



A Committee of the
Council of the Inspectors General
on Integrity and Efficiency

PANDEMIC RESPONSE ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE
Semiannual Report to Congress

OCTOBER 1, 2020–MARCH 31, 2021



Message from the Chair

I am pleased to present the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee's (PRAC) second Semiannual Report to Congress, covering the period from October 1, 2020, through March 31, 2021. One year has passed since the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was enacted, creating the PRAC to provide oversight of multiple pandemic response programs to ensure taxpayer dollars are used effectively in response to this unprecedented health and economic crisis.

Enactment of the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan (ARP) in March 2021 adds to the independent oversight responsibilities of the PRAC and its member Inspectors General (IGs). We are committed to promoting transparency and conducting aggressive oversight of the more than \$5 trillion in pandemic response funding included in the ARP, the CARES Act, and other pandemic relief legislation. Independent oversight of relief spending is essential to identify fraud, waste, and abuse of funds by bad actors, and to also ensure the relief reaches those individuals and businesses it was intended to help and has the desired impact, whether that be emergency rental assistance, unemployment benefits, or a small business loan.

To put it in perspective, the more than \$5 trillion in relief provided to address the pandemic and its health and economic impact to Americans is more than the federal government's total spending in 2019 for all discretionary, mandatory, and interest on the

debt. A program of this magnitude takes a monumental and whole-of-government effort to execute. The speed at which money has been disbursed and the sheer amount of funding put the funds at high risk of fraud and misuse, making the work of oversight entities like the PRAC and IGs essential to a successful national recovery.

Over the past six months, the PRAC has worked with member IGs to conduct oversight that seeks to identify and mitigate programmatic and systemic risks, and to develop recommendations for program improvements, refer matters for criminal and civil investigations, and identify misspent funds for potential recovery. The 22 PRAC IGs, as well as other IGs whose agencies received emergency pandemic funding, issued 103 reports between October 1, 2020, and March 31, 2021, related to the federal pandemic response. We have provided the public with accessible, timely, accurate, and comprehensive data on relief spending for programs such as the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) via our website, PandemicOversight.gov. Over the past year, the PRAC has served as an effective forum for coordination and collaboration among Offices of Inspectors General (OIGs) and other oversight partners, including the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and state and local auditors to minimize duplication of effort and support high-impact oversight of covered funds and the coronavirus response.



In January 2021, the PRAC stood up a Fraud Task Force to serve as a coordination tool to assist OIGs in their investigation of pandemic fraud; to serve as a coordinating body with Department of Justice prosecutors, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and other federal law enforcement agencies; and to enable OIGs to tap into criminal investigators and analysts from across the OIG community to help handle pandemic fraud cases.

Fulfilling the PRAC’s mission of rooting out waste, fraud, and abuse in novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) response spending requires advanced technological tools, including the use of data analytics to identify fraudulent payments before they are made, to strengthen compliance and audit efforts, and support efforts to recover ill-gotten gains. To that end, the PRAC has established the Pandemic Analytics Center of Excellence (PACE) to: (1) conduct data analysis and visualization of pandemic response funds; (2) provide fraud-fighting tools and central shared analytic services to the IG community; (3) enable the broad sharing of data, analytics, and leading practices across the oversight and law enforcement community; and (4) assist investigations and audits of pandemic relief programs with expanded data for open source investigative intelligence.

The PRAC remains committed to our mission of providing transparency and deep insights about how pandemic relief dollars have been spent and whether those funds reached their intended recipients. We have identified gaps in program-level data and are working closely with the Office of Management and Budget and our IG partners to address gaps and improve the data quality.

It is critical that the PRAC and individual OIGs inform Congress and the American public about whether these massive financial investments have helped communities, small and large businesses, state, local, and Tribal governments, and our public health system recover from the effects of the virus. One of our primary roles is to provide an objective, fact-based answer to this question: “Has this level of pandemic spending been effective, and if not, what needs to change?”

We hope you find this semiannual report informative.

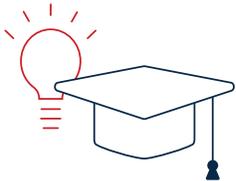
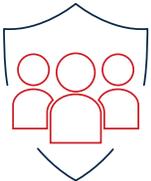
The Honorable Michael E. Horowitz
Chair, PRAC
Inspector General, U.S. Department of Justice



Contents

- i Message from the Chair**
- 1 Highlights**
- 2 Background**
- 4 Accomplishments**
- 15 Holding Wrongdoers Accountable Through Investigations**
- 22 Insights Through Oversight Reports**
- 36 Appendix A: Acronym List**
- 37 Appendix B: Pandemic-Related Reports by Office of Inspector General**
- 74 Appendix C: Hotlines**

Highlights

- 
Agile Products Toolkit
 November 16, 2020
- 
Data Release Coronavirus Relief Fund
 November 30, 2020
- 
\$900B Supplemental Relief Funds Enacted
 December 27, 2020
- 
Data Science Fellows Program
 January 7, 2021
- 
PRAC Fraud Task Force
 January 15, 2021
- 
Financial Sector Listening Series
 February 4, 2021
- 
\$1.9T American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Enacted
 March 11, 2021
- MITRE Report on Gaps in Pandemic Spending**
 November 19, 2020
- Data Release Paycheck Protection Program**
 December 6, 2020
- PRAC Chair Appointed**
 January 4, 2021
- COVID-19 Testing Report**
 January 14, 2021
- UPDATE Top Pandemic Challenges**
 February 3, 2021
- UPDATE Coronavirus Relief Fund Data**
 February 12, 2021
- Year One Retrospective Event**
 March 25, 2021

Background

Established in March 2020 by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) Act, the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee (PRAC) is a Committee of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. CIGIE is an independent entity established within the executive branch by the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, which includes the 75 statutorily created Federal Inspectors General (IGs).

The CARES Act specifically identifies IGs from nine agencies as members of the PRAC but allows the PRAC Chair to designate additional IGs to serve on the Committee from any agency that receives pandemic funds or is otherwise

involved in the Federal Government’s response to the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Consistent with the CARES Act, the IGs serving on the Committee continue to perform their IG duties. At present, the PRAC is composed of 22 IGs (see PRAC Membership list below).

The Committee is supported by a full-time Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, and professional staff.

The PRAC promotes transparency and provides Congress, agencies, and the public with objective, reliable information about covered funds. Covered funds, which include loans,

PRAC Membership

<i>Name</i>	<i>Department or Agency</i>
Michael E. Horowitz, Chair	Department of Justice
Paul K. Martin, Vice Chair	National Aeronautics and Space Association
Mark Bialek	Federal Reserve Board / Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
Sandra D. Bruce	Department of Education
Kathy A. Buller	Peace Corps
Joseph Cuffari	Department of Homeland Security
Rae Oliver Davis	Department of Housing and Urban Development
Mark Lee Greenblatt	Department of the Interior
Richard Delmar	Department of the Treasury
Eric J. Soskin	Department of Transportation
Phyllis K. Fong	Department of Agriculture
J. Russell George	Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration
Susan S. Gibson	National Reconnaissance Office
Christi A. Grimm	Department of Health and Human Services
Allison C. Lerner	National Science Foundation
Jay N. Lerner	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Brian D. Miller	Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery
Michael J. Missal	Department of Veterans Affairs
Sean W. O'Donnell	Department of Defense
Larry D. Turner	Department of Labor
Hannibal “Mike” Ware	Small Business Administration
Tammy L. Whitcomb	U.S. Postal Service

BACKGROUND

are funds made available in any form to any non-federal entity, not including individuals, under the CARES Act, Families First Coronavirus Response Act, Coronavirus preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, and any other act primarily making appropriations for the coronavirus response and related activities.

We strive to detect fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement in federal programs related to the Federal Government's response to the nationwide public health emergency and to programs that provide relief to individuals, large corporations, small businesses, state and local governments, and public services.

We work with IGs to develop recommendations for program improvements, refer matters for criminal investigations, and identify misspent covered funds for recovery. The PRAC's work helps to safeguard the Federal Government's more than \$5 trillion in emergency aid to individuals, businesses, and state, local, and Tribal governments nationwide. The PRAC released its Strategic Plan for 2020 through 2025 on July 23, 2020. The plan identifies four goals to carry out the PRAC's mission and vision (see Figure 1). These goals and objectives are not mutually exclusive—audits, investigations, reviews, and other activities may meet more than one goal or objective.



Figure 1. PRAC Mission, Vision, and Goals

Accomplishments

The PRAC was established to serve the American public by promoting transparency and facilitating coordinated oversight of the Federal Government’s COVID-19 pandemic response and associated spending. Our goals are to detect fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement and to identify and mitigate major risks that cross program and agency boundaries. We aim to serve as the eyes and

ears of the American public, monitoring the government’s pandemic response spending and reporting accessible, timely, accurate, comprehensive data that can be translated into actionable insights. The PRAC’s Strategic Plan for 2020 through 2025 identifies the following goals to carry out PRAC’s mission and vision (see Figure 2).

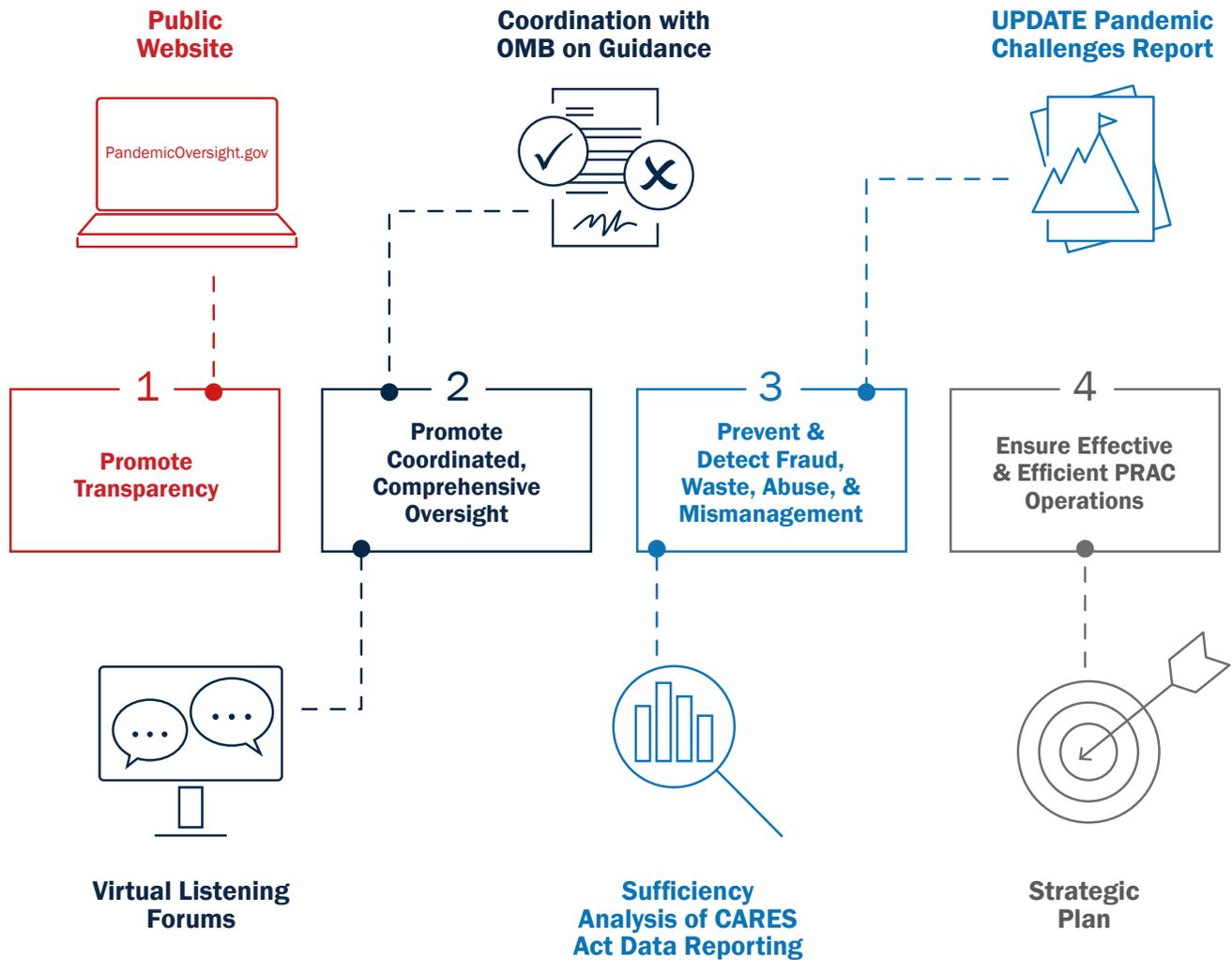


Figure 2. PRAC’s Accomplishments Aligned to Strategic Goals

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Goal One: Promote Transparency

Provide the Public with Timely Data and Information on Covered Funds and the Coronavirus Response

The PRAC fosters transparency of over \$5 trillion in federal pandemic response spending through our robust, publicly accessible website, [PandemicOversight.gov](https://www.pandemicoversight.gov). The website includes important information about the PRAC and a wide range of data related to how emergency pandemic funds have been spent.

Our website [PandemicOversight.gov](https://www.pandemicoversight.gov) contains the following:

- Easy to understand and regularly updated materials and information explaining the coronavirus response and how covered funds are being used
- IG accountability information, including findings, progress reports, audits, and inspections
- Data on relevant operational, economic, financial, grant, information in user-friendly visual presentations to enhance public awareness on how covered funds are used and the Federal Government's coronavirus response
- Detailed data on any Federal Government awards that expend covered funds
- An overview of the funding provided by the five pandemic response laws (data from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) will be added in the near future), broken down into broad funding categories and displayed on two visualizations
- Downloadable datasets on covered funds

- A channel for the public to give feedback on the performance of any covered funds, the pandemic response, and the website itself
- Links to other government websites with pandemic response resources for the public, business, and fraud awareness
- Spend plans from 32 federal agencies for how each is using covered funds
- Recommendations made to agencies relating to covered funds and the coronavirus response, as well as the status of each recommendation

The website also has detailed information about oversight activities, including an updated list of all ongoing work from member IGs related to the pandemic. The website contains accountability information, including findings from Offices of Inspectors General (OIGs), such as completed audits and inspections, as well as Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports. We also track recommendations that IGs have made to agencies to help them improve the operations of government programs related to the pandemic.

We are continuing to add datasets and new visualizations to make [PandemicOversight.gov](https://www.pandemicoversight.gov) more accessible. We are also looking forward to connecting spending data, pandemic data, and oversight activities to better tell the story of the government's pandemic response.

The PRAC continues to coordinate closely with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on pandemic issues, such as payment integrity and transparency. On March 19, OMB issued M-21-20, *Promoting Public Trust in the Federal Government through Effective*

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Implementation of the American Rescue Plan Act and Stewardship of the Taxpayer Resources. This guidance addresses some of the concerns the PRAC has been discussing with OMB this past year, particularly the need for detailed and accurate award descriptions and enhanced transparency of spending through the use of Disaster and Emergency Funding Codes. The guidance specifically mentions the administration’s commitment to working with the PRAC and IGs to strengthen payment integrity to minimize the risk of fraud, waste, and abuse. Additionally, the guidance notes that “OMB anticipates continued collaboration with the PRAC to include joint communications on issues related to ARP relief that will raise awareness on specific challenges and opportunities for payment integrity.”

Outreach and Engagement

The PRAC uses a variety of communications methods and platforms, from social media to direct email, to increase the visibility of our efforts, the work and recommendations of pandemic IGs and other oversight partners, and to encourage the public to provide feedback on the use or misuse of covered funds. We regularly issue press releases and alerts when new datasets are added to PandemicOversight.gov. We maintain an active presence on social media, at the Twitter handle @COVID_Oversight.

In February 2021, the PRAC developed a new email newsletter on issues that cut across agency boundaries to highlight trends, risks, and common themes in PRAC OIG work. In March 2021, our newsletter highlighted work across OIGs to prevent the public from falling victim to consumer fraud. We transitioned to a customer management email platform, allowing us to use analytics to better understand audience

engagement and needs and to adjust our tools for greatest impact.

The PRAC provides information on pandemic spending and response programs to the public through a variety of channels and activities, including stakeholder listening forums, data analytics listening sessions, and videos, which are available on the PRAC YouTube channel and accessible via [PandemicOversight.gov](https://pandemicoversight.gov). Through short videos and infographics, we communicate oversight findings and insights in an accessible, interesting, and digestible way to increase the public’s interest in and understanding of very complex information.

As examples, during the reporting period we created the following products and disseminated through direct email, YouTube, and Twitter:

- The “PRAC Math” video series designed to break down complex spending topics
- An infographic on the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) to increase understanding of the dataset available for the \$150 billion in funding that went to state, local, Tribal, and territorial governments
- A one-page “By the Numbers” guide with facts and insights on who received funds from the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)
- An infographic detailing the funds appropriated through the December 27, 2020, pandemic relief bill of \$900 billion
- A visual guide to the funds appropriated in the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

To ensure the public is aware of our activities, we provide regular updates on social media,

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

sharing content we've created on Twitter to help increase understanding of pandemic response. Since November 2020, we have increased the number of our Twitter followers by nearly 23% and increased impressions by 4,786.83%.

PRAC leadership frequently engages with Congressional leaders and staff through briefings as well as formal testimony. PRAC Chair Michael Horowitz testified to the House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis on March 25 on the topic of fraud in small business pandemic relief programs alongside Small Business Administration (SBA) IG Mike Ware and GAO.

In addition, PRAC staff regularly presents at external speaking engagements with federal agencies, accounting and auditing groups, law enforcement, and good government groups. Our outreach and engagement team meets with nonprofit organizations to better understand how we might work together.

To spark discussion around the impact of CARES Act funding, we held a virtual forum on March 25, 2021—*CARES Act One Year Later: Oversight of America's Investment in Pandemic Response* to reflect on the progress that has been made, as well as discuss lessons learned and the way forward. The event began with a video overview of the PRAC's work over the last year, which is available on our [YouTube channel](#).

The event was attended live by 550 participants and featured prerecorded remarks from Sen. Gary Peters, Rep. Carolyn Maloney, Rep. James Comer, and Rep. Jim Clyburn. Panel discussions included PRAC Chair Michael Horowitz, Gene Dodaro of GAO, and James-Christian Blockwood of the Partnership for Public Service on the challenges and success in pandemic oversight;

Dr. Ashish Jha of Brown University, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Dr. Georges Benjamin of the American Public Health Association on the ways the CARES Act funding impacted delivery of health care; and Dr. Wendy Edelberg, of the Brookings Institution, Dr. Doug Elmendorf of Harvard, and Steve Ballmer of [USAFacts.org](#) on the overall economic impact of pandemic relief funding. To share these insights widely with the public, the PRAC posted the event video on [PandemicOversight.gov](#) and our YouTube channel and featured clips from the video on Twitter.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Goal Two: Promote Coordinated, Comprehensive Oversight

Facilitate Exceptional Coordination and Collaboration to Ensure High-Impact Results

IGs have a rich history of collaboration and coordination within the community and with their federal, state, and local partners in pursuit of effective oversight. The PRAC provides an effective forum for IGs and other oversight partners, including GAO and state and local auditors, evaluators, and inspectors, to minimize duplication of effort and support high-impact oversight of covered funds and the pandemic response. The PRAC established six subcommittees—chaired by Committee members—to share, through formalized coordination, ongoing oversight and accountability efforts, best practices, and lessons learned. The PRAC also added a Data Sharing issue group to the other three groups already established to address specific areas of concern during the pandemic.

Subcommittees

1. Investigations
 - Law Enforcement Coordination
 - Training
 - Data Analytics
 - Special Investigative Techniques
2. Audit, Inspections, and Evaluation
3. Information Technology
4. Legislative/External Communications
5. GAO, State, and Local Coordination

Issue Groups

1. Intelligence Oversight
2. Health Care Oversight
3. Financial Institutions Oversight
4. Data Sharing

The subcommittees and issue groups are self-governing and serve as communities of interest for common concerns and providing strategic input to the PRAC and the PRAC Executive Director. The PRAC staff participate in the subcommittees and issue groups as supporting members, provide PRAC-centered guidance, when needed, and strive to keep areas of the community informed on happenings in the community that impact their committee or group.

In February and March 2021, the Financial Institutions Oversight issue group hosted three pandemic response listening forums related to [Housing Insights](#), [Perspectives of Small Business Borrowers](#), and [Perspectives from the Banking Industry](#). The purpose was to gather input and insights on the operation, efficiency, and effectiveness of CARES Act programs and the pandemic response efforts of the Federal Government and the Federal Reserve. Panelists shared their views on whether the CARES Act funding and programs effectively reached the intended individuals and communities as well as their recommendations for areas for enhanced oversight.

Similarly, the GAO, State and Local subcommittee is hosting a series of monthly listening posts, of which two have been held to date, to engage in discussions related to oversight matters, lessons learned, best practices, and issues that are faced by federal, state, and local audit, program, and fiscal partners in their oversight of the CRF and/or the CARES Act funds. For the listening posts, the PRAC OIGs collaborate with participants from GAO, the National Association of State Auditors,

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Comptrollers and Treasurers, the Association of Local Government Auditors entities responsible for Tribal oversight.

The PRAC Audit, Inspection, and Evaluation subcommittee led the development of the PRAC's [Agile Products Toolkit](#) in November 2020. The public and policymakers need timely reporting of potential risks and management concerns related to COVID-19 response and response spending. The toolkit, along with a supporting video, is a resource to assist federal, state, and local oversight agencies in conducting rapid-response reviews and oversight of federal funding. The Agile Products Toolkit was designed to provide a blueprint for how to produce these types of reports quickly, increasing transparency for stakeholders.

In February 2021, we issued an update to our June 2020 report [Top Challenges Facing Federal Agencies: COVID-19 Emergency Relief and Response Efforts](#).

The update, [Top Challenges in Pandemic Relief and Response](#), provides insights into the top challenges federal agencies that received pandemic related funding currently face, as identified by OIGs. The PRAC reached back out to OIGs from more than 40 agencies and reviewed Management Challenges reports issued by OIGs since March 2020. We added four new challenges and modified the Protecting Health and Safety challenge to Protecting the Health and Safety of the Public.

The four new challenges we identified are:



Preventing and Detecting Fraud Against Government Programs

- Numerous pandemic response programs are being hit by bad actors looking to fraudulently obtain federal funds
- Agencies can improve fraud prevention, detection, and response when managers can identify and address fraud risks



Informing and Protecting the Public Against Pandemic-Related Fraud

- Americans are being targeted in all types of scams related to the pandemic



Data Transparency and Completeness

- Federal agencies need to complete and accurate data to make decisions and assess performance of programs
- We found the Federal Government is not ensuring recipients of pandemic funds are reporting required data



Federal Workforce Safety

- As the federal workforce transitions from remote work back to the office, agencies face new challenges in protecting employees

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Foster Sound Stewardship of Covered Funds and Programs

Efficient and effective management and administration of taxpayer-funded programs are essential to ensure that coronavirus response programs achieve their intended purposes and provide relief to intended individuals and entities. To address this, the PRAC issued two reports and has four ongoing projects.

Issued Reports

First, the PRAC commissioned the MITRE Corporation, a federally funded research and development organization, to do an independent assessment of existing federal data to determine if it is sufficiently comprehensive and accurate to provide transparency into federal pandemic-related spending. In the November 2020 report, [Transparency in Pandemic-related Federal Spending: Report of Alignment and Gaps](#), MITRE reported that existing data satisfies a substantial portion of the CARES Act transparency requirements for pandemic relief funds. However, MITRE found 16 key gaps that may impair the PRAC's ability to meet all transparency requirements in Sections 15010 and 15011 of the CARES Act. MITRE identified 13 actions to mitigate these gaps ranging from relatively minor changes to more complex corrective actions that may require changes to policy, legislation, or IT systems.

Second, in January 2021, we issued [Federal COVID-19 Testing Report: Data Insights from Six Federal Health Care Programs](#). This report provided five insights on COVID-19 testing in federal health care programs as well as data-driven details related to the key questions.

Ongoing Projects

The PRAC has four ongoing projects with partners across the community.

**Sole Source Contracting**

Examines federal contracts related to the COVID-19 pandemic that were awarded to first-time federal contractors without competitive bidding.

**State Spend Rates**

Intends to provide transparency to Congress and policymakers about the ability of states and localities to spend pandemic response funds provided by the Federal Government across different programs. It may also highlight any challenges faced by these recipients expending funds.

**Multi-Dipping of Funds Provided to Tribal Governments**

Examines the possibility of Tribal government recipients receiving funding from multiple federal programs for the same purpose.

**Data Gaps**

Will inspect and evaluate transparency in award data for federal relief and assistance spending in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In addition to the reports and ongoing work, the PRAC hosted a Virtual Forum on Grant Oversight in November 2020 for the audit and investigation OIG community. The session was attended by over 500 participants.

Ensure Efficient Sharing of Data, Analytics, and Other Information

The PRAC has established the Pandemic Analytics Center of Excellence (PACE). The PRAC will use its authorities to provide, directly or in partnership with IGs that have existing data capabilities, a modern infrastructure to allow the efficient sharing of timely, relevant, actionable data among IGs and the broader oversight community.

The PACE provides the enhanced capacity needed to ensure that pandemic response funds are being used for their intended purposes, and are not wasted or misused. The PACE is currently utilizing the procurement process to provide the PRAC and OIGs tools to: (1) conduct data analysis and visualization of all pandemic response funds; (2) provide fraud-fighting tools and centrally shared services to the IG community; (3) enable the broad sharing of data, analytics, and leading practices across the oversight and law enforcement communities; and (4) assist investigations and audits of pandemic relief programs with expanded data for open source investigative intelligence.

For example, beginning in March 2021, we have been able to share nonpublic PPP data with five OIGs and Department of Justice (DOJ), as a law enforcement organization, so they can use the data in their oversight and accountability activities.

To further support our OIG partners, we have established a Data Science Fellows Program.

These data science fellows will assist the PRAC and OIG partners in identifying trends, patterns, and anomalies in data, and transform data into insights to detect and prevent potential or suspected fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement of covered funds.

Additionally, the PRAC Data Sharing issue group coordinates regular meetings of OIGs to discuss data sharing opportunities to identify potential cross-cutting initiatives, to share lessons learned from OIG data-related oversight work, and to consider ways to prevent and detect fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement through the use of data analytics. Two focus groups that have come out of the Data Issue Sharing Group looked into:

- Multi-dipping, or when recipients of pandemic funds use multiple sources of funds for the same purpose
- Outcomes related to oversight and inspections of Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) fraud and misuse

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Goal Three: Prevent and Detect Fraud, Waste, Abuse, and Mismanagement

Mitigate Major Risks That Cut Across Program and Agency Boundaries

The PRAC works with federal OIGs and other oversight partners to identify major cross-cutting risks by using data analytics and risk assessments. Such risks may include criminal fraud schemes, internal control weaknesses with the disbursement and accounting of covered funds, and deficiencies with coordination across agencies and programs.

One ongoing initiative with the PRAC and the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) OIG focuses on pandemic fraud risks:



Fraud Risk

A project focused on analyzing HUD's fraud risk management practices and the fraud risks HUD has identified for the Community Development Block Grant and Emergency Solutions Grant funds appropriated by the CARES Act to develop an inventory of fraud risks not already identified by HUD.

The PRAC is also continuing to track scam and fraud alerts issued by our member agencies to ensure the broadest dissemination on our website and social media platforms. Most recently, the PRAC worked with the Health and Human Services (HHS) OIG to publish an alert on the vaccine scams that target the public.

We have also published Featured Stories that highlight risks, success stories, and accomplishments from around the community.

Some recent articles include:

- [Fraud in Unemployment Insurance](#)
- [Don't Fall for Scammers Offering Access to COVID-19 Vaccine](#)
- [Self-Certification Procedures May Increase Fraud Risk in Pandemic Response Programs](#)

Hold Wrongdoers Accountable

The PRAC supports law enforcement in pursuing fraud investigations and criminal enforcement. To this end, the PRAC established the PRAC Fraud Task Force to: (1) serve as a deconfliction and coordination body; (2) assist OIGs in their investigative efforts; (3) serve as a coordinating body with DOJ prosecutors, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and other federal law enforcement agencies; and (4) forge a path for OIGs to tap into available criminal investigators and analysts from across the OIG community when handling pandemic fraud cases. Further, the PRAC will provide contract and staff support to the Fraud Task Force, as well as assist OIGs with pursuing administrative remedies such as suspension and debarment.

Additionally, the PRAC has a draft subpoena policy in the clearance process with our Committee members, which should be approved in April 2021. The policy, when adopted, will directly support the PRAC Fraud Task Force and our member OIGs, and contribute to the OIG community's efforts to stop the large-scale fraud we are seeing in pandemic response programs, like PPP.

The PRAC encourages the public to report concerns, including allegations of fraud, waste,

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

abuse, or whistleblower reprisal using the [Hotline Complaint form](#). The PRAC hotline staff refers such allegations to the appropriate OIG

or agency and supports hotlines for individual IGs as well as other federal, state, and local oversight entities.

Goal Four: Ensure Effective and Efficient PRAC Operations

Fulfill Statutory Responsibilities

We have utilized our budget to hire and train staff, continue to evolve our website, and conduct Committee operations. In its first year, the PRAC continues to evaluate the needs of the Committee to ensure our workforce can fulfill our responsibilities. The PRAC may also use funds to support relevant oversight duties of IGs and to engage contractors to conduct audits or reviews.

The PRAC completed our first Enterprise Risk Management project to identify potential risks to fulfilling our statutory goals and mission. As part of this project, the PRAC conducted workshops with staff across the organization to identify more than 70 risks to add to the PRAC's Risk Register. The PRAC used this information to develop the PRAC's Risk Profile to prioritize the most significant risks and implement management and mitigation activities across the organization. The PRAC will continue to mature the Enterprise Risk Management activities and report progress in future updates.

The PRAC's Executive Director, in consultation with the Committee, will continuously evaluate and promote the PRAC's performance in overseeing the COVID-19 pandemic response.

Support the Independent Oversight of Inspectors General

The PRAC uses leading tools and practices to support IGs. The PRAC has established the PACE and with it has begun developing a data warehouse and an analytics capability to provide IGs with accessible data, tools, infrastructure, data analytics, and other support to help them conduct vigorous pandemic response oversight, including oversight of cross-cutting vulnerabilities.

Within the PRAC, we implemented a shared services model for subject matter experts, such as visual information design. These services have been used by OIGs at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Department of the Interior, and National Aeronautics and Space Administration. This expertise is available to the pandemic IG community, to produce visually appealing products that communicate complex data to the public thereby promoting data literacy.

We respect the independence of IGs to conduct audits or investigations of covered funds and the COVID-19 pandemic response. We are mindful of the complexity of the federal programs involved in the pandemic response and recovery effort and the need for deep programmatic expertise in these programs to ensure efficient and effective auditing and review. IGs have specialized expertise and institutional knowledge regarding the programs

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

of their respective agencies and the most effective oversight methods for those programs. This expertise, experience, credibility, and institutional knowledge is critical to fulfilling the PRAC's mission. Accordingly, to the extent feasible, we will rely on the existing expertise and experience of individual agency OIGs for oversight of emergency pandemic spending.

We support OIGs efforts to procure equipment and technology necessary to conduct coordinated, effective, and safe oversight.

Build a Diverse Team of Innovative Thought Leaders

We encourage creative and practical problem-solving and insightful thought leadership. We also foster collaborative professional relationships. Each of our lines of business developed a roadmap outlining their visions for the next five years. Supporting the roadmap, we have continued to expand our team with a mix of thought leaders from the federal government, the OIG community, and private sector. To recruit and retain the best candidates, provide a positive work environment, and mitigate the risk of current and future pandemic-related workplace disruptions, the PRAC functions as a distributed workforce in a virtual workplace with a small physical footprint in Washington, DC.

Holding Wrongdoers Accountable Through Investigations

A key role of OIGs is to support law enforcement in pursuing fraud investigations and criminal enforcement. A total of 15 OIGs have publicly reported investigations, indictments/complaints, arrests, and/or convictions from October 1, 2020, through March 31, 2021,

related to the Federal Government's COVID-19 pandemic response. The following section provides the total number of accountability actions organized by agency and highlights cases categorized by criminal activity.

Percentage of Investigative Results by Criminal Activity from October 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021

	Indictments/ Criminal Complaints	Arrests	Convictions
Paycheck Protection Program/ Economic Injury Disaster Loan	82%	68%	84%
Pandemic Unemployment	11%	19%	8%
Provider Relief Fund	1%	2%	
Other	2%	3%	3%
Medicare Fraud	2%	4%	
Price Gouging/Hoarding	1%	1%	1%
Personal Protective Equipment Theft	1%	2%	3%
Coronavirus Relief Fund	1%	1%	1%

Source: Assembled by the PRAC from DOJ RSS Feed.

Note: The percentages above credit all agencies involved in a single case in the individual totals. Combined totals only count unique totals; therefore, the total count will not equal the total of each OIG's statistics.

HOLDING WRONGDOERS
ACCOUNTABLE

Investigative Results from October 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021

	Indictments/ Criminal Complaints	Arrests	Convictions
	288	167	75
AmeriCorps	2	2	1
Department of Defense/Defense Criminal Investigative Service	2	2	3
Department of Education	1	1	
Department of Health and Human Services	7	7	
Department of Homeland Security	2	2	1
Department of Labor	30	30	6
Department of Veterans Affairs	4	4	2
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	48	21	16
Federal Housing Finance Agency	23	15	3
Federal Reserve Board	26	17	4
Small Business Administration	110	54	26
Social Security Administration	5	5	1
Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration	23	2	12
U.S. Postal Service	3	3	
U.S. Agency for International Development	2	2	

Source: Assembled by the PRAC from DOJ RSS Feed.

Note: The percentages above credit all agencies involved in a single case in the individual totals. Combined totals only count unique totals; therefore, the total count will not equal the total of each OIG's statistics.

Paycheck Protection Program/Economic Injury Disaster Loan Case Highlights

**FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION
FEDERAL HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY OIG
SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (SBA) OIG
TREASURY INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR TAX
ADMINISTRATION (TIGTA)**

***Seven Charged in Connection with a COVID-Relief
Fraud Scheme Involving more than 80 Fraudulent
Loan Applications Worth Approximately \$16
Million, November 2020***

Seven individuals across two states were charged in an indictment for their alleged participation in a scheme to obtain approximately \$16 million in forgivable PPP loans guaranteed by the

SBA under the CARES Act. The indictment alleges all conspired to submit more than 80 fraudulent PPP loan applications by falsifying the number of employees and the average monthly payroll expenses of the applicant businesses. In support of these fraudulent loan applications, they conspired to submit, and did submit, fraudulent bank records and/or fake federal tax forms, according to the charges. Some of the PPP loan applications were allegedly submitted on behalf of companies the defendants controlled. Over \$3 million of the fraudulent proceeds were

HOLDING WRONGDOERS
ACCOUNTABLE

purportedly laundered through a check cashing company using over 1,100 fabricated employee paychecks. The illegally obtained funds were also allegedly used to purchase a Porsche and Lamborghini.

**FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION OIG
TREASURY INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR TAX
ADMINISTRATION (TIGTA)**

Texas Man Charged In \$24 Million COVID-Relief Fraud, October 2020

A Dallas-area man was charged in an indictment for his alleged participation in a scheme to file fraudulent loan applications, submitting 15 fraudulent applications, filed under the names of various purported businesses that he owned or controlled, to eight different SBA-approved lenders seeking approximately \$24.8 million in PPP loans. In his applications, he claimed that these businesses had numerous employees and hundreds of thousands of dollars in payroll expenses when, in fact, no business had employees or paid wages consistent with the amounts claimed in the PPP applications. He ultimately received approximately \$17.3 million in PPP loan funds and used the proceeds primarily for personal expenses, spending them on multiple homes and luxury cars, including a 2020 Bentley convertible, and sending millions of dollars in international transfers, the indictment alleges.

**FEDERAL HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY
SBA OIG**

Eight Members of Los Angeles-Based Fraud Ring Indicted for Exploiting COVID-Relief Programs, March 2021

Eight defendants were indicted for allegedly using fictitious, stolen, or synthetic identities along with fabricated tax documents and payroll records in a scheme to submit over 150 fraudulent loan applications seeking over \$21.9 million in COVID-19 relief funds guaranteed by SBA under the CARES Act. The defendants conspired together, and with others, as part of a disaster-relief loan fraud ring based in and around Los Angeles, California, received at least \$18 million in fraudulently obtained funds, and used the funds as down payments on luxury homes and to buy gold coins, diamonds, jewelry, luxury watches, fine imported furnishings, designer handbags and clothing, cryptocurrency, and securities.

Eight defendants indicted for allegedly using fictitious, stolen, or synthetic identities to submit over 150 fraudulent loan applications seeking over \$21.9 million.

Pandemic Unemployment Case Highlights

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) OIG U.S. POSTAL SERVICE (USPS) OIG

Two Postal Service Employees Face Federal Charges of Using Funds from Unemployment Insurance Scheme to Buy Postal Money Orders, March 2021

The two defendants obtained debit cards issued by the California Employment Development Department (EDD), which administers the state's unemployment insurance program. Those debit cards were issued based on applications for pandemic-related unemployment benefits submitted under stolen identities.

Both defendants used the fraudulently obtained EDD debit cards to purchase and cash Postal money orders, additionally unidentified individuals used the EDD debit cards to purchase Postal money orders from the defendants while they were on duty at the Post Office. The defendants also allegedly used the EDD debit cards issued in other people's names to withdraw thousands of dollars from ATMs and deposit multiple fraudulently purchased Postal money orders directly into their own bank accounts.

DOL OIG

San Gabriel Valley Man Pleads Guilty to Mail Fraud Charge for Fraudulently Obtaining Over \$500,000 in COVID-19 Jobless Relief, February 2021

The defendant took advantage of provisions in the CARES Act to file approximately 85 unemployment insurance claims with the EDD falsely asserting that the named claimants were self-employed real estate agents in Los Angeles County whose jobs had been adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In actuality, the named claimants resided in Saipan or the Philippines, were not registered as real estate agents in Los Angeles County, had no employment history in California, and were not eligible for the benefits the defendant claimed. He listed his own residence as the mailing address for each of the named claimants, the plea agreement states. As a result, the EDD debit cards were mailed to the defendant, who then used them to withdraw the fraudulently obtained funds. In his plea agreement, the defendant admitted that his scheme caused losses to EDD and the United States Treasury of at least \$516,244.

DOL OIG

Menifee Woman Pleads Guilty to Federal Criminal Charge for Fraudulently Obtaining Over \$500,000 in COVID-19 Jobless Relief, December 2020

The defendant pled guilty to knowingly using stolen personal identifiable information, such as dates of birth and Social Security numbers, to apply for unemployment insurance benefits in the names of approximately fifty people. Based upon the defendant's fraudulent applications, she obtained from the EDD multiple debit cards totaling more than \$500,000 in COVID-related unemployment benefits to which she was not entitled, the plea agreement states. The defendant admitted that she knew people who access the "dark web" to purchase stolen identities that she used to then file fraudulent claims with EDD. She further admitted to watching YouTube videos that instructed viewers on how to commit EDD fraud.

Health Care/Medicare Fraud Case Highlights

HHS OIG

More Charges Against State Lawmaker for \$900,000 COVID-19 Fraud Scheme at Springfield Health Care Charity, March 2021

The indictment alleges that the defendant fraudulently received \$296,574 in CARES Act funds on behalf of her medical clinic for COVID-19 testing. In fact, the medical clinic closed at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and remained closed from March 2020 to June 2020. The defendant allegedly sought CARES Act funding for COVID-19 testing that had been provided, and already paid for, at her for-profit medical clinic. According to the indictment, she requested reimbursement for \$379,294 in COVID-19 testing and related expenses, and future funding in the amount of \$503,350. In total, she applied for \$882,644 from the CARES Act Relief Fund on her clinic's behalf.

FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION HHS OIG

Two Owners of New York Pharmacies Charged in a \$30 Million COVID-19 Health Care Fraud and Money Laundering Case, December 2020

The owners of over a dozen New York-area pharmacies were charged in an indictment for their roles in a \$30 million health care fraud and money laundering scheme, in which they exploited emergency codes and edits in the Medicare system that went into effect due to the COVID-19 pandemic in order to submit fraudulent claims for expensive cancer drugs that were never provided, ordered, or authorized by medical professionals.

The indictment alleges that the defendants acquired control over dozens of New York pharmacies by paying others to pose as the owners of the pharmacies and hiring pharmacists to pretend to be supervising pharmacists at the pharmacies, for the purpose of obtaining pharmacy licenses and insurance plan credentialing. The defendants used the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to capitalize on a national emergency for their own financial gain by using the COVID-19 “emergency override” billing codes to submit fraudulent claims for Targretin Gel 1%, which has an average wholesale price of approximately \$34,000 for each 60-gram tube.

The indictment also alleges that, with the proceeds of the fraud, the defendants engaged in a complex money laundering conspiracy. They created sham pharmacy wholesale companies, which they named after pre-existing pharmacy wholesalers, and fabricated invoices to make it appear that funds transferred from the pharmacies to the sham pharmacy wholesale companies were for legitimate pharmaceutical drug purchases.

Fraudsters exploit the national emergency by using the COVID-19 “emergency override” billing codes to submit fraudulent claims for Targretin Gel 1%, which has an average wholesale price of about \$34,000 per tube.

Personal Protective Equipment Case Highlights

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) OIG

Businessman Charged in Scheme to Hoard Personal Protective Equipment and Price Gouge Health Care Providers, January 2021

The owner of a wholesale pharmaceutical company was indicted in the Southern District of Mississippi on charges of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and mail fraud, conspiracy to defraud the United States, conspiracy to commit hoarding of designated scarce materials, and hoarding of designated scarce materials. The VA OIG, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations, and FBI investigation resulted in charges alleging that the defendant participated in a scheme to defraud healthcare

providers, to include the VA, of more than \$1.8 million by acquiring and hoarding personal protective equipment. It is alleged that the defendant directed sales representatives to solicit healthcare providers, including the VA, to purchase personal protective equipment and other designated materials at excessively inflated prices through high-pressure sales tactics and through misrepresenting sourcing and actual costs. The defendant allegedly sold N95 masks to the VA and other healthcare providers for as much as \$25 per mask, despite acquiring such masks at much lower prices. The total amount of designated materials billed to the VA by the vendor was approximately \$334,300.

Other Case Highlights

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OIG

Two Louisiana College Students Charged with Identify Theft, March 2021

The indictment alleges the defendants were involved in a fraudulent scheme to obtain emergency financial aid grants offered to colleges as part of the CARES Act. As part of the Act, funds were given to the office of Postsecondary Education for the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund. Louisiana College in Pineville, Louisiana was allotted emergency funding for its students.

It is alleged in the indictment that between June 5, 2020, and June 20, 2020, the defendants conspired to fraudulently obtain CARES Act funds for their own use. The defendants and other members of the conspiracy used

Louisiana College Student Identification Numbers and passwords of other students to access the Louisiana College Online Student Portal to apply for CARES Act emergency financial aid grants in the names of individuals and direct the grants to specific bank accounts controlled by members of the conspiracy.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (DHS) OIG VA OIG

CEO Pleads Guilty to Defrauding Multiple Federal Agencies, February 2021

An Arlington businessman pleaded guilty to making false statements to multiple federal agencies in order to fraudulently obtain multimillion-dollar government contracts, COVID-19 emergency relief loans, and undeserved military service benefits.

HOLDING WRONGDOERS ACCOUNTABLE

The defendant made false statements to the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the VA in order to obtain lucrative contracts to provide COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE). In addition, he fraudulently obtained loans under the federal PPP and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program (EIDL), and he also defrauded the VA by falsely claiming to be entitled to veteran's benefits for serving in the U.S. Marine Corps when, in fact, he never served in the Marines.

Defendant makes false statements to multiple federal agencies in order to fraudulently obtain multimillion-dollar government contracts, COVID-19 emergency relief loans, and undeserved military service benefits.

Insights Through Oversight Reports

From October 1, 2020, through March 31, 2021, 27 OIGs issued 103 oversight reports related to the Federal Government’s COVID-19 pandemic response. These reports generally aligned with the most common areas of concern the PRAC identified in its [top challenges report](#) and informed the addition of [four new challenges](#) in February 2021. OIGs continue to look for new ways to conduct their work and coordinate across agency boundaries—such as through the issuance of the PRAC’s [COVID-19](#)

[Testing data brief](#) in January 2021. OIGs have also expanded their use of agile principles to issue oversight reports related to pandemic-response funds and programs a timely and responsive manner.

This section identifies the total number of issued reports for each top challenge area and presents summaries of key reports. For a complete list and summaries of all oversight reports issued, see “Appendix B” on page 37.

¹ These oversight reports include all reports, memorandums, and advisories issued by the OIGs related to coronavirus response funding and programs.

Oversight Reports from October 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021

<i>Office of Inspector General</i>	<i>Report Count</i>
Department of Commerce	1
Department of Defense	17
Department of the Interior	9
Department of Education	2
Department of Health and Human Services	5
Department of Homeland Security	2
Department of Housing and Urban Development	5
Department of Justice	13
Department of Labor	3
Department of State	1
Department of the Treasury	3
Department of Veterans Affairs	9
Environmental Protection Agency	2
General Services Administration	1
Government Publishing Office	1
Legal Services Corporation	1
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	1
National Science Foundation	2
National Reconnaissance Office	2
Office of Personnel Management	1
Pandemic Response Accountability Committee	3
Railroad Retirement Board	1
Small Business Administration	6
Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery	1
U.S. Agency for International Development	1
U.S. Postal Service	5
U.S. Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration	5
Total Reports	103



Challenge: Preventing and Detecting Fraud against Government Programs

Total Reports 2

DOL OIG

Alert Memo: The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Needs to Ensure State Workforce Agencies (SWA) Implement Effective Unemployment Insurance Program Fraud Controls for High Risk Areas, 19-21-002-03-315, February 22, 2021

DOL OIG identified more than \$5.4 billion in potentially fraudulent unemployment insurance benefits paid to individuals with social security numbers filed in multiple states, to individuals with social security numbers of deceased persons and federal inmates, and to individuals with social security numbers used to file for unemployment insurance claims with suspicious email accounts. DOL needs to take immediate action and increase its efforts to ensure State Workforce Agencies implement effective controls to mitigate fraud in these high risk areas.

DOL OIG

COVID-19: States Cite Vulnerabilities in Detecting Fraud While Complying with the CARES Act UI Program Self-Certification Requirement, 19-21-001-03-315, October 21, 2020

While states have processes in place for claimants to self-certify that they meet eligibility requirements for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefits, the states still reported challenges when implementing the program and detecting and deterring fraud. Ninety-eight percent of respondents said their state faced challenges while implementing the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program. Specifically, states identified a lack of resources to address the high volume of claims, untimely and unclear guidance from the Employment and Training Administration, and incompatible legacy systems as top challenges. In addition, states reported inherent vulnerability in the legislative self-certification process, systems issues, and inadequate fraud screening tools.

DOL OIG identified more than \$5.4 billion in potentially fraudulent unemployment insurance benefits.



Challenge: Informing and Protecting the Public against Pandemic-Related Fraud

Total Reports 2

HUD OIG

Interim Audit Memorandum—The HUD Single Family Insurance Operations Division Should Take Additional Action to Inform Homeowners of Changes to Its FHA Refund Process Resulting From the COVID-19 Pandemic, 2021-LA-0802, December 2, 2020

This audit determined whether HUD appropriately, effectively, and efficiently tracked, monitored, and issued Federal Housing Administration refunds owed to homeowners with terminated loans and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on those efforts. HUD OIG determined that COVID-19 generally did not affect the Single Family Insurance Operations Division's Federal Housing Administration refund policies and procedures; however, the Single Family Insurance Operations Division did not fully notify homeowners of operational changes to its physical mail procedures, which potentially impacted its distribution of refunds. HUD OIG issued this interim report to ensure HUD was made aware of the issues identified during the review and could act in a timely manner to address them. The audit prompted HUD to take immediate corrective action for all three recommendations.

HUD OIG

Opportunities Exist To Improve HUD's Communication to Renters About Eviction Protections, 2021-NY-0801, October 13, 2020

This oversight effort reviewed HUD's communication to renters regarding the eviction moratorium found in Section 4024 of the CARES Act and sought to highlight the progress HUD has made and identify areas for improvement. HUD OIG found that HUD provided critical information to many of these renters through its website and published guidance. However, they identified several aspects of HUD's communication to renters on its website and published guidance that could be strengthened. Further, HUD OIG identified areas of the joint website that could be improved. While the Section 4024 eviction moratorium expired on July 24, 2020, it is still

HUD OIG identified opportunities to improve information provided to renters about eviction protections.

crucial that HUD have clear, complete, and accessible guidance available to help renters at a time when their health and financial stability may be at risk. If HUD maintains up-to-date and easily accessible information for all impacted renters, including information on any new renter protections, it would help to ensure that renters know their rights, maintain housing stability through the pandemic, and avoid homelessness.

OVERSIGHT REPORTS



Challenge: Data Transparency and Completeness

Total Reports	2
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PRAC

MITRE Report: Transparency in Pandemic Related Federal Spending: Report of Alignment and Gaps, November 19, 2020

This work found that the existing publicly available data meets a substantial portion of the CARES Act transparency requirements for the PRAC. However, the study identified 16 key gaps in the data reporting that could impair the PRAC's ability to provide the public with timely data and information on federal pandemic spending. The report outlines 13 corrective

A MITRE report identified 16 key gaps in data reporting that could impair the PRAC's ability to provide transparency of pandemic spending.

actions that Congress, OMB, federal agencies, and others can take to close these gaps ranging from relatively minor changes to more complex corrective actions that may require changes to policy, legislation, or information technology (IT) systems.



Challenge: Federal Workforce Safety

Total Reports	15
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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DOD) OIG

Evaluation of the Navy's Plans and Response to the Coronavirus Disease-2019 Onboard Navy Warships and Submarines, DODIG-2021-049, February 4, 2021

The DOD OIG determined that the DOD and the Navy had policies, plans, and procedures to mitigate the spread of pandemic influenza

and infectious diseases, and that they collected and disseminated lessons learned to specifically prevent, mitigate, and combat COVID-19. However, the Navy did not fully implement measures intended to reduce the risk of the spread of infectious diseases, which increased the risk of infectious diseases, such as COVID-19, spreading quickly if introduced

OVERSIGHT REPORTS

onboard warships and submarines. According to the Vice Chief of Naval Operations' Command Investigation Concerning Chain of Command Actions with Regard to COVID-19 Onboard USS *Theodore Roosevelt*, the ineffective implementation of social distancing and the premature release of sailors from quarantine were primary causes of increased infection onboard the ship. In addition, the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* leadership team allowed social gathering areas to remain open and continued to perform nonessential urinalysis to test

An investigation revealed that the ineffective implementation of social distancing and other policies increased infection onboard the USS Theodore.

for illegal substances during the COVID-19 outbreak. As of August 1, 2020, the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center was still collecting lessons learned from the COVID-19 outbreak on the USS *Kidd*.

NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE (NRO) OIG

Final Report: Evaluation of the National Reconnaissance Office's COVID-19 Pandemic Response, October 13, 2020

The National Reconnaissance Office OIG conducted this evaluation to identify any best practices implemented or challenges encountered by National Reconnaissance Office Headquarters and selected field sites

in responding to the pandemic. Areas of evaluation contained in this report include mission sustainment, policy, leadership, facilities and logistics, health and safety, communications, and human resources. This report is fundamentally informational and contains perspectives and opinions of National Reconnaissance Office's leadership and workforce.

U.S. POSTAL OFFICE (USPS) OIG

Employee Safety - Postal Service COVID-19 Response, 20-259-R21, November 20, 2020

To lead its pandemic response, the USPS created the COVID-19 Command Response Team at headquarters to ensure the agency followed directives and guidance from the CDC. The USPS implemented changes to slow the spread of the virus, manage and support affected employees, and ensure that recovered employees returned to work safely. The objective of this report was to assess the USPS's response to the COVID-19 outbreak regarding the safety of its employees.



Challenge: Financial Management of Relief Funding

Total Reports 10

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR (DOI) OIG

Departmental Offices CARES Act Funding Snapshot, December 28, 2020

Under the CARES Act enacted on March 27, 2020, DOI received \$909.7 million to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus pandemic. The Office of the Secretary received \$158.4 million of the DOI's CARES Act funding and transferred funds to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Office of Inspector General, Bureau of Reclamation, and Office of Wildland Fire. As of November 30, 2020, 5.3% of the funding for departmental offices had been obligated. As requirements change, bureaus and offices are required to submit updated spend plans. All bureaus that received transferred CARES Act funds informed us that they are complying with weekly reporting requirements. The Office of the Secretary plans to use existing reporting mechanisms to minimize the administrative burden on the bureaus and offices.

DOD OIG

Audit of DOD Implementation of Section 3610 Authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, December 9, 2020

The DOD OIG determined that, in general, DOD contracting officers complied with OMB and DOD guidance to support rational decisions that were in the best interest of the Government when approving requests related to section 3610 of the CARES Act. Section 3610 of the Act authorized agencies to reimburse contractors for any paid leave, including sick leave, they provide to keep their employees or subcontractor employees in a “ready state.” This includes protecting the life and safety of Government and contractor personnel. However, the DOD faced some challenges implementing section 3610 that extended beyond the audit sample, such as contracting officers having to rely on the contractor's self-certification of the use of other COVID-19 relief measures, tracking and identifying section 3610 in DOD contracts, and the lack of a specific appropriation for section 3610.

The DOD faced challenges implementing section 3610 of the CARES Act, dealing with issues related to tracking and identifying section policies in DOD contracts and contractor self-certification of COVID-19 relief measures.

OVERSIGHT REPORTS



Challenge: Grants and Guaranteed Loan Management

Total Reports 19

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OIG

Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund Reporting Requirements, I20DC0013, February 26, 2021

The CARES Act provided \$31 billion for an Education Stabilization Fund to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19, domestically or internationally, including \$17 billion for state and local agencies and \$14 billion for the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund. The objective of the inspection was to determine (1) whether selected institutions receiving funds under the Institutional Portion of Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund met public reporting requirements and (2) the reported usage of the Institutional Portion of Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund by selected institutions. The inspection focused on the first quarterly report, due October 30, 2020, covering the period from the date of the first Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund grant award through September 30, 2020.

SBA OIG

Inspection of the SBA's Implementation of the Paycheck Protection Program, 21-07, January 14, 2021

SBA's initial response to implement the PPP quickly made billions of dollars of capital available to millions of borrowers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The SBA quickly

released loan origination program guidance for the majority of the program's aspects and approved approximately 3,800 financial institutions for participation in the program. However, SBA's efforts to hurry capital to

SBA's efforts to quickly issue capital to businesses resulted in a lack of controls, which could have reduced the likelihood of ineligible businesses obtaining PPP loans.

businesses were at the expense of controls that could have reduced the likelihood of an ineligible or fraudulent business obtaining a PPP loan. As a result, there is limited assurance that loans went to only eligible recipients.

SBA OIG

Inspection of Small Business Administration's Initial Disaster Assistance Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic, 21-02, October 28, 2020

The IG at SBA found that SBA, in its effort to provide billions of dollars of capital to small businesses quickly, "lowered the guardrails" or relaxed internal controls, which significantly increased the risk of program fraud. The unprecedented demand for COVID-19 EIDLs and the equally unprecedented challenges SBA had in responding to this pandemic combined

OVERSIGHT REPORTS

SBA approved \$78 billion in EIDLs to potentially ineligible businesses and potentially fraudulent loans.

with lowered controls resulted in billions of dollars in potentially fraudulent loans and loans to potentially ineligible businesses. Based on an analysis of SBA’s COVID-19 EIDL data, as of July 31, 2020, SBA OIG found SBA approved \$14.3 billion (\$13.4 billion disbursed) in COVID-19

EIDLs to accounts that differed from the original bank accounts listed on the loan applications; \$62.7 billion (\$58.0 billion disbursed) in multiple (between 2 and 245) COVID-19 EIDLs to applicants using the same internet protocol (IP) addresses, email addresses, bank accounts, or businesses listed at the same addresses; and approximately \$1.1 billion in COVID-19 EIDLs and emergency advance grants to potentially ineligible businesses.



Challenge: IT Security and Management

Total Reports 5

DOD OIG

Audit of Contracts for DOD Information Technology Products and Services Procured by DOD Components in Response to the Coronavirus Disease-2019 Pandemic, DODIG-2021-050, February 12, 2021

The DOD OIG determined that the Military Departments, Defense Health Agency, and Defense Information Systems Agency (DOD Components) procured information technology products and services in accordance with the CARES Act and other Federal and DOD requirements. For the 28 contract actions reviewed, the DOD Components paid fair and reasonable prices for information technology products and services to support COVID-19 response operations; performed a risk assessment for known cybersecurity vulnerabilities and developed risk mitigation

strategies before procuring or using the information technology products; and accurately reported the required COVID-19-related codes to USAspending.gov. As a result, DOD stakeholders have assurance that the DOD Components procured \$81.5 million in information technology products and services for COVID-19 response at reasonable prices and reduced the risk of cybersecurity vulnerabilities.

TREASURY INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR TAX ADMINISTRATION

Systems Processing Economic Impact Payments Performed Well and the Get My Payment Application Security Vulnerabilities Are Being Remediated, 2021-26-006, December 28, 2020

Overall, the 16 Internal Revenue Service tax systems involved in delivering Economic Impact Payments to individuals performed

OVERSIGHT REPORTS

well. However, a coding issue in the software developed to process the payments affected the Individual Master File's performance. The Internal Revenue Service fully restored the system within approximately 24 hours and the affected payments were processed the following business day.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY OIG

CSB Discontinued Information Recovery Testing and Off-Site Backup Storage During the Coronavirus Pandemic, 21-E-0016, November 18, 2020

The SB & Company found that the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board did not perform disaster recovery testing on major information systems during FY 2020 and did not store copies of backup media at

an off-site location. The National Institute of Standards and Technology's guidance indicates that contingency plans should be tested to determine the effectiveness and readiness of the plans, that the test results should be reviewed, and that necessary corrective actions should be taken. The guidance also specifies that system backups should be stored securely at an off-site location. The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board indicated that the coronavirus pandemic impeded its disaster recovery testing and exercises, as well as its ability to move backup media to an off-site location. As a result, in the event of a disaster or isolated incident, the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board may not be readily able to recover its systems operations.



Challenge:
Protecting the Health and Safety of the Public

Total Reports	33
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VA OIG

Comprehensive Health Care Inspection of Facilities' COVID-19 Pandemic Readiness and Response in Veterans Integrated Service Networks 10 and 20, 21-01116-98, March 16, 2021

This report provides a focused evaluation of the Veterans Integrated Service Networks 10 and 20 facilities' COVID-19 pandemic readiness and response. This evaluation

focused on emergency preparedness; supplies, equipment, and infrastructure; staffing; access to care; community living center patient care and operations; and facility staff feedback. The VA OIG aggregated findings on COVID-19 preparedness and responsiveness from routine inspections to ensure prompt dissemination of information given the quickly changing landscape as infection rates and demands on facilities continually shift. Findings of inspected

OVERSIGHT REPORTS

medical facilities are grouped by the Veterans Integrated Service Network, which are regional offices that provide oversight of medical centers in their areas. This report is the first in a series and describes findings on COVID-19 practices from health care inspections performed within the Veterans Integrated Service Networks 10 and 20 from July 1, 2020, through September 30, 2020. It also provides a more recent snapshot of the pandemic's demands on these facilities' operations based on data compiled as of December 31, 2020. Interviews and survey results provided additional context on lessons learned and perceptions of both preparedness and response. This report also provides data that illustrates the tremendous COVID-19-related demands on VA health care services. It describes leader and staff experiences, assessments, shared sentiments, and best practices to help improve operations and clinical care during public health crises. At the time of the inspections, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the Veterans Integrated Service Networks had not yet experienced the full force of the pandemic peaks in November and December 2020 but had valuable information.

DOL OIG

COVID-19: Increased Worksite Complaints and Reduced OSHA Inspections Leave U.S. Workers' Safety at Increased Risk, 19-21-003-10-105, February 25, 2021

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has taken a series of actions to address its challenges and has issued guidance in response to the pandemic. However, increased complaints, reduced inspections, and most inspections not being conducted onsite subject employees to greater safety risk. Compared to a similar period in

2019, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration received 15% more complaints in 2020 but performed 50% fewer inspections. As a result, there is an increased risk that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration is not providing the level of protection that workers need at various job sites. While the

Increased complaints, reduced inspections, and remote inspections subject employees to greater safety risk.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration has issued several guidance documents to enhance safety provisions during the pandemic, guidance is not enforceable like rules or standards would be, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration has not issued an emergency temporary standard during the pandemic for airborne infectious diseases that may better protect employees' health and safety at worksites.

VA OIG

Reporting and Monitoring Personal Protective Equipment Inventory during the Pandemic, 20-02959-62, February 24, 2021

The spread of COVID-19 drastically increased the demand for personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks, gloves, and gowns, and significantly disrupted the global supply chain. As the nation's largest integrated health care system, the VHA had to compete for PPE for its personnel and patients. The OIG received hotline allegations that the Veterans Health Administration medical facilities could not acquire and maintain enough PPE to keep pace with escalating needs. Without reliable PPE inventory information, the VHA cannot

OVERSIGHT REPORTS

effectively assess demand, monitor stock levels, or identify supply shortages that require prompt action. In interviews of 22 people involved in logistics operations at 42 facilities, no one reported running out of PPE items. Some individuals reported running low, but risks of outages were mitigated by shifting supplies among facilities or acquiring additional PPE in time. Overall, the VA OIG found that the VHA took swift steps to work around known limitations in its inventory management system by developing new processes and tools, to use near real-time information on PPE inventory to shift and order supplies, and to otherwise ensure its facilities would not run out of PPE. The VA OIG found, however, that the VHA could improve the accuracy and consistency of the PPE data for reporting and monitoring. The VHA concurred with the OIG's two recommendations to provide guidance for reporting expired quantities of PPE that may still be of use, and to more effectively verify facilities' self-reported information. Although not a formal recommendation, the OIG also called on the VHA to report any data limitations until corrections can be made.

As the pandemic took hold, about 5,000 Medicare beneficiaries per month suffered an opioid overdose.

HHS OIG

Opioid Use in Medicare Part D During the Onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, OEI-02-20-00400, February 2, 2021

It is critical to monitor the use of opioids in Part D, as COVID-19 presents new dangers for beneficiaries taking these drugs. As the pandemic took hold, about 5,000 Medicare beneficiaries per month suffered an opioid overdose. Almost a quarter of a million

beneficiaries received high amounts of opioids in the first eight months of 2020. At the same time, the number of beneficiaries receiving drugs for treatment of opioid use disorder increased slightly. HHS OIG determined that continued vigilance is needed as the country grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic and opioid crisis.

PRAC

Federal COVID-19 Testing Report: Data Insights from Six Federal Health Care Programs, January 14, 2021

This report examines COVID-19 testing efforts for six federal health care programs during the first seven months following the declaration of a public health emergency in the United States. Published by the PRAC Health Care Subgroup, the report takes a detailed look at testing data in each of the programs that, when combined, provide benefits or care for about 64 million individuals. The findings in this report are intended to help policymakers as they continue to develop and refine their testing efforts related to testing accessibility and availability for at-risk populations, cost effectiveness, and sufficiency of data available to inform testing efforts.

DOJ OIG

Remote Inspection of Federal Correctional Institution Terminal Island, 21-025, January 13, 2021

Federal Correction Institution Terminal Island experienced challenges separating COVID-19 negative and positive inmates, enforcing social distancing in open dormitories, quarantining inmates before expanding housing, and meeting Bureau of Prisons (BOP) standards in one alternative housing area. Additionally, five inmates who died after contracting COVID-19 were not tested until arriving at the hospital

OVERSIGHT REPORTS

and, in one instance, staff did not comply with BOP policy on notifying seriously ill inmates' families. Finally, our staff survey indicated that obtaining adequate staff and inmate PPE were challenges.

Federal Correctional Institution Terminal Island experienced challenges separating COVID-19 negative and positive inmates and enforcing social distancing.

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT OIG

Downward Trends in FEHBP Members' Use of Preventive Care Services Caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic, 1K-99-00-20-046, January 6, 2021

In this Data Brief, the Office of Personnel Management OIG presents concerns with downward trends related to preventive care services utilized by a selected section of Federal Employee Health Benefit Program participants during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the brief focuses on claims incurred and paid during the period of January through August of 2020 and compares this data to the same time period in 2019.

HHS OIG

Onsite Surveys of Nursing Homes During the COVID-19 Pandemic: March 23-May 30, 2020, OEI-01-20-00430, December 17, 2020

HHS OIG did this review to determine the number and results of onsite state surveys of nursing homes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nursing home residents are particularly vulnerable to infectious diseases such as COVID-19, and infection control has been a persistent problem for most nursing homes. As of November 8, 2020, more than 67,000

nursing home residents had died of COVID-19-related illnesses, which represented almost 30% of all COVID-19 deaths in the United States at that time. Onsite state surveys assess the quality of services in nursing homes, a critical function for protecting residents. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services changed survey practices in response to the pandemic. These changes—together with nursing home residents' high-risk status and the importance of the state surveys—warrant close examination to assess the sufficiency of this oversight.

DOJ OIG

Remote Inspection of Federal Correctional Complexes Oakdale and Pollock, 21-003, November 17, 2020

Federal Correctional Complex (FCC) Oakdale experienced a large-scale spread of COVID-19 within facilities with open layouts. At FCC Pollock, which did not experience as significant an outbreak, most inmates are housed in two-man cells. FCC Oakdale failed to promptly implement January 2020 inmate screening guidance and February 2020 staff screening guidance, and, by the time FCC Oakdale expanded screening to all staff, COVID-19 had already entered the institution. FCC Oakdale did not fully limit inmate movement until after it identified its first COVID-19 positive inmate on March 21, 2020. FCC Pollock limited inmate movement beginning in early March. In mid- to late March, some FCC Oakdale staff did not have proper PPE when in close contact with infected or potentially infected inmates. In mid-May, after nearly 100 asymptomatic inmates tested positive, FCC Oakdale failed to comply with isolation, quarantine, and PPE guidance. Some COVID-19 positive inmates were left in their housing units for up to six days without being isolated. Staff were not advised that they

OVERSIGHT REPORTS

would be interacting with COVID-19 positive inmates and were not furnished proper PPE prior to the inmates' isolation. Numerous staff absences at FCC Oakdale resulted in some staff

being mandated to work 16-hour shifts, and, in some instances, staff volunteered to work as much as 40 continuous hours.



Other: Agency Operations

Total Reports	15
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GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (GSA) OIG

Alert Memorandum: GSA Is Impeding Oversight of Its COVID-19 Activities, A201018-4, January 15, 2021

In performing oversight of the General Service Administration's COVID-19 activities, the General Services Administration OIG initiated two projects: the Monitoring of General Services Administration Activities in Response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 and the Audit of Public Building Service's Coronavirus Disease 2019 Communication and Cleaning Procedures. In response to this oversight, the General Services Administration established a new centralized review and approval process for responses to all audit team inquiries. This process compromised the integrity of information provided by General Services Administration personnel and delayed and limited the audit team's access to requested information. As a result, oversight of the General Services Administration's response to this important public health and safety issue has been impeded.

DOJ OIG

Survey on the Effects of COVID-19 on ATF, DEA, FBI, USAO, and USMS Investigative Operations, January 5, 2021

To gain insight on the effects and impact of COVID-19 on law enforcement investigative operations, the DOJ OIG surveyed law enforcement personnel within the DOJ during July and early August of 2020. Specifically, the DOJ OIG deployed an anonymous online survey to Special Agents; Criminal Investigators; General Inspection, Investigation, Enforcement, and Compliance personnel; and U.S. Marshals

More than 64% of respondents noted that COVID-19 had affected their ability to work cases.

and Deputy U.S. Marshals. The DOJ OIG released an interactive dashboard displaying the survey results, which include: (1) more than 64% of respondents noted that COVID-19 had affected their ability to work cases, (2) 25% of respondents did not agree that their agency provided adequate personal protective

OVERSIGHT REPORTS

equipment, (3) 62% of respondents reported always or often wearing a mask, but more than half noted federal/state partners never or only sometimes wear masks, (4) a majority of respondents reported that they took appropriate precautions while interacting with the public during the COVID-19 pandemic, and (5) the majority of respondents indicated that protocols were in place to notify them of a positive test for individuals they had either recently worked with or taken into custody.

USPS OIG***Mail Service During the Early Stages of the COVID-19 Pandemic, 20-275-R21, January 4, 2021***

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Postal Service provided vital service, including the delivery of critical items such as medications, stimulus payments, and Social Security checks. Further, the USPS is the leading delivery service provider for online purchases. A May 2020 Harris Poll survey on America's 100 essential

companies' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, ranked the USPS as number one, based on its resolve, integrity, responsiveness, and permanence. The USPS OIG's objective was to evaluate mail service during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Appendix A

Acronym List

<i>Acronym</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
ARP	American Rescue Plan
BOP	Federal Bureau of Prisons
CARES Act	Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
COVID-19	novel coronavirus disease 2019
CRF	Coronavirus Relief Fund
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOD	Department of Defense
DOI	Department of the Interior
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOL	Department of Labor
EDD	California's Employment Development Department
EIDL	Economic Injury Disaster Loan
FCC	Federal Correctional Complex
GAO	Government Accountability Office
HHS	Department of Health and Human Services
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
IG	Inspector General
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
IT	information technology
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
PACE	Pandemic Analytics Center of Excellence
PPE	personal protective equipment
PPP	Paycheck Protection Program
PRAC	Pandemic Response Accountability Committee
PRF	Provider Relief Fund
RRC	Residential Reentry Center
SBA	Small Business Administration
Treasury	Department of the Treasury
TIGTA	Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration
USPS	United States Postal Service
VA	Department of Veterans Affairs
VHA	Veterans Health Administration

Appendix B

Pandemic-Related Reports by Office of Inspector General

Offices of Inspectors General (OIG) issued a total of 103 reports between October 1, 2020, and March 31, 2021 related to the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic response. The following information provides a list and summary of each of those reports.

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (USAID) OIG

USAID Had Limited Control Over COVID-19 Ventilator Donations, Differing from Its Customary Response to Public Health Emergencies, 4-936-21-002-P, February 24, 2021

One of USAID's main interventions in the fight against COVID-19 has been the provision of ventilators to over 40 countries at a cost of approximately \$204 million. Prior to the start of the ventilator donation program in April 2020, the U.S. Agency for International Development followed its customary practices in determining how it would respond to the novel coronavirus disease 2019 in accordance with the Department of State-U.S. Agency for International Development joint strategy. The ventilator donation program significantly differed from the U.S. Agency for International Development's customary practices for responding to public health emergencies. Specifically, the decisions for donating ventilators abroad—including the National Security Council decisions for determining recipient countries, how many ventilators to send, and which suppliers and models to use—did not align with the USAID's initial COVID-19 response planning. The report does not contain any recommendations because the ventilator donation program has ended and there are no current plans to donate more ventilators abroad.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE OIG

EDA Was Effective in Implementing the Requirements for Awarding Funds Under the CARES Act, OIG-21-017-I, January 05, 2021

This memorandum provides the results of our evaluation of the Economic Development Administration's plan for the implementation of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) funding. Department of Commerce OIG's objective was to determine whether the Economic Development Administration implemented and followed the requirements of the CARES Act. Overall, the Department of Commerce OIG found that the Economic Development Administration implemented and followed the requirements of the CARES Act. The Economic Development Administration has also put in place measures to mitigate challenges resulting from employees working from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is on track to obligate all CARES Act funds before September 30, 2022. The Economic Development Administration, however, still faces challenges in its workforce planning for emergency and disaster relief efforts.

APPENDIX B

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DOD) OIG***Audit of Public Health Emergency Readiness at Military Installations, DODIG-2021-070, March 31, 2021***

This DOD OIG determined the commanders at the eight installations the DOD OIG reviewed implemented measures to prepare for public health emergencies and respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Commanders prepared for public health emergencies to maintain readiness. For example, commanders designated public health emergency officers, ensured public health emergency officers were trained, created Emergency Management plans, and conducted annual public health emergency exercises such as the Disease Containment Tabletop Exercise for a novel coronavirus. Commanders took actions to control and prevent the spread of COVID-19. For example, commanders evaluated the COVID-19 health threat, and four of eight commanders at the installations the DOD OIG reviewed declared a public health emergency. All eight commanders issued and communicated guidance, such as base access and social distancing guidelines to installation personnel and visitors through memorandums, website postings, and virtual town halls, to protect individuals and help prevent the spread of the disease. Additionally, commanders planned to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and return to full mission operations. For example, all eight commanders developed and implemented recovery guides or return-to-work plans, specific to COVID-19. As a result of the measures that commanders implemented to prepare for public health emergencies and respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, installation personnel protected lives and sustained mission-critical operations.

Audit of the Impact of Coronavirus Disease-2019 on Basic Training, DODIG-2021-069, March 31, 2021

The DOD OIG determined that despite the challenges with the global pandemic, the DOD and Military Services established procedures to prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19. However, the DOD OIG determined that the Military Services did not fully implement the procedures at six basic training centers. Specifically, the training personnel at the six locations reported that they had challenges with implementing DOD and Military Service-specific guidance issued to prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19; the screening and testing of training personnel; practicing preventive measures, such as wearing face masks, washing hands, cleaning common areas, and enforcing social distancing (six feet); and maintaining the quality of recruit training due to basic training modifications. As a result, the potential for positive COVID-19 cases among recruits and training personnel may increase.

Recommendations: 5

APPENDIX B

Evaluation of U.S. Southern Command Response to COVID-19, DODIG-2021-068, March 31, 2021 (CLASSIFIED)

The DOD OIG determined how U.S. Southern Command and its component commands executed pandemic response plans and identified both the challenges they encountered in implementing the response plans and the impact to operations resulting from COVID-19. The results of this evaluation are classified.

Evaluation of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Response to COVID-19, DODIG-2021-067, March 31, 2021 (CLASSIFIED)

The DOD OIG determined how U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and its component commands executed pandemic response plans and identified both the challenges they encountered in implementing the response plans and the impact to operations resulting from COVID-19. The results of this evaluation are classified.

Evaluation of U.S. Central Command Response to COVID-19, DODIG-2021-058, March 5, 2021 (CLASSIFIED)

The DOD OIG determined how U.S. Central Command and its component commands executed pandemic response plans and identified both the challenges they encountered in implementing the response plans and the impact to operations resulting from COVID-19. The results of this evaluation are classified.

Evaluation of Access to Department of Defense Information Technology and Communications During the Coronavirus Disease-2019 Pandemic, DODIG-2021-065, March 30, 2021

The DOD OIG determined the extent to which DOD Components provided access to DOD information technology and communications during maximum telework in response to the COVID-19 pandemic by administering a 43-question survey to a sample of DOD military and civilian personnel. Of those who teleworked, survey respondents reported problems accessing DOD Component networks, voice applications, and video conference applications. Respondents also identified shortfalls in Government-furnished equipment available to DOD personnel when their Components first transitioned to maximum telework in mid-March 2020. Based on the results of the survey and interviews with DOD officials, the DOD's initial challenges occurred because some DOD Components had not fully tested whether their information systems could support Government-wide mandated telework and had not conducted telework exercises with their personnel before March 2020, as required by the DOD Implementation Plan and the DOD Telework Policy. However, the problems cited in survey responses lessened over time as the DOD increased its network availability and capacity, added voice and video conferencing applications, and purchased and distributed computer and communications equipment. Overall, DOD Components and the majority of survey respondents expressed positive maximum telework experiences.

Recommendations: 2

APPENDIX B

Audit of Maintaining Cybersecurity in the Coronavirus Disease-2019 Telework Environment, DODIG-2021-064, March 29, 2021

The DOD OIG determined that the DOD Components the DOD OIG assessed did not consistently implement required cybersecurity controls to protect DOD networks during maximum telework. Telework and remote access technologies require additional protection from malicious cyber actors because they receive higher exposure to external threats than technologies accessed by personnel physically located inside the organization's facilities. Because the DOD Components that the DOD OIG assessed did not fully implement security controls to maintain cybersecurity in a maximum telework environment as outlined in National Institute of Standards and Technology and DOD policies and guidance, DOD Components are at a higher risk of becoming victims of cyberattacks that could threaten the safety of the warfighter and the security of the United States.

Recommendations: 7

Evaluation of the Armed Forces Retirement Home Response to the Coronavirus Disease-2019 Pandemic, DODIG-2021-055, February 12, 2021

The DOD OIG determined that the Armed Forces Retirement Home generally complied with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, "Preparing for COVID-19 in Nursing Homes." Armed Forces Retirement Home officials generally established procedures related to the 11 core infection prevention and control practices that "Preparing for COVID-19 in Nursing Homes" recommends. However, the Armed Forces Retirement Home should improve two core infection prevention and control practices that the CDC guidance recommends for responding to COVID-19. Specifically, the Armed Forces Retirement Home did not formalize the plan for testing residents and health care personnel for the virus that causes COVID-19 and did not include in the plan all the recommended elements contained in the CDC guidance. Additionally, the Armed Forces Retirement Home did not formalize plans at either of its campuses for their respective COVID-19 and quarantine units established for responding to the pandemic. Instead of focusing on formalizing these draft plans, Armed Forces Retirement Home officials prioritized their immediate response to COVID-19, such as procuring personal protective equipment and administering COVID-19 tests. By taking these actions, Armed Forces Retirement Home officials protected residents, staff, and health care personnel from COVID-19 exposure.

Recommendations: 5

Audit of Contracts for DOD Information Technology Products and Services Procured by DOD Components in Response to the Coronavirus Disease-2019 Pandemic, DODIG-2021-050, February 12, 2021

The DOD OIG determined that the Military Departments, Defense Health Agency, and Defense Information Systems Agency (DOD Components) procured information technology products and services in accordance with the CARES Act and other Federal and DOD requirements. For the 28 contract actions reviewed, the DOD Components paid fair and reasonable prices for information

APPENDIX B

technology products and services to support COVID-19 response operations, performed a risk assessment for known cybersecurity vulnerabilities and developed risk mitigation strategies before procuring or using the information technology products; and accurately reported the required COVID-19-related codes to USAspending.gov. As a result, DOD stakeholders have assurance that the DOD Components procured \$81.5 million in information technology products and services for COVID-19 response at reasonable prices and reduced the risk of cybersecurity vulnerabilities.

Audit of Dual-Status Commanders for Use in Defense Support of Civil Authorities Missions in Support of the Coronavirus Disease-2019 Pandemic, DODIG-2021-048, February 5, 2021

The DOD OIG determined that DOD Components managed and coordinated the nomination, certification, and appointment of Dual-Status Commanders to support COVID-19 relief efforts in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. All appointed Dual-Status Commanders met eligibility and qualification requirements, Dual-Status Commander appointment documents were complete, and Dual-Status Commanders were appointed (on average) within two days of receipt of governors' state and territory appointment memorandums. In addition, the 14 states that did not have appointed Dual-Status Commanders to coordinate COVID-19 response did have eligible and qualified officers assigned to their National Guards that could serve as a Dual-Status Commander if required. The DOD OIG also identified three best practices that state or territory National Guards can apply to improve their responsiveness and ability to employ Dual-Status Commanders to support Defense Support of Civil Authorities missions.

Evaluation of the Navy's Plans and Response to the Coronavirus Disease-2019 Onboard Navy Warships and Submarines, DODIG-2021-049, February 4, 2021

The DOD OIG determined that the DOD and the Navy had policies, plans, and procedures to mitigate the spread of pandemic influenza and infectious diseases, and that they collected and disseminated lessons learned to specifically prevent, mitigate, and combat COVID-19. However, the Navy did not fully implement measures intended to reduce the risk of the spread of infectious diseases, which increased the risk of infectious diseases, such as COVID-19, spreading quickly if introduced onboard warships and submarines. According to the Vice Chief of Naval Operations' Command Investigation Concerning Chain of Command Actions with Regard to COVID-19 Onboard USS *Theodore Roosevelt*, the ineffective implementation of social distancing and the premature release of Sailors from quarantine were primary causes of increased infection onboard the ship. In addition, the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* leadership team allowed social gathering areas to remain open and continued to perform nonessential urinalysis testing for illegal substances during the COVID-19 outbreak. As of August 1, 2020, the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center was still collecting lessons learned from the COVID-19 outbreak on the USS *Kidd*.

Recommendations: 3

APPENDIX B

Audit of Contracts for Equipment and Supplies in Support of the Coronavirus Disease-2019 Pandemic, DODIG-2021-045, January 15, 2021

The DOD OIG determined that the DOD paid fair and reasonable prices on 19 of 23 contracts, valued at \$4.1 million, for the eight items reviewed, which included laboratory equipment, medical supplies, and personal protective equipment. In addition, contracting personnel evaluated price reasonableness and determined that prices for all 23 contracts were fair and reasonable in accordance with DOD policy and the Federal Acquisition Regulations. However, the DOD OIG identified items on four contracts for which the DOD did not pay fair and reasonable prices. The DOD paid between \$466,935 and \$530,263 more than the manufacturer's list prices or other comparable prices on four contracts for urgently needed items. However, contracting personnel had to purchase these items, which were drastically impacted by supply shortages. Although the DOD paid more than the manufacturer's list prices or other comparable prices, and therefore was unable to spend these funds on other equipment and supplies, contracting personnel were able to quickly procure the items to combat the pandemic and ensure the health and safety of Service members, their families, and other frontline health care workers.

Evaluation of Defense Logistics Agency Oversight of Contracts for Ventilators and Respirators in Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak, DODIG-2021-042, December 23, 2020

The DOD OIG determined that the Defense Logistics Agency took proactive measures to acquire ventilators by contacting six vendors already on contract in response to COVID-19. Due to projected national shortages, the Defense Logistics Agency took the initiative to acquire ventilators prior to receiving customer requests. As a result, the Defense Logistics Agency's actions reduced delivery delays, which could have resulted from a high demand for ventilators in the fight against COVID-19.

Audit of Infectious Disease Medical Treatment Capabilities at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, DODIG-2021-040, December 21, 2020

The DOD OIG determined that the 379th Expeditionary Medical Group had the capabilities to treat patients infected with COVID-19 and isolate or quarantine suspected infected Service members, civilians, and contractors. The 379th Expeditionary Medical Group developed response plans, established procedures to screen Al Udeid Air Base personnel attempting to enter medical treatment facilities, and initiated COVID-19 testing. Additionally, the 379th Expeditionary Medical Group increased its on hand inventory of personal protective equipment and acquired COVID-19 testing kits to detect infected Service members, civilians, and contractors. As a result, the 379th Expeditionary Medical Group was able to quickly identify COVID-19 patients, expedite restriction of movement measures, and conduct contact tracing to prevent the spread of the virus throughout Al Udeid Air Base.

APPENDIX B

Audit of the Disinfection of Department of Defense Facilities in Response to the Coronavirus Disease-2019, Rpt. No. DODOIG-2021-036, December 18, 2020

The DOD OIG determined that for the 21 cases at eight DOD installations the DOD OIG reviewed from April 1, 2020, through June 30, 2020, DOD and contractor personnel disinfected areas occupied by individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 in accordance with the CDC guidance. As a result, DOD personnel reduced the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and protected DOD personnel from the spread of COVID-19 in DOD workspaces.

Audit of DOD Implementation of Section 3610 Authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, Rpt. No. DODIG-2021-031, December 9, 2020

The DOD OIG determined that in general, DOD contracting officers complied with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and DOD guidance to support rational decisions that were in the best interest of the Government when approving requests related to section 3610 of the CARES Act. Section 3610 of the Act authorized agencies to reimburse contractors for any paid leave, including sick leave, they provide to keep their employees or subcontractor employees in a “ready state.” This includes protecting the life and safety of Government and contractor personnel. However, the DOD faced some challenges implementing section 3610 that extended beyond the audit sample, such as contracting officers having to rely on the contractor’s self-certification of the use of other COVID-19 relief measures, tracking and identifying section 3610 in DOD contracts, and the lack of a specific appropriation for section 3610.

Evaluation of the U.S. European Command’s Response to Coronavirus Disease-2019, DODIG-2021-002, October 8, 2020 (CLASSIFIED)

The DOD OIG determined how U.S. European Command and its component commands executed pandemic response plans and identified both the challenges they encountered in implementing the response plans and the impact to operations resulting from COVID-19. The results of this evaluation are classified.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OIG***Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund Reporting Requirements, I20DC0013, February 26, 2021***

The CARES Act provides \$31 billion for an Education Stabilization Fund to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19, domestically or internationally, including \$17 billion for State and local agencies and \$14 billion for the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund. The objective of the Department of Education OIG’s inspection was to determine (1) whether selected institutions receiving funds under the Institutional Portion of the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund met public reporting requirements and (2) the reported usage of the Institutional Portion of the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund by selected institutions. They focused on the first quarterly report, due October 30, 2020, covering the period from the date of the first the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund grant award through September 30, 2020.

APPENDIX B

Assessment of the Department's Reconstitution Plans Following COVID-19, S20DC0008, December 15, 2020

The objective of the Department of Education OIG's inspection was to assess the Department of Education's plans and procedures for returning employees to the federal office in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, including what existing guidance the Department of Education considered when developing its plans and procedures. The Department of Education OIG found that the Department of Education generally incorporated available guidance, which was intended to provide for a safe and gradual return to federal offices, in its Workplace Reconstitution Transition Plan. However, we noted that the Department of Education's Workplace Reconstitution Transition Plan does not address anti-retaliation as recommended in Occupational Safety and Health Administration guidance. In addition, the Department of Education OIG found that the Department of Education did not periodically reassess and update self-screening questions as necessary in its Workplace Reconstitution Transition Plan as suggested by the OMB.

Recommendations: 2

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS) OIG***Hospitals Reported That the COVID-19 Pandemic Has Significantly Strained Health Care Delivery, EI-09-21-00140, March 23, 2021***

This review provides a national snapshot, from the perspective of front-line hospital administrators, on how responding to the COVID-19 pandemic has affected their capacity to care for patients, staff, and communities. This is not a review of the HHS response to the COVID-19 pandemic. HHS OIG conducted their first pulse survey of challenges that hospitals reported facing in response to COVID-19 during the early weeks of the pandemic (March 23-27, 2020). This snapshot from 2021 provides HHS and other decision makers with updated information on hospital perspectives. Hospital administrators described difficulty balancing the complex and resource-intensive care needed for COVID-19 patients with efforts to resume routine hospital care. Hospitals reported a range of strategies they have used to address their challenges and identified areas in which further government support could help as they continue responding to the pandemic.

Opioid Use in Medicare Part D During the Onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, OEI-02-20-00400, February 2, 2021

It is critical to monitor the use of opioids in Medicare Part D, as COVID-19 presents new dangers for beneficiaries taking these drugs. As the pandemic took hold, about 5,000 Medicare beneficiaries per month suffered an opioid overdose. Almost a quarter of a million beneficiaries received high amounts of opioids in the first eight months of 2020. At the same time, the number of beneficiaries receiving drugs for treatment of opioid use disorder increased slightly. Continued vigilance is needed as the country grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic and opioid crisis.

APPENDIX B

Onsite Surveys of Nursing Homes During the COVID-19 Pandemic: March 23-May 30, 2020, OEI-01-20-00430, December 17, 2020

HHS OIG did this review to determine the number and results of onsite State surveys of nursing homes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nursing home residents are particularly vulnerable to infectious diseases such as COVID-19, and infection control has been a persistent problem for most nursing homes. As of November 8, 2020, more than 67,000 nursing home residents had died of COVID-19-related illnesses, which represented almost 30% of all COVID-19 deaths in the United States at that time. Onsite State surveys assess the quality of services in nursing homes, a critical function for protecting residents. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services changed survey practices in response to the pandemic. These changes—together with nursing home residents' high-risk status and the importance of the State surveys—warrant close examination to assess the sufficiency of this oversight.

Recommendations: 3

Opioid Treatment Programs Reported Challenges Encountered During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Actions Taken to Address Them, A-09-20-01001, November 18, 2020

HHS OIG did this review to determine the impact COVID-19 has had on opioid treatment programs, since individuals with an opioid use disorder may be at a higher risk for infection from COVID-19. HHS OIG identified a variety of challenges opioid treatment programs have encountered and actions taken to address those challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Opioid treatment programs reported challenges related to: (1) maintaining pre-pandemic service levels; (2) managing impacts on facility operations; (3) implementing and using telehealth; (4) obtaining treatment medications, personal protective equipment, and cleaning supplies; (5) maintaining patient participation in opioid treatment program activities dealing with limitations posed by existing Federal guidance; (7) providing take-home doses to patients; and (8) implementing governmental guidance. Opioid treatment programs reported actions taken, including: (1) encouraging or requiring various personal safety measures for patients and staff, (2) implementing or expanding the use of telehealth to continue providing services, (3) increasing the number of take-home doses to reduce the number of patients visiting facilities, (4) making physical changes to facilities and increasing staffing flexibilities, and (5) ensuring that patients received treatment medications.

Office of Refugee Resettlement Ensured That Selected Care Providers Were Prepared to Respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic, A-04-20-02031, November 6, 2020

HHS OIG did this audit to provide a snapshot of communicable disease preparedness and response capabilities at selected Administration for Children and Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Unaccompanied Alien Children care provider facilities. It is critical to monitor efforts to protect children who arrive in the United States unaccompanied from communicable disease such as COVID-19. HHS OIG determined that the Office of Refugee Resettlement ensured that selected care provider facilities followed Office of Refugee Resettlement

APPENDIX B

requirements in preparing and responding to COVID-19. The selected care provider facilities reviewed were generally prepared to respond to COVID-19 because they had policies and procedures, the capability to quarantine COVID-19 cases, encouraged telehealth visits, and had adequate personal protective equipment.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (DHS) OIG

Violations of Detention Standards Amidst COVID-19 Outbreak at La Palma Correctional Center in Eloy, AZ, OIG-21-30, March 30, 2021

DHS OIG identified violations of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention standards that threatened the health, safety, and rights of detainees. La Palma Correctional Center complied with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention standard regarding classification, but detainee reports and grievances allege an environment of mistreatment and verbal abuse, including in response to peaceful detainee protests of the facility's handling of the pandemic. In addressing COVID-19, La Palma Correctional Center did not enforce the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's precautions including facial coverings and social distancing, which may have contributed to the widespread COVID-19 outbreak at the facility. In addition, La Palma Correctional Center did not meet standards for medical care, segregation, grievances, or detainee communication. DHS OIG also found that the medical unit was critically understaffed, took an average of 3.35 days to respond to detainee sick call requests. Further, DHS OIG found the facility was not consistently providing required care for detainees in segregation and did not consistently record medication administration and daily medical visits for segregated detainees. DHS OIG's grievance review revealed that La Palma Correctional Center did not give timely responses to most detainee grievances and, in some cases, did not respond at all. Finally, DHS OIG found deficiencies in staff-detainee communication practices.

Recommendations: 8

Ineffective Implementation of Corrective Actions Diminishes DHS' Oversight of Its Pandemic Planning, OIG-21-14, December 23, 2020

DHS OIG issued a series of three reports between August 2014 and October 2016 examining DHS's pandemic activities, including 28 recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of DHS planning and response activities. DHS OIG conducted this verification review to determine the adequacy and effectiveness of DHS' corrective actions and focused its review on 11 of 28 key recommendations that dealt with DHS-wide pandemic planning and response activities. DHS OIG determined that DHS provided them with adequate documentation of its initial plans and actions to address the recommendations to improve the DHS' pandemic planning and response. However, DHS did not effectively implement corrective actions to address three recommendations to provide the operational efficiencies and controls needed in the current pandemic. Specifically, DHS did not ensure the office it designated to manage and account for pandemic personal protective equipment provided adequate management

APPENDIX B

oversight; did not ensure components' compliance with the Integrated Logistics Support Plan; and did not designate an office to ensure continued oversight, review, and approval of DHS' and its components' pandemic plans.

Recommendations: 3

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD) OIG

HUD and its CDBG-DR grantees have experienced challenges related to the COVID-19 Pandemic, 2021-GA-0801, March 23, 2021

HUD OIG completed a survey of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on HUD's Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery grantees. Their objective was to determine the challenges that HUD and its Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery grantees are experiencing related to the COVID-19 pandemic and to help inform the Office of Community Planning and Development and Congress on the issues faced in responding to the pandemic. HUD's Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery grantees across the country reported facing similar challenges and experiences related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The most significant challenges faced during the pandemic and reported by grantees were systems-technology and communications. HUD OIG determined that there were eight recurring themes faced by Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery grantees and HUD officials during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Considerations From Prior Audits of the Single Family Default Monitoring System and the Partial Claim Loss Mitigation Option, 2021-KC-0801, March 12, 2021

HUD OIG prepared this memorandum to provide the Office of Housing at HUD with key considerations from prior audits of the HUD Single Family Default Monitoring System and the partial claim loss mitigation option. These audits identified HUD's lack of effective controls to ensure that lenders reported default information accurately and in a timely manner, lenders promptly filed and reported partial claims, and partial claims fully reinstated delinquent loans. Prior audits also identified that the current design of partial claims results in an inferior lien position on the securing property during a foreclosure sale. HUD should address these situations now to ensure program integrity and minimize the risk of financial loss during the COVID-19 national emergency.

Interim Audit Memorandum – The HUD Single Family Insurance Operations Division Should Take Additional Action to Inform Homeowners of Changes to Its FHA Refund Process Resulting From the COVID-19 Pandemic, 2021-LA-0802, December 2, 2020

HUD OIG audited the HUD response to COVID-19 to determine if it appropriately, effectively, and efficiently tracked, monitored, and issued Federal Housing Administration (FHA) refunds owed to homeowners with terminated loans. During the field work, the COVID-19 pandemic began and as a result, HUD OIG developed a second, more urgent audit objective to determine how COVID-19 has affected policies, procedures, and distribution of Federal Housing Administration refunds

APPENDIX B

and whether HUD's response was appropriate. They determined that COVID-19 generally did not affect the Single Family Insurance Operations Division's Federal Housing Administration refund policies and procedures; however, the Single Family Insurance Operations Division did not fully notify homeowners of operational changes to its physical mail procedures, which potentially impacted its distribution of refunds. HUD OIG issued this interim report to ensure HUD was made aware of the issues identified during its review and could act in a timely manner to address them.

Recommendations: 3

Drawdown Levels for the Initial Round of CARES Act Emergency Solutions Grants Were Minimal, 2021-LA-0801, November 16, 2020

HUD OIG conducted this limited review to identify HUD's CARES Act drawdown levels for the initial round of Emergency Solutions Grants funding. In addition, HUD OIG researched information published by grantees on how they have used and will use their funds. Their objective was to highlight the grantees' (1) drawdown levels for the initial round of Emergency Solutions Grants CARES Act funding and (2) published information on how the funds have and will be used. The review determined that as of July 1, 2020, the Emergency Solutions Grants CARES Act drawdown levels for the initial round of funding of \$1 billion had been minimal. In addition, a majority of grantees in HUD OIG's sample had not elected to waive their citizen participation plans or indicated whether they would use their consultation waiver, and many had not published their planned uses of the funds.

Opportunities Exist to Improve HUD's Communication to Renters About Eviction Protections, 2021-NY-0801, October 13, 2020

As part of the HUD OIG's effort to provide oversight of HUD's relief efforts provided by the CARES Act, they reviewed HUD's communication to renters regarding the eviction moratorium found in Section 4024. The objective of their review was to highlight the progress HUD has made and identify areas for improvement. HUD OIG found that HUD provided critical information to many of these renters through its website and published guidance. However, they identified several aspects of HUD's communication to renters on its website and published guidance that could be strengthened. Further, HUD OIG identified areas of the joint website that could be improved. While the Section 4024 eviction moratorium expired on July 24, 2020, it is still crucial that HUD have clear, complete, and accessible guidance available to help renters at a time when their health and financial stability may be at risk.

APPENDIX B

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR (DOI) OIG***Where the Money? DOI Use of CARES Act Funds as of January 31, 2021, 2021-FIN-021, March 29, 2021***

This report presents the DOI's progress as of January 31, 2021, in spending CARES Act appropriations. Specifically, the DOI's expenditures as of January 31, 2021 totaled \$613,068,783, and its obligations total \$676,758,983.

Apparent Misuse of and Lack of Internal Controls Over the Government Purchase Card Program During the Coronavirus Pandemic, 20-0436, March 30, 2021

DOI OIG's ongoing review of the use of CARES Act funds has identified a significant number of transactions that appear to be impermissible split purchases and that reflect possible misuse of DOI purchase cards. Previous investigative and audit reports from our office have identified gaps in bureau oversight of the DOI's Government Purchase Card Program. In its management advisory, DOI OIG describes findings related to pandemic-related DOI purchase card transactions, specifically (1) a number of transactions that appeared to be prohibited split purchases and (2) ineffective or missing internal controls over purchase card use. Until effective controls are implemented and enforced consistently throughout all bureaus and offices, the DOI's Government Purchase Card Program will continue to be at risk for improper purchases and other noncompliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Recommendations: 3

Where's the Money? DOI Use of CARES Act Funds as of December 31, 2020, 2021-FIN-014, February 18, 2021

This report presents the DOI's progress as of December 31, 2020, in spending CARES Act appropriations. Specifically, the DOI's expenditures as of December 31, 2020, totaled \$600,876,882, and its obligations totaled \$668,075,114.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs' Coronavirus Response at Indian Country Detention Facilities, 2020-WR-004, January 26, 2021

To address the spread of COVID-19 in Indian Country detention facilities, DOI OIG found that the Office of Justice Services issued guidance and screening tools, provided funding for deep cleaning, and provided personal protective equipment (PPE). Inmate overcrowding and inadequate staffing levels are two longstanding challenges that continue to affect Indian Country detention facilities, and they further increase the risk that inmates will contract COVID-19. Facility officials told DOI OIG that they attempted to obtain COVID-19 tests, work with Tribal governments to obtain early releases or home confinement, increase social distancing, and screen inmates and staff within the unique constraints of each detention facility. Detention facilities, including those in Indian Country, face significant challenges in overcoming COVID-19 outbreaks because inmates live, work, eat, and participate in activities in close proximity to each

APPENDIX B

other. It is critical that Office of Justice Services and detention facility officials remain focused on this issue and continue to monitor, communicate, and implement the latest guidance from health professionals.

Where's the Money? DOI Use of CARES Act Funds as of November 30, 2020, 2021-FIN-012, January 14, 2021

This report presents the DOI's progress as of November 30, 2020, in spending CARES Act appropriations. Specifically, the DOI's expenditures as of November 30, 2020 totaled \$582,466,112, and its obligations totaled \$666,937,885.

Departmental Offices CARES Act Funding Snapshot, 2020-FIN-056, December 28, 2020

Under the CARES Act enacted on March 27, 2020, DOI received \$909.7 million to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus pandemic. The Office of the Secretary received \$158.4 million of the DOI's CARES Act funding and transferred funds to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Office of Inspector General, Bureau of Reclamation, and Office of Wildland Fire. As of November 30, 2020, 5.3% of the funding for departmental offices had been obligated. As requirements change, bureaus and offices are required to submit updated spend plans. All bureaus that received transferred CARES Act funds informed us that they are complying with weekly reporting requirements. The Office of the Secretary plans to use existing reporting mechanisms to minimize the administrative burden on the bureaus and offices.

Where's the Money? DOI Use of CARES Act Funds as of October 31, 2020, 2021-FIN-004, December 15, 2020

This report presents the DOI's progress as of October 31, 2020, in spending CARES Act appropriations. Specifically, the DOI's expenditures as of October 31, 2020, totaled \$566,168,083, and its obligations totaled \$661,068,678.

Where's the Money? DOI Use of CARES Act Funds as of September 30, 2020, 2020-FIN-072, October 27, 2020

This report presents the DOI's progress as of September 30, 2020, in spending CARES Act appropriations. Specifically, the DOI's expenditures as of September 30, 2020, totaled \$546,908,092, and its obligations totaled \$658,490,397.

DOI OIG: Lessons Learned from Oversight of the Coastal Impact Assistance Program Grants. 2020-ER-057, October 19, 2020

In this report, DOI OIG presents lessons learned from and the risks identified in our earlier audit and investigation work related to the Coastal Impact Assistance Program. DOI OIG particularly highlighted its 2013 Coastal Impact Assistance Program audit report because, like the CARES

APPENDIX B

Act, the Coastal Impact Assistance Program provided significant funding to recipients through a series of grants that were primarily managed from afar. As of August 31, 2020, DOI has obligated nearly \$522 million of its CARES Act funding—in addition to more than \$102 million in CARES Act funding the DOI received from the Department of Education—using grants, cooperative agreements, and direct payments. DOI OIG’s previous Coastal Impact Assistance Program-related work demonstrated that grant awards can present substantial risks. Using its earlier work to illustrate areas of particular risk, DOI OIG highlights factors as essential to successful oversight of the DOI’s CARES Act funds.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (DOJ) OIG***Remote Inspection of Metropolitan Correctional Center, 21-053, March 23, 2021***

In April 2020, Metropolitan Correctional Center Chicago experienced its first outbreak of COVID-19. Factors that created challenges for controlling transmission of COVID-19 at Metropolitan Correctional Center Chicago included being in an area with a high level of community transmission, having a constant introduction of new inmates due to being a detention center housing many arrestees and pretrial detainees, having a high-rise architecture that includes open dormitory units, and not receiving enough rapid test kits to mass test inmates before COVID-19 started circulating throughout the institution. Nonetheless, Metropolitan Correctional Center Chicago complied with Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) guidance for social distancing and medical isolation and quarantine. In addition, staff constructed floor-to-ceiling plexiglass containment walls to separate the open dormitory units from the surrounding housing units and to create sub-sections within the open units to separate groups of inmates.

Review of the United States Marshals Service’s Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, 21-034, February 3, 2021

The DOJ OIG found that (1) the United States Marshals Service’s detention facility oversight plan is inconsistent and does not ensure that all active facilities will be assessed for implementation of the latest CDC guidance, (2) the U.S. Marshals Service does not provide the same scrutiny of facilities operated by the U.S. Marshals Service’s state and local government partners under Intergovernmental Agreements as U.S. Marshals Service contract facilities, and (3) the U.S. Marshals Service practice of transporting prisoners without first testing to confirm that they are COVID-19 free may lead to further infections. The OIG made six recommendations to the U.S. Marshals Service, and the U.S. Marshals Service agreed with all of them.

Recommendations: 6

Remote Inspection of Federal Correctional Complex Butner, 21-031, January 28, 2021

Due to the open layout of several of Federal Correctional Complex (FCC) Butner’s facilities, social distancing was a major challenge. The DOJ OIG also found that FCC Butner was not able to quarantine all inmates meeting requirements for quarantine due to a shortage of space.

APPENDIX B

Additionally, although FCC Butner took steps to limit staff movement among the facilities, it was not able to fully restrict staff movement at three of its five facilities. The DOJ OIG also found that staff was not changing N95 respirators when moving between units that had COVID-19 positive inmates and those that had COVID-19 negative inmates, which may have increased the risk of cross-contamination.

Remote Inspection of Federal Correctional Institution Milan, 21-032, January 28, 2021

In early April 2020, staff at Federal Correctional Institution Milan escorted symptomatic inmates to the local hospital without wearing appropriate PPE. The lack of appropriate PPE potentially increased the staff's risk of contracting COVID-19 and bringing it back to the institution. Federal Correctional Institution Milan promptly complied with the CDC's April 3, 2020 guidance that face coverings be worn in public settings; however, COVID-19 was already spreading throughout the institution by that time. By early May, 75% of Federal Correctional Institution Milan's medical staff had COVID-19. According to an Federal Correctional Institution Milan official, the depletion of medical staff was the most significant challenge to Federal Correctional Institution Milan's COVID-19 response.

Remote Inspection of Federal Correctional Complex Coleman, 21-026, January 13, 2021

At the onset of the pandemic, FCC Coleman had only 80% of its authorized medical staff. When an inmate tested positive, the resulting 14-day quarantine significantly added to the medical staff's workload. Prior to April 2020 BOP and DOJ policies on face coverings, FCC Coleman management denied staff the option to wear personally acquired face coverings. Additionally, the DOJ OIG's survey of FCC Coleman staff and Hotline complaints from inmates indicated that staff and inmates perceived deficiencies in the availability of hand washing items. Finally, FCC Coleman reviewed 919 inmates for home confinement placement and transferred 193 inmates to home confinement or a Residential Reentry Center (RRC).

Remote Inspection of Federal Correctional Institution Terminal Island, 21-025, January 13, 2021

Federal Correctional Institution Terminal Island experienced challenges separating COVID-19 negative and positive inmates, enforcing social distancing in open dormitories, quarantining inmates before expanding housing, and meeting BOP standards in one alternative housing area. Additionally, five inmates who died after contracting COVID-19 were not tested until arriving at the hospital and, in one instance, staff did not comply with BOP policy on notifying seriously ill inmates' families. Finally, the DOJ OIG's survey of staff indicated that obtaining adequate staff and inmate PPE were challenges.

APPENDIX B

Survey on the Effects of COVID-19 on ATF, DEA, FBI, USAO, and USMS Investigative Operations, 21-024, January 5, 2021

To gain insight on the effects and impact of COVID-19 on law enforcement investigative operations, the DOJ OIG surveyed law enforcement personnel within the DOJ during July and early August of 2020. Specifically, DOJ OIG deployed an anonymous online survey to Special Agents; Criminal Investigators; General Inspection, Investigation, Enforcement, and Compliance personnel; and U.S. Marshals and Deputy U.S. Marshals. The DOJ OIG released an interactive dashboard displaying the survey results, which include: (1) more than 64% of respondents noted that COVID-19 had affected their ability to work cases, (2) 25% of respondents did not agree that their agency provided adequate personal protective equipment, (3) 62% of respondents reported always or often wearing a mask, but more than half noted federal/state partners never or only sometimes wear masks, (4) a majority of respondents reported that they took appropriate precautions while interacting with the public during the COVID-19 pandemic, and (5) the majority of respondents indicated that protocols were in place to notify them of a positive test for individuals they had either recently worked with or taken into custody.

Remote Inspection of Federal Medical Center Fort Worth, 21-012, December 15, 2020

The DOJ OIG found that the rapid growth of the outbreak at Federal Medical Center Fort Worth during April and May 2020 necessitated a number of inmate transfers to local hospitals for treatment, straining institution staffing resources. Creating adequate social distancing in the institution's open layout housing units was also a challenge. Steps that Federal Medical Center Fort Worth officials took to address this included establishing temporary housing units in tents and in the gymnasium and modifying existing units. Finally, the DOJ OIG found that the availability of rapid testing allowed the institution to medically isolate a large number of COVID-19 positive inmates.

Remote Inspection of the CORE Services Group, Inc.'s Brooklyn House Residential Reentry Center, Brooklyn, New York, 21-006, November 19, 2020

The DOJ OIG found that Brooklyn House suspended most forms of inmate movement, implemented social distancing, and reduced in-house populations. However, in the absence of BOP requirements on the use of PPE in general RRC settings, Brooklyn House did not enforce universal use of PPE, such as masks and gloves, for staff and inmates until late April 2020. The RRC implemented screening requirements for both inmates and staff in March 2020 but took a week to implement BOP screening directives and did not uniformly apply screening to all inmates in its custody. Consistent with all RRC inspection work conducted by the DOJ OIG, we found that access to COVID-19 tests was limited by the capacity of the surrounding community and that systemic factors potentially heightened the risk of COVID-19 spread.

APPENDIX B

Remote Inspection of the GEO Group, Inc.'s Toler House Residential Reentry Center, Newark, New Jersey, 21-007, November 19, 2020

The DOJ OIG found that Toler House suspended most forms of inmate movement, implemented social distancing, and reduced in-house populations. Officials generally adhered to BOP policies and CDC guidelines; however, the GEO Group, which managed the RRC, did not implement mandatory screening for all staff until a week after the BOP told RRCs to do so. In addition, the facility's reliance on inmates to self-report symptoms to staff did not align with BOP guidance that called for daily screening of residents. Also, Toler House did not distribute face masks to all of its residents until nearly three weeks after the CDC recommended their widespread use.

Remote Inspection of Federal Correctional Complexes Oakdale and Pollock, 21-003, November 17, 2020

FCC Oakdale experienced a large-scale spread of COVID-19 within facilities with open layouts. At FCC Pollock, which did not experience as significant an outbreak, most inmates are housed in two-man cells. FCC Oakdale failed to promptly implement January 2020 inmate screening guidance and February 2020 staff screening guidance, and, by the time FCC Oakdale expanded screening to all staff, COVID-19 had already entered the institution. FCC Oakdale did not fully limit inmate movement until after it identified its first COVID-19 positive inmate on March 21, 2020. FCC Pollock limited inmate movement beginning in early March. In mid- to late March, some FCC Oakdale staff did not have proper PPE when in close contact with infected or potentially infected inmates. In mid-May, after nearly 100 asymptomatic inmates tested positive, FCC Oakdale failed to comply with isolation, quarantine, and PPE guidance. Some COVID-19 positive inmates were left in their housing units for up to six days without being isolated. Staff were not advised that they would be interacting with COVID-19 positive inmates and were not furnished proper PPE prior to the inmates' isolation. Numerous staff absences at FCC Oakdale resulted in some staff being mandated to work 16-hour shifts, and, in some instances, staff volunteered to work as much as 40 continuous hours.

Interim Report II - Review of the Office of Justice Programs' Administration of CARES Act Funding, 21-004, November 17, 2020

The DOJ OIG found that, as of August 22, 2020, the Office of Justice Programs had awarded 99.7% of the \$850 million received under the CARES Act, and that most recipient spending reviewed appeared allowable under the terms and conditions of the grant award. However, the DOJ OIG identified: (1) two instances in which policies and procedures for high risk grant recipients were not adhered to, either by the recipient or by the Office of Justice Programs, (2) one instance in which lobbying fees were paid to a not-for-profit entity, and (3) recipient spending during the first full reporting period (ending June 30, 2020) represented only 9% of the total amount available but that spending appeared to increase significantly as of early September. The OIG did not make any recommendations to the Office of Justice Programs.

APPENDIX B

Remote Inspection of Metropolitan Detention Center Brooklyn, 21-002, November 10, 2020

The DOJ OIG found that Metropolitan Detention Center Brooklyn followed BOP directives for testing symptomatic inmates. Lack of universal testing due to limited testing supplies partially accounted for a low overall number of reported cases. Additionally, self-contained, tiered housing units with closed cells on separate floors mitigated cross-contamination. A shortage of medical staff hindered screening inmates and staff, and Metropolitan Detention Center Brooklyn struggled to meet the medical needs of non-COVID-19 inmates. Although Metropolitan Detention Center Brooklyn complied with BOP directives on face coverings, in April and May 2020 some medical providers did not have sufficient PPE to evaluate and treat symptomatic inmates. Metropolitan Detention Center Brooklyn staff survey respondents were far more likely than BOP-wide respondents to report an immediate need for PPE, staff, or cleaning supplies.

Interactive Timeline of DOJ CARES Act Funding, October 8, 2020

To demonstrate the DOJ's use of CARES Act funding, the DOJ OIG released an interactive timeline that includes key milestones and significant events that have occurred since the onset of the pandemic.

Interactive Dashboards Relating to COVID-19 in BOP Facilities, October 1, 2020

The DOJ OIG released a collection of interactive dashboards with data on COVID-19 case trends, testing trends, and deaths due to COVID-19 in BOP-managed correctional facilities. The dashboards include information on: active and recovered COVID-19 cases and deaths over time for inmates and staff in the aggregate across all BOP-managed correctional facilities; the same data by facility for all BOP-managed facilities; and COVID-19 testing trends in BOP facilities. The dashboards present publicly available data obtained by the DOJ OIG from the BOP and the Johns Hopkins University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) OIG***COVID-19: Increased Worksite Complaints and Reduced OSHA Inspections Leave U.S. Workers' Safety at Increased Risk, 19-21-003-10-105, February 25, 2021***

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has taken a series of actions to address its challenges and has issued guidance in response to the pandemic. However, increased complaints, reduced inspections, and most inspections not being conducted onsite subject employees to greater safety risk. Compared to a similar period in 2019, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration received 15% more complaints in 2020 but performed 50% fewer inspections. As a result, there is an increased risk that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration is not providing the level of protection that workers need at various job sites. While the Occupational Safety and Health Administration has issued several guidance documents to enhance safety provisions during the pandemic, guidance is not enforceable like

APPENDIX B

rules or standards would be, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration has not issued an emergency temporary standard during the pandemic for airborne infectious diseases that may better protect employees' health and safety at worksites.

Recommendations: 4

Significant Recommendations: 4

Alert Memo: The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Needs to Ensure State Workforce Agencies (SWA) Implement Effective Unemployment Insurance Program Fraud Controls for High-Risk Areas, 19-21-002-03-315, February 22, 2021

DOL OIG identified more than \$5.4 billion of potentially fraudulent unemployment insurance benefits paid to individuals with social security numbers filed in multiple states, to individuals with social security numbers of deceased persons and federal inmates, and to individuals with social security numbers used to file for unemployment insurance claims with suspicious email accounts. The Department needs to take immediate action and increase its efforts to ensure state workforce agencies implement effective controls to mitigate fraud in these high-risk areas.

Recommendations: 2

Significant Recommendations: 2

COVID-19: States Cite Vulnerabilities in Detecting Fraud While Complying with the CARES Act UI Program Self-Certification Requirement, 19-21-001-03-315, October 21, 2020

While States have processes in place for claimants to self-certify they meet eligibility requirements for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefits, they still reported challenges when implementing the program and detecting and deterring fraud. Ninety-eight percent of respondents said their state faced challenges while implementing the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program. Specifically, States identified a lack of resources to address the high volume of claims, untimely and unclear guidance from the Employment and Training Administration, and incompatible legacy systems as top challenges. In addition, States reported inherent vulnerability in the legislative self-certification process, systems issues, and inadequate fraud screening tools.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE OIG

Information Report: Review of Department of State Preparations to Return Personnel to Federal Offices During the Global Coronavirus Pandemic, AUD-MERO-21-22, March 16, 2021

On May 1, 2020, the Department of State announced its “Diplomacy Strong” framework, which is a conditions-based, three-phased plan for returning personnel to the workplace based on authoritative Federal guidelines. To determine whether domestic or overseas Department of State facilities should move from one reopening phase to another, OIG found that Department of State officials considered data specific to local conditions, such as health care availability, COVID-19 case counts, testing data, and shelter-in-place orders. Specifically, the Department of State’s Coronavirus Data Analytics Team collected data from internal and external sources,

APPENDIX B

such as Johns Hopkins University, to inform reopening decisions. In addition to the framework, Department of State bureaus issued augmenting guidance that incorporated other Federal Government practices and recommendations. The Department of State OIG also found that the Department of State executed the framework to implement suitable safety and welfare considerations and precautions for personnel. Specifically, the Department of State assessed need and obtained critical resources to protect medical personnel at Department of State health units worldwide to safeguard personnel returning to worksites.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY (TREASURY) OIG***Interim Audit Update – Air Carrier and Contractor Certifications for Payroll Support Program, OIG-21-025, March 31, 2021***

Treasury OIG issued an interim report on its audit of certifications that passenger and cargo air carriers and contractors submitted to Treasury for a Payroll Support Program payment. To conduct its work, Treasury OIG selected a non-statistical sample of five passenger air carriers, four cargo air carriers, and seven contractors for audit. Of the 16 air carriers and contractors selected, as of the date of this interim report, Treasury OIG reviewed documentation to support requested payroll support amounts for seven recipients (five air carriers, one cargo air carrier, and one contractor). Based on audit work to date, Treasury OIG identified pervasive issues with the calculation of payroll amounts reported to Treasury by non-241 passenger air carriers—carriers that do not report financial data to the Department of Transportation—and contractors. These payroll amounts impacted the accuracy of recipient award amounts. Treasury OIG notified Treasury of these matters in December 2020, and according to management, Treasury implemented a number of measures in its “Payroll Support Program Extension” application process to identify and correct Payroll Support Program award amounts. When Treasury OIG receives confirmation from Treasury that award amounts have been corrected, it will resume work on its audit of non-241 passenger air carriers and contractor certifications.

Recommendations: 2

State of Rhode Island’s Uses of Coronavirus Relief Fund Payment, OIG-CA-21-08, February 11, 2021

Treasury OIG issued a letter to the State of Rhode Island officials regarding concerns raised with the Governor’s reported intent to use Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) proceeds to cover budget shortfalls, which is an ineligible use of CRF. Treasury OIG was advised by State officials that CRF proceeds were not being withheld to cover budget shortfalls despite the Governor’s comments during an interview with a local news station that the State had taken a cautious approach in withholding funds in case they are needed to balance the budget. Treasury OIG reminded the State that the use of CRF to cover revenue shortfalls remains an unallowable use of funds and that the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, did not change this requirement as anticipated by the State. To the extent that CRF payments are used to cover revenue shortfalls, the Treasury OIG will seek recoupment of those funds from the State of Rhode Island in accordance with the CARES Act.

APPENDIX B

State of Iowa's Noncompliance with Uses of Coronavirus Relief Fund Requirements, OIG-CA-21-011, December 14, 2021

Treasury OIG issued a letter to the State of Iowa officials based on concerns raised regarding the State's use of its CRF proceeds to make payments related to a portion of a \$20.1 million contract with Workday, Inc. (Workday), a computer system used for accounting and human resources that is to replace the State's legacy mainframe systems. While the new and modern Workday system may provide additional functionalities through a cloud-based environment, the timeline for achieving the new functionality is nearly two years away and the system upgrades were contemplated well before the pandemic began. As such, the Workday system is not available to meet the State's urgent needs during the covered period [based on covered period of March 1 through December 30, 2020, before extension through December 31, 2021, under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021]. Treasury OIG concluded that funding the Workday contract with the CRF was not a reasonable, allowable use of funds related to address the COVID-19 health pandemic and required that amounts equal to payments issued on the contract with Workday and any system implementation expenses related to contractor assistance using CRF proceeds be returned to Iowa's "Coronavirus Relief Fund" for eligible uses. Furthermore, additional CRF proceeds should not be used to make payments on this contract. In a written response, the State Governor authorized the return to Iowa's "Coronavirus Relief Fund" of all amounts that were initially allocated for payments on the Workday contract, including any system implementation expenses related to contractor assistance.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) OIG***Comprehensive Health Care Inspection of Facilities' COVID-19 Pandemic Readiness and Response in Veterans Integrated Service Networks 10 and 20, 21-01116-98, March 16, 2021***

The VA OIG's Comprehensive Health Care Inspection Program report provides a focused evaluation of the Veterans Integrated Service Network 10 and 20 facilities' COVID-19 pandemic readiness and response. This evaluation focused on emergency preparedness; supplies, equipment, and infrastructure; staffing; access to care; community living center patient care and operations; and facility staff feedback. The VA OIG aggregated findings on COVID-19 preparedness and responsiveness from routine inspections to ensure prompt dissemination of information given the quickly changing landscape as infection rates and demands on facilities continually shift. This report provides data that illustrates the tremendous COVID-19-related demands on VA health care services. It also describes leader and staff experiences, assessments, shared sentiments, and best practices to help improve operations and clinical care during public health crises.

Review of Veterans Health Administration's Virtual Primary Care Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, 20-02717-85, March 11, 2021

The VA OIG conducted a review to assess Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) virtual primary care response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the use of virtual care by primary care providers and their perceptions of VA Video Connect between February 7 and June 16, 2020.

APPENDIX B

One strategy initiated by VHA, in accordance with the CDC recommendation to social distance, included expanding the delivery of primary care via virtual care. In VHA, virtual care has had a long-standing presence as a modality of care. Virtual care options during the pandemic included video conferencing through VA Video Connect and third-party applications, such as Skype and FaceTime, as well as telephone appointments. The VA OIG found face-to-face primary care encounters decreased by 75% and virtual encounters increased, with contact by telephone representing 81% of all primary care encounters during the review period. Additionally, primary care providers reported via questionnaire that the VA Video Connect training and support were lacking for veterans, as was technology equipment and internet connectivity.

Recommendations: 2

Potential Risks Associated with Expedited Hiring in Response to COVID-19, 20-00541-34, March 11, 2021

This management advisory memo identifies potential risks associated with the VHA efforts to expedite adding new staff to meet increased demand caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The VA OIG recognizes the tremendous pressure to quickly hire staff to meet unprecedented needs. To achieve VHA's goal of bringing all new employees on duty within three days of making a tentative offer, VHA has modified or deferred tasks such as fingerprinting, background investigations, drug testing, credentialing, and preplacement physicals. The potential risks identified by the VA OIG may threaten VHA's ability to safeguard veterans' sensitive information and ensure its workforce is suitable for serving patients at VA medical facilities. The VA OIG organized these potential risks into three categories: (1) employees who do not have a completed fingerprint-based criminal history check may gain access to sensitive information and controlled substances; (2) delays in processing fingerprints add to a backlog of investigations; and (3) onboarding tasks are deferred—such as drug testing and credentialing—that are not being centrally monitored to ensure completion.

Reporting and Monitoring Personal Protective Equipment Inventory during the Pandemic, 20-02959-62, February 24, 2021

The VA OIG received hotline allegations that VHA medical facilities could not acquire and maintain enough PPE to keep pace with escalating needs. The VA OIG assessed how VHA reported and monitored PPE supply levels during the pandemic. The review team also solicited information about whether facilities ran out of PPE or experienced significant shortages. Without reliable PPE inventory information, VHA cannot effectively assess demand, monitor stock levels, or identify supply shortages that require prompt action. In interviews of 22 people involved in logistics operations at 42 facilities, no one reported running out of PPE items. Some individuals reported running low, but risks of outages were mitigated by shifting supplies among facilities or acquiring additional PPE in time. Overall, the VA OIG found VHA took swift steps to work around known limitations in its inventory management system by developing new processes and tools,

APPENDIX B

to use near real-time information on PPE inventory to shift and order supplies, and to otherwise ensure its facilities would not run out of PPE. The VA OIG found, however, that VHA could improve the accuracy and consistency of the PPE data for reporting and monitoring.

Recommendations: 2

Medication Delivery Delays Prior to and During the COVID-19 Pandemic at the Manila Outpatient Clinic in Pasay City, Philippines, 20-02779-59, January 28, 2021

The VA OIG conducted an inspection to assess allegations related to delayed medication delivery from the VA Manila Outpatient Clinic pharmacy in Pasay City, Philippines, prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Philippine President declared a COVID-19 public health emergency on March 8, 2020, and implemented a quarantine on March 16, 2020, that imposed travel limitations. Four patients experienced medication delivery delays in March and April 2020 due to limited or nonexistent courier transport. The VA OIG substantiated pharmacists could not dispense insulin to a patient as the VA Manila Outpatient Clinic pharmacy had no stock after April 2020. Orders for perishable items were also cancelled due to unavailability of flights to the Philippines. The VA OIG determined that none of these delays resulted in adverse clinical outcomes and made two recommendations related to pharmacy stock shortages and processing delays.

Recommendations: 2

Added Measures Could Reduce Veterans' Risk of COVID-19 Exposure in Transitional Housing, 20-02774-26, December 18, 2020

The VA OIG reviewed the measures taken by the VHA's Homeless Program Office, medical facilities, and community service providers to mitigate COVID-19 risks in transitional housing programs for veterans experiencing homelessness. The VA OIG found that while transitional housing service providers successfully implemented four of six specific CDC COVID-19 risk mitigation measures, the providers could have strengthened implementation of two others. VHA and service provider staff said the Homeless Program Office allowed them the flexibility to isolate vulnerable veterans, facilitate telehealth exams, and coordinate the provision of medical care in the community. Some service providers and VA medical facilities also developed their own best practices for reducing COVID-19 risks. As the pandemic continues, VHA and its service providers will need to sustain their efforts and strengthen measures to minimize COVID-19 exposure among veterans experiencing or at risk for homelessness. Staff at all 14 facilities assessed by the VA OIG made substantial progress on four measures: cleaning frequently with disinfectant, screening veterans for symptoms, creating isolation site plans, and maintaining adequate cleansing and sanitation supplies and personal protective equipment. However, several facilities appeared to struggle with the remaining two measures: identifying high-risk veterans and communicating suggested precautions and social distancing.

Recommendations: 4

APPENDIX B

Review of Veterans Health Administration's Emergency Department and Urgent Care Center Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic, 20-01106-40, December 17, 2020

The VA OIG conducted a review of the VHA's response to anticipated demand and use of emergency department and urgent care center services when faced with the possibility of an influx of patients needing evaluation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through a survey of 63 emergency department and interviews with urgent care center directors, the VA OIG learned there was a decreased number of patient visits to the emergency departments (19.8% decline) and to the urgent care centers (28.6% decline) for January to June 2020 when compared with the same time frame in 2019. Several Emergency department and urgent care center directors reported a loss of staff due to providers testing positive for the virus, transfers, resignations, or retirements. COVID-19 testing was generally available at the selected facilities. Some directors reported a lack of or need to ration certain items of personal protective equipment. Data related to supplies, clinical treatment, COVID-19 epidemiology, and hospital utilization were deemed critical and helpful for decision making. Virtually all respondents stated that they closely monitored staff for signs of fatigue and burnout. Lessons learned included patient and provider COVID-19 education, rethinking how emergency or urgent care can be delivered in a pandemic, and redesigning the day-to-day operations of the workplace.

Enhanced Strategy Needed to Reduce Disability Exam Inventory Due to the Pandemic and Errors Related to Canceled Exams, 20-02826-07, November 19, 2020

The VA OIG conducted this review to assess how the Veterans Benefits Administration scheduled and conducted exams during the COVID-19 pandemic to limit veterans' exposure, minimize processing delays, and ensure claims were not prematurely denied due to missed or canceled in-person exams. The VA OIG also evaluated the Veterans Benefits Administration's strategy for addressing the inventory of delayed disability exams. The Veterans Benefits Administration responded decisively to the pandemic by shifting exams to contractors, modifying procedures, and notifying veterans of their options. These included telehealth exams, reviews of acceptable clinical evidence, or the opportunity to wait for an in-person exam with the assurance that no final action would be taken until in-person exams could be completed. However, the Veterans Benefits Administration and the VA OIG identified claims prematurely or improperly denied based on canceled exams, contrary to issued guidance. In response, the Veterans Benefits Administration clarified guidance and established additional controls such as establishing a new program office focused on exam management operations and oversight. The VA OIG found that while the exam inventory has increased (about 1.5 million exams needed as of July 31), the percentage of errors decreased with clearer guidance. Still, the Veterans Benefits Administration must further develop, implement, and test its strategy for reducing the growing inventory of pending exams while handling incoming exam requests. The plan must incorporate lessons from COVID-19 responses to ensure continuity of exam processing and to prepare for future national emergencies.

Recommendations: 2

APPENDIX B

Veterans Crisis Line Challenges, Contingency Plans, and Successes During the COVID-19 Pandemic, 20-02830-05, October 28, 2020

The VA OIG reviewed Veterans Crisis Line operations ranging from contingency planning to quality metrics and lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Veterans Crisis Line staff had historically worked from communal call centers with shared space and equipment, a model that posed a safety risk to staff during the pandemic. To continue operations, Veterans Crisis Line's primary challenge was to equip and transition nearly 800 employees to telework-based operations. The VA's Office of Information and Technology prioritized Veterans Crisis Line's equipment needs and issued computers, monitors, and iPhones. The Veterans Crisis Line employees were provided with training, guidance, and resources related to telework and new Veterans Crisis Line processes. Veterans Crisis Line leaders implemented precautionary measures to reduce staff's risk of exposure in the call centers during the transition to telework. Despite these efforts, some surveyed employees felt some measures were inadequate to ensure safety. The Veterans Crisis Line continued to meet performance targets for key indicators. Veterans Crisis Line leaders reported that, in the future, the Veterans Crisis Line could benefit from a broader technology and equipment plan, its own information technology staff, and managing its own contracts; better succession planning with overlap for key positions; and maintaining an inventory of items such as headsets, keyboards, and cell phones.

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY OIG***EPA's Initial Plans for Returning to the Office Incorporate CDC Guidance but Differ by Location, 21-E-0030, November 30, 2020***

All 13 locations the Environmental Protection Agency OIG reviewed developed reopening plans to protect the health and safety of their returning workforces. These reopening plans incorporated the elements outlined in the CDC's Interim Guidance, but how they implemented the following health and safety measures outlined in the CDC's Interim Guidance differs substantially in many respects: face coverings; social distancing; ventilation systems; cleaning and disinfecting; interaction with visitors and non-Environmental Protection Agency employees; and public transportation.

Recommendations: 1

CSB Discontinued Information Recovery Testing and Off-Site Backup Storage During the Coronavirus Pandemic, 21-E-0016, November 18, 2020

The SB & Company found that the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board did not perform disaster recovery testing on major information systems during FY 2020 and did not store copies of backup media at an off-site location. The National Institute of Standards and Technology's guidance indicates that contingency plans should be tested to determine the effectiveness and readiness of the plans, that the test results should be reviewed, and that necessary corrective actions should be taken. The guidance also specifies that system backups should be stored securely at an off-site location. The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard

APPENDIX B

Investigation Board indicated that the coronavirus pandemic impeded its disaster recovery testing and exercises, as well as its ability to move backup media to an off-site location. As a result, in the event of a disaster or isolated incident, the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board may not be readily able to recover its systems' operations.

Recommendations: 2

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE OIG***GPO COVID-19 and Telework Survey Report, 21-01, October 9, 2020***

The Government Publishing Office OIG conducted surveys of the Government Publishing Office's COVID-19 response and maximum telework status. The report contains their analysis and considerations for Government Publishing Office Leadership and also contains the raw survey results as an attachment.

U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION OIG***Alert Memorandum: GSA Is Impeding Oversight of Its COVID-19 Activities, A201018-4, January 15, 2021***

In performing oversight of the General Services Administration's COVID-19 activities, the General Services Administration OIG initiated two projects: the Monitoring of the General Services Administration Activities in Response to the COVID-19 and the Audit of the Public Building Service's COVID-19 Communication and Cleaning Procedures. In response to this oversight, the General Services Administration established a new centralized review and approval process for responses to all audit team inquiries. This process has compromised the integrity of information provided by General Services Administration personnel and has delayed and limited the audit team's access to requested information. As a result, oversight of the General Services Administration's response to this important public health and safety issue has been impeded.

U.S. LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION OIG***Challenges Facing the Legal Services Corporation in Monitoring the COVID-19 Response Grant, March 2, 2021***

The Legal Services Corporation has announced its implementation of monitoring processes and techniques over the CARES Act funds. The Legal Services Corporation should continue monitoring reports with the GrantEase system, employing logic-checking systems to identify a duplicate or illogical submission before accepting the data, and communicating with grantee management or requirements, including providing information and assistance as the grantees continue to expend the CARES Act funds.

APPENDIX B

U.S. NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION OIG***COVID-19 Impacts on NASA's Major Programs and Projects, IG-21-016, March 31, 2021***

This memorandum presents a snapshot of the reported estimated impacts to 30 of the Agency's major programs and projects (defined as those with life-cycle costs of at least \$250 million) at the end of fiscal year 2020. These major programs and projects accounted for approximately \$1.6 billion of the estimated \$3 billion total COVID impact reported by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. To quantify the impacts to these programs and projects, the OIG reviewed (1) estimated COVID-19 related costs; (2) estimated COVID-19 related project life-cycle delays; and (3) COVID-19's impact on the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's domestic and international program and project partners. The OIG did not evaluate the Agency's compliance with congressional reporting requirements regarding cost growth and schedule delays.

U.S. NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE OIG***Final Report: Evaluation of the National Reconnaissance Office's Implementation of Section 3610 Authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, 2020-004S, January 4, 2021 (CLASSIFIED)***

The National Reconnaissance Office OIG is conducting an evaluation of the National Reconnaissance Office's implementation of section 3610 authorized by the CARES Act. The objectives are to evaluate the National Reconnaissance Office's implementation of section 3610 authorized by the CARES Act and to identify preliminary impacts to the National Reconnaissance Office mission.

Final Report: Evaluation of the National Reconnaissance Office's COVID-19 Pandemic Response, 2020-003S, October 13, 2020

The National Reconnaissance Office OIG conducted this evaluation to identify any best practices implemented or challenges encountered by National Reconnaissance Office Headquarters and selected field sites in responding to the pandemic. Areas of evaluation contained in this report include mission sustainment, policy, leadership, facilities and logistics, health and safety, communications, and human resources. This report is fundamentally informational and contains perspectives and opinions of the National Reconnaissance Office's leadership and workforce.

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION OIG***Performance Audit of the Implementation of OMB COVID-19 Flexibilities – University of Kentucky Research Foundation, 21-1-006, March 31, 2021***

The report highlights that there were no exceptions identified with the University of Kentucky Research Foundation's use of the administrative flexibilities granted through the National Science Foundation's implementation of Office of Management and Budget's COVID-19 guidance. However, the report identified concerns about the University of Kentucky Research

APPENDIX B

Foundation's compliance with certain Federal and National Science Foundation regulations, and National Science Foundation award terms and conditions not related to the COVID-19 flexibilities. The auditors questioned \$33,151 of costs claimed by the University of Kentucky Research Foundation during the audit period. Specifically, the auditors identified \$33,151 in unallowable materials and supplies expenses.

Recommendations: 2

Significant Recommendations: 2 of 2

Performance Audit of the Implementation of OMB COVID-19 Flexibilities – University of Alaska Fairbanks, 21-1-005, March 31, 2021

The report highlights that there were no exceptions identified with the University of Alaska Fairbanks' use of the administrative flexibilities granted through National Science Foundation's implementation of the OMB COVID-19 guidance. However, the report identified concerns about the University of Alaska Fairbanks's compliance with certain Federal and National Science Foundation regulations, National Science Foundation award terms and conditions, and University of Alaska Fairbanks policies not related to the COVID-19 flexibilities. The auditors questioned \$28,606 of costs claimed by the University of Alaska Fairbanks during the audit period. Specifically, the auditors identified \$14,964 in credits not appropriately returned, \$10,704 in inappropriately applied indirect costs, and \$2,938 in unallowable expenses. The auditors also identified one compliance related finding for which there were no questioned costs: University of Alaska Fairbanks' incorrect application of proposed indirect cost rates.

Recommendations: 10

Significant Recommendations: 10 of 10

U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT OIG

Downward Trends in FEHBP Members' Use of Preventive Care Services Caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic, IK-99-00-20-046, February 3, 2021

In this Data Brief, the OMB OIG presents concerns with downward trends related to preventive care services utilized by a selected section of Federal Employees Health Benefits Program participants during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, this brief focuses on claims incurred and paid during the period of January through August 2020 and compares this data to the same time period in 2019.

Recommendations: 3

PANDEMIC RESPONSE ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE (PRAC)

Update: Top Challenges in Pandemic Relief and Response, PRAC-2021-02, February 3, 2021

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government has appropriated over \$3.5 trillion to address the public health and economic crises. Given the changing nature of the pandemic and the federal government's response, the PRAC re-visited its original top

APPENDIX B

management challenges to ensure that it provided timely information to Congress and the new Administration about the response efforts. The following four challenges have been added: Preventing and Detecting Fraud against Government Programs; Informing and Protecting the Public from Pandemic-Related Fraud; Data Transparency and Completeness; and Federal Workforce Safety.

Federal COVID-19 Testing Report: Data Insights from Six Federal Health Care Programs, PRAC-2021-01, January 14, 2021

This report examines COVID-19 testing efforts for six federal health care programs during the first seven months following the declaration of a public health emergency in the United States. Published by the PRAC Health Care Subgroup, the report takes a detailed look at testing data in each of the programs that, when combined, provide benefits or care for about 64 million individuals. This report is intended to help policymakers as they continue to develop and refine their testing efforts related to testing accessibility and availability for at-risk populations, cost effectiveness, and sufficiency of data available to inform testing efforts.

MITRE Report: Transparency in Pandemic-Related Federal Spending: Report of Alignment and Gaps, November 19, 2020

This work found that the existing publicly available data meets a substantial portion of the CARES Act transparency requirements for the PRAC. However, the study identified 16 key gaps in the data sources themselves that could impair the PRAC's ability to provide the public with timely data and information on federal pandemic spending. The report outlines 13 corrective actions that Congress, the OMB, federal agencies, and others can take to lessen these gaps ranging from relatively minor changes to more complex corrective actions that may require policy changes, legislation, or IT system changes.

RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD OIG

Management Information Report: Interim Review of Railroad Retirement Board CARES Act Benefit Payments During the Pandemic, 21-04, March 26, 2021

The CARES Act boosted unemployment and sickness benefits for railroad workers impacted by the pandemic. CARES Act benefits were made in three phases. For each phase, the Railroad Retirement Board had made the following payments through December 2020: over \$13 million for phase I; over \$135 million for phase II; and over \$7 million for phase III. Railroad Retirement Board management has not addressed their responsibilities to increase efforts to identify potential fraud for CARES Act benefit payments and the need to send fraud referrals to the Office of the Inspector General in a timely manner. In addition, the Railroad Retirement Board is not set up to collect recoveries involving CARES Act benefit payments.

Recommendations: 2

APPENDIX B

U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (SBA) OIG***Evaluation of SBA's Award Procedures for the CARES Act Entrepreneurial Development Cooperative Agreements, 21-11, March 30, 2021***

This report found that SBA awarded the CARES Act entrepreneurial development cooperative agreements and grants in accordance with applicable federal laws, regulations, and guidance. SBA OIG found program officials established performance goals and identified performance indicators. SBA OIG recommended that SBA enforce standard operating procedures requiring defined performance goals and include performance targets in all future Small Business Development Centers and Women's Business Centers cooperative agreements and grants. It also recommended that SBA collect and analyze the CARES Act entrepreneurial development cooperative agreement recipient's performance results and establish a goal-setting process for technical assistance programs established for future disasters.

Recommendations: 2

Significant Recommendations: 2 of 2

Duplicate Loans Made Under the Paycheck Protection Program, 21-09, March 15, 2021

SBA OIG reviewed Payment Protection Program (PPP) regulations and the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act, in addition to guidance published in SBA's PPP Interim Final Rules and PPP Frequently Asked Questions. SBA OIG determined SBA did not always have sufficient controls in place to detect and prevent duplicate PPP loans. As a result, lenders made more than one PPP loan disbursement to 4,260 borrowers with the same tax identification number and borrowers with the same business name and address.

Recommendations: 4

Significant Recommendations: 4 of 4

Inspection of the SBA's Implementation of the Paycheck Protection Program, 21-07, January 14, 2021

SBA's initial response to implement the PPP quickly made billions of dollars of capital available to millions of borrowers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. SBA quickly released loan origination program guidance for the majority of the program's aspects and approved approximately 3,800 financial institutions for participation in the program. However, SBA's efforts to hurry capital to businesses were at the expense of controls that could have reduced the likelihood of ineligible or fraudulent businesses obtaining a PPP loan. As a result, there is limited assurance that loans went to only eligible recipients.

Recommendations: 6

Significant Recommendations: 6 of 6

APPENDIX B

Management Alert Paycheck Protection Program Loan Recipients on the Department of Treasury's Do Not Pay List, 21-06, January 11, 2021

Because of fraud complaints received by SBA OIG, it collaborated with the Treasury's Do Not Pay Business Center, which identified high-risk transactions related to financial assistance to small businesses for the COVID-19 pandemic. SBA OIG's review of the Treasury's analysis showed approximately \$3.6 billion in PPP loans to potentially ineligible recipients. Expedited management action could reduce or prevent the potential for loss in terms of the risk of improper payments to lenders for amounts ineligible for forgiveness as well as any fees. SBA OIG communicated summary results to SBA management, who requested the Treasury's results and have systemically put a "hold" flag on loans identified by the Do No Pay team to ensure the loan applications are properly reviewed before processing for forgiveness or any further disbursements.

Recommendations: 3

Significant Recommendations: 3 or 3

Evaluation of CARES Act Debt Relief to 7(a) Borrowers, 21-03, December 1, 2020

SBA OIG found that SBA effectively ensured that more than 224,000 borrowers of 7(a) loans received \$2.6 billion in debt relief within the first three months of the CARES Act. Although SBA OIG found that SBA accurately made payments on behalf of borrowers according to the data reported by lenders, it also found that opportunities existed to improve payment controls to ensure only eligible borrowers receive subsidy payments. SBA OIG identified issues with lender reported information that increased the risk of either making payments to ineligible borrowers or making excessive payments. It also found \$43 million in subsidy payments went to borrowers that may have been ineligible. Because of the urgency to issue the subsidy payments quickly, SBA relied heavily on lenders self-certifying the loan status and payment amount with limited verification procedures. Continuing to strengthen internal controls and oversight of the subsidy payments will help ensure that SBA provides debt relief only to eligible borrowers.

Recommendations: 2

Significant Recommendations: 2 of 2

Inspection of Small Business Administration's Initial Disaster Assistance Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic, 21-02, October 28, 2020

SBA OIG found that SBA, in its effort to provide billions of dollars of capital to small businesses quickly, "lowered the guardrails" or relaxed internal controls, which significantly increased the risk of program fraud. The unprecedented demand for COVID-19 Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) and the equally unprecedented challenges SBA had in responding to this pandemic combined with lowered controls resulted in billions of dollars in potentially fraudulent loans and loans to potentially ineligible businesses. Based on its analysis of SBA's COVID-19 EIDL data, as of July 31, 2020, SBA OIG found SBA approved \$14.3 billion (\$13.4 billion disbursed) in COVID-19 EIDLs to accounts that differed from the original bank accounts listed on the

APPENDIX B

loan applications; \$62.7 billion (\$58.0 billion disbursed) in multiple (between 2 and 245) COVID-19 EIDLs to applicants using the same internet protocol addresses, email addresses, bank accounts, or businesses listed at the same addresses; and approximately \$1.1 billion in COVID-19 EIDLs and emergency advance grants to potentially ineligible businesses.

Recommendations: 10

Significant Recommendations: 10 of 10

SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR PANDEMIC RECOVERY

Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery | Quarterly Report to Congress, February 1, 2021

This quarterly report summarizes the Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery's accomplishments and activities during the fourth quarter of calendar year 2020. It identifies the direct loans made by the Treasury to passenger air carriers and related businesses; cargo air carriers; and businesses critical to maintaining national security, including the company, loan amount, total disbursed, and end date. The report also provides information about other investments made by the Treasury in the Federal Reserve's various liquidity programs established under Section 13(3) of the Federal Reserve Act. Additionally, there is a brief analysis of "multiple-dipping," where an entity obtains funding from two or more CARES Act programs.

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE (USPS) OIG

Impact of Pandemic on Postal Service Finances, 20-257-R21, March 29, 2021

From March through September 2020, the USPS separated pandemic-related expenses from daily operating expenses to determine the financial impact. These pandemic-related expenses included supplies, services, transportation expenses, and sick and annual leave expenses, among others. Some expenses, such as supplies and services, were directly tracked while others, like transportation expenses, were estimated. The USPS subsequently filed and received approval for partial CARES act funding the week of March 15, 2021. USPS OIG may conduct future audit work around USPS requests for COVID-19 expense reimbursement.

Recommendations: 1

Service Performance of Election and Political Mail During the November 2020 General Election, 20-318-R21, March 8, 2021

USPS OIG's objective was to evaluate the USPS's service performance of Election and Political Mail during the November 2020 general election. They also evaluated the handling of mail for the Georgia Senate runoff election held on January 5, 2021. USPS OIG found that the USPS prioritized processing of Election Mail during the 2020 general election, significantly improving timeliness over the 2018 mid-term election even with significantly increased volumes of Election Mail in the mailstream. Although timeliness was slightly below goals, proper handling and timely delivery of all Election Mail, especially ballots, was the number one priority of the USPS. Further,

APPENDIX B

while USPS OIG's site visits did identify some delayed Election Mail and compliance issues, the USPS took immediate corrective actions to address the identified issues. However, USPS OIG did find opportunities for the USPS to increase the volume of ballots included in service performance and improve its internal communication on Election Mail guidance and processes.

Recommendations: 5

Pandemic Volume and Revenue Projected Scenarios, 21-037-R21, February 10, 2020

The USPS develops a range of financial projections as part of its financial planning based on future forecasts, current operations, and historical trends. The main projection the USPS completes is the annual financial plan, which estimates revenue, volume, and expenses for each fiscal year. The fiscal year 2020 plan was approved by the USPS Board of Governors in February 2020. On March 13, 2020, the President of the United States issued the national emergency declaration concerning the COVID-19 pandemic. During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the USPS has provided essential services as part of the nation's critical infrastructure by continuously processing and delivering mail and packages. Quarantines, stay-at-home orders, and travel restrictions have affected retail and commercial customers, suppliers, and mail service providers, which ultimately created a shift in the volume of some USPS products. For example, while First-Class Mail volumes declined greatly, package mail volume increased far above expectations. USPS OIG's objective was to evaluate the reasonableness of the USPS's projected financial scenarios as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommendations: 2

Mail Service During the Early Stages of the COVID-19 Pandemic, 20-275-R21, January 4, 2021

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the USPS provided vital service, including the delivery of critical items such as medications, stimulus payments, and Social Security checks. Further, the USPS is the leading delivery service provider for online purchases. USPS OIG's objective was to evaluate mail service during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommendations: 3

Employee Safety - Postal Service COVID-19 Response, 20-259-R21, November 20, 2020

To lead its pandemic response, the USPS created the COVID-19 Command Response Team at headquarters to ensure the agency followed directives and guidance from the CDC. The USPS implemented changes to slow the spread of the virus, manage and support affected employees, and ensure that recovered employees returned to work safely. USPS OIG's objective was to assess the USPS's response to the COVID-19 outbreak regarding the safety of its employees.

Recommendations: 4

APPENDIX B

TREASURY INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR TAX ADMINISTRATION (TIGTA)***Interim report - IRS COVID-19 Response Timeline and Policies to Protect Employee Health and Safety, 2021-16-020, March 23, 2021***

Since reopening of Internal Revenue Service (IRS) facilities across the country for limited operations on July 13, 2020, the number of IRS employees who reported testing positive for COVID-19 had increased. As of February 28, 2021, 3,404 IRS employees reported having tested positive for COVID-19. IRS data show that approximately 45% of these employees reported to an IRS facility during the 14 days preceding a positive test result for COVID-19. As part of its efforts to quickly inform and protect employees during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the IRS made Federal guidance available to all employees, in addition to developing and issuing its own internal guidance. These internal guidelines generally aligned with Federal guidelines and best practices issued by the Office of Personnel Management, the CDC, the Government Accountability Office, and other Federal authorities.

Interim Report – The IRS Leveraged Its Telework Program to Continue Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic, 2021-IE-R002, March 23, 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic began to have a significant impact on IRS operations in mid-March 2020 when the IRS began to close facilities. By March 28, 2020, the IRS placed nearly 35,000 employees on paid Weather and Safety Leave because they could not work in IRS facilities or telework during some portion of the two-week period. Between April 2020 and the end of September 2020, the IRS steadily increased telework participation. By September 26, 2020, almost 60,700 employees teleworked a portion of the week, while approximately 25,600 employees worked from an IRS facility for a portion of the week. For this same week, approximately 6,700 employees reported time to Weather and Safety Leave. This report presents the interim results of TIGTA's evaluation to determine whether the IRS effectively used its telework program to reduce the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on IRS operations. A subsequent report is planned for issuance later in Fiscal Year 2021.

Results of the 2020 Filing Season and Effects of COVID-19 on Tax Processing Operations, 2021-46-023, March 22, 2021

As of December 25, 2020, the IRS had more than 11.7 million paper-filed individual and business returns that still needed to be processed. The backlog of returns, correspondence, and other types of work resulting from the pandemic has and will continue to have a significant impact on the associated taxpayers. For example, the unprocessed individual returns, as well as the additional returns and correspondence in the Error Resolution, Rejects, Unpostables functions and the Accounts Management inventory, include taxpayers who have yet to receive their Tax Year 2019 tax refunds.

APPENDIX B

Interim Report – Taxpayer Advocate Service Actions to Assist Taxpayers in Response to the Implementation of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, 2021-16-019, March 4, 2021

The Taxpayer Advocate Service has taken numerous actions to assist taxpayers in response to the enactment of the CARES Act. This includes identifying and addressing CARES Act issues affecting large groups of taxpayers (Systemic Advocacy) and assisting individual taxpayers (Case Advocacy), as well as taking other actions to educate and assist taxpayers during the pandemic.

Systems Processing Economic Impact Payments Performed Well and the Get My Payment Application Security Vulnerabilities Are Being Remediated, 2021-26-006, December 28, 2020

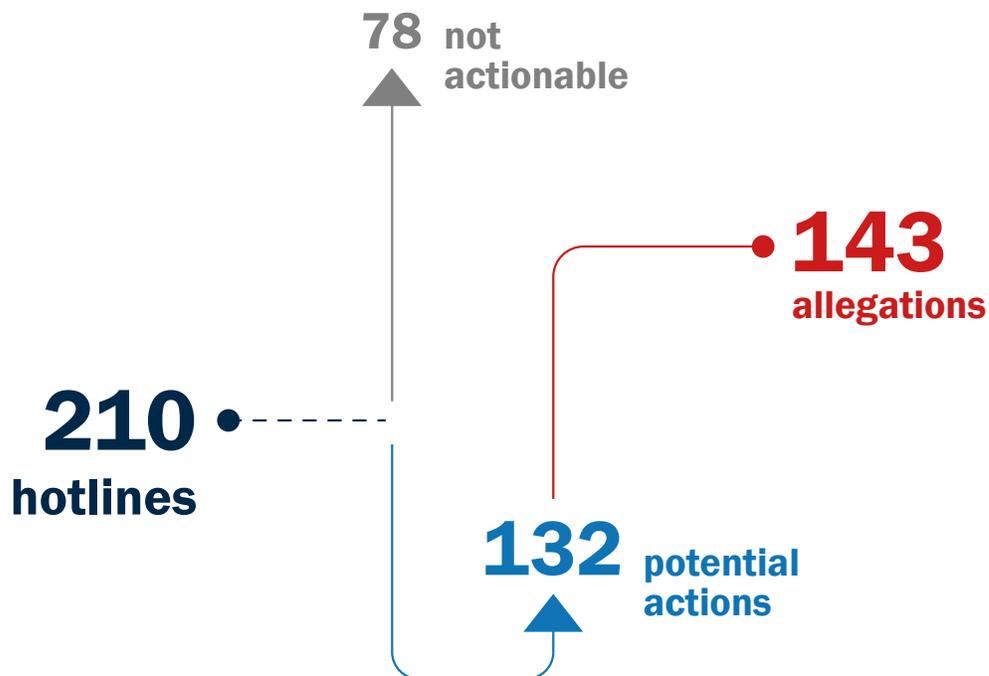
Overall, the 16 IRS tax systems involved in delivering Economic Impact Payments to individuals performed well. However, a coding issue in the software developed to process the payments affected the Individual Master File's performance. The IRS fully restored the system within approximately 24 hours and the affected payments were processed the following business day.

Recommendations: 2

Appendix C Hotlines

Since inception, the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee received the majority of its hotline complaints through its electronic complaint form located here: <https://www.pandemicoversight.gov/contact/about-hotline>. The PRAC's hotline provides an avenue for concerned citizens to report potential fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement related to the pandemic response, including the CARES Act and other related legislation.

During the reporting period, we received 210 hotline communications, of which 78 were filed for information or not actionable. The remaining 132 were deemed potentially actionable for fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement. From these, the PRAC forwarded 143 allegations to 13 different Offices of Inspectors General for review and appropriate action.



REPORT FRAUD, WASTE, ABUSE, OR MISCONDUCT

To report allegations of fraud, waste, abuse, or misconduct regarding funds or programs covered within the following Acts, please go to the PRAC website at PandemicOversight.gov.

[CARES Act](#)

[Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act](#)

[Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#)

[Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act](#)

[Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021](#)

[American Rescue Plan Act of 2021](#)



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