



Why This Matters

The *Telework Enhancement Act of 2010*, Public Law 111-292, was enacted on December 9, 2010, to improve telework across the Federal Government. Additionally, on July 15, 2011, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued a memorandum highlighting the benefits of teleworking, citing increases in productivity and reduced overhead costs. OMB has also emphasized the need for safeguards and reminded Federal agencies that, if not properly implemented, telework might introduce new security vulnerabilities into agency systems and networks.

DHS Response

We obtained written comments on a draft of this report from the Director, Departmental GAO-OIG Audit Liaison. DHS concurred with the two recommendations in the report. Additionally, the Department is taking actions to resolve the reported vulnerabilities.

DHS' System To Enable Telework Needs a Disaster Recovery Capability

What We Determined

The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) is implementing two systems to enhance telework in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). These systems are called Workplace as a Service (WPaaS) and are part of an overall effort to move to cloud-based services.

However, there are contingency planning deficiencies in the security plan for the WPaaS, including both the need for an alternate processing site and the need for plans to recover operations at an alternate site. OCIO designated these deficiencies as a moderate risk, and has left it up to the components using WPaaS to determine whether an alternate processing site is needed for their particular situations.

According to DHS staff, each contractor would need to establish a WPaaS space at the other contractor's data center to enable an alternate processing site. However, the contractors have not implemented the required alternate processing capability.

OCIO has recognized contingency planning deficiencies in the security plan for the WPaaS, including both the need for an alternate processing site and the need for plans to recover operations at an alternate site.

What We Recommend

We recommended that the DHS Chief Information Officer:

Recommendation 1 - Identify an alternate processing site for the WPaaS.

Recommendation 2 - Revise the WPaaS contingency plan to include a strategy to recover and perform system operations at an alternate processing site for an extended period.

For Further Information:

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