

BRIEFLY...

Highlights of Report Number: 18-11-010-03-001, issued to the Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training.

WHY READ THE REPORT

Congress enacted the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) to promote economic recovery and increase employment and training opportunities. The Recovery Act did not specifically require coordination of activities related to infrastructure investment funded by the Act. However, ETA issued TEGL 14-08 to states and local workforce areas which provided guidance on implementation of WIA funding in the Recovery Act and encouraged collaboration between the public workforce investment system and other agencies that received Recovery Act funds. ETA also undertook several planning initiatives to coordinate workforce development activities with federal infrastructure investments.

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) audited the coordination activities that were planned and conducted at the federal, state, and local levels between workforce investment activities and federal infrastructure investments funded by the Recovery Act.

WHY OIG CONDUCTED THE AUDIT

Our audit objectives were to answer the following questions:

1. What planning efforts have the Department of Labor, states, and local workforce investment agencies performed to coordinate workforce development activities with federal infrastructure investments elsewhere in the Recovery Act?
2. What projects and other cross-collaboration activities have the states, and local workforce agencies undertaken in terms of spending Department of Labor Recovery Act funding for workforce development activities that support federal infrastructure investments elsewhere in the Recovery Act?
3. What has been the impact of these coordination efforts in terms of employing or re-employing workers through these projects?

READ THE FULL REPORT

To view the report, including the scope, methodology, and full agency response, go to:

<http://www.oig.dol.gov/public/reports/oa/2011/18-11-010-03-001.pdf>

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RECOVERY ACT: PLANNING AND COORDINATION OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES WITH FEDERAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS NEEDED IMPROVEMENT

WHAT OIG FOUND

We found that even though there was no specific requirement to coordinate the workforce system with federal infrastructure investments, several planning initiatives were undertaken at the federal, state, and local levels to encourage cross-collaboration. However, we found the implementation of these planning efforts was generally informal and not well-coordinated.

ETA issued guidance to the workforce system recommending strategies and encouragement to link to other federal infrastructure investments. The Secretary of Labor issued a letter directly to each Governor requesting new jobs generated by the Recovery Act be listed on the state jobs banks, and two agreements were signed between DOL and other federal agencies to initiate collaborative projects. However, the agreements were never implemented.

Cross-collaboration activities did happen in some of the states and local areas. However, we found state agencies faced significant challenges to do more because 1) staff shortages and furloughs hampered implementing new Recovery Act programs; 2) not all state agencies required contractors to post Recovery Act jobs on the state jobs banks; and 3) state recovery task forces focused primarily on meeting Recovery Act reporting requirements.

WHAT OIG RECOMMENDED

We recommended that the Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training continue to strengthen cross-collaboration efforts across federal and state agencies and encourage states and local areas to continue to pursue collaboration as part of their regular practice.

The Assistant Secretary agreed with our recommendation and provided examples of how ETA is moving in a direction consistent with the recommendation.