

GAO: Each extra border agent costs \$187,000

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It costs nearly \$200,000 to recruit, bring on and train each of the 6,000 new border patrol agents now being hired by U.S. Customs and Border Patrol. A new report said the Homeland Security Department plans to add nearly 6,000 new agents between 2006 and 2009, as many new agents as were added in the previous 10 years, according to a new Government Accountability Office report on the training program. The additional agents will cost about \$12 million to bring on and train through their first year. The added agents would make the force more than 18,000 strong. Most of the additional forces, 4,796, will be added to the southwest border, a 43 percent boost to the number of forces assigned there. Just over 1,000 will be added to the Canadian border, doubling the number of border patrol agents on the northern border. GAO determined that it costs \$187,744 for Customs and Border Patrol to recruit a new agent and get him out in the field for the first year. More than \$30,000 of that is spent just recruiting and hiring a new agent. CBP spends another \$14,700 training each agent at a border patrol academy in Artesia, NM. The new program is set up to be effective, the GAO found, but is too new to measure how well it is doing. Nearly 2,000 U.S. Army National Guard soldiers are bolstering the border patrol for the next two years, on a rotating basis, until enough new border patrol agents are trained.