



At a Glance

Catalyst for Improving the Environment

Why We Did This Review

In response to a congressional request, the Office of Inspector General examined the execution of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grants awarded to the National Rural Water Association (NRWA).

Background

The NRWA is a nonprofit organization that provides technical assistance, training, and legislative representation to water providers serving rural communities. NRWA is a federation consisting of 48 State associations representing 49 States. Since October 2000, NRWA has received over \$70 million from EPA to provide training and technical assistance to rural water systems.

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

To view the full report, click on the following link:
www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2006/20060912-2006-S-00005.pdf

EPA Grants to the National Rural Water Association

What We Found

Under its grants, NRWA is not required to measure the environmental outcomes of the technical assistance activities it provides. As a result, the environmental benefits could not be determined. EPA grants awarded to NRWA, after January 1, 2005, include outputs but do not link the outputs to environmental outcomes and measures.

The work plans for the various subgrants result in a “one-size-fits-all” approach where NRWA treats each State association identically, regardless of its geographic size, number of water systems, or operators. NRWA’s consideration of the needs of various State associations would allow the funds to be used more effectively.

What We Recommend

We recommend that the Assistant Administrator for Water:

1. Develop a mechanism to link future NRWA grant awards to environmental outcomes and measures.
2. Review and negotiate work plans to ensure that State needs are met and will maximize environmental results achieved with EPA grant funds.

The Agency concurred with the recommendations of our report and will undertake efforts to implement the recommendations in the fall of 2006.