



At a Glance

Catalyst for Improving the Environment

Why We Did This Review

The Chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure asked us to evaluate whether the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) held supervisors and their project officers accountable for grants management responsibilities.

Background

In July 2004, EPA's Acting Assistant Administrator for Administration and Resources Management testified before Congress regarding EPA's actions to address grants management weaknesses. One of EPA's goals was to increase accountability among grants management staff.

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/2005/20050927-2005-P-00027.pdf

EPA Managers Did Not Hold Supervisors and Project Officers Accountable for Grants Management

What We Found

Although the Agency has made some progress to establish accountability, managers did not sufficiently hold supervisors and project officers accountable for grants management because there is no process to measure most grants management activity. Managers and supervisors generally did not discuss grants management responsibilities during year-end evaluations. In the limited cases where grants management weaknesses were identified, managers did not effectively communicate these weaknesses to staff.

As a result, systemic grants management weaknesses that the Office of Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office have reported on for the past several years continue to exist.

What We Recommend

We recommend that the Assistant Administrator for Administration and Resources Management work with Assistant Administrators and Regional Administrators to: (1) establish a process to measure project officer, supervisor, and manager performance against grant management requirements to form the basis for performance ratings and discussions; (2) ensure managers and supervisors review and discuss grants management during performance evaluations as appropriate; and (3) ensure that the weaknesses identified in a management review or self-assessment are communicated to the appropriate project officer and supervisor.

EPA agreed with the recommendations and provided an outline of its action plan in its response. EPA needs to provide more detail on specific actions it plans to take to implement the recommendations and the milestone dates for completing those actions.