



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Energy

INSPECTION REPORT

DOE-OIG-22-18

December 2021

**ALLEGATIONS REGARDING
MANAGEMENT CONDUCT WITHIN THE
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC IMPACT AND
DIVERSITY**



Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

December 23, 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

SUBJECT: Inspection Report on Allegations Regarding Management Conduct Within the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity

The attached report discusses our review of allegations regarding management conduct within the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity. This report contains seven recommendations that, if fully implemented, should help ensure that the issues identified during this inspection are corrected. Management fully concurred with our recommendations. Its comments and proposed corrective actions are responsive to our recommendations.

We conducted this inspection from July 2020 through September 2021 in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*. We appreciated the cooperation and assistance received during this evaluation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony Cruz", is written over a light-colored rectangular background.

Anthony Cruz
Assistant Inspector General
for Inspections, Intelligence Oversight,
and Special Projects
Office of Inspector General

cc: Chief of Staff
Director, Office of Administration
Acting Chief Financial Officer



Department of Energy Office of Inspector General

Allegations Regarding Management Conduct Within the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity (DOE-OIG-22-18)

WHY THE OIG PERFORMED THIS REVIEW

The Office of Inspector General received two separate allegations regarding management conduct within the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity (ED). The complaints were related to improper communication with prospective grant applicants, prohibited personnel practices related to a hiring action, misuse of position, use of disparaging terms and excessive contacts outside working hours, retaliatory behavior with an alleged hostile environment, disparate treatment of women, and improper travel expenses.

We initiated this inspection to determine the facts and circumstances regarding allegations within ED.

What Did the OIG Find?

Although we were unable to identify documentary evidence to substantiate that ED management engaged in disparate treatment of women, our inspection revealed numerous concerns expressed during our interviews and raised in Equal Employment Opportunity complaints.

In addition, we substantiated the allegation that the former ED Director incurred improper travel expenses. The former Director did not fully adhere to travel requirements and received a net of \$14,129.93 in reimbursement overpayments.

Finally, we did not substantiate the allegations related to improper communication with prospective grant applicants, prohibited personnel practices related to a hiring action, misuse of position, use of disparaging terms and excessive contacts outside working hours, and retaliatory behavior with an alleged hostile environment.

What Is the Impact?

The appearance of discrimination by senior officials, even if unsubstantiated, may impact employees' trust in management and the morale of the organization. Further, the lack of adherence to travel requirements resulted in the Department of Energy incurring excess travel costs.

What Is the Path Forward?

To address the issues identified in this report, we have made seven recommendations that, if fully implemented, should help ensure that the issues identified during our inspection are corrected.

BACKGROUND

The Office of Economic Impact and Diversity (ED) develops and executes Department of Energy-wide policies to implement applicable legislation and Executive Orders that strengthen diversity and inclusion goals affecting equal employment opportunities, small and disadvantaged businesses, minority educational institutions, and historically under-represented communities. Its mission is to advise the Secretary of Energy on the impact of energy policies, regulations, and Department programs on minority communities, minority institutions, and specific segments of the U.S. population.

In June 2020, the Office of Inspector General received two separate allegations concerning management conduct within ED. Specifically, the complainants' allegations included: (1) improper communication with prospective grant applicants; (2) prohibited personnel practices related to a hiring action; (3) misuse of position; (4) use of disparaging terms and excessive contacts outside working hours; and (5) retaliatory behavior with an alleged hostile environment. Additionally, during a meeting with the Department's Office of the General Counsel (General Counsel), we were made aware of alleged disparate treatment of women by the former ED Director and his alleged improper travel expenses. After receiving the additional information, we expanded our inspection to review these areas.

We initiated this inspection to determine the facts and circumstances regarding allegations within ED. The former Director left his position at ED on January 20, 2021.

CONCERNS RELATED TO DISPARATE TREATMENT OF WOMEN

Although we were unable to identify documentary evidence to substantiate that the former ED Director engaged in disparate treatment of women, our inspection revealed numerous concerns expressed during our interviews. Additionally, during a meeting with the Department's General Counsel, we were informed that the former Director was allegedly treating women differently than men. The Department's General Counsel made us aware that the former Deputy Secretary of Energy had informed its office of these issues during discussions with ED staff, the White House Liaison, and the Office of the Ombudsmen. While we were originally told that the former Director was allegedly treating women differently than men, we were told by 10 interviewees that they also witnessed different treatment based on race. According to Title VII of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, it is unlawful for an employer to discriminate against any individual because of the individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

During our inspection, we held 24 interviews with current, detailed, and former employees of ED and a discussion with the former Director. We were told by 10 interviewees that they witnessed different treatment based on race. We also reviewed Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaints filed by current and former ED employees, some against the former Director and a senior official, and others against former ED management officials.¹ The complaints raised numerous allegations, including disparate treatment of female, African-American employees. Our discussion with the former Director resulted in a conflicting account of what occurred.

¹ The conclusions in this report are separate from any conclusions that may be made in an EEO case.

For example, a former African-American employee of ED stated that she was treated differently than her Caucasian female colleagues. The employee stated that a senior official did not talk to or mentor her as much as her Caucasian peers. The senior official disagreed with this statement. During another interview, a former senior staff member stated that the former Director pressured her into creating a hostile work environment by pitting Schedule C² employees against each other, micromanaging, and cutting off communication with African-American female employees.

Based on a discussion with an interviewee, we were told that the former Director and a senior official did not treat everyone in the office equally. Conversely, the senior official provided examples of mentoring and supportive relationships of a diverse group of staff. The interviewee stated that management (i.e., the former Director and a senior official) marginalized African Americans in the office and that former employees told her that they left because the office was unfair. Further, we were told by the interviewee that the former Director would instruct Caucasian employees not to talk to African-American employees. In our discussion with the former Director regarding this allegation, he stated that he never told staff not to speak to each other based on race. He further stated that staff were not treated differently based on race. During an interview, the senior official stated that the former Director never told employees not to talk to anyone due to their race.

During an interview with an official from the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity, we were informed that EEO complaints were filed against current and former management at ED. We obtained and reviewed seven EEO complaints related to ED that were filed from 2018 through 2020, and one that was filed in 2015. Our review found that the EEO complaints contained allegations of retaliatory behavior with an alleged hostile environment, harassment, disability discrimination, sexism, and racism. Our review was based solely on EEO complaints filed at ED, and we did not review final determinations regarding these allegations.

During our inspection, a senior official told us that the former Director had hired a professional consultant firm in September 2019 to perform a culture survey in the office. The senior official stated that the consultant firm offered followup work for the office at a high cost. The senior official further stated that the former Director decided on his own approach to the situation. We were told that the former Director hired a part-time consultant who was responsible for providing customized leadership courses for ED supervisors and managers in June 2020.

While ED hired professional consultants to conduct a culture survey in 2019, we found that the same issues may still be recurring, and management has not taken initiative to ensure that anti-discrimination policies are embraced by current and future leaders. This is especially concerning given ED's mission related to strengthening diversity and inclusion goals and its role on advising the Secretary of Energy on topics such as the impact of Department policies, regulations, and programs on minority communities, minority institutions, and specific segments of the U.S. population. Finally, this could impact employees' trust in their management and the morale of the organization.

² A Schedule C position is a job in a Federal department or independent agency working directly for a presidential appointee or non-career official appointed by the head of the agency.

IMPROPER TRAVEL EXPENSES

We substantiated that the former Director claimed travel expenses that were not allowable under Title 41 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Chapters 300–304, *Federal Travel Regulation*, and the DOE Manual 552.1-1A, *U.S. Department of Energy Travel Manual*. In a discussion with the Department’s General Counsel, we were made aware that the former Director may have incurred improper travel expenses. We examined a sample of 37 travel vouchers and found that the former Director was overpaid for his travel expenses by a net of \$14,129.93. We found that the overpayments were a result of the former Director’s lack of adherence to travel regulations during his travel and an incorrect coding in the Standard Accounting and Reporting System.

Former Director’s Lack of Adherence to Travel Regulations

Based on our inspection, the former Director was overpaid for his travel expenses by a net of \$14,129.93, submitted repayment in the amount of \$5,534.54, and still has an outstanding balance of \$8,595.39. We consider the outstanding balance as questioned costs. The travel categories and total overpayment amounts we identified are included below:

- \$8,596.87 in improper meals and incidental expenses and lodging costs;
- \$3,712.48 in improper airfare, improper parking, taxes, and travel fees; and
- \$1,820.58 in improper rental car upgrade costs.

The \$8,596.87, made up of \$2,653.75 in overpayments for meals and incidental expenses, as well as \$5,943.12 in overpayments for lodging costs, were a result of extending travel into weekends and not recording personal time in the travel system. These trips were also not adjusted by the travel approver to reflect the former Director’s travel in an official capacity. The *Federal Travel Regulation*, specifically Title 41 CFR 301–11.10, *Per Diem Expenses*, states that the traveler must record the date of departure from, and arrival at, the official station or any other place travel begins or ends.

The former Director also incurred \$3,712.48 in improper airfare, parking, taxes, and voucher fees. This includes \$1,797.95 in improper airfare, \$462.99 in improper parking expenses, \$420.11 lodging taxes for other than official travel, \$412.40 in additional travel voucher fees, \$331.53 in improper fuel charges, and \$287.50 in additional taxi charges.

Our review found that the former Director incurred \$1,820.58 in rental car overpayments. The overpayments were a result of the former Director staying additional days and keeping the rental car that should have been for official business only, unapproved rental car upgrades, and use of a rental car when alternative transportation would have been significantly cheaper. Specifically, Title 41 CFR 301–10.450(c), *Transportation Expenses*, states that “...travelers must use the least expensive compact car available, unless an exception for another class of vehicle is approved.” We found that the former Director’s travel vouchers did not include approvals for a rental car upgrade. The former Director did pay for rental car upgrades on some trips; however, he did not

pay for upgrades on every trip, and the amount was not always adjusted to include fees or taxes owed on the rental car due to the upgrades.

In addition, the former Director did not follow regulations regarding booking trips or incurring costs. Specifically, the former Director did not provide cost comparisons for alternative travel. For example, during two trips, the former Director decided to drive a rental car rather than take his scheduled flight; however, cost comparisons were not submitted with his travel authorizations. Specifically, DOE Manual 552.1-1A, *U.S. Department of Energy Travel Manual Part 301–11, Subchapter B, Subpart D*, states that “...the traveler must provide a cost comparison to show what was authorized versus the actual travel that took place.” The unallowable travel expenses occurred because of the former Director’s personal decisions and a lack of travel approver training. The former Director did not take proper care to ensure that he received the correct reimbursement and depended on others to input his travel. In addition to the former Director’s personal decisions, there was a lack of training for travel approvers at ED. In our discussions with an official with the Department’s Office of Travel Management, we were told that there is no formal training required to be named an approver in the Department’s travel system.

Incorrect Coding in Standard Accounting and Reporting System

During our inspection, we held discussions with officials with the Department’s Office of Travel Management, who informed us that there is a report in the Standard Accounting and Reporting System that should have captured the former Director as a Very Important Person (VIP). When coded as a VIP, 100 percent of the employee’s travel claims are reviewed. The former Director was not coded as a VIP in the Standard Accounting and Reporting System; consequently, his travel claims were reviewed less frequently.

The issue regarding the former Director’s incorrect travel profile occurred because there was a lack of official guidance regarding the requirement that Senior Officials be coded as a VIP in the travel system. At the time of writing this report, the Office of Travel Management has modified the VIP criteria and is working with the Financial Operations Team within the Office of the Chief Financial Officer who will update and maintain the VIP list.

OTHER ALLEGATIONS

We did not substantiate the allegations that the former Director had participated in: (1) improper communication with prospective grant applicants; (2) prohibited personnel practices related to a hiring action; (3) misuse of position; (4) use of disparaging terms and excessive contacts outside working hours; and (5) retaliatory behavior with an alleged hostile environment.

Improper Communication with Prospective Grant Applicants

We did not substantiate the allegation regarding improper communication with prospective grant applicants. Based on our review of Title 5 CFR 2635.502, *Personal and Business Relationships*, if an employee has a covered relationship, including with recent employers, that employee needs

to obtain specific authorization before participating in any Government matter (e.g., a grant). In this case there was no grant proposed or awarded, so the subpart does not apply.

Use of Consultants on Merit Review Panel for Grants

During an interview with a Program Manager with ED, we were made aware of a concern regarding the use of consultants on a merit review panel for grants. The Program Manager did not think that the people overseeing the grant process within ED had sufficient experience to properly review and select awardees. Our review found that ED did use temporary Federal consultants to assist with financial decisions. We reviewed the Department's *Merit Review Guide for Financial Assistance* that states, "Merit reviewers must be DOE Federal employees." However, we also reviewed 5 U.S.C. 3109, *Employment of experts and consultants; temporary or intermittent*, and found that it categorizes these type of consultants as Federal employees. Specifically, 5 U.S.C. 3109 states that "...the head of an agency may procure, by contract, the temporary (not in excess of 1 year) or intermittent services of experts or consultants." Given that these consultants were considered Federal employees, there was no violation for these individuals participating in the merit review panel for grants.

Prohibited Personnel Practices Related to Hiring Action

We did not substantiate the allegation that the former Director had engaged in, or instructed others to engage in, prohibited personnel practices related to a hiring action. The complainant told us that a senior staff member of ED asked them to set up an informal meeting, such as a meet-and-greet, with one of the applicants. According to 5 U.S.C. 2302, *Prohibited personnel practices*, "Any employee who has the authority to take [...] any personnel action, shall not, with respect to such authority grant any preference or advantage [...] to any employee or applicant for employment." Based on discussions with an official with the Office of Corporate Executive Management and an official with the Oak Ridge Shared Services Center, we concluded that having a meet and greet with one or more applicants prior to a formal offer is not a violation under 5 U.S.C. 2302.

During our inspection, we were made aware that there were two individuals who stated that they were not given an opportunity to compete for positions that they thought they were qualified to perform. In a discussion with a senior official, we were informed that there were two Division Chief positions that were filled using the Non-Competitive Reassignment Authority (*Policy Guidance Memorandum #28*). Based on review of *Policy Guidance Memorandum #28* and a discussion with the Director of the Oak Ridge Human Resources Shared Service Center, we concluded that it is not a violation to hire employees noncompetitively provided those employees held prior supervisory status or occupied the same General Service Grade level as the new position. We verified that these employees met the criteria for this requirement. We were also made aware that 25 percent of the office are Schedule C employees. Based on discussions with the White House Liaison, we learned that there is no limitation placed on the number of political appointees within a program office. We were told there is a limitation placed on the Department as a whole, and that number is determined by legislation. We verified that the Department had not reached its limit of political appointees as of October 7, 2020.

Misuse of Position

We did not substantiate the allegation of misuse of position. A senior staff member with ED stated that the former Director asked them to use their contacts to connect the former Director's fiancé's lawyer with an official with the Department of Homeland Security. We were told that the former Director was trying to get help with a fine for his fiancé that resulted from crossing the northern border without properly declaring fruits and vegetables. During a followup discussion, we were told that the contact with the Department of Homeland Security told them they would not be able to assist the former Director in any way with his issue. Further, based on discussions with the Department's General Counsel, it was noted that simply asking for a point of contact for assistance with this matter would not constitute a violation. According to General Counsel, an example of a violation would be contacting another Federal agency in an official capacity to get assistance with a personal matter. We did not identify any evidence that the former Director contacted the Department of Homeland Security using his official capacity regarding this personal matter.

We were told by one of the complainants that they were asked to update the former Director's resume. We were also told by the second complainant that the former Director asked them to update a resume of a departing consultant. In addition, the second complainant stated that they were asked to update resumes for political staff and consultants. Based on a discussion with the Department's General Counsel, we were told that subordinates may often be asked to assist with certain administrative tasks. Further, asking a subordinate to update a resume does not indicate a violation unless it was based on the former Director's request to pursue outside employment. We did not find any indications that the former Director asked staff to update his resume for seeking outside employment.

Use of Disparaging Terms and Excessive Contacts Outside Working Hours

We did not substantiate the allegation that the former Director used disparaging terms and made excessive contacts outside working hours. We were told by one of the complainants that the former Director called at late hours and talked negatively about other employees who had submitted complaints against the Department. However, according to the former Director, he had an expectation in place with his political appointees that calls would be accepted outside of working hours. During our interviews, other Schedule C employees also confirmed this type of communication. However, our review of Title 5 CFR 551.431(b)(1), *Time spent on standby duty or in an on-call status*, did not identify a violation for calls outside working hours. Further, we were not provided evidence of the alleged negative comments made by the former Director when talking about other employees who had submitted complaints. During an interview with the former Director, he stated he did not discourage employees against submitting complaints. The complainant also stated that the former Director used a term referring to the complainant's mental condition that the complainant found offensive because of a disability. To address the former Director's alleged use of the possible offensive term, we reviewed the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on harassment. During our review, we found that harassment becomes unlawful when the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive. Based on the interviews conducted, we did not determine that the former Director's alleged use of the term

rose to the severe and pervasive level. Our conclusion is based solely on the information provided to us during the inspection.

Retaliatory Behavior with Hostile Environment

We did not substantiate the allegation regarding retaliatory behavior with a hostile environment. The complainant stated that they told the former Director that he was putting them in a hostile environment. In addition, the complainant stated that the former Director was retaliatory towards them once the complainant notified a senior official of an offensive comment made by an ED consultant. The complainant stated that in retaliation, the former Director told them that he was going to close their division.

According to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on *Disability Discrimination and Harassment*, "...harassment can include, for example, offensive remarks about a person's disability." The guidance further states that "...although the law doesn't prohibit simple teasing, off-hand comments, or isolated incidents that aren't very serious, harassment is illegal when it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or when it results in an adverse employment decision (such as the victim being fired or demoted)." Based on the interviews discussed above and review of the criteria, we concluded that the harassment claimed by the complainant did not rise to the level of severe and frequent, constituting a hostile environment. Further, based on a discussion with the White House Liaison, we concluded that there was no action or request by the former Director to close or restructure a division at ED. Although the former Director would not have been able to make the change without the acquiescence approval of the White House Liaison, threatening to take such an action, if substantiated, constitutes a violation under the Office of Special Counsel's Prohibited Personnel Practices. Therefore, we are referring this issue to the Office of Special Counsel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the issues identified in our report, we recommend that the Deputy Secretary, Department of Energy:

1. Conduct further independent assessments of ED's culture and the specific concerns raised in this report.
2. Ensure that ED's management enforces existing policies of anti-discrimination in the workplace.
3. Require that ED's management work with employees in conjunction with the Alternate Dispute Resolution Office or the Office of the Ombudsman to discuss the treatment of others in the office and create solutions for improvement.
4. Require training for ED's approving officials in the travel system to ensure that they are knowledgeable of the *Federal Travel Regulation* and the *U.S. Department of Energy's Travel Manual*.

5. Ensure that ED's employees who travel submit cost comparisons when choosing to travel by a different transportation mode than was authorized.

We recommend that the Director, Office of Administration, and Acting Chief Financial Officer, Office of the Chief Financial Officer:

6. Ensure that the Office of Travel Management submit a billing request to the Office of Finance and Accounting requesting repayment by the former Director for overpayment of travel expenses. Also, that the Office of Finance and Accounting create and submit a bill to the former Director requesting repayment of travel expenses that resulted from the overpayment.
7. Ensure that the Office of Travel Management modifies the VIP criteria and works in consultation with the CFO Office of Corporate Business Systems who will update and maintain the VIP list in the Standard Accounting and Reporting System to ensure that 100 percent of VIPs are flagged for review.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Management fully concurred with all seven recommendations and stated proposed actions will be completed no later than April 30, 2022.

Management comments are included in Appendix 2.

INSPECTOR COMMENTS

Management's comments and corrective actions are responsive to our recommendations.

Appendix 1: Objective, Scope, and Methodology

OBJECTIVE

We initiated this inspection to determine the facts and circumstances regarding allegations within the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity (ED).

SCOPE

The inspection was performed from July 2020 through September 2021 at ED located in Washington, DC. The inspection was conducted under Office of Inspector General project number S20HQ014.

METHODOLOGY

To accomplish our inspection objective, we:

- Reviewed laws and regulations applicable to the inspection objective;
- Reviewed related Government Accountability Office and Office of Inspector General prior reports;
- Held discussions with senior Department of Energy officials with the Office of Travel Management, an official with the Office of Corporate Executive Management, an official with the Oak Ridge Shared Services Center, the Department's Office of the General Counsel, the White House Liaison, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, and ED;
- Held interviews with current, former, and detailed employees with ED;
- Reviewed and analyzed Equal Employment Opportunity complaints against management with ED for applicability to the inspection objective;
- Requested and reviewed qualifications in comparison to job descriptions of newly hired Schedule C employees; and
- Worked with the Office of Inspector General's Data Analytics Division, Office of Technology, Financial, and Analytics, to test a judgmental sample of 37 travel vouchers submitted by the former ED Director for travel during weekends and trips that had overlapping travel dates.

We conducted our inspection in accordance with the *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation* (January 2012) as put forth by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. We believe that the work performed provides a reasonable basis for our conclusions.

We held exit conferences with management officials on December 7, 2021, and December 8, 2021.

Appendix 2: Management Comments



The Deputy Secretary of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

November 19, 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR TERIL L. DONALDSON
INSPECTOR GENERAL

FROM:

DAVID M. TURK

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David M. Turk".

SUBJECT:

Allegations Regarding Management Conduct within the Office of
Economic Impact and Diversity, (A18GT027)

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the subject draft report. We appreciate the inspectors' work and provide the comments below:

The attachment to this memorandum details actions planned to be taken by the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity, the Office of Management and Administration and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer and provides technical comments from the Office of the Chief Financial Officer.

If you have any questions, please contact Ingrid Kolb, Director, Office of Management, Ingrid.kolb@hq.doe.gov, (202) 586-1604; Christopher Johns, Deputy Chief Financial Officer, Christopher.johns@hq.doe.gov, (202) 586-4049; or Ann Augustyn, Acting Director/Principal Deputy Director, Office of Economic Impact and Diversity, ann.augustyn@hq.doe.gov, (202) 586-5687.

Enclosure

Appendix 2: Management Comments

Enclosure

Management Response
OIG Draft Report:
Allegations Regarding Management Conduct within the
Office of Economic Impact and Diversity, (A18GT027)

Recommendation # 1: We recommend that the Deputy Secretary of Energy: Conduct further independent assessments of Economic Impact's culture and the specific concerns raised in this report.

DOE Response: Concur.

A DOE Organizational Culture Advisor who is an expert in social organizational psychology will conduct an independent, objective assessment of the culture in the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity and prepare an Action Report for management.

Estimated Completion Date: April 30, 2022

Recommendation #2: We recommend that the Deputy Secretary of Energy: Ensure that Economic Impact's management enforces existing policies of anti-discrimination in the workplace.

DOE Response: Concur.

The Office of Economic Impact and Diversity has already collaborated with the Office of Human Capital to revise the Supervisory Performance element in all Supervisor Performance Plans to require, among other things, that supervisors enforce the Federal anti-discrimination statutes and policies.

Estimated Completion Date: Completed on October 1, 2021

Recommendation #3: We recommend that the Deputy Secretary of Energy: Require that Economic Impact's management work with employees in conjunction with the Alternate Dispute Resolution Office or the Office of the Ombudsman to discuss the treatment of others in the office and create solutions for improvement.

DOE Response: Concur.

The Office of the Ombudsman has agreed to work with the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity to facilitate discussions about treatment of others in the office and create solutions for improvement.

Estimated Completion Date: April 30, 2022

Appendix 2: Management Comments

Enclosure

**Management Response
OIG Draft Report:
Allegation: Regarding Management Conduct within the
Office of Economic Impact and Diversity, (A18GT027)**

Recommendation #4: We recommend that the Deputy Secretary of Energy: Require training for Economic Impact's approving officials in the travel system to ensure that they are knowledgeable of the Federal Travel Regulations and the Department of Energy's Travel Manual.

DOE Response: Concur.

The Office of Economic Impact and Diversity will work with the Office of Management to obtain training for all approvers of travel to enhance their awareness of the Federal Travel Regulations and the DOE Travel Manual.

Estimated Completion Date: April 30, 2022

Recommendation #5: We recommend that the Deputy Secretary of Energy: Ensure that Economic Impact's travelers submit cost comparisons when choosing to travel by a different transportation mode than was authorized.

DOE Response: Concur

The Office of Economic Impact and Diversity will work with the Office of Management to obtain training for travelers to educate them about submitting cost comparisons when choosing to travel by a different transportation mode than was authorized.

Estimated completion date: April 30, 2022

Recommendation #6: We recommend that the Director, Office of Administration: Ensure that the Office of Travel Management create and submit a bill to OCFO requesting repayment by the former Director for travel expenses that resulted in overpayment.

DOE Response: Concur.

Once the Office of the Inspector General (IG) has provided its final assessment of the former ED Director's overpayments, the Office of Travel Management will submit a billing request to the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Office of Finance and Accounting, requesting payment by the former Director, ED.

Estimated Completion Date: December 2021, assuming the Office of Travel Management and the Chief Financial Officer, Office of Finance and Accounting receive the IG's final assessment of overpayments by December 2021.

Appendix 2: Management Comments

Enclosure

Management Response
OIG Draft Report:
Allegation: Regarding Management Conduct within the
Office of Economic Impact and Diversity, (A18GT027)

Recommendation #7: We further recommend that the Director, Office of Administration and Acting Chief Financial Officer, OCFO: Ensure that the Financial Operations Team works with both offices to modify the VIP criteria and code senior officials as VIPs in the Standard Accounting and Reporting System to ensure that 100 percent of their travel is reviewed, as required.

DOE Response: Concur.

The Office of Administration and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer are updating and will maintain the VIP list in the Standard Accounting and Reporting System (STARS) to ensure that 100 percent of VIP travel is flagged for review.

Completion Date: December 2021

FEEDBACK

The Office of Inspector General has a continuing interest in improving the usefulness of its products. We aim to make our reports as responsive as possible and ask you to consider sharing your thoughts with us.

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Office of Inspector General (IG-12)
Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

If you want to discuss this report or your comments with a member of the Office of Inspector General staff, please contact our office at 202-586-1818. For media-related inquiries, please call 202-586-7406.