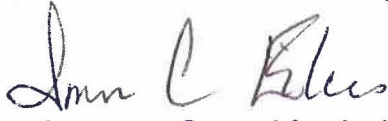




UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Office of Inspector General
Washington, D.C. 20230

March 28, 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR: Scott B. Quehl
Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration

FROM: Ann C. Eilers 
Principal Assistant Inspector General for Audit and Evaluation

SUBJECT: Lessons Learned Review for the American Recovery
and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act)

The Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General will be participating in the joint Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board/Offices of Inspector General initiative to document the lessons learned from the implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act; see attached letter).

The objective of the Lessons Learned Review is to identify which actions, processes, and mechanisms have been either beneficial or posed challenges to agencies, departments, and their respective Offices of Inspectors General in meeting requirements of the Recovery Act. Central to the review will be cross-cutting issues that have surfaced in the following areas: pre-award processes associated with Recovery Act funds; outreach, education, and technical assistance provided to Recovery Act recipients; performance measures; and oversight.

As part of the review, we intend to provide a questionnaire to the staff responsible for Recovery Act activities in the Office of Acquisition and Management. Additionally, we will submit the questionnaire to contracts and grants staff responsible for Recovery Act funding and implementation at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), Economic Development Administration (EDA), and Census Bureau. Follow-up interviews with these operating units may be scheduled as deemed necessary.

To initiate this review, we will contact the agencies' audit liaisons to schedule an entrance conference. In the meantime, if you have any questions regarding this review, please feel free to contact me at (202) 482-4382 or Rebecca Leng at (202) 482-8294.

Attachment

cc: Ellen Herbst, Senior Advisor Deputy Secretary
Barry E. Berkowitz, Senior Procurement Executive and Director of Acquisition
Management
Virna Winters, Acting Deputy for Procurement & Administration
Mona-Lisa Dunn, Director, Commerce Acquisition Solutions
Lisa Casias, Director for Financial Management
Peter Petrianni, Audit Liaison, OS
Sandi Walters, Chief Financial Officer/Chief Administrative Officer, EDA
Deborah Neff, Audit Liaison, EDA
Joanne Buenzli Crane, Audit Liaison, Economics and Statistics Administration
Michael Palensky, Chief, Acquisition Division, Census Bureau
Adam Miller, Audit Liaison, Census Bureau
Cecelia Royster, Chief, Acquisition Management Division, NIST
Usha Ganti, Division Chief, Grants and Agreements Management Division, NIST
Rachel Kinney, Audit Liaison, NIST
Chad Wagner, Branch Chief Oversight and Compliance, NOAA
Mitchell Ross, Director, Acquisition and Grants Office, NOAA
Mack Cato, Director, Office of Audit and Information Management, NOAA
Aimee Meacham, Compliance Specialist, NTIA
Milton Brown, Audit Liaison, NTIA



Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board
1717 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 700
Washington DC 20006-4614

March 23, 2012

The Honorable John E. Bryson
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
Washington, DC 20230

Re: Lessons Learned Review

Dear Mr. Secretary:

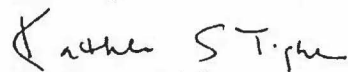
I am pleased to announce a joint Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board/ Inspector General initiative currently underway to document the lessons learned from the implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act).

The objective of the Lessons Learned Review is to identify which actions, processes, and mechanisms have been either beneficial or posed challenges to agencies, departments, and their respective Offices of Inspectors General (OIGs) in meeting the requirements of the Recovery Act. Central to the review will be cross-cutting issues that have surfaced in the following areas: pre-award processes associated with Recovery Act funds; outreach, education, and technical assistance provided to Recovery Act recipients; performance measures; and oversight.

Sixteen OIGs are currently participating in the review, and field work is set to begin this month. A complete list of participating OIGs is enclosed. Each OIG will review and assess agency/departmental implementation efforts as well as the OIG's own oversight efforts. Supplemental interviews with program officials will capture perceptions of the work performed to comply with Recovery Act requirements. All interviews will be structured similarly to ensure that data collected are comparable.

The Board is grateful for your continued contributions to the implementation of the Recovery Act. Your support of the Lessons Learned Review will help provide an accurate portrayal of any best practices and opportunities for improving government-wide efforts for transparency and accountability of federal funds, both now and in the future.

Sincerely,


Kathleen S. Tighe
Chair

Enclosure

cc: Todd J. Zinser, Inspector General
Ellen Herbst, Recovery Act Official

OIG ARRA Lessons Learned Review

Participating Members

Office of Inspector General from the:

Department of Agriculture

Department of Commerce

Department of Defense

Department of Education

Department of Health and Human Services

Department of Housing and Urban Development

Department of Justice

Department of Labor

Department of the Interior

Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service

Department of Transportation

Department of Veterans Affairs

Environmental Protection Agency

General Services Administration

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

National Science Foundation