



At a Glance

Catalyst for Improving the Environment

Why We Did This Review

We conducted this audit to determine whether the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has sufficient qualified contracts and grants staff to handle American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 work and non-Recovery Act work.

Background

EPA received \$7.2 billion from the Recovery Act. The Recovery Act also established the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board. Among its responsibilities, the board determines whether there are sufficient qualified contract and grant personnel overseeing funds. EPA retained \$81.5 million of Recovery Act funds for management and oversight.

For further information, contact our Office of Congressional, Public Affairs and Management at (202) 566-2391.

To view the full report, click on the following link: www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2011/20101025-11-R-0005.pdf

EPA's Contracts and Grants Workforce May Face Future Workload Issues

What We Found

EPA should ensure that it has sufficient contracts and grants staff to perform both the Recovery Act and non-Recovery Act activities. EPA emphasized Recovery Act activities, resulting in non-Recovery Act activities being delayed or not completed. The Office of Management and Budget's Recovery Act implementation guidance states that each agency is responsible for initiating risk mitigation actions, including evaluating workforce needs. The management and oversight resource allocations of the Office of Acquisition Management (OAM) and the Office of Grants and Debarment (OGD) were not always based on workforce analyses of the actual resources needed to accomplish Recovery Act activities. Factors such as the funding limitations set forth in the Recovery Act heavily influenced how Recovery Act management and oversight funds were distributed. As a result, non-Recovery Act resources were devoted to Recovery Act activities, leaving less time for staff to focus on non-Recovery Act administration, monitoring, and oversight.

Unlike OGD, OAM does not have Agency-wide performance measures, thereby making it difficult to assess the impact of the Recovery Act on its staff and workload. The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 requires the Federal Government to establish performance measures. In response to a prior Office of Inspector General audit recommendation, OAM developed performance measures for employee job standards that tied in to its strategic goals. However, it did not develop Agency-wide performance measures for contract functions. Without Agency-wide performance measures, OAM does not have valuable information it could use to effectively and efficiently manage its workforce and workload, and quickly address emerging issues such as impacts from Recovery Act work.

What We Recommend

We recommend that the Assistant Administrator for Administration and Resources Management direct OAM and OGD to review the September 30, 2010, metrics and prepare action plans for any measure that did not meet its goal in 2010. At the exit conference, EPA stated that if we allowed flexibility for the Agency to determine what delays would reveal a control weakness, it would agree with the recommendation. EPA stated that it agreed with the recommendation as it was revised in the final report. We also recommend that OAM develop and implement organization-wide performance measures to better manage its activities. OAM agreed to implement this recommendation.