



At a Glance

Why We Did This Review

Within the past 3 years, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Inspector General issued three audit reports containing recommendations designed to improve the agency's workforce and workload management. We conducted this audit to determine whether the EPA effectively implemented corrective actions for issues identified in OIG reports relating to the agency's workforce and workload.

Deficiencies in workforce and workload management have been a longstanding issue at the EPA. Recent budget cuts due to sequestration have highlighted the need to improve workforce and workload management.

This report addresses the following EPA Goal or Cross-Cutting Strategy:

- *Strengthening EPA's workforce and capabilities.*

For further information, contact our Office of Congressional and Public Affairs at (202) 566-2391.

The full report is at:
www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2013/20130830-13-P-0366.pdf

The EPA Needs to Improve Timeliness and Documentation of Workforce and Workload Management Corrective Actions

What We Found

The EPA did not complete the majority of the corrective actions relating to workload and workforce management within planned timeframes. Further, some corrective actions were delayed by more than 6 months and the EPA did not notify the OIG of those delays, as required by EPA Manual 2750. The Office of Management and Budget Circular A-50 requires agencies to establish systems to assure the timely implementation of corrective actions. Complex corrective action plans and implementing new workload and workforce management initiatives contributed to delays in completing the corrective actions. Program staff and managers from the Office of Administration and Resources Management and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer informed us they were not aware of the Manual 2750 requirement to notify the OIG if actions are delayed 6 months or more. Delaying corrective actions relating to workforce and workload management resulted in unfinished improvements to the EPA's management of its limited resources.

We also found that the EPA did not update the status for several of the corrective actions we reviewed. EPA Manual 2750 requires audit follow-up coordinators to manage audit data in the agency's Management Audit Tracking System. This includes entering and updating corrective actions and their associated due dates for each corrective action. However, the AFCs and other program staff did not believe it was necessary to update the status for completed actions since the completion date had been added in a separate field. There were some instances where the AFC could not update the status field because program staff had not provided certification that it was complete or had not provided a new planned date. If the EPA does not update MATS with current information, the OIG and other stakeholders do not have accurate information available regarding the status of corrective actions.

Recommendations and Planned Corrective Actions

We recommend that the chief financial officer: (1) send notifications to all the EPA's action officials informing them that when corrective action dates will be extended by more than 6 months they must provide the OIG with written notification that includes the new milestone dates, and (2) ensure that training provided to staff on EPA Manual 2750 emphasizes that AFCs should update all fields in MATS and that program staff should provide timely information to AFCs. EPA agreed with both recommendations and proposed corrective actions that we believe will address our findings.