



At a Glance

Catalyst for Improving the Environment

Why We Did This Review

We performed this review in response to a congressional request to evaluate Superfund expenditures at headquarters and the regions.

Background

The Superfund program was created in 1980, and since that time and through FY 2003, over 1,500 of the Nation's highest priority hazardous waste sites have been cleaned up or are undergoing cleanup. However, the Superfund Trust Fund has decreased over the years, and in FY 2004 and FY 2005, all Superfund appropriations came from general tax revenue rather than the Trust Fund. Recent studies have reported shortages in funding needs for Superfund, and have identified needed improvements in how the program is managed.

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/2006/20060228-2006-P-00013.pdf

EPA Can Better Manage Superfund Resources

What We Found

We provide answers to congressional questions about EPA's Superfund program expenditures. We also identify numerous opportunities for EPA to more effectively manage its existing Superfund resources, its program, and direct more resources to cleanup. EPA needs to overcome challenges in accounting for Superfund resources, understanding the program's resource needs, and decentralized management of the Superfund program.

Several obstacles have prevented EPA from efficiently and effectively managing the Superfund program for performance and adequately accounting for Superfund resources. EPA has been unable to allocate and manage Superfund resources for cleanup as efficiently and effectively as possible because of the way the Agency accounts for program resources, manages by functions, supplements the program with other funds, relies on an outdated workload model, and maintains unliquidated Superfund obligations and funds in special accounts. Closely aligning offices that support the Superfund program, and producing program performance and cost data, have been limited because EPA disperses the responsibility for allocating and managing program resources.

What We Recommend

We recommend changes that will help EPA overcome these obstacles and better manage its Superfund resources. We recommend actions that enable the Agency to direct additional funds to Superfund cleanup. We recommend a specific action Congress could take to help improve the Superfund program. The Agency is developing a plan to implement our recommendations.