



ADMINISTRATIVE CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES

**Request for Proposals—April 23, 2026**  
**Preventing, Detecting, and Resolving Improper Payments in Federally Administered Programs**

Revised June 9, 2026

The Administrative Conference of the United States (ACUS) is accepting proposals from individuals interested in serving as a consultant(s) to produce a report examining how agencies prevent, detect, and resolve improper payments in federally administered programs under which the federal government disburses funds directly to private individuals and organizations for their own use. The report will support the development of a recommendation for action by federal agencies.

**About ACUS**

ACUS is a federal agency in the executive branch charged with identifying and promoting improvements in the efficiency, adequacy, and fairness of the procedures by which federal agencies conduct administrative processes.

Many of the hundreds of recommendations ACUS has issued since 1968 have resulted in reforms by federal agencies, the President, Congress, and the Judicial Conference of the United States. All are available at [acus.gov/recommendations](https://acus.gov/recommendations).

Recommendations are issued by the Conference, which consists of a Chairman appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate; ten presidential appointees; 50 senior federal officials designated by the heads of participating agencies; and 40 leading academics, practitioners, and other private-sector experts. Except for the Chairman, all members are unpaid.

Recommendations are typically informed by a report prepared by one or more consultants. Consultants also work closely with committees of Conference members and the full Conference membership to develop the recommendations. Previous consultant reports are available at [acus.gov/reports](https://acus.gov/reports).

**Project Description**

Federal agencies pay out trillions of dollars each year under various programs. Such payments include monetary benefits to eligible individuals; grant funding to individuals and organizations; tax refunds and credits; and Medicare fees to physicians, hospitals, and other healthcare facilities. Agencies are under continual pressure to ensure these payments are made accurately.



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Improper payments, which are payments that should not have been made or that were made in an incorrect amount, have been a longstanding concern in the federal government.<sup>1</sup> Since fiscal year (FY) 2003, the federal government has improperly paid around \$2.8 trillion,<sup>2</sup> and in FY 2025 alone, 15 agencies reported improperly paying about \$186 billion in 64 federal programs, 82 percent of which consisted of overpayments.<sup>3</sup>

Improper payments pose ongoing challenges. Agencies dedicate significant resources to preventing, identifying, and resolving improper payments. Overpaid individuals and entities may be burdened financially or otherwise attempting to repay or dispute improper payments. And payment integrity issues cause broader harm by diminishing public trust in government.

ACUS is undertaking a project to examine how agencies prevent, detect, and resolve improper payments in federally administered programs under which the federal government disburses funds directly to private individuals and organizations for their own use. Among other topics, the project will study the protocols and systems agencies have in place for preventing improper payments from occurring and detecting improper payments that do occur, as well as processes for resolving improper payments when they occur (e.g., appeals, requests for waivers, payment plans).

Key questions the project will address include:

- What are common causes of improper payments in different federal programs?
- What practices can agencies implement to reduce the frequency of improper payments and detect them as soon as possible after they occur? How can agencies use technology to prevent and detect improper payments more effectively?
- What factors affect agencies' ability to prevent and detect improper payments effectively?
- What resource and workload demands are associated with preventing, detecting, and resolving improper payments?
- How do agencies inform recipients about improper payments and their procedural options for disputing and resolving them?

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<sup>1</sup> See GARRETT HATCH, CONG. RSCH. SERV., R48296, IMPROPER PAYMENTS: ONGOING CHALLENGES AND RECENT LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS 1 (2024); U.S. GOV'T ACCOUNTABILITY OFF., GAO-25-108172, PROGRAM INTEGRITY: AGENCIES AND CONGRESS CAN TAKE ACTIONS TO BETTER MANAGE IMPROPER PAYMENTS AND FRAUD RISKS 2-4 (2025).

<sup>2</sup> U.S. GOV'T ACCOUNTABILITY OFF., GAO-25-107753, IMPROPER PAYMENTS: INFORMATION ON AGENCIES' FISCAL YEAR 2024 ESTIMATES 1 (2025).

<sup>3</sup> U.S. GOV'T ACCOUNTABILITY OFF., GAO-26-108073, U.S. GOVERNMENT'S 2025 AND 2024 CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 7 (2026). See also [paymentaccuracy.gov](https://www.paymentaccuracy.gov).



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- What procedural options do recipients have for disputing and resolving improper payments?

The project will not examine improper payments related to: (1) payments to federal employees and contractors for goods and services rendered to the federal government; (2) grants-in-aid to state, local, tribal, and territorial governments; (3) payments made by state, local, tribal, and territorial governments to private individuals and organizations under federally funded programs; and (4) federally guaranteed loans disbursed by nonfederal institutions.

The project will consist of a report prepared by a consultant(s) and, it is expected, a recommendation adopted by the Conference. Both the report and recommendation will identify agency best practices to help agencies prevent, detect, and resolve improper payments in federally administered programs under which the federal government disburses funds directly to private individuals and organizations for their own use.

### **Consultant Responsibilities**

The consultant(s) will complete a draft report by January 2028. The consultant(s) will work with Conference staff to finalize the draft report, which will be provided to a committee of Conference members and made publicly available on the ACUS website.

During spring 2028, the consultant(s) will work with Conference staff and the committee to develop a proposed recommendation. Committees typically meet two to three times per project; meetings are conducted virtually and typically last about three hours.

The consultant(s) will work with Conference staff to complete a final report by May 2028, which will be provided to the full Conference and made publicly available on the ACUS website. The consultant(s) will also work with Conference staff and the full Conference membership to consider the committee-proposed recommendation at a plenary session of the Conference, likely in June 2028.

The Conference may select a single consultant or assemble a team of consultants depending on the proposals it receives. Consultants will receive between \$8,000 and \$25,000, plus a budget for related expenses, depending on the number of consultants and allocation of responsibilities. The total value of consulting fees for this project will not exceed \$25,000, to be apportioned in accordance with the number of consultants and division of responsibilities.

### **Submitting a Proposal and Evaluation Criteria**



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If you are interested in serving as a consultant for the report, send an email to Lea Robbins ([lrobbins@acus.gov](mailto:lrobbins@acus.gov)) with the phrase “ACUS Project Proposal” in the subject line. Attach your curriculum vitae to the email, along with a short statement (ideally no more than two pages) that:

- Addresses your interest in this study;
- Describes specific topics you would be interested in researching;
- Describes the methodologies you might employ to researching these topics; and
- Identifies any relevant scholarship you have published.

**All responsible sources must submit a proposal by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on July 10, 2026, in order to be guaranteed consideration by the agency.**

Proposals will be evaluated based on quality, clarity, and the proposer’s qualifications. The Conference has a strong preference for consultants who have previously authored scholarly work related to public administration or payment integrity issues.