



BRIEFLY...

DATA ACT: DOL'S REPORTED DATA GENERALLY MET QUALITY STANDARDS BUT ACCURACY ISSUES REMAIN

November 21, 2019

WHY OIG CONDUCTED THE AUDIT

Under the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014 (DATA Act), it is critical that the Department of Labor (DOL) report accurate and reliable spending data so taxpayers and policy makers understand how the Department is spending its funds. The Act requires federal agencies to report spending data in accordance with government-wide data standards. The Act also requires the Inspectors General of each federal agency to conduct a review of the agency's DATA Act compliance and report on the accuracy, completeness, timeliness, and quality of the agency's data.

WHAT OIG DID

We conducted an audit to assess: (1) the accuracy, completeness, timeliness, and quality of data submitted by DOL for publication on USAspending.gov; and (2) DOL's implementation and use of the government-wide data standards established by OMB and Treasury.

Our audit covered Fiscal Year 2019, first quarter spending data DOL submitted for publication on USAspending.gov; and the procedures, certifications, documentation, and controls it used in this process.

READ THE FULL REPORT

<http://www.oig.dol.gov/public/reports/oa/2020/03-20-001-13-001.pdf>

WHAT OIG FOUND

Overall, we found 94 percent accuracy of DOL's reported data, which according to the government-wide methodology indicates the data was generally of high quality. We also found the data was generally complete and timely, and the Department followed the government-wide data standards established by OMB and Treasury.

We found the following data elements had significant errors or issues:

- Two data elements, "Potential Total Value of Award" and "Ultimate Parent Legal Entity Name," had error rates higher than 20 percent.
- DOL did not report accurate Period of Performance Start Dates for 22 percent of 136 contracting actions tested.
- DOL continued to report inaccurate Program Activity and Object Class Codes in File B, and submitted its File C data without the required Unique Record Identifiers (URI) for financial assistance awards.

Finally, while DOL officials informed us they assessed risks specific to DATA Act reporting through the Department's Enterprise Risk Management process, they did not provide any documentation of specific risks identified or related mitigation efforts. Had the officials provided this information, we may have identified additional opportunities to enhance internal controls to mitigate risks over DATA Act reporting.

WHAT OIG RECOMMENDED

We made three recommendations to the Chief Financial Officer to address the underlying causes for errors within its reported data as well as identify risks specific to DATA Act reporting and take appropriate action to ensure internal controls address the resulting areas of concern.

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer generally agreed with our recommendations and stated that DOL had assessed risks related to DATA Act reporting. However, it did not disclose the risks identified so the limitation on our audit as discussed above remains.