

U.S. Department of Labor

Office of Inspector General—Office of Audit

**EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING
ADMINISTRATION**



COMPLAINT AGAINST SOUTHWEST TEXAS JUNIOR COLLEGE COMMUNITY-BASED JOB TRAINING GRANT WAS UNSUBSTANTIATED

**Date Issued: September 27, 2007
Report Number: 06-07-008-03-390**

BRIEFLY...

Highlights of Report Number: 06-07-008-03-390, to the Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training.

WHY READ THE REPORT

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) performed an audit resulting from a complaint against Southwest Texas Junior College (SWTJC) officials. The complaint alleged that SWTJC officials improperly used U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) funds to purchase inappropriate equipment. The complaint also alleged SWTJC officials never intended to have a Registered Nurse (RN) program, also known as Advanced Degree in Nursing (ADN) program.

WHY OIG DID THE AUDIT

The purpose of the audit was to answer the following questions:

- Was the highly computerized SimMan Patient Simulator equipment purchased for the Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) lab too sophisticated for the skill level of the students?
- Were DOL funds improperly used to purchase computer projection equipment for the ADN program?
- Has SWTJC achieved the goal of establishing the ADN program?

READ THE FULL REPORT

To view the report, including the scope and methodology, go to:

<http://www.oig.dol.gov/public/reports/oa/2007/06-07-008-03-390.pdf>

September 2007

COMPLAINT AGAINST SOUTHWEST TEXAS JUNIOR COLLEGE COMMUNITY-BASED JOB TRAINING GRANT WAS UNSUBSTANTIATED

WHAT OIG FOUND

The OIG found no evidence that the SimMan Patient Simulator equipment purchased for the LVN lab was too sophisticated for the LVN students' skill level. In addition, we found no evidence that DOL funds were improperly used to purchase computer projection equipment for the ADN program.

We determined that, while SWTJC has not achieved its goal of establishing the ADN program, the grant is ongoing through October 2008, and SWTJC was making progress in the program's development and implementation.

WHAT OIG RECOMMENDED

We have no recommendations as a result of this audit.

SWTJC concurred with our findings and did not provide comments.

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Executive Summary

We conducted a limited scope performance audit of the Southwest Texas Junior College (SWTJC) as a result of a complaint received by the Office of Inspector General (OIG). SWTJC, located in Uvalde, Texas, currently has a \$1.9 million Department of Labor (DOL) Community-Based Job Training grant, which is a rural healthcare initiative, for the period of November 1, 2005, through October 31, 2008. .

Our audit objective was to determine if the specific allegations contained in the complaint with respect to SWTJC officials' improper use of DOL funds to purchase inappropriate equipment, and their intention to not have a Registered Nurse (RN) program¹ could be substantiated. From our review of the complaint, we developed the following three subobjectives:

1. Was the highly computerized SimMan Patient Simulator equipment purchased for the Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) lab too sophisticated for the skill level of the students?
2. Were DOL funds improperly used to purchase computer projection equipment for the Advanced Degree in Nursing (ADN) program?
3. Has SWTJC achieved the goal of establishing the ADN program?

Results

The OIG determined the allegations against SWTJC were unfounded. Specifically:

We found no evidence to substantiate that the SimMan Patient Simulator equipment purchased was too sophisticated for the LVN students' skill level. The grant allowed the purchase of the SimMan Patient Simulators and computer projection equipment. SWTJC purchased three SimMan Patient Simulators for the purpose of being used as a training aid in lieu of live patients. This computerized equipment can be adjusted to the skill level—LVN or RN—related to the class being taught. The computer projection equipment is being used for distance training for the allied health programs. The ADN program will be part of the allied health programs, and therefore, computer projection equipment purchased for it is appropriate. The grant is ongoing through October 2008, and SWTJC was making progress in the development and implementation of the ADN program.

¹ The grant refers to development of an ADN program. The allegation refers to the RN program. According to the grant, the ADN program will provide a skilled RN workforce. Therefore, the RN program is the same as the ADN program. In this report the training program is referred to as ADN program.

***Complaint Against Southwest Texas Junior College
Community-Based Job Training Grant was Unsubstantiated***

Grantee Response

The grantee concurred with our findings and did not provide comments.

OIG Conclusion

The OIG concludes the allegations were not substantiated. Further, because there are no recommendations made, the audit is closed.

Recommendations

OIG found the allegations were not substantiated; therefore, we have no recommendations.

U.S. Department of Labor

Office of Inspector General
Washington, DC 20210



Assistant Inspector General's Report

Ms Emily Stover DeRocco
Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20210

We conducted an audit of SWTJC's Community-Based Job Training grant as a result of a complaint received by the OIG. Our audit objective was to determine if the specific allegations contained in the complaint with respect to SWTJC officials' improper use of DOL funds to purchase inappropriate equipment and their intention to not have an ADN program could be substantiated. Specifically, we determined:

1. Was the highly computerized SimMan Patient Simulator equipment purchased for the LVN lab too sophisticated for the skill level of LVN students?
2. Were DOL funds improperly used to purchase computer projection equipment for the ADN program?
3. Has SWTJC achieved the goal of establishing the ADN program?

We conducted the audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards for performance audits. Our objectives, scope, methodology, and criteria are detailed in Appendix B.

Results

Objective 1: Was the highly computerized SimMan Patient Simulator equipment purchased for the LVN lab too sophisticated for the skill level of LVN students?

We found no evidence to substantiate that the SimMan Patient Simulator equipment purchased was too sophisticated for the LVN students' skill level. The SimMan Patient Simulator is a computerized mannequin that is used as a training aid in lieu of live patients. It can be programmed to simulate many patient symptoms and medical conditions and can be adjusted to the skill level of the student, whether in the LVN or ADN program. Further, SWTJC's purchase of the equipment was part of the grant statement of work and the proposed budget. Because the cost of the three SimMan Patient Simulators purchased totaled over \$5,000, SWTJC requested prior approval from the Employment and Training Administration (ETA), which was approved through a grant modification.

Objective 2: Were DOL funds improperly used to purchase computer projection equipment for the ADN program?

The allegation correctly stated that DOL funds were used to purchase computer projection equipment for the ADN program. However, OIG determined the purchase, which is video conferencing equipment, to be appropriate and, therefore, the allegation unfounded.

The ADN program will be part of SWTJC's allied health programs. SWTJC uses the video conferencing equipment it purchased, for distance training for the allied health programs. The grant's statement of work explained the need for the video conferencing equipment and the grant's budget included the cost of its purchase. Because the cost of the equipment purchased totaled over \$5,000, SWTJC requested prior approval from ETA, which was approved through a grant modification.

We identified all equipment purchases from the grant's financial records and visited all training sites to account for the equipment. Additionally, we interviewed 10 LVN graduates who confirmed the use of the video conferencing equipment for distance learning.

Objective 3: Has SWTJC achieved the goal of establishing the ADN program?

We determined that, while SWTJC had not achieved its goal of establishing the ADN program, evidence shows that SWTJC was making progress in the program's development and implementation. Therefore, the allegation is unfounded.

In interviews with SWTJC officials, we received assurances of their intent to develop and implement the ADN program. In addition, we noted documentation that supports SWTJC's progress in development of the ADN program. At a May 17, 2007 meeting of the SWTJC Board of Trustees (Board), the ADN director and the Technical Programs director presented a formal application plan for the ADN program (titled the Associate of Applied Science in Nursing Degree.) The Board approved the application for submission to the next level in the approval process, which is the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. SWTJC's web site lists the ADN program, pending state approval, starting in the 2008 spring semester. In addition, ETA has conducted a site visit on this grant, and is monitoring the progress of the program's development.

Grantee Response

The grantee concurred with our findings and provided no comments.

OIG Conclusion

The OIG concludes the allegations were not substantiated. Further, because there are no recommendations made the audit is closed.

Recommendations

OIG found the allegations were not substantiated. Therefore, we have no recommendations.



Elliot P. Lewis
May 18, 2007

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Appendices

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APPENDIX A

BACKGROUND

ETA awarded a Community-Based Job Training Grant to SWTJC in the amount of \$1,929,645 for the period of November 1, 2005, through October 31, 2008. The proposal for the project, incorporated in the grant as the statement of work, was a rural healthcare initiative. Among the goals of the grant is the expansion of LVN training slots by eight positions and the development and implementation of an ADN program.

Included in the grant was the proposed purchase of SimMan Patient Simulators and distance learning equipment. The SimMan Patient Simulator is a computerized mannequin that is used as a training aid in lieu of live patients. The SimMan can be programmed to simulate many patient symptoms and medical conditions and can be adjusted to the skill level of the student, whether in the LVN or ADN program. The SWTJC area covers 11 rural counties and there are a limited number of healthcare facilities for the students to obtain practical clinical experience with live patients. Further, many of the more seriously ill patients are transported to urban hospitals, such as in San Antonio, so the students will not have contact with the more complex patient illnesses and medical conditions. The SimMan can be programmed so the patients can encounter the more complex conditions to gain experience that would not normally be available to them. SWTJC offers classroom instruction at the main campus in Uvalde and four other rural sites. The use of distance learning equipment alleviates SWTJC the cost of hiring instructors each site.

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OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, METHODOLOGY, AND CRITERIA

Objectives

Our audit objective was to determine if the specific allegations contained in the complaint with respect to SWTJC officials' improper use of DOL funds to purchase inappropriate equipment, and their intention to not have a RN program² could be substantiated. Specifically, we determined:

1. Was the highly computerized SimMan Patient Simulator equipment purchased for the LVN lab too sophisticated for the skill level of the students?
2. Were DOL funds improperly used to purchase computer projection equipment for the ADN program?
3. Has SWTJC achieved the goal of establishing the ADN program?

Scope

Our audit was limited to reviewing and obtaining sufficient evidence necessary to address the allegations. Specifically, we audited purchases related to the SimMan Patient Simulator and computer projection equipment, as well as their intended purposes. Regarding the grant's program goals, we audited SWTJC's documented efforts made toward establishing an ADN program. We conducted the audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards for performance audits.

We performed our fieldwork at SWTJC in Uvalde, Texas and its surrounding training sites from May 14, 2007, through May 18, 2007.

Methodology

As part of the review, we:

- Interviewed cognizant SWTJC officials, including the ADN and LVN directors;
- Reviewed grant award and related documents

² The grant refers to development of an ADN program. The allegation refers to the RN program. According to the grant, the ADN program will provide a skilled RN workforce. Therefore, the RN program is the same as the ADN program. In this report the training program is referred to as the ADN program.

***Complaint Against Southwest Texas Junior College
Community-Based Job Training Grant was Unsubstantiated***

- Identified SimMan Patient Simulator and computer projection equipment purchased with grant funds, reviewed supporting procurement-related documentation, and traced equipment to its physical location;
- Interviewed former LVN students about the use and benefit of the SimMan Patient Simulator and computer projection equipment; and
- Obtained documentation, such as SWTJC's Board of Trustees approval of the ADN program application for submission to the Texas Higher Education Board, which supports the progress of SWTJC's development and implementation of the ADN program.

Criteria

DOL Community-Based Job Training Grant Number CB-15221-06-60.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADN	Associate Degree in Nursing
Board	SWTJC Board of Trustees
DOL	Department of Labor
ETA	Employment and Training Administration
LVN	Licensed Vocational Nurse
RN	Registered Nurse
OIG	Office of Inspector General
SWTJC	Southwest Texas Junior College

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APPENDIX D

AUDITEE RESPONSE TO DRAFT REPORT

The grantee concurred with our findings and provided no comments.