

BRIEFLY...

Highlights of Report Number: 03-09-003-03-390, Audit of Workforce Investment Act Data Validation for the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs, to the Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training.

WHY READ THE REPORT

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Office of Inspector General (OIG) performed an audit of the Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) data validation initiative for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. ETA implemented data validation to ensure that state workforce agencies (SWA) report accurate and reliable WIA performance data. ETA uses this data to report WIA performance measure results in DOL's annual Performance and Accountability Report. Data validation requires SWAs to conduct (1) report validation by assessing whether their software accurately calculated performance outcomes in their Annual Performance Reports to ETA, and (2) data element validations by reviewing samples of WIA participant files to check the accuracy of the data that the SWAs use to calculate performance outcomes. The data element validation is performed after the report validation in order to detect and identify specific problems with an SWA's WIA reporting process.

WHY OIG CONDUCTED THE AUDIT

OIG conducted the audit to answer the following question:

Does ETA exercise adequate oversight of the SWAs' data validation of WIA performance data?

The audit covered data SWAs reported for Program Year (PY) 2006 (July 1, 2006, through June 30, 2007), the latest PY that was subject to the data validation process at the time of our audit. The audit also included analysis of reported self-service participant and exiter data covering PYs 2005 through 2007. We reviewed a statistical sample of participant files used to perform data element validation at the SWAs in Michigan, Utah, and Texas.

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/2009/03-09-003-03-390.pdf>

September 2009

AUDIT OF WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT DATA VALIDATION FOR THE ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAMS

WHAT OIG FOUND

The OIG found that ETA provided extensive guidance to SWAs in preparing for and implementing data validation; however, it needs to strengthen its oversight to ensure SWAs are conducting data validations correctly. Our analysis of participant files from the SWAs' data element validation reviews found they were not validated using the appropriate ETA criteria or source documentation. This occurred in part because ETA did not finalize the draft guide for monitoring the SWAs' data validation process. Without sufficient oversight, ETA has no assurance that data validation is operating as designed.

We also noted that ETA is not updating the software used for data validation on a timely basis because it has not had sufficient funds for the maintenance needed to ensure it operates efficiently and addresses changes in performance reporting requirements as they occur. This has negatively impacted the effectiveness and efficiency of using the data validation software.

We also found reported participant and exiter data was inconsistent from SWA-to-SWA because the instructions did not clarify which self-service participants and exiters should be counted. As a result, Congress, stakeholders, the public, and other interested parties do not have accurate information on participation levels which is needed to fully report on whether the One-Stop systems are meeting the needs of business and the workforce.

WHAT OIG RECOMMENDED

The OIG recommended that the Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training finalize the Data Validation Monitoring Guide, require the regional offices to implement a monitoring plan of data validation at the SWAs, and provide regional offices access to data validation results that they can use to assist them in monitoring SWAs. We also recommended ETA sufficiently fund for maintaining and revising the data validation software and develop and disseminate instructions that clearly define how SWAs should report self-service participants and exiters.

HOW THE AUDITEE RESPONDED

ETA responded that they generally concurred with the recommendations, and initiated several steps in the direction of the recommendations.