



At a Glance

Why We Did This Review

The Indian Environmental General Assistance Program Act of 1992 provides the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the authority to award grants to tribal governments to build capacity to administer environmental programs. The Act authorized EPA to provide General Assistance Program (GAP) grants to federally recognized tribes and tribal consortia. We reviewed actions taken by EPA to address a 2008 report by our office on tribal capacity. The 2008 report contained three recommendations to EPA on developing a framework for achieving capacity; developing environmental plans; and revising the grant funding formula to better reflect prior progress, needs, and long-term goals.

This report addresses the following EPA Goal or Cross-Cutting Strategy:

- *Strengthening state, tribal, and international partnerships*

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

The full report is at:
www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2013/20121127-13-P-0057.pdf

Status of Corrective Actions in Response to 2008 Report, “Framework for Developing Tribal Capacity Needed in Indian General Assistance Program”

What We Found

EPA has taken a number of actions to address findings and recommendations from the Office of Inspector General’s 2008 report, including developing the GAP Online database, drafting a GAP guidebook, and revising GAP guidance. EPA is also engaging or will engage in tribal consultation for both the guidebook and guidance. EPA said it intends to finalize its revised GAP guidance, including the guidebook, by May 2013. EPA has focused on ensuring that GAP work plans include intermediate and long-term outcomes/goals. EPA said it has made an incremental shift in the way it distributes GAP funding and said it will make additional changes based on internal conversations and information in GAP Online.

Although EPA certified all actions as completed in its Management Audit Tracking System, corrective actions are still in progress and we could not test their effectiveness. EPA should have an implementation period following issuance of the final GAP guidance and guidebook before we evaluate how well tribes and EPA regions operate under the new guidance.

Recommendations and Planned Agency Corrective Actions

We recommend that the Assistant Administrator for International and Tribal Affairs complete implementation of corrective actions initiated in response to the 2008 report and denote May 2013 as the date to implement actions to address the 2008 report recommendations. The Agency accepted this recommendation and plans to complete corrective actions by May 2013.

Noteworthy Achievements

Since its launch in 2007, GAP Online has provided grantees and EPA project officers with a centralized tool for creating work plans and reporting progress. EPA also provided GAP Online training to each region.