



At a Glance

Catalyst for Improving the Environment

Why We Did This Review

We sought to determine whether the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has collected and used workload data to determine its workforce size, and whether there are workload models that EPA could use or benefit from when trying to determine workforce size.

Background

During the 1980s, EPA conducted comprehensive workload analyses to determine appropriate workforce levels. Around the early 1990s, EPA discontinued these analyses and, since then, it has adjusted the size of its workforce via incremental shifts. The U.S. Government Accountability Office and the EPA Office of Inspector General have reported on the importance of basing workforce levels on workload.

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

The full report is at:
www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2011/20110914-11-P-0630.pdf

EPA Needs Workload Data to Better Justify Future Workforce Levels

What We Found

EPA has not collected comprehensive workload data or conducted workload analysis in about 20 years. EPA does not require program offices to collect and maintain workload data, and the programs do not have databases or cost accounting systems in place to collect data on time spent on specific mission-related outputs. Federal guidance and standards emphasize the importance of planning work to determine staffing needs. Office of Management and Budget guidance states that agencies should identify their workloads to help determine the proper workforce size, and federal accounting standards require that agencies establish cost accounting systems to allow them to determine resources consumed for work performed. Without sufficient workload data, program offices are limited in their ability to analyze their workloads and justify resource needs, and EPA's Office of Budget must base budget decisions primarily on subjective justifications at a time when budgets continue to tighten and data-driven decisions are needed.

Organizations of varying sizes and missions have used workload models for years to justify resource needs. During our audit, we identified some basic concepts of workload modeling from which EPA could benefit. EPA would need to tailor such concepts to its own mission, structure, and culture.

What We Recommend

We recommend that the Chief Financial Officer conduct a pilot project requiring EPA offices to collect and analyze workload data on key project activities. The Chief Financial Officer should use information from the pilot project, along with data from an ongoing contractor study, to issue guidance to EPA program offices on how to collect and analyze workload data, the benefits of workload analysis, and how the information should be used to prepare budget requests. EPA partially concurred with our recommendations in its response to our draft report. EPA stated that it needs time to collect more data and develop a final corrective action plan with milestones for completion. Therefore, our report recommendations will remain unresolved with resolution efforts in progress.