

Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board
1717 Pennsylvania Ave, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20006

Minutes

A meeting of the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board was held in Washington, D.C, on Friday, September 11, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. and continued until 3:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Board Members:

Earl E. Devaney, Chairman, Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board
Phyllis Fong, Inspector General U.S. Department of Agriculture
Calvin L. Scovel, II, Inspector General U.S. Department of Transportation
Daniel Levinson, Inspector General, US. Department of Health and Human Services
Todd J. Zinser, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Commerce
Mary Mitchelson, Acting Inspector General, U.S. Department of Education
J. Russell George, Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration
Richard Skinner, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Glenn A. Fine, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Justice
Gregory H. Friedman, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Energy
Mary Kendall, Inspector General, U.S. Department of the Interior
Gordon S. Heddell, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Defense

Board Staff:

Glen Walker, Executive Director
Eric M. Lippold, Secretary
Jennifer Dure, General Counsel
Ed Pound, Director, Communications
Michael Wood, Director, Recovery.gov

Proxy Attendee (Non-voting):

Dennis S. Schindel, U.S. Department of the Treasury

Presenters:

Joseph Vengin, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Robert Young, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Mr. Devaney called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

By unanimous vote of the members present, the Board approved the consent agenda consisting of the following:

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Mr. Scovel led a discussion on the Working Group's data quality initiative. Mr. Scovel discussed OMB requirements that require Federal agencies to develop internal policies and procedures for reviewing reported Recovery Act data, and discussed the Working Group's proposal to review agencies' plans for ensuring data quality. Mr. Vengrin and Mr. Young briefed members on the Working Group's efforts to coordinate a review approach, and presented members with the Working Group's Data Quality Review Guide. Mr. Scovel then informed members that the Recovery Funds Working Group Committee approved the data quality initiative and

had distributed the review guide to the Inspector General community. Mr. Scovel informed Board members that the Committee had decided to proceed in light of the approaching October 10 deadline for Recovery Act recipient reporting and the postponement of the Board meeting until September 11. Mr. Friedman expressed his concern with the project, and Mr. Zinser expressed concern that the effort may conflict with efforts already begun by some IGs.

Members then discussed the roles and responsibilities of the Board, the Inspectors General and the Office of Management and Budget in respect to data quality. Mr. Devaney stated that a distinction needed to be made between data quality and data integrity. Mr. Devaney explained that the Board and Inspectors General (IGs) could play a role in data quality by reviewing agencies' processes for ensuring quality of the data, however the Board's main goal would be one of data integrity. That is, the Board would strive to ensure that the data on Recovery.gov is a true reflection of what recipients report, including any subsequent modifications made to that data. Mr. Devaney then explained that the responsibility for data quality, however, rested with the recipients of the funds and the agencies distributing the funds, since they would be in the best position to know the details associated with the funds.

Members agreed on the need to review Federal Agency processes for monitoring recipient reporting of recovery funds, and by a majority vote of the members present approved of the Data Quality Review Guide stipulating that the use of the guide was voluntary.

Mr. George, Recovery.gov Committee Chair, provided members with an overview of progress made with www.federalreporting.gov (inbound reporting) and www.recovery.gov (outbound reporting). Mr. Wood explained that the data elements for the inbound reporting solution were now finalized, functionality tests were completed, and recipient registration on www.federalreporting.gov began successfully on August 17, 2009. Mr. Wood informed members that the help desk began operating on August 17, and FAQs would be prepared in collaboration with OMB. Mr. Wood stated that the reporting modules would be available on October 1, 2009, and focus groups were conducted on the enhanced www.recovery.gov from August 29 through September 4 in the following locations:

- Richmond, Virginia
- Boston, Massachusetts
- Dayton, Ohio
- Dallas, Texas
- Sacramento, California

Mr. Skinner, Accountability Committee Chair, briefed members on the August 31, 2009 Accountability Committee meeting. He provided members with an update on the status of the Recovery Operations Center and the voice hotline solution.

Mr. Devaney then led a discussion on transparency and his concern that displaying large amounts of incorrect data on www.recovery.gov could actually harm transparency rather than enhance it. Members agreed to the following schedule and process for displaying recipient data on www.recovery.gov:

- All reported data associated with Recovery contracts awarded directly by federal agencies will be displayed by Oct. 15
- All reported data associated with Recovery grants, loans and other forms of assistance will be displayed on Oct. 30
- All data changes made by recipients between Oct. 11 and Oct. 29 will be carefully tracked, chronicled and made available on Recovery.gov shortly after Nov. 1.

Eric M. Lippold
Secretary