U.S. Department of Commerce ★ Office of Inspector General

Report Highlights

Audit of NTIA's Public Wireless Supply Chain Innovation Fund Award Process for Notice of Funding Opportunity 1

Audit Report OIG-26-027-A
September 3, 2026

What We Audited | Our objective was to determine whether the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) had an adequate application review and award selection process to ensure that grant recipients met the requirements of the Innovation Fund program's Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) 1, *Public Wireless Supply Chain Innovation Fund Grant Program – Expanding Testing and Evaluation*.

Why This Matters | The marketplace for fifth generation (5G) cellular network technology is consolidated and dominated by a few vendors. The Innovation Fund aims to accelerate the development and adoption of open and interoperable wireless technologies to enable new vendors to enter the market more easily and to facilitate growth and innovation in the wireless industry.

On August 9, 2022, Congress established the enhancement of supply chains for 5G and successor technology as a national priority through the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors and Science Act, which appropriated $1.5 billion for the Innovation Fund. However, in July 2025, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act rescinded $850 million of that funding. NTIA received 125 grant applications and—through an interagency agreement to receive grants management services from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)—awarded 17 grants, totaling approximately $140.5 million, based on NOFO 1.

What We Found | NTIA had an adequate application review and award selection process to ensure that grant recipients met the requirements of the Innovation Fund program's NOFO 1. However, we found that NTIA did not always follow its process and could not appropriately support the award decisions made by its program office regarding the grant applications in our sample.

What We Recommend | We made five recommendations to NTIA and one to NIST to conduct oversight of the grant review process and of the financial statement analyses, respectively. They concurred with our recommendations and are working to implement them.