U.S. Department of Labor
Office of Inspector General
Audit

BRIEFLY...

DOL'S IT GOVERNANCE LACKED THE FRAMEWORK NECESSARY TO SUPPORT THE OVERALL MISSION

September 30, 2021

WHY OIG CONDUCTED THE AUDIT

The Department of Labor (DOL) spends over $685 million annually on a portfolio of information technology (IT) assets that support the operation and management of its programs. Prior audit work found DOL's information security program contained deficiencies in critical, high-risk areas. As cited for many years through our previous audit reports, these issues were attributed, in part, to the DOL Chief Information Officer's (CIO) lack of authority and a misaligned reporting structure.

WHAT OIG DID

We conducted a performance audit to determine:

Whether DOL's IT governance structure appropriately aligns authority and responsibility to support the overall mission of the Department.

To answer our objective, we interviewed senior DOL leadership, evaluated documents related to IT governance and operations, and surveyed DOL agency staff and leadership. We also interviewed CIOs from other federal agencies for benchmarking purposes.

READ THE FULL REPORT

https://www.oig.dol.gov/public/reports/oa/2021/23-21-002-01-001.pdf

WHAT OIG FOUND

Based on the results of our audit work, we determined DOL's IT governance structure does not appropriately align authority and responsibility to support the overall mission of DOL. We found IT governance at DOL was ambiguous, ad hoc, and reliant on personnel to fulfill their duties without codified policies and procedures.

To be effective, a CIO must be organizationally positioned within leadership to ensure the implementation of IT Governance without the appearance of any conflicts of interest. This is not the case at DOL, as the CIO reports to the ASAM, the head of one of the CIO's customer agency, who also represents the CIO in key enterprise planning and strategy meetings.

While DOL made progress in ensuring the CIO controls key IT elements within the department, blind spots remain. The CIO remains impaired in visibility and authority over DOL IT within agencies not fully integrating into the IT Shared Services model.

The DOL's IT processes critical to proper IT governance were weakened by ad hoc design and reliance upon personnel. Additionally, with the recent transition to IT Shared Services, the absence of clearly documented requirements and processes created confusion among agencies dependent upon OCIO for IT support.

As a result, the current state of DOL IT is reliant upon the direction of the ASAM and, without implementing codified structures, it is directly impacted by the changing of personnel.

WHAT OIG RECOMMENDED

We made five recommendations to the Deputy Secretary of Labor to improve DOL's establishment and implementation of IT governance across the enterprise. The Associate Deputy Secretary for the Department disagreed with one recommendation to provide the CIO with the authority, accountability, and independence required to effectively manage the Department's IT by elevating the CIO to a level commensurate with the DOL's Assistant Secretaries and the Chief Financial Officer and reporting to the Deputy Secretary. The other four recommendations were accepted.