



# At a Glance

## Why We Did This Project

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Inspector General conducted this audit to determine whether:

1. The EPA's use of assignments under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act is in accordance with federal requirements and Agency policy and procedures.
2. The IPA assignments achieved their purpose.

The IPA allows for the temporary assignment of personnel between the federal government and eligible nonfederal organizations, such as state and local governments, colleges and universities, and Indian tribal governments. Our audit focused on EPA employees on IPA assignment to external organizations from June 1, 2016, through May 31, 2019.

### This report addresses the following:

- *Operating efficiently and effectively.*
- *Compliance with the law.*

### This project addresses a top EPA [management challenge](#):

- *Complying with internal control (policies and procedures).*

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## ***EPA Needs to Strengthen Controls Over Required Documentation and Tracking of Intergovernmental Personnel Act Assignments***

### What We Found

The EPA's use of assignments under the IPA complied with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements and with IPA guidance issued by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. However, the Agency did not always comply with documentation requirements contained in its *Intergovernmental Personnel Act Policy and Procedures Manual (IPA)*. The Agency also did not enforce the Manual's requirement that assignments be terminated if annual progress reports are not submitted.

**The Agency lacks controls to verify that documents are submitted and maintained as required, as well as a reliable system to track employees on IPA assignment.**

Our analysis of 18 IPA assignment files found that many required documents were missing. This lack of documentation occurred because the Agency does not have adequate controls to verify that documents required by the Manual are submitted and maintained. In addition, the Manual has not been updated for over 20 years. Without an updated Manual, staff may not fully understand the Agency's IPA process and requirements. And without the required documentation, management cannot effectively determine whether the IPA assignments are progressing as planned or have achieved their purpose. For example, although we found that nine of the 12 completed IPA assignments met their overall purpose, we were unable to make a determination on the remaining three completed assignments due to missing documentation.

Furthermore, the Agency lacks a reliable process to track EPA employees on IPA assignment. As a result, it cannot accurately determine the number of employees on IPA assignment at any given time, nor can it accurately and reliably report on IPA assignments.

### Recommendations and Planned Agency Corrective Actions

We recommend that the assistant administrator for Mission Support update the Agency's *Intergovernmental Personnel Act Policy and Procedures Manual (IPA)* to reflect relevant and appropriate requirements, strengthen controls over IPA assignment documentation and tracking, and enforce requirements for noncompliance with IPA requirements. The Agency agreed with the recommendations and provided acceptable planned corrective actions and estimated completion dates. We consider the recommendations resolved with corrective actions pending.