

Management Alert: Alteration of the EPA's Grants Management Plan 2021-2025

June 1, 2026 | Report No. 26-N-0034



Grants Management Plan
2021-2025



Abbreviations

EPA U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
OIG Office of Inspector General

Cover Image

The EPA's Grants Management Plan 2021-2025 (EPA OIG image). Report cover has EPA logo at the top with report title below and a photograph at the bottom picturing clouds, snow-capped mountains, trees, grass, and part of a waterway reflecting the sun.

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OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

June 1, 2026

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Management Alert: Alteration of the EPA's Grants Management Plan 2021-2025
Report No. 26-N-0034

FROM: Nicole N. Murley, Deputy Inspector General performing the duties
of the Inspector General *Nicole N. Murley*

TO: C. Paige Hanson, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Administrative Officer
Office of Finance and Administration

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency developed its first grants management plan in 2003 in response to EPA Office of Inspector General, Government Accountability Office, and Office of Management and Budget concerns regarding the EPA's management of grants.¹ According to the foreword included in the Grants Management Plan 2021-2025, this publication "establishes the strategic framework to accomplish [the EPA's] critical fiscal stewardship responsibilities."

When the EPA does not transparently record changes to publications, the public may rely on inaccurate information.

In November 2025, while planning for future grant audits, an OIG audit team could not find the 2021-2025 plan among the EPA's online resources and inquired about it with the Office of Finance and Administration. Following that inquiry, the EPA made an updated 2021-2025 plan publicly available through its grants [web page](#). The updated 2021-2025 plan omitted the phrase "including Environmental Justice Considerations" from one objective that originally read "Integrate Input from Agency Partners and Stakeholders, including Environmental Justice Considerations, into Grants Management Policies and Requirements." Also, a bullet listed under the same objective had been changed to remove a commitment "to establish a forum for representatives of underserved communities to provide ... input." In addition, a bullet listed under another objective, "Streamline Processes and Reduce Administrative

¹ In 2003, the Government Accountability Office was known as the General Accounting Office.

Burden on EPA staff,” was missing a previously stated commitment to “incorporate equity and environmental justice principles into grants process where possible.”²

The updated plan does not note that the EPA changed the original publication. As a result, readers could erroneously conclude that the updated plan 1) is the same plan released by the former acting assistant administrator whose name and photograph appear on the foreword and 2) accurately reflects the message of the 21 Agency senior resource officials named in the plan.

We note that the EPA has committed to the transparent and accurate dissemination of information. For example, in the [Guidelines for Ensuring and Maximizing the Quality, Objectivity, Utility, and Integrity of Information Disseminated by the Environmental Protection Agency](#),³ the EPA commits to ensuring and maximizing the dissemination of information in a manner that is “accurate, clear, complete, and unbiased.” Similarly, as stated on the EPA’s “Guidance Documents” [web page](#), the EPA “is committed to ensuring the fair and transparent use of guidance documents.”

The number for this project was OA-FY26-0038. We shared a statement of findings with the Office of Finance and Administration on February 12, 2026. In that document, the OIG requested that the Agency consider updating the 2021-2025 plan to indicate when, how, and why the plan was changed, as would be consistent with transparency principles. In response, the EPA removed the updated 2021-2025 plan from its grants web page. In its written response to us, the Agency agreed to make the original 2021-2025 plan publicly available through its online document [archive](#), the National Service Center for Environmental Publications, as it has done with previous plans. The Agency’s written response to our statement of findings is in the appendix.

The OIG requests that when the Agency changes a publication, it ensures the changes are recorded properly to safeguard transparency. The OIG also requests that the Agency consider whether other publications revised to comply with recent executive orders or to reflect changes in administration priorities need to be updated to transparently record changes. Please keep the OIG informed of any actions taken to address our concerns raised in this memorandum.

The OIG Office of Audit conducted the work reported in this memorandum following the OIG’s quality assurance procedures. We will post this memorandum to our website at www.epa.gov/oig.

² The period listed in the plan’s title coincided with the issuance of Executive Order 14151, dated January 20, 2025, which directed the Office of Management and Budget to coordinate the termination of certain programs, including those related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, within the federal government. The executive order also directed Agency heads, to the maximum extent permitted by law, to terminate equity action plans, equity actions, initiatives, or programs. Readers who rely on the 2021–2025 plan should be aware that the EPA made a version available that was revised to comply with this executive order and differs from the plan originally published.

³ EPA/260R-02-008, October 2002, last amended April 2024.

cc: Lee Zeldin, Administrator
David Fotouhi, Deputy Administrator
Travis Voyles, Associate Deputy Administrator
Eric Amidon, Chief of Staff, Office of the Administrator
Wesley J. Carpenter, Deputy Chief of Staff for Management, Office of the Administrator
Michael Molina, Principal Deputy Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Acquisition Officer
Gregg Trembl, Deputy Chief Financial and Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Sean Donahue, General Counsel
Sarah Talmage, Associate Administrator for Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations
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Agency Response to the Statement of Findings



OFFICE OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

March 3, 2026

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Response to the Office of Inspector General Report, Project No. OA-FY26-0038, "Management Alert: Alteration of the EPA's Grants Management Plan 2021-2025" sent on February 12, 2026.

FROM: C. Paige Hanson, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Administrative Officer *C. Paige Hanson*

TO: Beth Schubert, Director, Drinking Water Investments Directorate
Office of Audit

This memorandum responds to the Office of Inspector General's report, "Management Alert: Alteration of the EPA's Grants Management Plan 2021-2025" sent on February 12, 2026. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the issues and the considerations noted in the report. The following response includes a summary of how the Office of the Chief Grants Officer, located within the Office of Finance and Administration, is currently working to address them.

OFA RESPONSE TO MANAGEMENT ALERT REPORT:

In response to Agency-wide direction in March 2025, the EPA Office of the Chief Grants Officer conducted a review of the EPA's Grants Management Plan (GMP) to ensure alignment with the President's Executive Orders, particularly [EO 14168](#), "Defending Women From Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government," and [EO 14151](#), "Ending Radical and Wasteful Government [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion] Programs and Preferencing." To ensure full compliance with the direction of the new administration, the GMP was removed from the EPA website. The GMP is no longer relevant as it covered a timeframe which ended in FY 2025, the document was

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removed following the issuance of this draft report. OCGO will comply with Agency's records management policies for including the original FY 2021-2025 GMP in the National Service Center for Environmental Publications.

A new GMP is not delayed by resource issues and organization changes. As the GMP is not statutorily required, the production of a revised GMP is under consideration by Agency in line with the President's release of his strategic plan for EPA which is part of the FY 2027 President's Budget.

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