



At a Glance

Why We Did This Review

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Office of Inspector General (OIG), performed this audit to determine whether EPA oversight and use of audio conference line services are an efficient and economical way to use taxpayer funds.

The EPA provides multiple audio conference services. Reservationless Plus is the agency's primary audio conference service. In fiscal years 2015 and 2016, EPA offices and regions spent over \$8 million using Reservationless Plus.

The EPA's Office of Environmental Information (OEI) is the administrator of the agency's audio conference line services.

This report addresses the following:

- *Operating efficiently and effectively.*

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EPA Needs to Improve Oversight of Its Audio Conference Services

What We Found

The EPA's internal controls and oversight of its audio conference services need improvement. Our review found the following:

- The EPA did not establish official policies and procedures for the efficient use of audio conference services.
- The EPA did not effectively monitor service costs and usage, and did not have documentation readily available to determine whether service cost estimates were reasonable and accurate.
- Two EPA regions and an EPA program office spent over \$260,000 to contract for services already provided by the agency.

The EPA is unable to substantiate whether its audio conference service usage totaling \$8.4 million was cost-effective.

This occurred because the EPA was not fully aware of the required controls needed to mitigate risks, including management roles and responsibilities for such control activities. In fiscal year 2016, the EPA spent about \$1.2 million for audio conference calls with one to six participants. These costs could have been avoided by using other less costly conference call services.

Recommendations and Planned Corrective Actions

We recommend that OEI's Assistant Administrator and Chief Information Officer establish internal controls that include (a) completing an assessment, (b) implementing policies and procedures that define customer roles and responsibilities, and (c) providing training on the use of audio conference services and avenues for potential cost savings. We also recommend that OEI design and implement internal controls that allow EPA program offices and regions to monitor audio conference activities. In addition, we recommend that OEI maintain documentation to support Reservationless Plus usage rate formulation, approvals and calculations.

We recommend that the EPA's Chief Financial Officer increase customer awareness about the agency's Working Capital Fund Policy Standard requirements for mandatory services, and establish controls that require EPA program offices and regions to comply with the mandatory services requirements.

The agency concurred with all recommendations, but OEI's planned corrective actions do not meet the intent of Recommendations 1, 2 and 4. These recommendations are unresolved, and we will work with the agency for resolution. We consider the planned corrective actions for Recommendation 3 to be acceptable. Recommendation 3 is resolved with corrective actions pending.