



At a Glance

Catalyst for Improving the Environment

Why We Did This Review

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) sought to determine whether the competition process that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) used to award American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) grants under the National Clean Diesel Funding Assistance Program (1) promoted competition to the maximum extent possible, and (2) met ARRA goals and requirements.

Background

The President signed ARRA to create and save jobs, jump start the economy, and build the foundation for long-term growth. One of six EPA programs that ARRA funded was the Diesel Emission Reduction Act Program. That program, which received \$300 million, includes the National Clean Diesel Funding Assistance Program.

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/2010/20100323-10-R-0082.pdf

EPA Maximized Competition for Recovery Act Grants under the National Clean Diesel Funding Assistance Program

What We Found

We determined that EPA promoted competition to the maximum extent possible for the National Clean Diesel Emission Funding Assistance Program. EPA achieved three important goals in promoting competition:

- EPA's competition process was fair and impartial.
- All applicants were evaluated only on the criteria stated in the announcement.
- EPA made an effort to mitigate the risk of any applicant receiving an unfair competitive advantage.

We noted that EPA received a significant increase in the number of applicants and proposals for ARRA National Clean Diesel Funding Assistance Program grant awards over the 2008 competition.

We also determined that EPA set up a structure to meet the ARRA goals and requirements, namely the creation or retention of jobs. EPA designed the Request for Applications to make it difficult for applicants to disregard the ARRA criteria and still receive an award. EPA's evaluation forms to grade applications allotted 25 percent of the total score to ARRA-specific funding priorities.

As we conducted our work, we noted EPA activities that could be considered as best practices. EPA issued a national Request for Applications and universal guidance for reviewers and selection officials, collected questions and provided answers universally, and conducted and coordinated outreach efforts with EPA partners. The national Request for Applications and guidance helped facilitate consistency among regional grant selection processes. Once the Request for Applications was issued, EPA Headquarters collected all of the questions that potential applicants submitted and provided answers that were accessible to all potential applicants (either online or via webinars). Also, EPA conducted extensive outreach in informing potential applicants of the competition, taking advantage of existing contacts, and establishing new ones.

Because we determined that EPA is sufficiently promoting competition for ARRA grants under the National Clean Diesel Funding Assistance Program, we are closing this subject assignment upon issuing this memorandum report.