



OIG identifies Amtrak's top management and performance challenges for fiscal years 2026 and 2027

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WASHINGTON – Amtrak faces a number of management and performance challenges as it balances the demands of running a safe, efficient passenger railroad with historic capital investment, goals to eliminate operating losses, customer service expectations, and technology modernization, according to an Amtrak Office of Inspector General report released today.

These challenges affect the company's programs, operations, and ability to achieve its goals at a time when Amtrak is managing a record number of multibillion-dollar capital projects, pursuing operational profitability, and developing options for a major organizational restructuring, the report said. The report, based on the OIG's independent observations as well as insights from its prior audit and investigative work, identifies what the OIG considers to be the company's top management and performance challenges for fiscal years (FY) 2026 and 2027.

Safety and security remain the company's most critical challenges, with the OIG describing them as the "cornerstone" of Amtrak's viability and urging the company to maintain its focus on longstanding risks. While the report recognized progress by Amtrak in implementing safety initiatives and reducing certain types of accidents, it also highlights persistent risks, including train strikes and employee safety incidents.

For example, over a four-year period from FY 2020 through FY 2023, the company was involved in approximately 800 train strikes that resulted in 594 deaths and 279 injuries. In addition, the OIG identified instances where employees put themselves at risk by working near live tracks without requesting required operational protections. The report also underscored the inherent difficulty Amtrak faces in safeguarding its operations across its vast network, noting that the OIG had reported on security gaps in 2018, 2019, and 2023.

Capital investment presents another major challenge, according to the report. The scale of Amtrak's historic capital program, supported in part by funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, has significantly expanded the company's responsibilities. In fact, Amtrak's capital expenditures were more than \$5.5 billion in FY 2025 and annual spending is estimated to peak around \$7.8 billion in FY 2027. Currently, Amtrak is undertaking nearly 500 capital projects, with at least 10 valued at more than \$1 billion, to include its three ongoing train procurements.

The report recognized that Amtrak has made progress in better managing its capital portfolio but said the company has experienced shortcomings in each of its ongoing train procurements. These shortcomings have led to years-long delays and tens of millions of dollars in change orders and forgone revenue, the report said.

In addition, balancing growing demand for service with limited train capacity was a key financial and operational challenge identified in the report. As Amtrak seeks to achieve operational profitability, it is attempting to increase revenue and reduce costs. The company is currently breaking records in both ridership and revenue, providing more than 34 million passenger trips and

generating \$2.8 billion in revenue in fiscal year 2025. It has also continued to expand service with its new Borealis and the Mardi Gras routes.

The report notes, however, that Amtrak no longer has enough train capacity to meet existing demand. Aging equipment and obsolete parts exacerbate these capacity shortfalls. While the company expects its NextGen Acela and Airo fleets will add capacity and mitigate the impact of an increasingly unreliable legacy fleet, the report warns that until new trains enter operation, Amtrak will need to find a balance between expanding service and improving existing service. The company will also need to manage the tension between charging higher ticket prices and providing affordable intercity transportation, the report said.

Customer service remains another key challenge. The report noted recent declines in Amtrak's on-time performance and customer satisfaction and pointed to areas where Amtrak has greater control to reduce impacts, such as maintaining its aging fleet, providing consistent communications during delays, and continuing work to make its services fully accessible.

The report also identified technology modernization and cybersecurity risk as an additional challenge, noting that outdated systems, struggles with governance and addressing security weaknesses, responsible integration of artificial intelligence, and evolving threats could affect both operations and decision-making.

Despite these challenges, the report notes that Amtrak has addressed several areas to improve its operations and reduce risks. The OIG said continuing to build on this progress—while strengthening oversight, coordination, and management practices—will be essential as the company balances its core responsibility of running a safe railroad with expanding service, modernizing its infrastructure, and managing unprecedented levels of investment.

More information is available in the full report: <https://direc.to/paTa>.

Reports of fraud, waste, or abuse; criminal or unethical acts affecting Amtrak's property or operations; or mismanagement in Amtrak programs or operations can be made 24 hours a day via the Amtrak OIG Hotline at 1-800-468-5469 or online at <https://direc.to/hPAu>.

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