



At a Glance

Catalyst for Improving the Environment

Why We Did This Review

We reviewed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) appointment process managed by its Office of Administration and Resources Management (OARM) to determine how the new process for filling vacancies can be more efficient and effective.

Background

OARM revised EPA hiring procedures in June 2008 when it consolidated the processing of personnel actions from 15 locations across the country to 3 OARM service centers. These procedures must comply with pertinent requirements, including those imposed by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

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

To view the full report, click on the following link:
www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2010/20100809-10-P-0177.pdf

EPA's Revised Hiring Process Needs Additional Improvements

What We Found

EPA had not implemented critical technology upgrades or obtained other resources necessary for the service center concept to succeed. EPA produced three reports, including its 2007 Business Case, which identified key factors for a successful transition to the service center concept. However, EPA management implemented the transition without obtaining some of these key capabilities, including electronic infrastructure. Proceeding without ensuring that key requirements were satisfied is a significant weakness in management control. As a result, the new process to fill vacant positions falls significantly short of OPM timeliness goals and does not consistently provide program managers with the best candidates.

Service centers did not consistently provide program managers with the best candidates, and data quality and recruitment action processes need improvement. We also noted a lack of management attention to policies and inconsistencies in service center operations. As a result, the appointment process is not providing program offices with the right people, in the right place, at the right time, thus impacting EPA's ability to effectively perform its mission.

What We Recommend

We recommend that EPA officials determine the scope of services to be obtained from a line-of-business provider, select the provider, and develop and implement a plan to migrate to the provider. In addition, we recommend that the appropriate EPA official help program offices standardize position descriptions and review EZ-Hire questions; increase subject matter expert involvement in evaluating applications; improve the reorganization policy and procedures; obtain feedback on inquiries about personnel actions being processed; and address various staffing, policy, and procedural issues.

In response to Agency comments on the draft report, we changed the action official for five recommendations and slightly modified the wording for two. Agency officials agreed with most of our recommendations but disagreed with recommendation 2-3 and part of recommendation 3-4; these recommendations are undecided pending the Agency's 90-day response.