



At a Glance

Catalyst for Improving the Environment

Why We Did This Review

We conducted this audit to support the requirements of the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act of 2002 (Brownfields Act). The objective was to determine whether the Office of Brownfields Cleanup and Redevelopment (Brownfields Office) established a competition process that complied with the Brownfields Act and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) policy and guidance.

Background

There are between 450,000 and a million Brownfields sites that need to be assessed and cleaned up. The Brownfields Act authorized EPA to award grants that promote Brownfields redevelopment, based on the applications meeting 10 ranking criteria prescribed in the Act.

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/2005/20050307-2005-P-00009.pdf

Brownfields Competition Process for Awarding Grants Complied With Act

What We Found

EPA's competition process for awarding grants complied with the requirements of the Brownfields Act. EPA was required to award grants to eligible organizations that have the highest rankings under the 10 ranking criteria established in the Act, and EPA used these criteria to the extent they were applicable.

In awarding the grants, the Brownfields Office generally complied with EPA policies and procedures, with the exception of the cost review policy. EPA Grants Policy 00-5 requires EPA staff to perform a cost review for every project selected for funding, and to include documentation of the review in the grant files. However, cost reviews were documented for only 4 of 24 grants we reviewed. In many cases, project officers stated they performed cost reviews but did not document them. In those instances where no cost reviews were performed, the project officers said they thought that the grants management offices or proposal reviewers performed the cost reviews. As a result, EPA risked the possibility of reimbursing recipients for costs that were unreasonable, unallowable, or unrelated to agreed-upon activities.

What We Recommended

We recommended that the Acting Assistant Administrator for Solid Waste and Emergency Response remind project officers to document cost reviews, in accordance with EPA policy, prior to grant award. The Agency agreed with our recommendation and initiated appropriate corrective action.