



# At a Glance

## Why We Did This Review

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted this audit to determine whether EPA printing and publications operations are efficient and effective, and comply with applicable federal guidance.

Executive Order 13589 on printing encourages agencies to limit the publication and printing of hard copy documents, and presumes that information will be provided in an electronic format whenever practicable. Proper stewardship of federal resources is an essential responsibility of agency managers and staff.

**This report addresses the following EPA goal or cross-agency strategy:**

- *Embracing EPA as a high-performing organization.*

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## Positioning EPA for the Digital Age Requires New Mindsets Toward Printing

### What We Found

The EPA's main authoritative guidance for printing operations (Printing Management Manual) is over 20 years old and outdated. The Agency Printing Officer stated that the agency hopes to update its manual once federal regulations are updated. As a result, the manual currently does not provide effective guidance for accountability or oversight.

**Without efficient printing management operations, the EPA cannot attain its goal of being a high-performing organization.**

EPA's current mindset leads the agency to amass large quantities of printed material. EPA staff believe it is cheaper to print in bulk and then store the material. The potential for waste is high, as evidenced by the nearly 8 million items recycled at the National Service Center for Environmental Publications between June 2013 and March 2015.

Further, the EPA has yet to implement all corrective actions identified in response to a 2014 OIG report on strategic sourcing. The OIG recommended, and the agency agreed, to develop by December 2014 a plan of action to strategically source print management. The EPA has extended its deadlines more than once and still has not established realistic milestones to implement all corrective actions. As a result, the EPA still cannot effectively control print management functions.

### Recommendations and Planned Agency Corrective Actions

We recommend that the Assistant Administrator for Administration and Resources Management update the Printing Management Manual to include authorization for decentralized operations within the regions, and issue guidance to reiterate roles and responsibilities. In addition, we recommended that the agency establish achievable milestones to address the recommendations in our prior report. The EPA concurred with all of the recommendations, and the OIG agrees with the agency's proposed actions. When implemented, the corrective actions will meet the intent of our recommendations.

### Noteworthy Achievements

EPA headquarters' in-house printing plant is already practicing print-on-demand, so the need for storing materials is nominal. In addition, the agency renegotiated its print contract to reflect industrywide structure, and the rates are now lower than the rates offered by the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative.