



At a Glance

Catalyst for Improving the Environment

Why We Did This Review

We conducted this review in response to a congressional request to evaluate the administrative and program costs being used to carry out the Brownfields program and identify options to reduce administrative costs. This report includes answers to five specific questions.

Background

In January of 2002, the President signed the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act. This Act created a new Brownfields program fostering Brownfields redevelopment, and authorized up to \$250 million per year through Fiscal Year 2006 to implement the new program. Estimates indicate there are between 450,000 and a million Brownfields sites that need to be assessed and cleaned up.

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/2005/20050607-2005-P-00017.pdf

EPA Can Better Manage Brownfields Administrative Resources

What We Found

We provide answers to congressional questions about EPA's Brownfields program: the distribution and type of staff; budget for Fiscal Year 2003 and 2004; grant and contract management responsibilities and workload; the number and type of Brownfields conferences; and the workload model used to staff the program.

In evaluating this data, we determined that EPA's ability to effectively manage Brownfields resources is challenged by policy and organizational impediments. Because the authority for Brownfields resources is dispersed, offices with responsibility for program resources are not in alignment in their efforts to define and track Brownfields costs, and staff resources cannot be accounted for and efficiently utilized. Close alignment of offices that support the Brownfields program is needed to effectively and efficiently manage program resources.

We also found that EPA expends significant financial and personnel resources on Brownfields outreach at conferences and meetings, without evaluating or prioritizing these efforts. An analysis of these efforts offers the potential to identify savings.

What We Recommend

We recommend the Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response, with assistance from other accountable Assistant Administrators, as appropriate: (1) more closely align themselves in support of an accountable entity effectively to distribute, manage, account for, and optimize Brownfields resources, consistent with program needs and goals; (2) define Brownfields administrative and programmatic payroll costs and establish a system to identify and track them; (3) provide documentation to account for all Fiscal Year 2003 administrative resources; (4) revise the regional staffing model to support current workload, develop a workload model for allocation of Brownfields headquarters staff, and develop a schedule for regularly updating the workload model; (5) evaluate Brownfields staff that are not certified Project Officers to determine how many should become certified, and take necessary steps to complete their certification; (6) hold the EPA-sponsored Brownfields conference once every two years rather than annually; and (7) develop a process to evaluate conferences and meetings to determine which conferences or meetings Brownfields staff need to attend. The Agency did not agree or disagree with our recommendations, and in several cases, disagreed with our analysis.