



OFFICE *of the*
INSPECTOR GENERAL
U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

INSPECTION REPORT

NUMBER 26-01

Site Visits Follow-Up Inspection

December 15, 2025

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Hotline: 866-4-GPO-OIG (866-447-6644)

Fax: 202-512-1352

Email: gpoighotline@gpo.gov

Mail: Office of the Inspector General
Government Publishing Office
732 North Capitol St. NW
Washington, DC 20401



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**OFFICE of the
INSPECTOR GENERAL**
U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

MEMORANDUM
OIG-26-02

Date

December 15, 2025

To

Director, U.S. Government Publishing Office

From

Inspector General

Subject:

Final Report— GPO Site Visits Follow-Up Inspection, Report Number 26-01

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) conducted a follow-up inspection to evaluate actions taken by GPO to address considerations in the May 2022 GPO OIG Regional Site Visit Inspection, Report Number 22-05. This follow-up report contains no findings.

GPO reviewed the draft report and provided comments through the Director. In accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency Quality Standards for Inspections, we reviewed GPO's comments for relevance and completeness and included them in their entirety in Appendix C.

We found that GPO made great progress in addressing the 10 considerations outlined in our May 2022 Site Visit Report. We considered six of these considerations resolved and encouraged GPO to continue to focus its efforts on the remaining four. We found their proposed timelines outlined in Appendix C to be responsive.

We appreciate the courtesies extended to our staff throughout this review. If you have any questions or comments about this report, please contact Connie Greene, Assistant Inspector General for Inspections, at cgreen@gpo.gov or (202) 512-1597.

NATHAN J. DEAHL
Inspector General

Attachment

RESULTS IN BRIEF**What We Did**

From May through June 2025, our office sent a joint team of investigators and inspectors to GPO's two Distribution Centers as well as the Stennis Secure Production Facility (SPF). The purpose was to evaluate any actions taken by GPO to address the considerations outlined in the May 2022 GPO OIG Regional Site Visit Report. We also sought to educate employees about our office to deter fraud, waste, and abuse.

What We Recommend

GPO has addressed or made progress in addressing employee concerns identified in the May 2022 Regional Site Visit Report. GPO should continue to focus its efforts on the following:

- Barcode modernization at the Distribution Centers.
- Improving hiring timelines.
- Installing the emergency notification lighting system in the SPF production area.
- Installing hydrogen cyanide and carbon monoxide detectors at each of the production lines located at SPF and Washington, DC.

What We Found

GPO obtained approval to dispose of outdated Congressional publications at our Distribution Centers, creating space to bring in new customers. Aging computers at the Laurel Distribution Center were replaced, Wi-Fi service was obtained for the Pueblo Distribution Center, and a mainframe inventory system migration plan was developed, facilitating the implementation of barcode scanning. Outdated Position Descriptions were updated, and overall engagement between the regional sites and Agency Human Capital improved.

GPO policies and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been updated to clarify that the GPO Director is responsible for the decisions regarding weather-related facility closures. A loudspeaker system was installed at the SPF to ensure employees are made aware of weather-related emergencies in a timely manner. To augment the loudspeaker system, a visual notification system has been designed and is scheduled for installation in late 2025.

Government Publishing & Print Procurement (GPPP) closed all physical regional offices, and those employees are now working remotely. This resulted in an estimated annual savings of approximately \$1,000,000 in lease and utility payments. Remote work employees received adequate guidance on information security policies and how to request IT equipment. GPPP is planning to reorganize its regional teams and implement standard file naming conventions in 2026. Procedures were implemented, eliminating the need for GPPP employees working remotely to disclose their home address to third parties.

Finally, we learned of a new employee concern. A SPF employee expressed concern regarding potential exposure to harmful pollutants during the cleaning of the laser filtration systems on the passport production line. Based upon the documentation reviewed and interviews conducted with GPO's Safety Branch, SPF employees, and Office of General Counsel (OGC)-Labor Relations, GPO has sufficiently addressed these concerns.

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INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes our findings and conclusions on GPO's progress in addressing the issues from our May 2022 GPO OIG Regional Site Visit Report. The scope and methodology are presented in Appendix A.

Background

Initial Site Visits

Between May 2021 and March 2022, our office sent teams of auditors, inspectors, and investigators to better understand the purpose, functioning, and management of the U.S. Government Publishing Office's (GPO) regional offices. We physically visited the Stennis Secure Production Facility (SPF) in Mississippi, the two Distribution Centers at Pueblo, Colorado, and Laurel, Maryland, and eight of the 12 regional facilities maintained by Government Publishing & Print Procurement (GPPP).¹ We conducted virtual site visits for the four remaining GPPP regional facilities because they had three or fewer personnel on site.

At the conclusion of the inspection, we identified 10 considerations on topics related to storage space, technology, hiring, weather-related protocols, standard naming conventions, privacy, safety, and leased spaces.

Follow-Up Site Visits

From May through June 2025, we sent teams of inspectors and investigators to the Laurel and Pueblo Distribution Centers as well as the SPF. The purpose was to evaluate actions taken by GPO to address 10 considerations outlined in the May 2022 GPO OIG Regional Site Visit Report and continue to educate remote site employees through OIG-101 presentations. Five of the 10 considerations pertained to regional facilities operated by GPPP, which were all closed by the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2022.² However, as GPPP maintains regional personnel on a 100 percent remote work basis, we also evaluated GPO's progress on those five considerations.

Context of the Inspection

We initiated this review from our FY 2025 Annual Work Plan.

¹ On January 16, 2025, the GPO Director renamed the Customer Services Business Unit to the Government Publishing & Print Procurement Business Unit. The terms Customer Services and Government Publishing & Print Procurement are used interchangeably throughout the report.

² GPO Circular Letter No. 1096, *GPO's Regional Offices to Operate as Fully Virtual Agency Procurement Services (APS) Teams*, September 28, 2022.

Distribution Centers

GPO's Government Publication Sales Business Unit administers its Government Distribution Services (GDS) program through two Distribution Centers located in Laurel, Maryland, and Pueblo, Colorado. The two Distribution Centers offer the Federal government over 215,000 square feet of climate-controlled distribution, storage, and order fulfillment space. Services provided through the GDS program include:

- Consulting
- Order fulfillment and custom distribution solutions
- Active mailing permits, custom mailing, and custom webcarts
- Call center operations
- Controlled and secure storage facilities
- Printing optimization

Laurel Distribution Center

The Laurel Distribution Center (LDC) was established in 1975 and consists of four buildings with a combined 132,832 square feet of climate-controlled space and multiple loading docks. The LDC is a fulfillment center, sending daily shipments on behalf of its Federal customers as well as supporting GPO online sales. The LDC is a \$10 million-per-year business center for GPO. It performs all the functions of the Pueblo Distribution Center (PDC) and is also responsible for online sales to the public. LDC employs 14 full-time employees and 20 contractors.

Pueblo Distribution Center

The PDC was established in October 1971 and is a series of three physical warehouses, with a combined 84,670 square feet of climate-controlled space and multiple loading docks. It has fulfilled over 108 million orders and distributed over 1.2 billion publications. The PDC employs 25 full-time employees and eight contractors.

Construction of a new Government Secure & Intelligent Documents (GSID) facility for passport warehousing and distribution at GPO's Pueblo campus was underway at the time of our fieldwork. Since this facility was not yet operational, it was not evaluated in this report.

Stennis Secure Production Facility (SPF)

The SPF is one of two facilities maintained by the GSID Business Unit. GSID's mission is to manufacture, personalize, and deliver the most trusted credentials in Government. Its major customers are the U.S. Department of State (DOS) and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The SPF produces 45 percent of all Next Generation Passports for the DOS.

The SPF operates under a Use Permit with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). A separate Host-Tenant Services Agreement between GPO and NASA prescribes recurring operations and services, including designated utilities, which NASA is to supply to GPO on a reimbursable basis. The facility consists of over 26,000 square feet of office space. There is also 59,000 square feet of laboratory space used for passport production and other secure credentials, and an additional 40,000 square feet of physical warehouse space.

Government Publishing & Print Procurement Regional Offices

GPPP provides a comprehensive suite of services to ensure a coordinated contracting and printing process for its agencies and contractors. Services include strategic teams that provide direct assistance to assigned agencies, a network of regional coverage, and various procurement vehicles to satisfy specific printing needs. At the time of our fieldwork, GPPP's Regional Agency Procurement Services Team had closed all regional physical spaces and now maintains seven virtual regional groups, staffed with employees working remotely.

Objectives

- To evaluate any actions taken by GPO to address the considerations outlined in the May 2022 GPO OIG Regional Site Visit Report.
- To educate GPO employees on the OIG's mission and their role in detecting fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement.

Prior Evaluation Coverage

- GPO OIG-22-05, *GPO Regional Site Visit Report*, May 3, 2022.

STATUS OF PRIOR SITE VISIT CONSIDERATIONS

Employees at the Distribution Centers reported concerns with available storage space, challenges with technology, manual processes, and hiring. Employees at the SPF expressed concerns about hiring, communication, and the SPF's emergency procedures during weather-related events. Employees at the GPPP regional offices reported that having additional computer peripherals for teleworking would be helpful. In addition, staff stated that there was no standardized electronic file naming convention across all regional offices. Some staff raised concerns about privacy and safety due to a requirement to provide customer agencies and vendors with their home addresses. We also noted the potential for cost savings by terminating leases for largely unused regional office locations.

The considerations from the May 2022 Regional Site Visit Report were:

1. Reassess the value of long-term retention of potentially outdated publications at the Distribution Centers.
2. Evaluate the use of additional technologies to increase efficiency throughout the Distribution Centers.
3. Execute a focused effort to improve the speed of hiring at the regional sites. GPO should also consider reviewing and evaluating position descriptions for the PDC in order to ensure they are still reflective of the work requirements.
4. Develop return-to-work determinations based on SPF's specific mission essential functions.
5. Implement, or work with, NASA's Stennis facility to adopt additional SPF emergency protocols that ensure employees are notified quickly of weather-related events.
6. Remind employees about information security policies while teleworking, including how to request IT equipment.
7. Require the use of a standard file naming convention across the Central Office, and all regional offices, for electronic files in Customer Services.
8. Implement procedures to mitigate privacy and safety risks resulting from employees sharing their home addresses with customer agencies and vendors.
9. End the regional office leases as expeditiously as possible, particularly for those locations where employees are already 100 percent teleworking.
10. Explore a more flexible pay-as-you-go type hoteling solution instead of a contract-based solution.

Specific details on the status of these considerations are set forth below.

Consideration 1

Reassess the value of long-term retention of potentially outdated publications at the Distribution Centers.

Issue

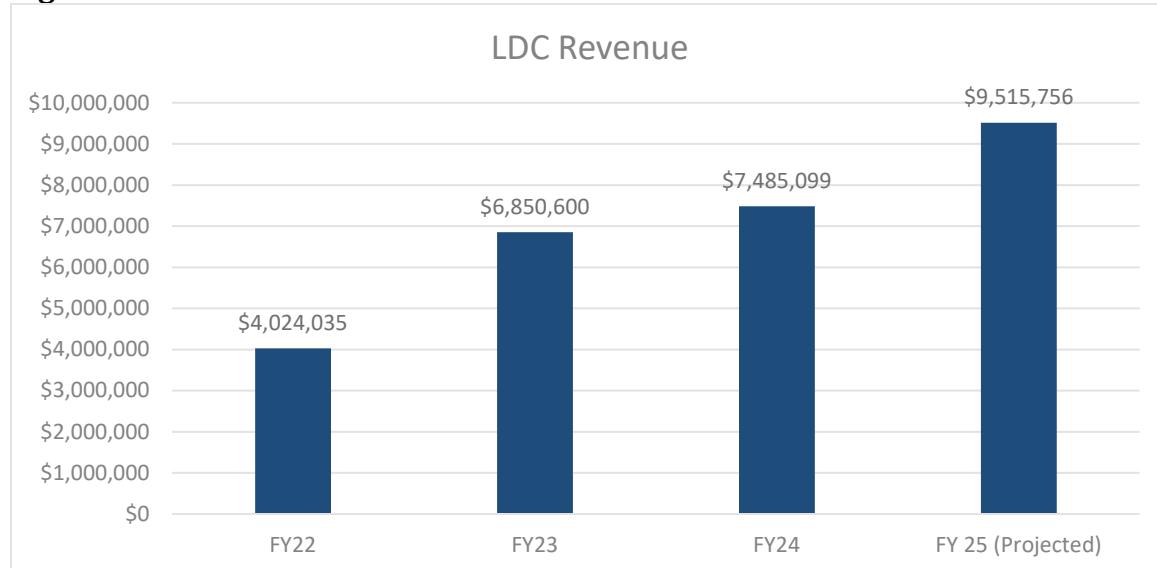
During our May 2021 visit to the LDC, we learned that there were outdated Congressional publications. These publications required the Joint Committee on Printing's (JCP) approval to be removed. According to one manager, the operation at the LDC had grown so much that having additional space would allow further expansion of their operation.

In September 2021, the PDC reported that its facility was at maximum storage capacity and could not take on any new customers or store any additional publications. Contributing to this lack of available storage were 266 pallets of outdated Congressional material. Staff at the PDC stated that the GPO Central Office told them not to dispose of the pallets as they contained Congressional publications, and unnamed Members of Congress wanted the publications to continue to be stored.

Resolution

In February 2024, GPO obtained JCP authorization to dispose of surplus Congressional inventory, with the understanding that GPO would retain 10 copies of each publication. As a result, the LDC was able to free warehouse space to bring in new customers and increase its revenue from \$4,024,035 in FY 2022 to a projected \$9,515,756 in FY 2025. See Figure 1.

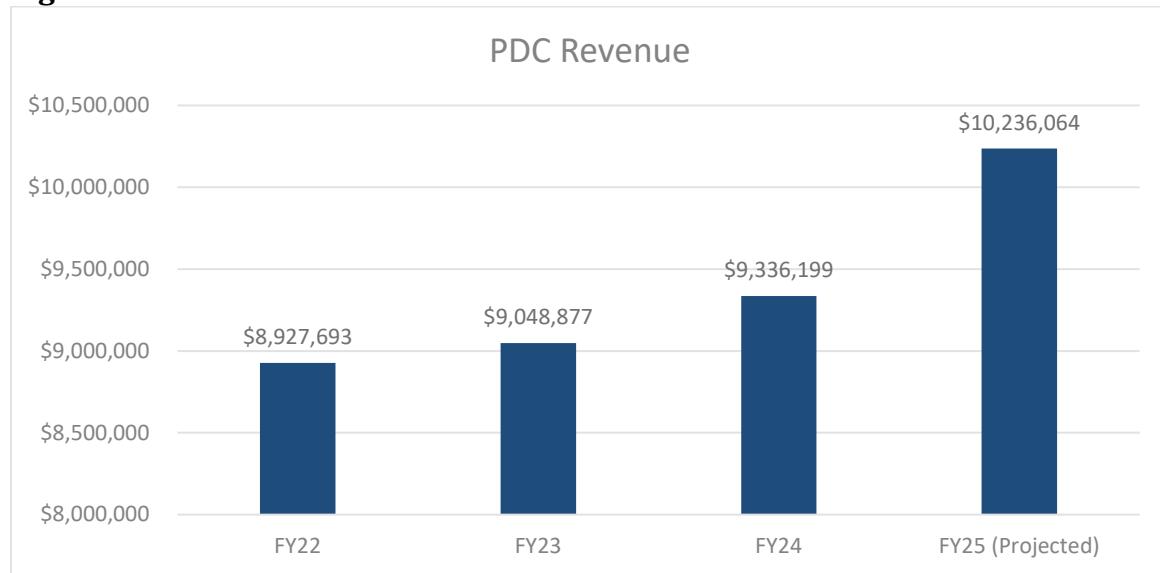
Figure 1. LDC Annual Revenue



Source: OIG Analysis

The PDC was also able to free up warehouse space to bring in new customers. As of May 2025, the PDC warehouses were at 65 percent capacity. Having available space has helped the PDC grow its customer base and increase its revenue year over year from \$8,927,693 in FY 2022 to a projected \$10,236,064 in FY 2025. See Figure 2.

Figure 2. PDC Annual Revenue



Source: OIG Analysis

Consideration 2

Evaluate the use of additional technologies to increase efficiency throughout the Distribution Centers.

Issue

In May 2021, management and staff at the LDC reported slow network access speed and outdated computer equipment. Specifically, LDC staff explained that order tickets were sometimes difficult to read and had to be manually keyed for processing because they came from legacy mainframe systems at the GPO Headquarters (HQ) located in Washington, DC. At that time, the Database Order Tracking System (DOTS) application was housed on a server located at the PDC, resulting in latency issues. The LDC did not have a computer-based barcode scanning system. Therefore, inventories were conducted manually.

In September 2021, employees at the PDC highlighted a need for basic modernization efforts. They stated that inventory was conducted manually because there was no barcode scanning system, nor was there Wi-Fi throughout the Distribution Center to support such a system. The staff explained that manual inventory processes were time-consuming. Staff desired a barcode scanning system to increase efficiency and reduce human error. Additionally, the PDC manager and supervisors stated that they should be issued government mobile phones so they do not have to use their personal phones for work-related matters.

Resolution

DOTS was moved to the LDC server, which, according to a GPO official, improved processing times. The LDC has also engaged with the network service provider to ensure network access speed is fully optimized. LDC leadership stated that 17 aging computers were replaced in September 2024, and obsolete computer equipment is no longer a concern. Also, order tickets are no longer printed and scanned from HQ. A digital solution was developed which eliminated the need for manual entry. Barcode scanning systems are planned but have not yet been implemented. GPO is in the early contract stages of moving the Retail Order Processing System (ROPS) and DOTS from the legacy mainframe and onto a new platform. The ROPS project migration will occur first, during the next twelve months, and the DOTS migration will occur afterward. Once this has been accomplished, it will be possible to implement barcode scanning at the LDC and the PDC.

Although this is a two-year project, LDC leadership is satisfied with the timeline because they need time to train staff on the new system as well as troubleshoot any issues with retail sales before replacing DOTS. GPO is encouraged to continue barcode modernization at the LDC and the PDC. The modernization would increase efficiency and reduce human error. For example, at the PDC, GPO officials estimated that implementing a barcode scanning system would result in a time savings of up to 300 hours per year.

In FY 2025, Wi-Fi was installed at the PDC with 50 access points to ensure facility-wide coverage. This enhancement was featured in GPO's Winter 2025 edition of *Typeline* magazine. As noted above, inventory at the PDC is still conducted manually; however, Wi-Fi has made this process more efficient, eliminating the need for handwritten count sheets and cumbersome laptop setups. The *Typeline* article quoted a GPO Official who stated one particular inventory used to take a week to accomplish but is now completed in less than two days.

The PDC site manager confirmed that in 2023, GPO-issued supervisory personnel mobile phones.

Consideration 3

Execute a focused effort to improve the speed of hiring at the regional sites. GPO should also consider reviewing and evaluating position descriptions for the PDC in order to ensure they are still reflective of the work requirements.

Issue

In May 2021, LDC management reported difficulty in hiring personnel and slow processing times. There were also challenges with the use of out-of-date job descriptions.

In September 2021, employees at the PDC stated that the hiring process often took too long. The process could take up to one year from announcing an open position to the onboarding of the candidate selected. Staff at the PDC also shared concerns with having

different types of pay plans for similar job functions. According to staff, Wage Grade (WG) employees and Printing Office Grade employees performed essentially the same job functions; however, the WG employees were limited in pay.

In December 2021, SPF managers stated that the hiring process was broken and was GPO's most significant issue.

Resolution

LDC management stated that Agency Human Capital (AHC) is doing a good job of communicating with them on a bi-weekly basis, ensuring vacancies are posted, and selections are made in a timely manner.³ We received updated PDC position descriptions, and we received no further complaints.

PDC management stated that the hiring process has improved since May 2022. There are pending vacancies, but those vacancies exist due to difficulty in attracting applicants who meet all job qualifications.

We reviewed Distribution Center hiring data for FYs 2023 and 2024. In FY 2023, the Distribution Centers onboarded two new employees. The average time from the posting of the vacancy to the onboarding of the employee was 134 days. In FY 2024, the Distribution Centers onboarded one new employee. The time from the posting of the vacancy to the onboarding of this employee was 124 days. As these timelines exceeded the 70 days recommended by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for this portion of the suggested total 80-day hiring timeline, we encourage GPO to continue its efforts to improve hiring speed.⁴

In December 2021, the SPF was staffed with 78 employees working a single daytime shift. The facility's workforce consisted of one manager, overseeing all operations and wearing several hats, including responsibility for six supervisors, 29 Printing Plant Workers, 29 Bookbinders, four press workers, two IT specialists, two Quality Control specialists, two Document Inspectors, one Electrician, one Engineer, and one Administrative Officer.

As of July 2025, the SPF has added both a night shift and weekend shift and has increased staffing from 78 to 145 employees (86 percent).

To address a critical shortage of journeyperson Bookbinders, the SPF and AHC developed a new role, Production Technician, to hire teammates with a demonstrated aptitude for working in a manufacturing environment and provide a three-year, on-the-job training opportunity. After working alongside experienced craftspeople, these teammates will

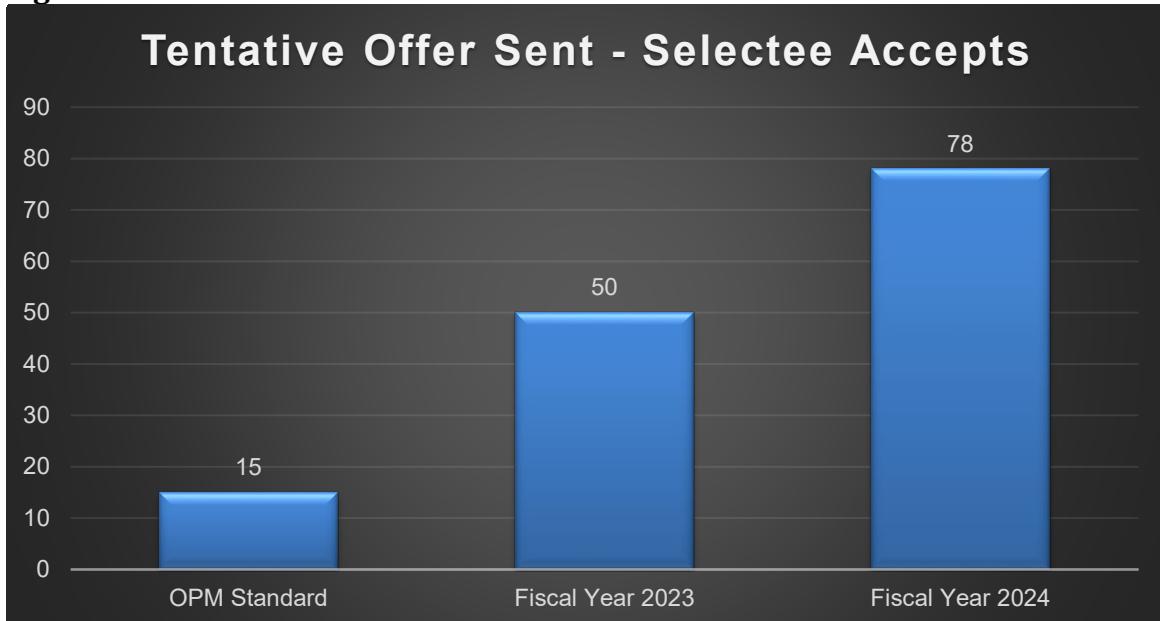
³ On January 16, 2025, the GPO Director renamed the Human Capital Business Unit to Agency Human Capital. The terms Human Capital and Agency Human Capital are used interchangeably throughout the report.

⁴ *End-to-End Hiring Initiative*, U.S. Office of Personnel Management, March 2017.

learn the necessary skills to produce passports and secure identification documents and become journeyperson Bookbinders.⁵

We also reviewed Bookbinder hiring data provided by AHC for FYs 2023 and 2024. In FY 2023, the SPF onboarded 27 new Bookbinders. The average time from the posting of the vacancy to the employee's onboarding was 154 days. In FY 2024, the SPF onboarded eight new Bookbinders. The average time from the posting of the vacancy to the employee's onboarding was 306 days. As these timelines also exceeded the 70 days recommended by OPM, we again encourage GPO to continue its efforts to improve hiring speed and suggest that GPO determine where processing times routinely exceed OPM recommendations. As noted previously, OPM suggests that the time from issuance of a tentative job offer to acceptance of the final offer should be no more than 15 days. See Figure 3. We found the average time for this stage of hiring for Bookbinders in FYs 2023 and 2024 to be 50 and 78 days, respectively, to include security and medical approvals. See Figure 3.

Figure 3. SPF Tentative Offer Timeline

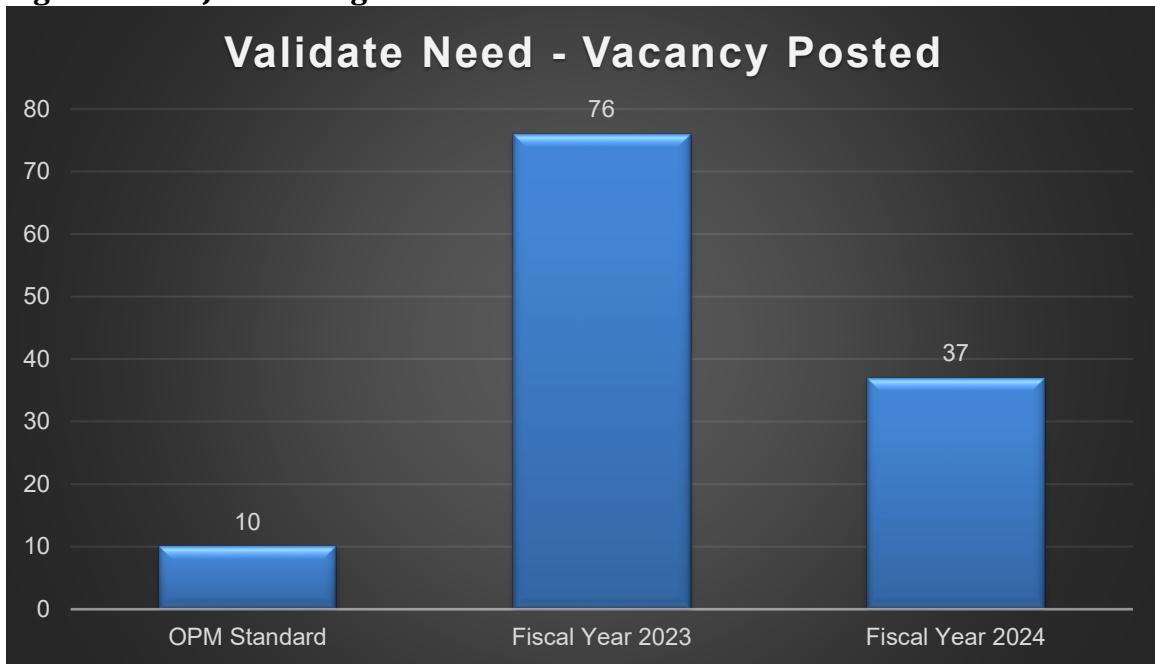


Source: OIG Analysis

The data provided also indicated an average time of 76 days in FY 2023 and 37 days in FY 2024 from validation of hiring need to job posting. See Figure 4. As noted above, OPM suggests 10 days for these actions.

⁵ GPO Director Hugh Nathaniel Halpern, *Prepared Statement before the Committee on Rules and Administration, United States Senate*, December 12, 2023.

Figure 4. SPF Job Posting Timeline



Source: OIG Analysis

Consideration 4

Develop return-to-work determinations based on SPF's specific mission essential functions.

Issue

During our 2021 visit to the SPF, staff reported that weather-related emergency protocols and notifications were a significant concern, particularly during hurricane season. Employees stated SPF management follows NASA's protocols to determine the site's operational status. According to the staff, if NASA opens the Space Center, the SPF staff are expected to be at work or take annual leave.

Resolution

GPO Directive 645.1E, *Closure, Delayed Arrival, and Early Dismissal Policy for Inclement Weather Conditions and Similar Emergency Situations*, dated October 27, 2023, states that the GPO Director or his or her designee has the sole discretion in determining GPO's operating status. The directive further states that managers in GPO field offices outside of the Washington, DC area are authorized to excuse employees during emergency situations in their areas. Although the directive also states that the operating status for GPO's Alternative Facility in Stennis, Mississippi, will be determined by the NASA Base Command, we found evidence that while NASA determines the overall operating status of the base, GPO determines the operating status of the SPF.

A GPO official at the SPF advised that the ultimate decision regarding return-to-work is made by the GPO Director, with information from SPF management. For example, in January 2025, a freeze was expected, and the SPF closed before NASA issued any notification of base closure. While the SPF is generally aligned with NASA's operating status, return-to-work decisions by NASA and GPO are made independently by each agency.

Consideration 5

Implement, or work with, NASA's Stennis facility to adopt additional SPF emergency protocols that ensure employees are notified quickly of weather-related events.

Issue

Another weather-related concern shared by SPF staff was that emergency notifications were not timely. For example, on Monday, December 6, 2021, the State of Mississippi issued a tornado warning affecting the area surrounding the SPF facility. According to staff, the sirens that sounded throughout the NASA Space Center could not be heard within the SPF plant floor. The reason they could not be heard was due to the noise of machinery and staff wearing hearing protection. In contrast, the sirens were heard in the SPF reception area and office spaces. SPF employees on the production floor only found out about the emergency notification when they went into the breakroom and saw the notification on their mobile phones.

Resolution

A loudspeaker system has been installed and tested throughout the facility.

Current SPF Emergency Action Plans reference red flashing lights for NASA-declared weather emergencies, blue flashing lights for SPF-declared site emergencies, and yellow flashing lights for SPF emergency evacuations due to bomb threats, chemical spills, or other hazardous situations. However, this system had not been fully implemented at the conclusion of our fieldwork. A GPO official stated that eight flashing lights have been installed to date, and the project is expected to be completed by late 2025.

Consideration 6

Remind employees about information security policies while teleworking, including how to request IT equipment.

Issue

Staff at six regional Customer Services offices expressed their desire for a GPO-supplied or approved printer or scanner at home.

Resolution

On June 2, 2023, GPO Directive 645.25, *Procedures Detailing How Teleworking Employees Can Obtain Office Supplies*, was issued. This updated directive reminded employees of procedures to be followed to order supplies and equipment when teleworking. The directive superseded GPO Notice 645-373, *Procedures Detailing How Teleworking Employees Can Obtain Office Supplies during the COVID-19 Response*, dated May 13, 2020.

GPO Directive 645.25 also referenced GPO Directive 645.19C, *GPO Telework Program*, dated June 25, 2021, and reiterated the following language:

"Teleworking Employees should safeguard Government owned/leased equipment and documents and observe all Government/Agency requirements for the handling of sensitive information, such as but not limited to, proprietary information, attorney-client privileged documents, PII data, information covered by applicable Privacy laws; and, adhere to applicable Government regulations concerning information management and electronic security procedures for safeguarding data and databases."

The 2021 *GPO Telework Program* directive was updated on January 10, 2025. The updated directive, GPO Directive 645.19D, continues to establish guidelines for requesting and safeguards governing the use of IT equipment. Furthermore, annual online telework training, which addresses the content of GPO Directive 645.19D, is required for all employees who participate in the GPO Telework program.

We also noted relevant guidance contained within GPO Directive 825.33D, *Information Technology (IT) Security Program Statement of Policy*, dated February 1, 2024.

In summary, we found sufficient GPO policies, procedures, and training exist to ensure employees in a telework or remote work status receive guidance regarding information security policies, including how to request IT equipment.

Consideration 7

Require the use of a standard file naming convention across the Central Office, and all regional offices, for electronic files in Customer Services.

Issue

Supervisors and staff at three regional Customer Services offices said no standardized file naming convention existed. Further, one supervisor said regional supervisors are allowed to determine their preference for file naming conventions. In other words, each regional office can potentially name the same types of files in different ways. In December 2021, Customer Services released their Records Management SOP, which provides specific instructions on recommended file naming conventions. The SOP states that “[i]f an office doesn’t already have a structure in place, they will follow the structure identified” in the

SOP. Alternatively, if an office already has a structure in place, it does not have to use the provided naming conventions.

Resolution

GPPP is combining all regional teams into four teams that will align with contract types offered to agencies. These four teams will consist of a purchasing team, a term contract team, a simplified purchase team, and an on-site services team. With the combination of the teams, the single filing and naming convention using the Shared Drive Folder Structure and File Naming SOP will be used by all teams. The new team structure is scheduled to be implemented and completed during FY 2026.

Consideration 8

Implement procedures to mitigate privacy and safety risks resulting from employees sharing their home addresses with customer agencies and vendors.

Issue

Staff at some regional offices expressed concerns with having to provide their home addresses to customer agencies and vendors. According to GPO, the regional offices' full-time telework employees were required to provide their home addresses for deliveries. If the employee is unable to provide their home address, they are required to go to the regional office to retrieve mail. While the option to retrieve the deliveries from the regional offices may be feasible when the offices are open, it would not be when an office is permanently closed.

Resolution

A GPO official stated that instructions have been given to all remote employees that materials from agencies or vendors can be sent to GPO HQ, and they, in turn, will send the package to the team member. This official further stated that it is rare that employees have required materials to be sent to their homes now that the Government has become accustomed to working remotely, and digital images of materials are much more readily available.

Considerations 9 and 10

End the regional office leases as expeditiously as possible, particularly for those locations where employees are already 100 percent teleworking.

Explore a more flexible pay-as-you-go type hoteling solution instead of a contract-based solution.

Issue

During our 2021-2022 site visits, we found that the regional office spaces maintained by Customer Services were primarily used for storage of paper files and mail/package delivery. According to regional employees, a physical office space could be used during Continuity of Operations (COOP) situations, such as loss of internet or power, or if they need to meet a customer in person. However, some agreed that the current office footprint would no longer be needed once the historic paper files stored in the office were digitized. We learned that, at the time of the initial visit, some employees rarely went into the office, and did not describe any instances of going into the office for COOP situations. Further, staff reported that even before the pandemic, visits from customer agencies and vendors were minimal.

Resolution

Via Circular Letter 1096, dated September 28, 2022, GPO notified its Federal customers that it would operate its Regional APS Offices virtually, that all regional physical locations were closed, and were reorganized into the following regions:

<u>New Regional APS Team</u>	<u>Former GPO Offices Included</u>
Northeast Region	Columbus, Philadelphia, Boston
MidAtlantic Region	Virginia Beach, Charleston
Southeast Region	Atlanta
Northcentral Region	Chicago
Southcentral Region	Dallas, San Antonio
Mountain Region	Denver
Southwest Region	San Francisco
Northwest Region	Seattle

GPO subsequently merged the Mountain Region into the Northwest and Southwest Regions and currently operates seven Regional APS Teams.

GPO Notice 640-385, *Pay Setting upon Realignment of Customer Services Regional Teams*, was issued on January 24, 2023. This document establishes the pay setting determinations for GPO Customer Services employees impacted by the closure of regional offices. The notice included an announcement that GPO was reorganizing its regional Customer Services teams into regional teams that were not tied to a physical office location and would be closing its physical regional office spaces. The notice further advised that, as a result of these closures, GPO would save nearly \$1 million annually.

We reviewed GPPP financial data provided by GPO Agency Financial Management for FYs 2022-2024. Our review revealed that GPPP expended \$614,561 in FY 2022 for leased GSA and commercial regional space as well as associated electricity costs. In FY 2023, those annual costs had decreased to \$398,217. In FY 2024, there were no GPPP regional lease or lease-related expenditures, and the general ledger data provided reflected a net credit of \$15,239 for that year.

NEW MATTERS EVALUATED

Laser Filtration System

Issue

The lasers used on the digital passport production lines at the SPF and in Washington, DC, include a filtration system that must be serviced after every 80 hours of production. This service includes replacing four filters, replacing the granular filtration aid, and vacuuming the filtration cabinets. Employees conducting this service have been provided with protective disposable outerwear, gloves, and a Powered Air-Purifying Respirator (PAPR) system. See Figure 5. Training in the use of the PAPR was provided by the Safety Branch in September 2022.

Figure 5. Powered Air-Purifying Respirator



Source: OIG

At the time of our fieldwork, in Washington, DC, this service was being conducted by one machinist and an assistant. At the SPF, this service was generally conducted by two machinists and five assistants. We noted during our tours of the production lines in DC and at the SPF that DC operates three production lines with a total of six filtration cabinets, while the SPF operates two production lines with a total of four filtration cabinets.

During our site visit, one employee at the SPF expressed concern regarding the potential exposure to harmful substances during the cleaning of the laser filtration systems. This employee requested full disclosure of materials and toxins involved in laser and passport production, independent testing and air quality analysis within operational areas, implementation of mandatory safety training and briefings for all relevant staff, review and enforcement of proper maintenance schedules in compliance with safety guidelines, evaluation of environmental pay classifications for affected employees, and appointment of dedicated safety personnel to the SPF.

GPO's OGC-Labor Relations, through the employees' union, previously expressed concerns about potential exposure to harmful substances to GPO's Safety Branch.

On May 20, 2025, in connection with routine wage negotiations, a union official advised OGC-Labor Relations that the SPF machinists would like to receive "environmental" pay differential when servicing the laser filtration system, "due to the potential health effects of the material they are dealing with." The union official also inquired about the potential toxicity of Hydrogen Cyanide (HCN) that could be generated during passport production.

Resolution

Based upon the documentation reviewed and interviews conducted with GPO's Safety Branch, SPF employees, and OGC-Labor Relations, GPO sufficiently addressed these concerns.

An independent laboratory conducted material testing, and the Safety Branch conducted air sampling as far back as 2017 and most recently in 2025. The air sampling results have been provided to GSID management. Employees have been provided with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to wear while servicing the laser filtration system and have been trained in using the PAPR. Laser filtration system maintenance is generally performed in accordance with the manufacturer's recommended interval of 80 production hours. However, we noted that the interval increased slightly when overtime production shifts were necessary. While the Safety Branch does not maintain permanent personnel at the SPF, they routinely visit the SPF and discuss these concerns with SPF personnel. The Safety Branch most recently visited the SPF in March 2025.

The manufacturer's Safety Data Sheet for the polycarbonate material used in passport production revealed that the material is classified as an irritant. Air quality testing conducted by the Safety Branch revealed no concerns regarding air quality in the immediate vicinity of the laser system where employees are stationed. Dust sample testing conducted by an independent laboratory in 2024 and 2025, at the request of the Safety Branch, revealed no concerns regarding composition that would not be mitigated by the use of PPE. Although the manufacturer of the laser filtration system only recommends protective outer clothing and a dust mask for routine service, GPO has purchased PAPR systems for use by all personnel involved in the weekly cleaning to provide higher levels of comfort and protection. Based upon our review of surveillance camera footage at the SPF, the provided PPE is being worn during the servicing of the laser filtration system. We also learned that dust waste is disposed of as non-hazardous landfill waste, with the concurrence of the GPO's Environmental Program Manager, further underscoring that the dust material is an irritant, rather than a hazardous substance.

On May 20, 2025, OGC-Labor Relations responded to the inquiring union official that servicing the laser filtration system did not meet the criteria for environmental or hazardous pay differential.

Effective July 11, 2025, the cleaning of the laser filtration system at the SPF is being conducted by the weekend shift using the DC staffing model of one machinist and one assistant.

Based on a request from the SPF personnel involved in designing a new planned filtration system at the SPF, the Safety Branch procured equipment to test for the presence of airborne HCN during passport production. On the DC production line, sampling for HCN was conducted by the Safety Branch on August 11, August 12, and August 24, 2025. Passport production and laser filtration equipment are the same at the SPF and at DC, so travel to the SPF to conduct testing was not necessary. The first sampling session measured the waste stream generated by the digital laser printers by inserting a sampling probe into the hoses leading from the laser enclosure to the filtration cabinet. The second sampling session measured the atmosphere in the immediate production work area to determine if HCN was present. Testing was conducted over an 8-hour shift to assess an 8-hour time-weighted average (TWA). The third sampling measured the atmosphere during the cleaning of the laser filtration systems. Testing was conducted over an 8-hour shift to determine an 8-hour TWA. See Table 1.

Table 1. HCN Testing Results

Date	Location	Gas Sample	Average Parts Per Million (PPM) Detected	OSHA 8-hour TWA PPM
8/11/2025	Hose to the filtration cabinet	HCN	11.8	N/A
8/12/2025	Operator Area	HCN	Non-detectable	10.0
8/24/2025	Laser Filter Cleaning Area	HCN	Non-detectable	10.0

Source: OIG Analysis

As reflected in Table 1 above, HCN levels of 11.8 PPM were detected within the contained filtration system. Although 11.8 PPM exceeds the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standard for employee work areas, it is important to note that this sample was taken from *within* the closed exhaust system and prior to any filtration. HCN levels in the areas where employees are stationed were non-detectable, evidencing that the filtration system is working as intended to protect employees from HCN exposure. Even though HCN levels were non-detectable outside the filtration system, on August 13, 2025, the Safety Branch made the following recommendations to GSID management to address potential filtration system failures:

- A. Conduct air testing during the maintenance cycle to determine employee exposure.
- B. Procure monitors and alarms on each production line to detect HCN and Carbon Monoxide (CO) leaks.
- C. Contract for the installation, periodic calibration, and maintenance of HCN and CO monitors and alarms.
- D. Develop a response SOP in the event of an HCN or CO leak.
- E. Ensure that maintenance schedules for the laser filtration systems are followed.
- F. Train personnel operating in the laser area of the hazards of HCN and CO exposure.

CONCLUSION

Although GPO was not required to take action and resolve the 10 considerations identified in the May 2022 Regional Site Visit Report, they have made progress in addressing employee concerns. GPO should continue to focus its efforts on:

- Modernizing barcodes at the LDC and PDC.
- Improving hiring timelines, focusing on identified bottlenecks.
- Installing the emergency notification lighting system in the SPF production area.
- Installing HCN and CO detectors on each production line located at SPF and Washington, DC.

The GPO OIG will continue its outreach efforts to educate GPO employees on its mission and their role in detecting fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement.

Appendix A. Scope and Methodology

Scope

Our inspection focused on GPO's progress in addressing the considerations set forth in our May 2022 Regional Site Visit Report. Our review spanned from May 2022 to August 2025.

Our inspection focused on Government Secure & Intelligent Documents, specifically the Stennis Secure Production Facility (SPF), and the Superintendent of Documents, specifically the Laurel and Pueblo Distribution Centers. We also evaluated actions taken by Government Publishing & Print Procurement to address prior considerations.

Methodology

The inspection team:

- Reviewed Federal regulations and applicable GPO policies and procedures.
- Visited the Stennis SPF, Laurel Distribution Center, and Pueblo Distribution Center.
- Conducted 13 interviews with individuals from each of the regional sites, as well as personnel from Government Distribution Services (GDS), Agency Force Protection – Safety Branch, and the GPO Office of General Counsel (OGC) – Labor Relations.
- Reviewed information from GPPP and AHC.
- Conducted 14 on-site focus groups and provided OIG-101 presentations and Fraud Awareness training to 162 personnel across the three locations.
- Assessed progress toward the considerations outlined in the May 2022 Regional Site Visit Report.

This inspection was conducted in accordance with the *Quality Standards for Inspections and Evaluations of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency*, December 2020 (Blue Book).

This report was delayed 43 days due to the government shutdown from October 1, 2025, to November 12, 2025.

Appendix B. Abbreviations

AHC	Agency Human Capital
APS	Agency Procurement Services
CO	Carbon Monoxide
COOP	Continuity of Operations
DOS	U.S. Department of State
DOTS	Database Order Tracking System
FY	Fiscal Year
GDS	Government Distribution Services
GPO	Government Publishing Office
GPPP	Government Publishing & Print Procurement
GSID	Government Secure & Intelligent Documents
HCN	Hydrogen Cyanide
HQ	GPO Headquarters
IT	Information Technology
JCP	Joint Committee on Printing
LDC	Laurel Distribution Center
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
OGC	Office of General Counsel
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
OPM	U.S. Office of Personnel Management
PAPR	Powered Air-Purifying Respirator
PDC	Pueblo Distribution Center
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PPM	Parts Per Million
ROPS	Retail Order Processing System
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SPF	Secure Production Facility
TWA	Time-Weighted Average
WG	Wage Grade

MEMORANDUM

Subject: Management Review of IG Draft Report 25-03-LS
Date: December 5, 2025
To: Inspector General

This memorandum responds to the “Draft Report – GPO Site Visits Follow-Up, Project 25-03-LS.” The Agency accepted the 10 considerations presented in the original report and appreciates the draft report’s recognition of the progress made in these areas.

The conclusion of the draft report includes a list of activities where GPO should continue to focus its efforts. This is an update on these activities:

- Barcode modernization at the LDC and the PDC (Consideration 2 – Evaluate the use of additional technologies to increase efficiency throughout the Distribution Centers.)
 - Gov Distribution Services and Sales are in the process of migrating from the mainframe ROPS system to a new system on the Agency’s Oracle platform. We expect this migration to be complete for both Laurel and Pueblo Distribution Centers by mid-FY27. Barcode functionality will be included in this system, with AITS currently supporting some exploratory testing.
- Improving hiring timelines, focusing on identified bottlenecks (Consideration 3 – Execute a focused effort to improve the speed of hiring at the regional sites.)
 - Since the initial site visit, hiring timelines have improved significantly, particularly when addressing backfilling promotions or departures at the Pueblo Distribution Center. In FY 25, a major Human Capital effort led to hiring a senior Business Continuity Manager and the realignment of agency staff under the Laurel Distribution Center. Working with HC teammates, managers have been able to better understand the hiring process and the necessary documentation required to successfully fill vacancies.
- Installing the emergency notification lighting system in the SPF production area (Consideration 5 – Implement, or work with, NASA’s Stennis facility to adopt additional SPF emergency protocols that ensure employees are notified quickly of weather-related events.)
 - This project involved several phases, the first of which required the SPF-Stennis telephone system to be switched over from the NASA switchboard to the GPO switchboard, with all desk telephone numbers ported over. This was necessary to gain the functionality of the PA system, a capability that the NASA-based telephone system lacks.

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The second phase involved installing a visual lighting tree in four strategic, high-traffic locations around the facility. These lights are active and color-coded to signify the particular emergency situations:

- Evacuation Emergency (Yellow)
- Area Emergency (Blue)
- Shelter in Place Emergency (Red)

The third phase was the creation and dissemination of the Emergency Action Plan (EAP), which is posted in several locations around the facility. The EAP outlines the proper actions to take in response to the light system colors. The SPF-Stennis facility will also have drills on a regular cadence designed to familiarize teammates with the proper responses.

The final phase of the project involves programming the light system to match the phone system's verbal PA announcements with the corresponding color illumination of the light tree, and to enable managers and supervisors to activate the system through their phones. This programming has to be performed by GPO ITS and is scheduled for completion by January 2026. The system will be thoroughly tested and vetted before being declared operational.

- Installing HCN and CO detectors at each of the production lines located at SPF and Washington D.C.
 - Hydrogen Cyanide (HCN) and Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detectors have been ordered for SPF and are planned to be fully operational by the end of December 2025. Production lines in Washington, D.C., are expected to follow in 2026.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the Agency's input on the draft report. The Agency spent approximately 12 hours preparing this memorandum. If you have any questions, please contact me.



HUGH NATHANIAL HALPERN
Director, U.S. Government Publishing Office

cc:
Deputy Director