

**Verification Review of
Transportation Security
Administration's Screening of
Passengers by Observation
Techniques/Behavior
Detection and Analysis
Program**





OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Department of Homeland Security

Washington, DC 20528 / www.oig.dhs.gov

JUL 8 2016

MEMORANDUM FOR: Jill Vaughan
Assistant Administrator
Office of Security Capabilities
Transportation Security Administration

FROM: Mark Bell *Mark Bell*
Assistant Inspector General for Audits

SUBJECT: *Verification Review of Transportation Security Administration's Screening of Passengers by Observation Techniques/Behavior Detection and Analysis Program*

In May 2013, we published an audit report, *Transportation Security Administration's Screening of Passengers by Observation Techniques (REDACTED)*, (OIG-13-91). We made six recommendations to improve the program, all of which we have since closed. We conducted this verification review to evaluate progress on two audit recommendations, including whether completed and on-going corrective actions still meet the intent of our recommendations. We selected the recommendations that we determined to be most critical for the program's success. These two recommendations are related to strategic planning and data reliability.

We determined that TSA met the intent of the first recommendation because it implemented a strategic plan in response to our audit report and has since updated the plan for fiscal years 2016 through 2018. However, it still must execute the actions described in its plans to demonstrate the program's effectiveness. As of May 2016, TSA reported that it implemented new performance metrics at all 87 Behavioral Detection and Analysis program (BDA) airports, but it has yet to fully assess them to determine their effectiveness. For the second recommendation, as of the time of our exit conference, TSA has not fully transitioned to a new reporting system that is designed to improve data deficiencies in the Performance Measurement and Information System.

We intend to conduct an audit of the program's effectiveness in FY 2017 — after the BDA Program Office has had sufficient time to assess these newly implemented plans and metrics.

Please call me with any questions at (202) 254-4100, or your staff may contact Maureen Duddy, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audits, at (617) 565-8723.



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Department of Homeland Security

Background

In 2013, we audited TSA's then-Screening of Passengers by Observation Techniques (SPOT) program. TSA has since changed the name of the program from the SPOT program to the BDA program. The intent of the program is to screen passengers by observing their behavior in order to detect potential high-risk travelers. The program uses Behavior Detection Officers (BDO) to detect passenger behaviors that may be indicative of stress, fear, or deception. Currently, TSA operates the program at 87 airports (BDA airports) with 2,660 full-time staff. Between fiscal years 2007 and 2015, the program expended an estimated \$1.5 billion.

Our 2013 audit reported that TSA had not implemented a comprehensive strategic plan to ensure the SPOT program's success and did not have adequate controls to ensure the completeness, accuracy, authorization, and validity of program data. To address the 2013 report's recommendations, TSA implemented a comprehensive strategic plan and addressed the accuracy and reliability of data by conducting a large scale data audit to identify and correct errors in its referral data.¹ TSA also implemented additional controls to improve the timeliness and accuracy of recorded referrals. Subsequently, we closed the recommendations because we determined that TSA's corrective actions met the intent of our recommendations.

In this verification review, we evaluated whether TSA's on-going actions still meet the intent of these recommendations. We did not look at the program's effectiveness, as this review is limited in scope. We intend to conduct an audit of the program's effectiveness in FY 2017.

Verification Review Results

TSA created a comprehensive strategic plan and developed controls to assure completeness, accuracy, authorization, and validity of Performance Measurement Information System referral data. These actions were sufficient to close the two selected recommendations. However, TSA has not yet executed all the actions described in its plans to demonstrate the program's effectiveness. Since we closed our recommendations in March 2014, TSA updated and revised its strategic plan for fiscal years 2016 through 2018, and it incorporated newly developed performance metrics. As of May 2016, TSA reported it implemented these new performance metrics at all 87 BDA airports, but TSA has yet to fully assess them to determine their effectiveness.

¹ BDOs are required to document all relevant information regarding each passenger referral to law enforcement in a referral report and the Performance Measurement Information System.



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Department of Homeland Security

Furthermore, TSA has not fully transitioned to a new reporting system that is designed to improve data deficiencies in the Performance Measurement and Information System. Therefore, we were unable to fully assess whether TSA's corrective actions for these two recommendations will further improve BDA performance and reporting.

Implementation of Recommendation #1

Consistent with Office of Management and Budget Circular A-11, our May 2013 report recommended that TSA develop and implement a comprehensive strategic plan for the SPOT program that includes —

- mission, goals, objectives, and a system to measure performance;
- a training strategy that addresses the goals and objectives of the SPOT program;
- a plan to identify external partners integral to program success, such as law enforcement agencies, and take steps to ensure that effective relationships are established; and
- a financial plan that includes identification of priorities, goals, objectives, and measures; needs analysis; budget formulation and execution; and expenditure tracking.

Since our 2013 audit, the BDA program revised and developed a strategic plan for FYs 2016 through 2018. The revised strategic plan now includes:

- new BDA program performance metrics designed to measure:
 1. BDO deployment effectiveness,
 2. operational efficiency and oversight, and
 3. operational timeliness and accuracy.
- an improved training plan that includes a requirement for new employees to attend training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. The plan has defined competencies and related hourly requirements for on-the-job and recurrent training for all BDA staff.
- an improved coordination and outreach program with key external partners and stakeholders. This includes coordination with the Federal Air Marshal Service to begin an outreach and awareness program for BDOs and airport stakeholders on the Transportation Information Sharing System to improve program referral reporting. In addition, the program developed a stakeholder briefing for local law enforcement.
- a tool to track historical program funding and annual expenditures to plan and manage its financial resources.



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Department of Homeland Security

TSA piloted the three new BDA program performance metrics described above at 7 airports in 2015 and reported it has since implemented the metrics at all 87 BDA airports. The program will need to track these metrics for a period of time to demonstrate how they improve operations. Because the metrics were implemented recently, the program has not obtained enough information to assess how well the metrics provide information that will improve operations.

Implementation of Recommendation #2

Our May 2013 audit report also recommended that TSA develop and implement controls intended to ensure completeness, accuracy, authorization, and validity of referral data entered into the Performance Measurement and Information System.

TSA has continued to refine and update BDA program controls to ensure it captures accurate and reliable program data. For example, in December 2014, TSA replaced its large-scale data audit with a biweekly monitoring and reporting process. TSA made this change to help with the timely identification and correction of errors and discrepancies. TSA now requires BDOs to input referrals into the reporting system within 24 hours of the occurrence. TSA mandated that change because information not input timely adversely affects the integrity of the data collected in BDA information systems and associated reporting.

TSA expanded these biweekly reports in 2015 to include data entered in the BDO Efficiency and Accountability Metrics (BEAM) database. BDOs must record their daily activity in BEAM. TSA uses the BEAM to generate reports that help airport leadership identify inefficiencies, monitor operations for compliance with program-defined goals, and further refine the BDA program.

Unfortunately, TSA has experienced delays with information technology initiatives aimed at further improving deficiencies in the existing Performance Measurement and Information System and providing real-time reporting. Specifically, program officials plan to transfer referral data from the Performance Measurement and Information System to a module on its integrated Airport Information Management System. As of our exit conference this had not occurred, once completed, program officials told us it plans to use this system to monitor performance in accordance with the program's recently developed performance metrics. Since TSA had not implemented and tested the system at the time of our review, we were unable to assess its impact on improving data accuracy and reliability.



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Department of Homeland Security

Conclusion

TSA needs to fully assess the impact of the three recently developed BDA program performance metrics and continue to revise them as necessary. We will revisit this program in FY 2017 — after the BDA Program Office has had sufficient time to assess these newly implemented performance metrics.

Objective, Scope, & Methodology

The objective of this verification review was to ensure the TSA's SPOT program, now known as the BDA program, implemented two closed recommendations as reported in OIG-13-91.² Verification reviews typically involve a review of only selected recommendations that we have identified as most critical to audit findings. Our review focused on recommendations #1 and #2, which we identified as the most critical because they address strategic planning as well the use of accurate and reliable data. Strategic planning is the keystone to a successful program, and having accurate and reliable data is essential to achieve performance goals.

To achieve our objective, we reviewed BDA Program documentation including the *BDA Strategic Plan for FYs 2016–18*; spend plans, *BDA Metrics and Analysis Guide*, Timeliness and Accuracy reports, and other applicable reports and program documentation. We also reviewed information from various systems that capture referral data for BDA operations. We conducted an analysis of these referral reports for completeness. However, we did not assess the reliability of the data since we do not use the data to support the conclusions we made in this review.

We interviewed TSA officials from the BDA Program Office headquarters in Washington, DC. We also conducted a site visit at the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport, FL, and observed BDA program operations. The site location was selected because of team members' proximity to the airport.

We conducted this verification review in February and March 2016 pursuant to the *Inspector General Act of 1978*, as amended. This review was not conducted according to generally accepted government auditing standards. Major contributors to this report include Brooke Bebow, Director; Maryann Pereira, Audit Manager; Dawn Pizarro, Auditor; Marissa Weinschel, Program Analyst; and Brandon Landry, Program Analyst.

² All six of the recommendations in the original report had been closed prior to the initiation of our verification review.



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Department of Homeland Security

Appendix A Report Distribution

Department of Homeland Security

Secretary
Deputy Secretary
Chief of Staff
General Counsel
Executive Secretary
Director, GAO/OIG Liaison Office
Assistant Secretary for Office of Policy
Assistant Secretary for Office of Public Affairs
Assistant Secretary for Office of Legislative Affairs

Transportation Security Administration

Administrator
Audit Liaison

Office of Management and Budget

Chief, Homeland Security Branch
DHS OIG Budget Examiner

Congress

Congressional Oversight and Appropriations Committees, as appropriate

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND COPIES

To view this and any of our other reports, please visit our website at: www.oig.dhs.gov.

For further information or questions, please contact Office of Inspector General Public Affairs at: DHS-OIG.OfficePublicAffairs@oig.dhs.gov. Follow us on Twitter at: @dhsoig.



OIG HOTLINE

To report fraud, waste, or abuse, visit our website at www.oig.dhs.gov and click on the red "Hotline" tab. If you cannot access our website, call our hotline at (800) 323-8603, fax our hotline at (202) 254-4297, or write to us at:

Department of Homeland Security
Office of Inspector General, Mail Stop 0305
Attention: Hotline
245 Murray Drive, SW
Washington, DC 20528-0305