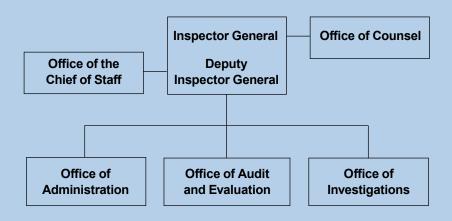


OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL



Oversight Areas

Office of the Secretary Bureau of Economic Analysis Bureau of Industry and Security U.S. Census Bureau U.S. Economic Development Administration **Economics and Statistics Administration** First Responder Network Authority International Trade Administration Minority Business Development Agency National Institute of Standards and **Technology** National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Technical Information Service National Telecommunications and Information Administration United States Patent and Trademark Office

OIG Main Number

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More Information

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FROM THE ACTING INSPECTOR GENERAL

I am pleased to present the U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General's (OIG's) Semiannual Report to Congress. This report summarizes oversight work that we initiated and oversight work that we completed during the 6-month period ending March 31, 2025, on important Department programs and operations.

OIG issued 5 investigative reports and 12 audit and evaluation reports. We've summarized significant projects in the Completed Works section of this report, grouped under the three challenge areas of modernizing technology and systems, providing core services and data, and managing spending.

Commerce OIG has a strong record of identifying monetary benefits while protecting the Department and taxpayers from fraud, waste, and abuse. From fiscal years 2020-2024, every \$1 budgeted to OIG resulted in the identification of \$8 in recoveries or potential savings for the Department. In the first half of FY 2025, we built on that success by identifying \$16,523,940 in recoveries and potential savings.

OIG's productivity and results are enabled by the excellent workplace culture we've built in recent years. The Partnership for Public Service released its FY 2024 Best Places to Work rankings in March 2025, and OIG continued trending upward. Our overall engagement and satisfaction score places us in the top 20 percent of all agency subcomponents and represents a remarkable increase of 152 spots since the year before.

OIG remains committed to excellence in providing independent and objective oversight of the Department and its programs. The work highlighted in this report reflects that commitment. I thank Secretary Lutnick, senior officials throughout the Department, and members of Congress and their staffs for their support of our work and for their receptiveness to our recommendations to improve departmental programs and operations.

Sincerely,

Roderick Anderson Acting Inspector General



TOP MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE CHALLENGES FACING THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE IN FISCAL YEAR 2025

OIG is required by statute (see 31 U.S.C. § 3516(d)) to annually report the most serious management and performance challenges facing the Department. Below is a summary of our final report (OIG-25-001) issued October 16, 2024, on the Department's top management and performance challenges for fiscal year (FY) 2025.

- Challenge Area 1: Modernizing Technology and Systems
 - o Maximizing Cybersecurity and Information Technology (IT) Security
 - Modernizing IT Systems and Operations
 - o Integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Other Emerging Technologies Safely
- Challenge Area 2: Providing Core Services and Data
 - Ensuring Secure, Fair International Trade
 - Maintaining and Improving National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Operations and Services
 - Safeguarding Intellectual Property and Fostering Innovation
 - Ensuring Quality Population Data
- Challenge Area 3: Managing Spending
 - o Strengthening Oversight in Response to Dramatic Growth
 - Strengthening Oversight of the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) Program
 - Managing Major Broadband Grant Programs
 - Managing and Overseeing Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) Funding
 - Overseeing the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN) Program
 - Overseeing National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Facility Improvement Project Contracts

COMPLETED WORKS

Our completed works section is divided into three sections that broadly reflect the Department's most serious management and performance challenges in FY 2025:

(1) modernizing technology and systems. (2) providing core services and data, and

- (1) modernizing technology and systems, (2) providing core services and data, and
- (3) managing spending.¹



Modernizing Technology and Systems

Strengthening IT security posture and modernizing IT systems and operations.



Providing
Core Services
and Data

Providing essential information to stakeholders on such varied subjects as trade, weather and environment, intellectual property, and population data.



Managing Spending

Funding and managing major programs while protecting funds from risk, fraud, and waste.

¹ For more details on these challenge areas, please see <u>Top Management and Performance Challenges</u> <u>Facing the Department of Commerce in FY 2025</u>. U.S. Department of Commerce. October 16, 2024.

Modernizing Technology and Systems

The Department and its bureaus need up-to-date technology, systems, and equipment to safeguard data and provide valuable services. This is particularly important as the Department continues to implement critical programs intended to ensure American innovation, progress, and prosperity. The following reports discuss our work in this area.

Data Quality Challenges and Ineffective Program Management Hinder the Department's Enterprise Cybersecurity Capabilities (OIG-25-006-A)

The Enterprise Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation (ECDM) program is critical to the Department's strategy for meeting its cybersecurity modernization goals and transitioning to a zero trust architecture (ZTA), which was required to be in place by the end of FY 2024. ECDM is the Department's implementation of the Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation (CDM) program in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). The Department deploys security tools procured via CISA's CDM program across all Department bureaus to provide enterprise-wide visibility into security for reporting, risk management, continuous monitoring, and incident response. Effective cybersecurity efforts hinge on accurate asset discovery and management—the Department cannot secure unseen and untracked assets, and subsequent cybersecurity capabilities, such as vulnerability management and incident response, are built on this cornerstone.

Our audit objective was to assess the effectiveness of the Department's ECDM program. We found that the Department has not yet adequately strengthened its cybersecurity posture by fully implementing its ECDM program. Specifically, we found issues related to inaccurate and incomplete data, inconsistent control and testing of information system changes, internal security weaknesses, program management deficiencies, and incomplete cost tracking.

We made seven recommendations to improve the oversight and effectiveness of the ECDM program.

The National Weather Service Should Further Strengthen Its Protection of Essential Operational Technology (OIG-25-012-I)

Bureaus across the Department use operational technology (OT) to support their missions. At the National Weather Service (NWS), within NOAA, deploying OT is critical to providing climate data, forecasts, and warnings to protect people and property and enhance the economy. OT at NWS is spread across the country and ranges from buoys to weather radars.

Implementing ZTA is a critical aspect of protecting OT and defending against increasingly sophisticated and persistent threat campaigns. A key principle of ZTA is distrust of all

entities inside and outside the security perimeter. Thus, agencies must secure both OT and the IT assets that support it against internal and external threats.

Our objective was to determine whether NWS has implemented effective security controls for its critical OT. We found that for some OT systems, NWS did not implement strong credential management and lacked complete vulnerability scanning coverage. We made four recommendations to improve the security of NWS's OT systems.

Providing Core Services and Data

The Department manages a great variety of services that are essential to the nation and the world. Our trade with other countries, our inventions and creations, our weather data and environmental observations, our population and demographic data—all of these rely on the Department and its bureaus. The following reports discuss our work in this area.

The Census Bureau Should Address Challenges from the 2020 Post-Enumeration Survey Ahead of the 2030 Census (OIG-25-015-A)

The Census Bureau carries out a decennial census of the U.S. population to reapportion the U.S. House of Representatives and determine the distribution of federal funding to the states, tribal governments, and local communities for services and infrastructure. The bureau also carries out a quality check of the decennial census, which in 2020 was called the Post-Enumeration Survey (PES). The PES's purpose is to independently survey a representative sample of households from the decennial census enumeration to measure coverage errors and census accuracy. The PES results are one of the most important quality measures of the decennial census. This is especially true for the 2020 Census, which experienced complications and delays largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. PES estimates found that 14 states had population undercounts or overcounts. In addition, some historically undercounted demographic groups were undercounted again, but to a higher degree, while others were overcounted.

Our audit objective was to assess the validity of the 2020 PES results as they related to overcounts and undercounts. Overall, while the 2020 PES results were derived using methodologies consistent with federal and bureau statistical standards, we identified areas of concern that had an impact on the survey results, bringing into question the validity of the 2020 PES. Specifically, we found that operational disruptions, mitigations in response to missing data, and a smaller-than-anticipated sample size increased uncertainty in PES estimates and that the bureau did not carry out quality control processes for PES operations as planned. We made one recommendation to improve the accuracy and reliability of future PES results.

The Census Bureau Did Not Develop a Workforce Plan to Address Field Representative Staffing Gaps (OIG-25-013-I)

The Census Bureau conducts more than 130 surveys of households and businesses each year. The bureau employs thousands of field representatives (FRs) to interview respondents for some of its largest surveys, including the American Community Survey (ACS), Current Population Survey (CPS), and National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS).

The bureau struggles to recruit and retain FRs in some areas, resulting in high FR attrition. This has resulted in staffing shortfalls for the ACS, CPS, and NCVS. If the bureau does not recruit and retain enough quality employees for FR positions, it will not have sufficient and

capable staff to complete interviews and collect social and economic data the federal government, businesses, and other groups need.

Our objective was to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies the bureau uses to support its recruitment, hiring, and retention of employees in these mission-critical positions. Specifically, we reviewed staffing requirements and strategies intended to ensure the bureau recruits, hires, and retains enough FRs to collect survey data.

We found that the bureau does not have effective strategies to address staffing gaps and high vacancies in FR positions. Specifically, we found that the ACS, CPS, and NCVS did not meet staffing goals, and the bureau has no documented processes to aid in FR recruitment and retention or address FR vacancies.

We made one recommendation to improve workforce planning and address FR staffing gaps.

NOAA Should Assess Opportunities to Improve Hurricane Forecasts and Warnings (OIG-25-007-A)

NOAA's NWS mission includes providing weather forecasts, warnings, and impact-based decision support services for the protection of life and property and enhancement of the national economy. Within NWS, the mission of the National Hurricane Center (NHC) is to save lives, mitigate property loss, and improve economic efficiency through the issuance of its watches, warnings, and forecasts.

The Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (Weather Act) directed the development and extension of accurate hurricane forecasts and warnings with a goal of reducing loss of life, injury, and economic damage. The Weather Act mandated a focus on improving hurricane forecasts in terms of track (the path that a storm follows) and intensity (determined by a storm's maximum wind speed), forecasting and communication of storm surge, and creating more effective products (including watches and warnings) by incorporating risk communication research in operations. It also required NOAA to develop a collaborative project plan to achieve the goal and focus areas.

Our audit objective was to assess NWS progress toward improving hurricane forecasts and warnings. We found that NWS has made progress in improving tropical cyclone track and intensity forecasts since the Weather Act became law. However, NWS is only partially meeting the Weather Act's requirements for a hurricane forecast improvement program (HFIP). We found that NHC has not extended tropical cyclone warnings and excludes performance measures that could help it better focus improvements on high-impact storms. Additionally, NHC has not ensured optimal usage of hurricane hunter aircraft.

Finally, NOAA's HFIP is not sufficient to meet the Weather Act's hurricane forecast and warning goal.

We made eight recommendations for NOAA to improve hurricane forecasts and warnings to better meet the Weather Act's requirements.

USPTO Should Address Risks to Its Pendency Reduction Efforts for Trademark Applications (OIG-25-002-A)

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) is responsible for registering trademarks that meet the requirements of the Trademark Act of 1946, as amended. As part of its performance management, USPTO sets targets and reports results for two application pendency measures: first action pendency and total pendency. First action pendency increased from under 3 months in FY 2019 to 8.5 months in FY 2023, and the backlog of unexamined applications grew by 256 percent over the same period. To address the increase, USPTO initially relied on hiring more examining attorneys and increasing the amount of overtime and production incentive awards available to examining attorneys. In FY 2023, USPTO developed a phased pendency reduction plan that includes strategies such as a new first-action production incentive award and training on more efficient search techniques.

Our objective was to determine whether USPTO exercised effective oversight and management of trademark pendency. We found that (1) USPTO missed its pendency targets for multiple years and provided insufficient information in its reporting of pendency goals and results and (2) USPTO's projections of future pendency reduction may not be achievable.

Weaknesses in USPTO's processes for setting pendency targets and in some of its pendency reduction initiatives create the risk that trademark application pendency will continue at high levels longer than USPTO projects. USPTO's lack of sufficient long-term strategic goals and workforce plans leaves it vulnerable to changes in application filing trends. Without additional actions, USPTO may not meet applicants' needs for pendency levels that support timely business decisions. We made six recommendations on setting long-term trademark pendency goals, documenting and publicizing pendency targets, updating the trademark production model, and implementing an action plan to address workforce challenges.

Managing Spending

In recent years, the Department has been at the forefront of efforts to strengthen the American economy and global competitiveness. This has led to many new programs and initiatives for the Department to manage. As the Department's funding for these programs and initiatives has grown, so has its ongoing challenge of ensuring the proper oversight and management of contracts, grants, and financial assistance awards. The Department must manage many high-dollar award programs and procurements while ensuring that it spends taxpayer dollars prudently and safeguards programs from fraud, waste, and abuse. The following reports discuss our work in this area.

Department of Commerce FY 2024 Financial Statements (OIG-25-005-A)

KPMG LLP (KPMG)—an independent public accounting firm—performed the audit in accordance with U.S. generally accepted auditing standards, standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Bulletin No. 24-02, *Audit Requirements for Federal Financial Statements*. KPMG determined that the financial statements were fairly presented, in all material respects, and in accordance with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles. Also, KPMG identified certain deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting, specifically at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Service Center, that it considers to be material weaknesses. In addition, KPMG identified no instances of reportable noncompliance with *Government Auditing Standards* or OMB Bulletin No. 24-02, as well as no instances in which the Department's financial management systems did not substantially comply with (1) federal financial management systems requirements, (2) applicable federal accounting standards, and (3) the United States Government Standard General Ledger at the transaction level.

Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network Was Not Always Available to First Responders During the Catastrophic 2023 Maui Wildfires (OIG-25-004-A)

Our audit objective was to assess First Responder Network Authority's (FirstNet Authority's) NPSBN services in response to the devastating wildfires that broke out on the Hawaiian island of Maui in August 2023. We focused on AT&T's operational response, FirstNet Authority's oversight of AT&T from a program and contract perspective, and the extent the network was a reliable means of communicating for public safety agencies during the wildfire response.

We found that FirstNet Authority's network services were not effective in supporting the public safety response to the Maui wildfires. Specifically, we found that FirstNet Authority did not ensure that timely, adequate network services were provided to support public safety's response; it took up to 11 days to temporarily restore service at affected cell sites, AT&T's response to the need for mobile cell sites was inadequate, and issues with connectivity and communication hampered first responders' ability to provide their services after network service was restored. In addition, FirstNet Authority did not ensure

that a sufficient plan for business continuity and disaster recovery was developed before the wildfires, or that network service response efforts were accurately reported afterward.

We made 11 recommendations to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to help improve FirstNet Authority's management of the network's contract, its disaster recovery oversight, and its ability to hold AT&T accountable for effective restoration of network service during emergencies.

OIG's Evaluation of MEP's Economic Impact Reporting Process Also Identified Instances of Noncompliance at Centers, Led to NIST Action (OIG-25-011-I)

NIST's Hollings MEP is a national network of 51 MEP Centers—in all 50 states and Puerto Rico—providing any U.S. manufacturer with resources to improve production processes, upgrade technological capabilities, and facilitate product innovation. NIST makes federal financial assistance awards in the form of cooperative agreements to state, university, and nonprofit organizations to operate the Centers.

This report provides additional results identified during our previously published <u>evaluation</u> of MEP economic impact reporting, as well as actions taken by NIST in response to our work. Specifically, the report provides details on two specific instances in which our work prompted NIST to conduct its own review and issue notices of material noncompliance to Centers.

First, we found that the California Center and its subrecipient did not accurately report program income. Second, we found that the Maryland Center's use of state grant funds was unallowable and not properly reported. Our findings in both cases led to NIST issuing the Centers notices of material noncompliance.

We made four recommendations to help NIST recover amounts owed by these Centers, ensure that the California Center and its subrecipients accurately report program income, and ensure that the Maryland Center correctly uses funds on other NIST awards.

Puerto Rico's Department of Natural and Environmental Resources Properly Disbursed Funds but Was Slow in Expending Fishery Disaster Assistance Funds (OIG-25-009-A)

Our audit objective was to determine whether federal funds received by Puerto Rico's Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (PRDNER) to support its fisheries in recovering from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and damages caused by several hurricanes were properly disbursed and used for their intended purpose. We conducted this audit in response to a congressional request. Overall, we found that for the disaster funds (COVID-19 pandemic relief funds will be covered in a separate report) it expended, PRDNER properly disbursed and used funds as intended. However, PRDNER was slow in spending funds. Several factors contributed to the slow expenditure of funds, and NOAA missed opportunities to provide oversight throughout the award performance period. We made a recommendation to NOAA to document all project monitoring activities in the

official grant files in accordance with the *Department of Commerce Grants and Cooperative Agreements Manual*.

Broadband Stakeholders Identified Various Challenges Affecting Broadband Deployment (OIG-25-014-I)

NTIA is responsible for administering \$48.2 billion provided by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) for four different broadband programs, namely the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment program, the Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Grant program, the Digital Equity Act program, and the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program. Each has different programmatic requirements, but they all aim to expand broadband infrastructure and promote broadband adoption and use.

The objective for this evaluation was to identify potential challenges for deploying broadband to underserved and unserved communities. We interviewed NTIA and state and territory broadband office representatives, surveyed broadband offices, and sent questionnaires to industry stakeholder associations. Broadband officials and industry stakeholders identified challenges with the following: (1) statutory requirements, (2) Notice of Funding Opportunity provisions, (3) supply chain and labor market shortages, and (4) NTIA's communication process. Our report describes these challenges and does not make recommendations.

United States Patent and Trademark Office FY 2024 Financial Statements (OIG-25-003-A)

KPMG performed the audit in accordance with U.S. generally accepted auditing standards, standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, and OMB Bulletin No. 24-02, *Audit Requirements for Federal Financial Statements*. In its financial statement audit report of USPTO, KPMG determined that the financial statements were fairly presented, in all material respects, and in accordance with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles. KPMG identified no material weaknesses in internal control over financial reporting. In addition, KPMG identified no instances of reportable noncompliance with applicable laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements.

Reviews of Single Audits

Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) (2 Code of Federal Regulations [C.F.R.] Part 200) requires nonfederal entities that expend \$1,000,000 or more per year in federal awards to obtain an annual independent financial audit, referred to as a "single audit" (2 C.F.R. § 200.501). We conducted desk reviews on a judgmental sample of single audit reporting packages for which the Department is the cognizant or oversight agency. The objectives of the desk reviews included identifying quality issues that may warrant follow-up work, revisions to

² Prior to October 1, 2024, the statutory threshold for conducting single audits was \$750,000. Because the single audits we reviewed were completed prior to that date, the \$750,000 threshold applied.

the reporting package, or appropriate management official attention. During the desk reviews, we examined the audit reporting packages, which included financial statements, federal award expenditures, and auditors' reports, but not the auditors' underlying documentation. We then determined whether the audit met *Uniform Guidance*, generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS) and American Institute of Certified Public Accountants audit standards.

During this period, we conducted desk reviews of 28 single audit reporting packages. The audits covered approximately \$266 million in total federal expenditures, including \$188 million in Department direct expenditures. We found that 18 of the 28 audit reporting packages (about 64 percent) fully met federal reporting requirements, whereas the remaining 10 (36 percent) did not meet all requirements.

Additional Significant Reports

Former Census Bureau Contractor Pled Guilty to Defrauding the Small Business Administration (SBA) of over \$455,000

On October 10, 2024, OIG closed a joint investigation into allegations that a Census Bureau contractor and his consulting firm misused \$455,166.33 in Economic Injury Disaster Loan and Paycheck Protection Program loans. The investigation, conducted jointly with the FBI, revealed that from around August 2020 through August 2021, the contractor used the funds for personal investments, local auction purchases, gambling, personal loans to friends and family, and the repayment of personal loans, rather than using the funds for their intended purpose. On February 23, 2024, the contractor pled guilty to one count of 18 U.S.C. § 1343, *Fraud by wire, radio, or television* by devising and participating in a scheme to defraud a financial services company and the SBA. On May 24, 2024, the contractor was sentenced to probation for a term of 3 years, with home confinement for the first 6 months of probation. Additionally, he was ordered to pay \$455,166.33 in restitution to SBA and received a monetary judgment for \$403,166.33.

NOAA Contractors Pled Guilty to False Statements

On January 8, 2025, OIG closed an investigation into an allegation that two NOAA contractors, operating under the same ownership interest, conspired to submit competing bids for the same NWS janitorial contracts. The allegation was substantiated, and one individual subsequently pled guilty to making false statements in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1001. The individual was sentenced to 2 years of probation and was ordered to pay a \$100,000 fine and a \$100 special assessment. The individual was also excluded from government contracting for a period of 5 years.

Settlement Agreement Requires Contractor to Repay the Census Bureau \$4 Million

On February 18, 2025, OIG closed an investigation into allegations that a contractor provided inaccurate and misleading information regarding its performance on a Census Bureau contract in support of the 2020 Decennial Census. The investigation revealed the contractor provided information to artificially increase scoring pertaining to the quality of its work to the Census Bureau, which allowed the contractor to receive more contract award fees than it would have received with accurate reporting. In February 2025, the Department of Justice negotiated a settlement agreement pursuant to the civil False

Claims Act requiring the contractor to pay \$8,000,000 to the government, of which \$4,000,000 was restitution to Census.

Quality Control Review of Douglas Wilson & Company's Single Audit of Great Falls Development Authority, Inc., for Fiscal Year 2022 (OIG-25-QCR-1)

On our behalf, Premier Group Services, Inc., conducted a quality control review (QCR) of Douglas Wilson & Company, P.C.'s single audit of Great Falls Development Authority, Inc., for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022. After reviewing Douglas Wilson & Company's single audit report and related documentation, Premier Group assigned Douglas Wilson & Company a rating of Fail. Premier Group Services concluded that Douglas Wilson & Company's single audit was not conducted in accordance with applicable standards, specifically the *Generally Accepted Auditing Standards* (GAAS), GAGAS, and Uniform Guidance for federal awards.

Quality Control Review of Lank, Johnson & Tull, CPAs' Single Audit of Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council for Fiscal Years 2020 And 2021 (OIG-25-QCR-2)

On our behalf, Premier Group Services, Inc., conducted a QCR of Lank, Johnson & Tull, CPAs' single audit of Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, for the fiscal years ending December 31, 2020, and 2021. After reviewing Lank, Johnson & Tull's single audit report and related documentation, Premier Group Services assigned Lank, Johnson & Tull a rating of Fail. Premier Group Services concluded that Lank, Johnson & Tull's single audit was not conducted in accordance with applicable standards, specifically the GAAS, GAGAS, and Uniform Guidance for federal awards.

Response to Prior QCR

During this reporting period, the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) provided its response to a previously issued QCR. McBride, Lock, & Associates, LLC, performed the QCR on our behalf and, in January 2022, issued a rating of Fail, prompting a report to the AICPA Professional Ethics Division. On March 27, 2025, AICPA concluded that the CPA firm under review violated the rules of the AICPA Code of Professional Conduct and has required remedial action. Remedial action is taken when the matter is not considered egregious and typically includes requiring appropriate continuing professional education courses or periodic monitoring to ensure requirements are met.

WORK IN PROGRESS

The following is a list of audits and evaluations we initiated or continued work on during this reporting period but for which we have not yet issued a final report. Each engagement is listed by title, followed by its objective.

Department-Wide

Audit of the Department's Past Performance Evaluations and Oversight of Accenture Contracts

To assess the effectiveness of the Department's past performance evaluations and oversight of contract awards to Accenture Federal Services LLC.

Audit of Fiscal Year 2025 Department of Commerce Consolidated Financial Statements

To determine whether the financial statements are presented fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Audit of BAS System Implementation for the Census Bureau

To assess the Department's efforts to transition Census Bureau financial operations to Business Applications Solution (BAS).

2025 Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act of 2015 (CISA) Evaluation

To provide an interagency report on the actions taken in calendar years 2023–2024 to carry out CISA information sharing requirements.

Evaluation of the Department's Fiscal Year 2024 Compliance With Payment Integrity Information Act Requirements

To determine the Department of Commerce's compliance with the Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019 (PIIA) for fiscal year 2024.

Audit of the Department's Vulnerability Reporting and Resolution Program

To assess the effectiveness of the Department's program for managing public-reported vulnerabilities in its public-facing information technology systems.

Audit of Grants Enterprise Management System (GEMS) Program Implementation

To assess the U.S. Department of Commerce's management and implementation of the GEMS program.

Bureau of Industry and Security

Evaluation of the Bureau of Industry and Security's Cyber Incident Detection and Response

To assess the adequacy of actions taken by the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) when detecting and responding to cyber incidents in accordance with federal and Department requirements.

Audit of Bureau of Industry and Security's Enforcement of Russia and Belarus Export Controls

To assess the actions taken by BIS to detect and prosecute violations of Russia and Belarus export controls.

Audit of the Bureau of Industry and Security's Enforcement Efforts to Combat China's Military-Civilian Fusion Strategy (second of two reports)

To assess the adequacy of actions BIS has taken to enforce export controls for China.

U.S. Census Bureau

Audit of Workforce Staffing Plans for the 2026 Census Test

To assess the Census Bureau's staffing plans and progress in meeting workforce hiring goals for the 2026 Census Test.

Evaluation of the 2026 Census Test Site Selection Methodology

To assess the Census Bureau's methodology used to select the test sites for the 2026 Census Test.

Audit of U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey

To determine whether the bureau has implemented adequate data collection procedures to ensure American Community Survey estimates are reliable.

U.S. Economic Development Administration

Audit of EDA's FY 2019 Disaster Relief Grants Costs Claimed and Oversight Efforts

To determine whether EDA grantees accounted for and expended disaster relief funds in accordance with federal laws and regulations. Specifically, we will determine whether EDA (1) claimed allowable, allocable, and reasonable costs under the financial assistance awards and (2) received the goods and services paid for by the awards.

Audit of EDA's Review Process for Selecting Tech Hub Awardees

To determine whether EDA has an adequate review and selection award process to ensure grant recipients met the Technology and Innovation Hub (Tech Hub) program requirements. On February 5, 2025, the audit was suspended because EDA was migrating its grant data into a new system, and we did not have access to complete and reliable grant data to conduct our audit. We will resume the audit on a future date.

Audit of CARES Act Grants Recipients Through EDA's Revolving Loan Fund Program

To determine whether costs claimed by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) RLF grant recipients were allowable, allocable, and reasonable.

First Responder Network Authority

Audit of the First Responder Network Authority's Oversight of User Eligibility for the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network

To assess FirstNet Authority's oversight for ensuring that only eligible users have access to the network.

Audit of the First Responder Network Authority's Oversight of Service Availability for the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network

To determine whether FirstNet Authority is ensuring that the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network is achieving service availability requirements.

International Trade Administration

Evaluation of the International Trade Administration's Cyber Incident Detection and Response

To assess the adequacy of ITA's actions when detecting and responding to cyber incidents in accordance with federal and Department requirements.

Minority Business Development Agency

Audit of the Minority Business Development Agency Business Center Program

To determine the adequacy of MBDA's oversight of the MBDA Business Center Program to ensure requirements are met.

National Institute of Standards and Technology

Audit of Semiconductor Incentives Program Eligibility

To determine whether entities receiving financial assistance met eligibility requirements as required by the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors Act.

Audit of NIST Cooperative Agreements with Ohio Department of Development

To determine whether the Ohio Department of Development complied with award terms and conditions.

Status Report on the Department of Commerce's CHIPS Act Programs

To evaluate the current status of the Department's CHIPS Act programs administered by the Department of Commerce.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Audit of National Weather Service Radar Next Program

To assess the adequacy of NWS planning for continuity of national radar coverage.

Audit of Office of Marine and Aviation Operations Class B Ship Acquisition

To assess the Office of Marine and Aviation Operations' (OMAO's) management and oversight of the Class B ship acquisition.

Audit of NOAA's Geostationary Extended Observations (GeoXO) Program Implementation

To assess NOAA's progress implementing the GeoXO program.

Audit of the Space Weather Follow-On Lagrange-1 (SWFO-L1) Project's Progress Preparing for Launch and Operations

To assess the SWFO-L1 project's progress preparing its satellite for launch and operations.

Audit of the Puerto Rico Department of Agriculture's Costs Claimed through CARES Act and CAA Funds

To determine whether the Puerto Rico Department of Agriculture's costs claimed through the CARES Act and Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA) funds are allowable, allocable, and reasonable in accordance with federal cost principles.

Evaluation of NOAA's National Weather Service Tornado Forecasting and Warning Performance

To assess National Weather Service tornado forecasting and warning performance and identify potential opportunities for enhanced effectiveness.

Audit of Office of Marine and Aviation Operations Aircraft Program

To assess NOAA's progress replacing its hurricane hunter aircraft.

Audit of Puerto Rico's Department of Natural and Environmental Resources Use of Federal Emergency and Pandemic Relief Financial Assistance Funds (second of two reports)

To determine whether federal funds received by Puerto Rico's Department of Natural and Environmental Resources to support its fisheries participants in recovering from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and damages caused by several hurricanes were properly disbursed and funds were used for their intended purposes.

National Telecommunications and Information Administration

Audit of NTIA's Public Wireless Supply Chain Innovation Fund Award Process for NOFO 1

To determine whether NTIA had an adequate review and selection award process to ensure grant recipients met requirements of the Innovation Fund program's Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) 1—Research and Development, Testing and Evaluation.

Semiannual Evaluation of the Status of NTIA's Broadband Grant Programs

To evaluate the status of the NTIA-administered grant programs that received broadband funding under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

Audit of the NTIA's Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program Review Process

To determine whether NTIA has an adequate review process to ensure that states' and territories' plans meet the BEAD Program's planning phase requirements.

Audit of NTIA's Allocation of BEAD Funds

To determine whether NTIA properly allocated federal funds provided for the BEAD program.

Audit of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Administrative Funds

To assess NTIA's spending of grant program administrative funds authorized by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

Evaluation of NTIA's Implementation of the Public Wireless Supply Chain Innovation Fund

To assess NTIA's implementation of the Innovation Fund program.

United States Patent and Trademark Office

Audit of Fiscal Year 2025 USPTO Financial Statements

To determine whether the financial statements are presented fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Audit of USPTO's Management and Utilization of Real Property

To determine whether USPTO effectively utilizes and manages real property.

Audit of USPTO's Governance of Its Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools

To determine whether USPTO has an effective governance structure and processes in place to manage its AI tools.

Audit of USPTO's Quality Reviews of Continuing Patent Applications

To determine the effectiveness of USPTO's quality reviews of continuing patent applications.

STATISTICAL DATA

Consistent with the Inspector General Act of 1978 (IG Act), as amended, OIG is providing the following statistical data:

TABLES		PAGES
1.	Office of Investigations Statistical Highlights for This Period	<u>23</u>
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9.	Description of Closed and Non-Public Inspections, Evaluations, Audits, and Certain Investigations	<u>39</u>

Table 1. Office Of Investigations Statistical Highlights for This Period

Investigative activities cover investigations opened and closed by OIG; arrests by OIG agents; indictments and other criminal charges filed against individuals or entities as a result of OIG investigations; and convictions secured at trial or by guilty plea as a result of OIG investigations.

Allegations received presents the number of complaints from employees, stakeholders, and the general public that were handled by our Compliance and Ethics unit. Of these, some resulted in the opening of investigations; others were referred to bureaus for internal administrative follow-up. Others were unrelated to Departmental activities or did not provide sufficient information for any investigative follow-up and so were not accepted for investigation or referral.

The metrics used for the statistical data referenced in this table include the following: ensure data input is completed accurately; obtain data extraction via reports generated in OIG's case management system; and complete quality assurance with supporting documentation in the case files and discussions with individual investigative personnel.

Allegations Received	
Total hotline contacts	688
Contacts related to departmental programs	495
Number of hotline referral to departmental management	188
Reports	
Total number of investigative reports issued during the reporting period ^a	5
Prosecutive Actions	
Total number of individuals or entities referred to Department of Justice for criminal prosecution	23
Total number of entities referred to state/local prosecuting authorities	1
Indictments/Informations/Criminal Complaints	1
Convictions	2
^a This figure consists of reports of investigation, case closure memorandums to the Department/bureaus (investigative summaries), and notice of concern memorandums.	

Table 2. Resolution and Follow-Up

The IG Act requires us to present in this report information concerning reports issued before the beginning of the reporting period (October 1, 2024) for which no management decision had been made by the end of the period (March 31, 2025). There is one report with a recommendation that remains unresolved for more than 6 months for this reporting period.

Audit resolution is the process by which the Department reaches an effective management decision in response to audit reports. **Management decision** refers to management's evaluation of the findings and recommendations included in the report and the issuance of a final decision by management concerning its response.

Department Administrative Order 213-5, *Audit and Evaluation Resolution and Follow-up*, provides procedures for management to request a modification to an approved action plan or for a financial assistance recipient to appeal an audit resolution determination. The following table summarizes modification and appeal activity during the reporting period.

Report Category	Modifications	Appeals
Actions pending (October 1, 2024)	10	1 ^a
Submissions	9	0
Decisions	8	1
Actions pending (March 31, 2025)	11	0

^a OIG was not aware of the appeal of <u>OIG-24-018-I</u> until after the September 2024 SAR. The appeal is now closed/resolved.

Table 3. Audit and Inspection Statistical Highlights for This Period

Audits comply with standards established by the Comptroller General of the United States for audits of federal establishments, organizations, programs, activities, and functions.

Inspections include evaluations, inquiries, and similar types of reviews that do not constitute an audit or a criminal investigation.

Questioned costs ^a	\$0
Value of audit recommendations that funds be put to better use ^b	\$7,576,169.26
Total potential monetary benefits	\$7,576,169.26

- ^a **Questioned cost**: This is a cost questioned by OIG because of (1) an alleged violation of a provision of a law, regulation, contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or other agreement or document governing the expenditure of funds; (2) a finding that, at the time of the audit, such cost is not supported by adequate documentation; or (3) a finding that an expenditure of funds for the intended purpose is unnecessary or unreasonable.
- b Value of audit recommendations that funds be put to better use: This results from an OIG recommendation that funds could be used more efficiently if Department management took action to implement and complete the recommendation. Such actions may include (1) reductions in outlays; (2) deobligation of funds from programs or operations; (3) withdrawal of interest subsidy costs on loans or loan guarantees, insurance, or bonds; (4) costs not incurred by implementing recommended improvements related to the Department, a contractor, or a grantee; (5) avoidance of unnecessary expenditures identified in pre-award reviews of contracts or grant agreements; or (6) any other savings specifically identified.
- Value of audit recommendations agreed to by management: This is the sum of (1) disallowed costs and (2) funds to be put to better use that are agreed to by management during resolution. Disallowed costs are the amount of costs that were questioned by the auditors or the agency action official and subsequently determined—during audit resolution or negotiations by a contracting officer—not to be charged to the government.

Table 4. Reports with Questioned Costs

See table 3 for a definition of "questioned cost." An **unsupported cost** is a cost that is not supported by adequate documentation at the time of the review. Questioned costs include unsupported costs.

Report Category	Number	Questioned Costs	Unsupported Costs
A. Reports for which no management decision had been made by the beginning of the reporting period	1	\$834,774,467	\$834,774,467
B. Reports issued during the reporting period	0	\$0	\$0
Total reports (A+B) requiring a management decision during the period	1	\$834,774,467	\$\$834,774,467
C. Reports for which a management decision was made during the reporting period	0	\$0	\$0
i. Value of disallowed costs		\$0	\$0
ii. Value of costs not disallowed		\$0	\$0
D. Reports for which no management decision had been made by the end of the reporting period	1	\$834,774,467	\$834,774,467

Table 5. Reports with Recommendations That Funds Be Put to Better Use

See table 3 for a definition of "recommendations that funds be put to better use."

Report Category	Number	Value
A. Reports for which no management decision had been made by the beginning of the reporting period	3	\$99,497,529
B. Reports issued during the reporting period	2	\$7,576,169
Total reports (A+B) requiring a management decision during the period	5	\$107,073,698
C. Reports for which a management decision was made during the reporting period	3	\$103,662,285
i. Value of recommendations agreed to by management		\$103,662,285
ii. Value of recommendations not agreed to by management		\$0
D. Reports for which no management decision had been made by the end of the reporting period	2	\$3,411,413

Tables 6, 6-A, 6-B, 6-C, and 6-D. Report Types for This Period

Performance audits provide findings or conclusions based on an evaluation of sufficient, appropriate evidence against criteria. Performance audits provide objective analysis to assist management and those charged with governance and oversight in using the information to improve program performance and operations, reduce costs, facilitate decision making by parties with responsibility to oversee or initiate corrective action, and contribute to public accountability.

Inspections include evaluations, inquiries, and similar types of reviews that do not constitute an audit or investigation. An inspection is defined as a process that evaluates, reviews, studies, or analyzes the programs and activities of a department or agency to provide information to managers for decision making; makes recommendations for improvements to programs, policies, or procedures; and identifies where administrative action may be necessary.

Financial statement audits are primarily to provide an opinion about whether an entity's financial statements are presented fairly in all material respects in conformity with an applicable financial reporting framework. Reporting on financial statement audits performed in accordance with GAGAS also includes reports on internal control over financial reporting and on compliance with provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements that have a material effect on the financial statements.

Other public releases from this period include two letters, a data stroll, a work plan, and a report on the Department's top management challenges in FY 2025.

Table 6. Summary of Report Types for This Period

Туре	Number of Reports	Table Number	
Performance Audits	6	Table 6-A	
Inspections/Evaluations	4	Table 6-B	
Financial Statement Audits	2	Table 6-C	
Other Public Reports	5	Table 6-D	
Total	17		

Table 6-A. Performance Audits

Report Title	Report Number	Date Issued	Funds to Be Put to Better Use	Amount Questioned	Amount Unsupported
The Census Bureau Should Address Challenges from the 2020 Post-Enumeration Survey Ahead of the 2030 Census	OIG-25- 015-A	03.25.2025	\$0	\$0	\$0
Puerto Rico's Department of Natural and Environmental Resources Properly Disbursed Funds but Was Slow in Expending Fishery Disaster Assistance Funds	OIG-25- 009-A	01.22.2025	\$0	\$0	\$0
NOAA Should Assess Opportunities to Improve Hurricane Forecasts and Warnings	OIG-26- 007-A	01.06.2025	\$0	\$0	\$0
Data Quality Challenges and Ineffective Program Management Hinder the Department's Enterprise Cybersecurity Capabilities	OIG-25- 006-A	12.17.2024	\$5,619,300	\$0	\$0
Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network Was Not Always Available to First Responders During the Catastrophic 2023 Maui Wildfires	OIG-25- 004-A	12.05.2024	\$0	\$0	\$0
USPTO Should Address Risks to Its Pendency Reduction Efforts for Trademark Applications	OIG-25- 002-A	10.24.2024	\$0	\$0	\$0

Table 6-B. Inspections/Evaluations

Report Title	Report Number	Date Issued	Funds to Be Put to Better Use	Amount Questioned	Amount Unsupported
Broadband Stakeholders Identified Various Challenges Affecting Broadband Deployment	OIG-25- 014-I	03.20.2025	\$0	\$0	\$0
The Census Bureau Did Not Develop a Workforce Plan to Address Field Representative Staffing Gaps	OIG-25- 013-l	3.13.2025	\$0	\$0	\$0
The National Weather Service Should Further Strengthen Its Protection of Essential Operational Technology	OIG-25- 012-I	2.27.2025	\$0	\$0	\$0
OIG's Evaluation of MEP's Economic Impact Reporting Process Also Identified Instances of Noncompliance at Centers, Led to NIST Action	<u>OIG-25-</u> 011-l	2.25.2025	\$1,956,869.38	\$0	\$0

Table 6-C. Financial Statement Audits

Report Title	Report Number	Date Issued
Department of Commerce FY 2024 Financial Statements	OIG-25-005-A	12.16.2024
United States Patent and Trademark Office FY 2024 Financial Statements	OIG-25-003-A	11.15.2024

Table 6-D. Other Public Releases

Report Title	Report Number	Date Issued
2025 Annual Letter to OMB re: Government Charge Card Abuse Act 2012	OIG-25-010-M	01.30.2025
Broadband: A Data Stroll, Version 2	Broadband: A <u>Data Stroll,</u> <u>Version 2</u>	01.17.2025
Office of Audit and Evaluation FY 2025 Work Plan	OIG-25-008	01.13.2025
Top Management and Performance Challenges Facing the Department of Commerce in FY 2025	OIG-25-001	10.17.2024
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program Letter for FY 24	<u>Letter</u>	10.1.2024

Tables 7, 7-A, and 7-B. Unimplemented and Unresolved Recommendations by Operating Unit

All tables concerning unimplemented or unresolved recommendations do not include recommendations from (a) recurring, annual audits (such as financial statement audits) or (b) single audits.

Recommendations from all performance audit, evaluation, and inspection reports issued prior to FY 2019 have been implemented.

Resolved but unimplemented recommendations are those for which (a) the operating unit(s) agreed to OIG recommendations and (b) OIG approved the action plan. Columns 2 through 5 of table 7 provide details on resolved but unimplemented recommendations.

Unresolved recommendations include those with no approved action plan as of March 31, 2025, or those for which the action plans are not due until after March 31, 2025. Columns 6 and 7 of table 7 provide details on unresolved recommendations.

Table 7-A, which is shown in appendix 1, provides details on FYs 2019–2025 performance audit, evaluation, or inspection reports that have resolved but unimplemented recommendations. During those FYs, we issued 109 audits and evaluations (excluding financial statement audits). As of March 31, 2025,

- 45 of the 109 reports (41 percent) had resolved but unimplemented recommendations.
- 137 of 621 total recommendations (22 percent) were resolved but unimplemented.
- 9 of these resolved but unimplemented recommendations had potential monetary benefits of \$717,393,709.

Table 7-B, which is shown in Appendix 2, provides the full list of 11 reports with 45 unresolved recommendations, including those for which an action plan is not due until after March 31, 2025. See figure 4 for a snapshot of unresolved recommendations from seven reports with action plans submitted by March 31, 2025.

Table 7. Summary of Unimplemented and Unresolved Recommendations by Operating Unit

Operating Unit	FYs 2019-2021 Unimplemented Recs (Resolved)	Potential Monetary Benefits of FYs 2019–2021 Unimplemented Recs	FYs 2022–2025 Unimplemented Recs (Resolved)	Potential Monetary Benefits of FYs 2022–2025 Unimplemented Recs	Unresolved FYs 2023– 2025 Recs	Potential Monetary Benefits of Unresolved FYs 2023– 2025 Recs
Bureau of Economic Analysis			1	\$0		
Bureau of Industry and Security	1	\$0	1	\$0	1	\$0
U.S. Census Bureau	1	\$0	20	\$363,083,441	2	
U.S. Economic Development Administration			1	\$0		
First Responder Network Authority						
International Trade Administration			8	\$0		
Minority Business Development Agency						
National Institute of Standards and Technology			15	\$5,434,263	5	\$3,411,413
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	2	\$11,895,000	27	\$33,114,000	12	
National Technical Information Service						
National Telecommunications and Information Administration			5	\$296,299,098	25	\$834,774,467
Office of the Secretary	3	\$0	41	\$7,567,907		
United States Patent and Trademark Office	1	\$0	10	\$0		
Total	8	\$11,895,000	129	\$705,498,709	45	\$838,185,880

Table 7-A. Unimplemented Recommendations from Audit, Evaluation, and Inspection Reports

Table 7-A, which is in appendix 1, does not include recommendations (a) from financial statement audits or (b) addressed to specific non-federal entities in connection with audits of financial assistance awards. For the full list of reports with unimplemented recommendations, see appendix 1.

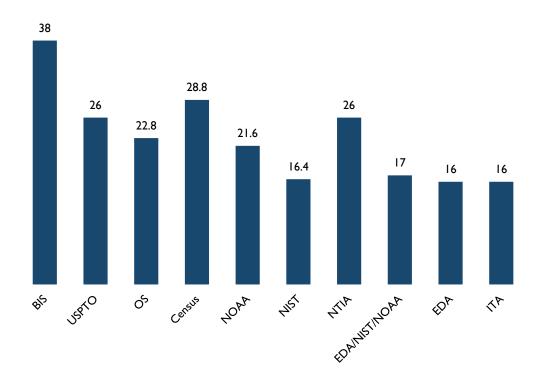
Recommendations from all performance audit, evaluation, and inspection reports issued prior to FY 2019 have been implemented. Figure 1 is a snapshot of unimplemented recommendations by year.

Figure 1. Snapshot of Unimplemented Recommendations by Year

Year	Reports Issued	Total Recommendations	Total Unimplemented Recommendations	Potential Monetary Benefits
2019	12	79	2	\$0
2020	16	76	3	\$11,895,000
2021	14	72	3	\$0
2022	19	112	17	\$0
2023	15	112	21	\$334,533,361
2024	24	127	77	\$365,346,048
2025	9	43	14	\$5,619,300

The average age of unimplemented recommendations across the Department is approximately 22 months. Figure 2 shows the average age of unimplemented recommendations by bureau as of March 31, 2025.

Figure 2. Average Age by Bureau of Unimplemented Recommendations for FYs 2019–2025 (in months)



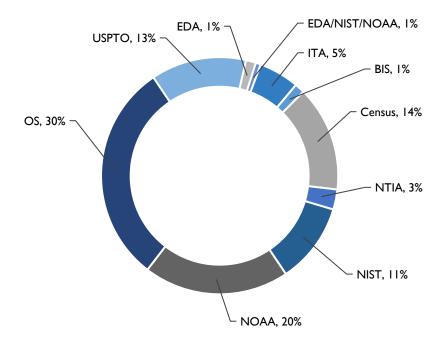
Source: OIG

Note 1: One of NIST's unimplemented recommendations was also addressed to the Department (see OIG-22-033-A).

Note 2: OIG-24-003-I had one recommendation addressed to EDA, NIST, and NOAA.

Figure 3 shows the percentage breakdown of unimplemented recommendations by bureau.

Figure 3. Percentage by Bureau of Total Unimplemented Recommendations for FYs 2019–2025



Source: OIG

Note 1: One of NIST's unimplemented recommendations was also addressed to the Department (see OIG-22-033-A).

Note 2: OIG-24-003-I had one recommendation addressed to EDA, NIST, and NOAA.

For the full list of reports with unimplemented recommendations, see appendix 1.

Table 7-B. Unresolved Recommendations from Audit, Evaluation, and Inspection Reports

Table 7-B, which is in appendix 2, includes audit, evaluation, and inspection reports with unresolved recommendations (i.e., OIG has not yet approved auditees' action plans). Either the submitted action plan is in the review process, or the action plan is not due until after March 31, 2025. Figure 4 shows unresolved recommendations for reports with action plans submitted.

Figure 4. Snapshot of Unresolved Recommendations for Reports with Action Plans Submitted by March 31, 2025

Report Date	Report Number	Short Title	Unresolved Recommendations
03.13.2023	<u>OIG-23-014-I</u>	NIST MEP Monitoring	1
05.30.2024	OIG-24-024-A	NPSBN Contract Modifications	6
06.05.2024	OIG-24-026-A	NPSBN Coverage	5
06.12.2024	OIG-24-027-A	NPSBN Contract Oversight	3
09.23.2024	OIG-24-036-A	BIS' Export License Approval Process	1
12.05.2024	OIG-25-004-A	NPSBN During 2023 Maui Wildfires	11
01.06.2025	OIG-25-007-A	NOAA Hurricane Forecasts and Warnings	8

For the full list of reports with unresolved recommendations, including those for which an action plan is not due until after March 31, 2025, see appendix 2.

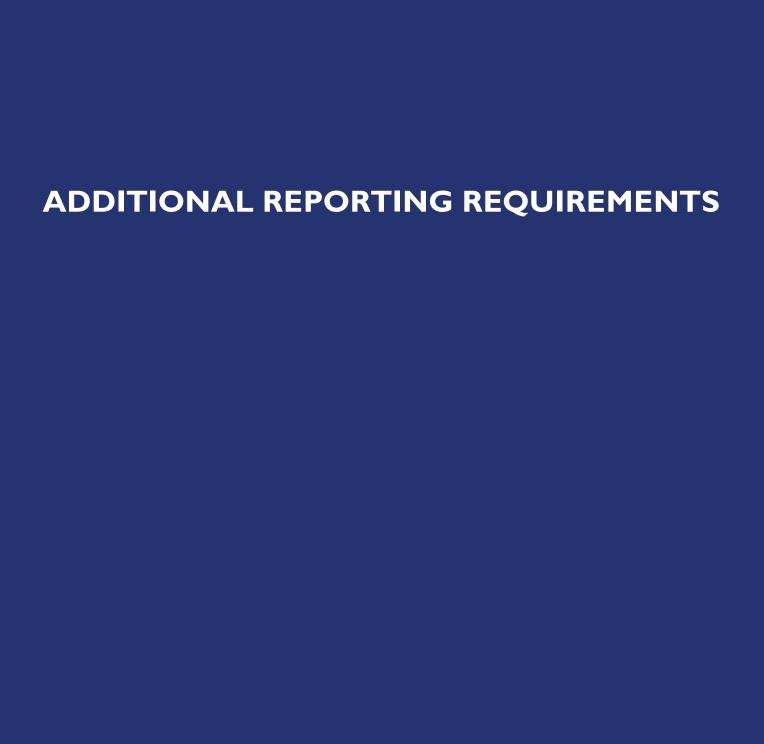
Table 8. Descriptions of Instances of Whistleblower Retaliation

OIG Case No.	Narrative Description of Investigations Concerning Senior Government Employees Where Allegations of Whistleblower Retaliation Were Substantiated
23-0450	In December 2024, OIG closed an investigation into a whistleblower retaliation allegation. OIG substantiated the allegation, finding that the National Marine Fisheries Service did not provide clear and convincing evidence that it would have removed the complainant from a 3-year detail after 1 year had the complainant not made protected disclosures. Subject's supervisor proposed a 3-day suspension, which was reduced to a counseling letter.

Table 9. Description of Closed and Non-Public Inspections, Evaluations, Audits, and Certain Investigations

OIG is required to describe (a) any inspection, evaluation, and audit conducted that is closed and not disclosed to the public and (b) any investigation conducted involving a senior government employee that is closed and not disclosed to the public. During this semiannual period, we closed two investigations involving senior government employees that were not disclosed to the public.

OIG Report/Case No.	Narrative Description for Audit and Closed Cases of Investigations Involving Senior Government Employees Not Disclosed to Public
25-0043	On February 29, 2025, OIG closed an investigation into the possible wrongful appropriation of materials via recycling and possible whistleblower retaliation. The first allegation was not substantiated, and the whistleblower retaliation allegation could not be investigated due to lack of cooperation from the complainant.
23-0744	On October 28, 2024, OIG closed an investigation wherein a NOAA Corps officer was alleged to have influenced a promotion board to recommend not promoting a more junior NOAA Corps officer in retaliation for the junior officer making a protected communication implicating the senior officer. OIG confirmed that the junior officer had not been promoted but found that the promotion board was unanimous in not recommending the junior officer for promotion. Additionally, OIG did not find evidence that the other board members were aware of the junior officer's protected communication, found no evidence of bias in their statements, and found no evidence of pressure or influence by the senior officer on the other four board members. OIG did not substantiate the junior officer's allegation of whistleblower retaliation.



Review of Legislation and Regulations

This section requires the inspector general of each agency to review existing and proposed legislation and regulations relating to that agency's programs and operations. Based on this review, the inspector general is required to make recommendations concerning the impact of such legislation or regulations on (1) the economy and efficiency in the administration of programs and operations administered or financed by the agency or (2) the prevention and detection of fraud and abuse in those programs and operations. Some of OIG's audits examine compliance with existing laws, regulations, and other legal requirements. OIG's reports of such audits describe findings and include recommendations on any action necessary to address such findings. OIG is also a participant in the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) and its regular review of legislative and regulatory items that affect the inspector general community at large and individual departments. During this reporting period, our office reviewed legislation and regulations including:

- S. 4043, The Telework Transparency Act of 2024
- H.R. 9593, The MANAGER Act
- S. 4711, The DOOBIE Act of 2024
- S. 3926, The Stop Secret Spending Act of 2024
- S. 4656, a bill to amend title 5, United States Code, concerning restrictions on the participation of certain Federal employees in partisan political activity, and for other purposes
- H.R. 9594, The Protecting Taxpayers' Wallets Act of 2024
- Draft revision to Commerce Acquisition Manual (CAM) 1372
- FAR Case 2023-015(p), Policy on Joint Ventures
- FAR Case 2023-003, Prohibition on the Use of Reverse Auctions for Complex, Specialized, or Substantial Design and Construction Services
- FAR Case 2021-019, Standardizing Cybersecurity Requirements for Unclassified Federal Information Systems
- FAR Case 2023-009, Credit for Lower-Tier Subcontracting

Information Required by the Federal Financial Management Improvement Act

No matters to report.

Description of Interference or Delays

During our ongoing audit of NPSBN user eligibility, OIG requested certain documentation, and FirstNet Authority has not provided access to the documentation. According to

FirstNet Authority, the requested documentation was not available to it because it was in a third party's control and FirstNet Authority could only access it under certain conditions. We will continue to work with FirstNet Authority to obtain sufficient information to meet the audit objectives.

APPENDIX 1. TABLE 7-A, REPORTS WITH UNIMPLEMENTED RECOMMENDATIONS

Date Report Issued	OIG Report No. and Title	Total Recommendations Made	Unimplemented Recommendation(s)	Potential Monetary Benefits of Unimplemented Recommendations
02.06.2019	OlG-19-008-A, 2020 Census: Issues Observed During the 2018 End-to-End Census Test's Address Canvassing Operation Indicate Risk to Address List Quality	6	Recommendation 1	0
06.13.2019	OlG-19-014-A, Inadequate Management of Active Directory Puts USPTO's Mission at Significant Cyber Risk	8	Recommendation 4	0
11.12.2019	OlG-20-006-A, NOAA's Office of Marine and Aviation Operations Needs to Improve the Planning and Governing of Its Ship Fleet Recapitalization Effort	7	Recommendation 1	\$11,895,000
07.20.2020	OlG-20-037-A, Fleet Program Is Not Managed in Accordance with Fleet Management Requirements	7	Recommendations 2 and 4	0
10.01.2020	OlG-21-001-A, The Department Has Made Progress Meeting Its Responsibilities Under the Geospatial Data Act But Must Improve Controls to Ensure Full Compliance	6	Recommendation 3	0
01.25.2021	OlG-21-020-A, Decisions on Exclusions from Section 232 Tariffs Were Not Transparent and Based on Incomplete and Inaccurate Information	2	Recommendation 1	0
05.25.2021	OlG-21-027-I, OMAO Must Define and Implement a Disciplined Requirements Management Process to Ensure Future Acquisitions Meet User Needs	7	Recommendation 1	0
11.08.2021	OlG-22-003-A, Audit of the Department's Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014 Submission for the First Quarter of Fiscal Year 2021	9	Recommendations 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8	0
12.02.2021	OlG-22-010-I, USPTO Has Opportunities to Improve its Patent Examination Process and to Advance Patent Decision-Making	7	Recommendation 5	0

Date Report Issued	OIG Report No. and Title	Total Recommendations Made	Unimplemented Recommendation(s)	Potential Monetary Benefits of Unimplemented Recommendations
12.16.2021	OlG-22-014-I, The Department Must Improve Processes for Addressing and Managing H Referrals	2	Recommendations 1 and 2	0
06.08.2022	OlG-22-022-A, The Success of NOAA's Next-Generation Satellite System Architecture Depends on Sound Requirements Management Practices	7	Recommendations 1, 4, 5, and 6	0
06.15.2022	OlG-22-023-I, The Department Mismanaged, Neglected, and Wasted Money on the Implementation of IT Security Requirements for Its National Security Systems	5	Recommendation 2	0
07.07.2022	OlG-22-025-A, The BAS Program Needs to Increase Attention to Business Process Reengineering and Improve Program Management Practices	6	Recommendation 1	0
07.20.2022	OlG-22-026-A, USPTO Needs to Improve Its Cost Estimating, Scheduling, and Agile Practices to Timely Retire Legacy Systems	6	Recommendation 1	0
09.22.2022	OlG-22-033-A, Performance Audit of the U.S. Department of Commerce's Working Capital Funds	5	Recommendation 2	0
11.28.2022	OlG-23-005-A, FirstNet Authority Could Not Demonstrate Investment Decisions Were the Best Use of Reinvestment Funds or Maximized the Benefits to Public Safety	9	Recommendation 4	\$296,299,098
01.09.2023	OlG-23-008-I, Bureau of Industry and Security's Law Enforcement Oversight Policies and Procedures Need Improvement	7	Recommendation 5	0
03.01.2023	OlG-23-012-A, FirstNet Authority Failed to Provide Adequate Contract Oversight for Its Initial Two Reinvestment Task Orders	6	Recommendations 1, 2, and 4	0
03.13.2023	OlG-23-014-I NIST Must Improve Monitoring of MEP to Prevent Waste of Financial Resources	5	Recommendations 1, 2, 4, and 5	\$5,434,262.88

Date Report Issued	OIG Report No. and Title	Total Recommendations Made	Unimplemented Recommendation(s)	Potential Monetary Benefits of Unimplemented Recommendations
08.30.2023	OlG-23-025-A, The Census Bureau Needs to Improve Its Performance Management Processes and Quality Control Program for the Reimbursable Surveys Program	15	Recommendations 1, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, and 15	0
09.05.2023	OlG-23-027-A, Satellite Integration and Test Phase Improvements Are Needed to Ensure the Success of Future Polar Weather Satellite Missions	5	Recommendation 4	0
09.20.2023	OlG-23-028-A, The GeoXO Program: Cost and Schedule Baselines are Established, But NOAA Should Evaluate Plans for the Central Satellite Mission and Revise Its Approach to Performance Gains to Provide the Best Overall Value	4	Recommendations 1 and 2	\$32,800,000
09.28.2023	OlG-23-030-A, Security Weaknesses in the Department's Mission-Critical High Value IT Assets Leave the Assets Vulnerable to Cyberattacks	4	Recommendations 1 and 3	0
10.23.2023	OlG-24-003-I, The Bureaus are Resolving Single Audit Findings, but the Department and Bureaus Need to Update Their Single Audit Resolution Policies	2	Recommendations 1 and 2	0
11.01.2023	OlG-24-004-A, ITA Did Not Effectively Resolve Foreign Trade Barriers	8	Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8	0
11.06.2023	OlG-24-005-A, EDA Generally Monitored Grants Awarded Under the FY 2019 EDA Disaster Supplemental Notice of Funding Opportunity	1	Recommendation 1	0
01.22.2024	OlG-24-009-A, The Department Needs to Fully Implement Strong Multifactor Authentication for Its High Value Assets to Protect Them from Cyberattacks	8	Recommendations 4, and 6	0
02.05.2024	OlG-24-011-I, Independent Evaluation of the 2020 Decennial Census Evaluations and Experiments (EAE) Operation	10	Recommendations 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 10	0
02.14.2024	OlG-24-013-I, The Department Needs to Strengthen Its Ethics Oversight for USPTO Patent Examiners	8	Recommendations 2, 4, 7, and 8	0

Date Report Issued	OIG Report No. and Title	Total Recommendations Made	Unimplemented Recommendation(s)	Potential Monetary Benefits of Unimplemented Recommendations
02.22.2024	OlG-24-014-A, The Department Needs to Improve Oversight to Ensure the Success of Its Financial System Modernization	6	Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6	\$1,905,622
03.27.2024	OlG-24-017-I, Independent Program Evaluation of National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Pandemic Relief Program	2	Recommendation 2	
04.04.2024	OlG-24-018-I, Independent Program Evaluation of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Pandemic Relief Program	3	Recommendation 2	\$ 314,000
05.08.2024	OlG-24-021-A, The Census Bureau Did Not Effectively Manage and Monitor Contractor Performance for Paid Advertising in the 2020 Census Integrated Communications Contract	6	Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6	\$363,083,441
05.20.2024	OlG-24-023-I, NIST Surpassed Hiring Goals for CHIPS But Did Not Develop a Comprehensive Workforce Plan	2	Recommendations 1 and 2	0
05.30.2024	OlG-24-024-A, FirstNet Authority Did Not Ensure the Nations's First Responders' Needs Were Continuing to Be Met Timely When Modifying Key Objectives of the NPSBN Contract	9	Recommendations 1, 2, and 3	0
06.03.2024	OlG-24-025-A, The Department Can Improve Processes to Ensure Locality Pay Is Accurate	4	Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4	\$42,985
06.20.2024	OlG-24-028-A, The Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources Needs to Fully Comply with Procurement Regulations When Executing NOAA Awards	5	Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5	0
06.24.2024	OlG-24-029-I, A 3-Year Exposure of Privacy Act-Protected Data Revealed USPTO Mismanagement in Safeguarding the Sensitive PII of Trademark Filers	10	Recommendations 8, 9, and 10	0

Date Report Issued	OIG Report No. and Title	Total Recommendations Made	Unimplemented Recommendation(s)	Potential Monetary Benefits of Unimplemented Recommendations
07.30.2024	OlG-24-031-A, NOAA's Office of Space Commerce Efforts to Provide Space Situational Awareness Services Have Been Delayed and Need a Realistic Schedule	5	Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5	0
08.27.2024	OlG-24-034-A, A Lack of Program Management Controls and Attention to IT Security Threatens the Success of NOAA's Effort to Implement a Cloud- Based Common Ground System	11	Recommendations 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, and 11	0
09.19.2024	OlG-24-035-A, Biennial Audit of the Department's Compliance with Geospatial Data Act Requirements	1	Recommendation 1	0
09.25.2024	OlG-24-037-I, NIST Overstated MEP's Economic Impacts to Congress and Other Stakeholders	8	Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8	0
10.24.2024	OlG-25-002-A, USPTO Should Address Risks to Its Pendency Reduction Efforts for Trademark Applications	6	Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6	0
12.17.2024	OlG-25-006-A, Data Quality Challenges and Ineffective Program Management Hinder the Department's Enterprise Cybersecurity Capabilities	7	Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7	\$5,619,299.88
01.22.2025	OlG-25-009-A, Puerto Rico's Department of Natural and Environmental Resources Properly Disbursed Funds but Was Slow in Expending Fishery Disaster Assistance Funds	1	Recommendation 1	0

APPENDIX 2. TABLE 7-B, REPORTS WITH UNRESOLVED RECOMMENDATIONS

Date Report Issued	OIG Report No. and Title	Total Recommendations Made	Reason	Potential Monetary Benefits of Unresolved Recommendations
03.13.2023	OIG-23-014-I, NIST Must Improve Monitoring of MEP to Prevent Waste of Financial Resources	5	Recommendation 3 for NIST to establish policy limits on executive compensation for MEP, including restrictions on Center and subrecipient salaries, remains unresolved. Although NIST stated it concurs with the intent of the recommendation, it disagrees with the specific recommendation to establish executive compensation limits. OIG continues to work with NIST to resolve the recommendation.	\$1,454,544
05.30.2024	OIG-24-024-A, FirstNet Authority Did Not Ensure the Nations's First Responders' Needs Were Continuing to Be Met Timely When Modifying Key Objectives of the NPSBN Contract	9	Recommendations 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 remain unresolved. NTIA submitted a revised action plan to OIG on 3/14/2025. OIG is reviewing the revised plan.	0
06.05.2024	OIG-24-026-A, FirstNet Authority's Lack of NPSBN Contract Oversight for Coverage Puts at Risk First Responders' Ability to Serve the Public Effectively	5	NTIA submitted a revised action plan to OIG on 3/14/2025. OIG sent comments on the revised action plan to NTIA on 3/27/2025. NTIA is expected to submit a revised action plan.	\$834,774,467
06.12.2024	OlG-24-027-A, FirstNet Authority's Lack of Contract Oversight for Device Connection Targets Puts the NPSBN at Risk of Impacting First Responders' Use of the Network	3	NTIA submitted an action plan to OIG on 3/14/2025. OIG sent comments on the revised action plan to NTIA on 3/27/2025.NTIA is expected to submit a revised action plan.	0

Date Report Issued	OIG Report No. and Title	Total Recommendations Made	Reason	Potential Monetary Benefits of Unresolved Recommendations
09.23.2024	OlG-24-036-A, BIS' Export License Approval Process Reduces Risk of Threats from China's Military-Civilian Fusion Strategy, but BIS Should Take Additional Steps to Mitigate Risks of Unauthorized Technology Release to China's Military	1	BIS submitted an action plan to OIG on 11/25/2024. OIG and BIS met to discuss the action plan on 1/23/2025 and 3/12/2025. Further BIS activities to update the BIS action plan and implement the recommendation are temporarily on hold, as BIS will focus on a mandated report that may potentially implicate the deemed export policy decisions described in this report.	0
12.5.2024	OlG-25-004-A, Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network Was Not Always Available to First Responders During the Catastrophic 2023 Maui Wildfires	11	NTIA submitted an action plan to OIG on 2/2/2025. OIG and NTIA met to discuss the action plan on 3/3/2025, and NTIA is expected to submit a revised action plan.	
01.06.2025	OIG-25-007-A, NOAA Should Assess Opportunities to Improve Hurricane Forecasts and Warnings	8	NOAA submitted an action plan to OIG on 2/19/2025. OIG and NOAA met to discuss the action plan on 3/19/2025, and NOAA is expected to submit a revised action plan.	
02.25.2025	OIG-25-011-I, OIG's Evaluation of MEP's Economic Impact Reporting Process Also Identified Instances of Noncompliance at Centers, Led to NIST Action	4	Action Plan Due 04.28.2025	\$1,956,869
02.27.2025	OlG-25-012-I, The National Weather Service Should Further Strengthen Its Protection of Essential Operational Technology	4	Action Plan Due 04.28.2025	
03.13.2025	OlG-25-013-I, The Census Bureau Did Not Develop a Workforce Plan to Address Field Representative Staffing Gaps	1	Action Plan Due 05.12.2025	
03.25.2025	OlG-25-015-A, The Census Bureau Should Address Challenges from the 2020 Post- Enumeration Survey Ahead of the 2030 Census	1	Action Plan Due 04.24.2025	

APPENDIX 3. PEER REVIEWS

OIGs play an important role in preventing waste, fraud, and abuse, and conduct peer reviews to help them fulfill their role. To accomplish peer reviews, <u>CIGIE</u> provides policies and procedures, including the *Guide for Conducting Peer Reviews of Audit Organizations of Federal Offices of Inspector General, Qualitative Assessment Review Guidelines for Investigative Operations of Federal Offices of Inspector General, and Guide for Conducting External Peer Reviews of Inspection and Evaluation Organizations of Federal Offices of Inspector General.*

Results of Peer Review Conducted by Another OIG

On March 22, 2024, the Office of Audit and Evaluation (OAE) received official notification of the peer review of its audit operations by the U.S. Department of State OIG (State OIG). State OIG's System Review Report covered the 3-year period ending September 30, 2023, and its report of our audit operations is available on our <u>website</u>. We received a Pass rating, the highest available rating.

On September 13, 2022, OAE received official notification of its peer review of its inspection and evaluation operations by the OIG of the Library of Congress (LOC). LOC OIG's External Peer Review Report covered the 3-year period ending March 31, 2022, and its report of our inspection and evaluation operations is available on our <u>website</u>.

On March 19, 2025, OIG's Office of Investigations (OI) received official notification that the system of internal safeguards and management procedures for OIG's investigative function was in compliance with the quality standards established by CIGIE and the applicable Attorney General Guidelines. The Federal Reserve Board OIG conducted the peer review.

Commerce OIG does not have any outstanding recommendations from any peer review.

Peer Reviews Conducted of Another OIG and List of Outstanding or Not Fully Implemented Recommendations from Any Peer Review

Commerce OIG did not conduct a peer review of another OIG during this reporting period.

APPENDIX 4. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The IG Act specifies reporting requirements for semiannual reports. The requirements are listed below and indexed to the applicable pages of this report.

TOPIC	PAGE(S)
Review of Legislation and Regulations	<u>41</u>
Significant Problems, Abuses, and Deficiencies Relating to the Administration of Programs and Operations; Associated Reports and Recommendations for Corrective Action	<u>3</u>
Recommendations Made Before the Reporting Period for Which Corrective Action Has Not Been Completed and Potential Cost Savings Associated with the Recommendation	<u>43</u>
Significant Investigations Closed	<u>23</u>
Convictions Resulting from Investigations	<u>23</u>
Audit, Inspection, and Evaluation Reports with Questioned Costs, Unsupported Costs, and Funds Put to Better Use; Associated Management Decisions	<u>26, 27</u>
Management Decisions Regarding Audits, Inspections, or Evaluations Issued During a Previous Reporting Period	<u>24</u>
Information Required by the Federal Financial Management Improvement Act of 1996	N/A
Results of Peer Reviews Conducted by Another OIG	<u>50</u>
Status of Any Outstanding Recommendations from Peer Reviews Conducted by Another OIG and Why Implementation Is Not Complete	N/A
Prior Peer Reviews Conducted of Another OIG and List of Outstanding or Not Fully Implemented Recommendations from Any Peer Review	N/A
Statistical Tables Regarding Investigations	<u>23</u>
Description of Metrics Used for Determining the Data in the Statistical Tables Regarding Investigations	<u>23</u>
Investigations Concerning Senior Government Employees or Officials in Which Allegations of Misconduct Were Substantiated ³	N/A
Description of Whistleblower Retaliation Instances	<u>38</u>
Description of Interference or Delays	<u>41</u>
Description of Closed and Non-Public Inspections, Evaluations, and Audits; Investigations Involving a Senior Government Employee	<u>39</u>
Statistical Tables Showing Audit, Inspection, and Evaluation Reports for Which Final Action Had Not Been Taken Before the Commencement of the Reporting Period	<u>43</u>
Statement on Why Final Action Has Not Been Taken with Respect to Each Audit, Inspection, and Evaluation Report in Which a Management Decision Has Been Made but Final Action Has Not Been Taken	<u>48</u>

³ For this semiannual reporting period, there were no reports on investigations concerning alleged misconduct by senior government employees.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EDA U.S. Economic **ACS American Community** Development Survey Administration ΑI Artificial Intelligence FirstNet Authority First Responder Network **AICPA** American Institute of Authority **Certified Public FRs** Field Representatives Accountants FRB Board of Governors of the **BAS Business Applications** Federal Reserve System Solution FΥ Fiscal Year **BEAD** Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment **GAAS** Generally Accepted Auditing Standards BIS Bureau of Industry and Security **GAGAS** Generally Accepted **Government Auditing** CAA Consolidated Standards Appropriations Act **GEMS Grants Enterprise** CAM Commerce Acquisition Management System Manual GeoXO Geostationary Extended **CARES Act** Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Observations **Economic Security Act HFIP** Hurricane Forecast **CDM** Continuous Diagnostics and Improvement Program Mitigation IDA Institute for Defense **Census Bureau** U.S. Census Bureau **Analyses** C.F.R. Code of Federal Regulations **IG Act** Inspector General Act of **CHIPS** Creating Helpful Incentives 1978, as amended to Produce Semiconductors IIJA Infrastructure Investment CIGIE Council of the Inspectors and Jobs Act General on Integrity and ΙT Information Technology Efficiency **KPMG KPMG LLC CISA** Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security LOC Library of Congress Agency **MBDA Minority Business** COVID-19 Coronavirus Disease 2019 **Development Agency CPS Current Population Survey** Manufacturing Extension MEP Partnership EAE Evaluations and Experiments **NCVS** National Crime Victimization Survey **ECDM Enterprise Continuous** Diagnostics and Mitigation NHC National Hurricane Center

NIST

National Institute of Standards and Technology

NOAA	National Oceanic and	RLF	Revolving Loan Fund
	Atmospheric Administration	SBA	U.S. Small Business
NPSBN	Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network		Administration
NTIA	National	SBIR	Small Business Innovation Research
	Telecommunications and Information Administration	State OIG	U.S. Department of State
NWS	National Weather Service	SWFO-L1	Space Weather Follow-On Lagrange-1
OAE	Office of Audit and		
	Evaluation	Tech Hub	Technology and Innovation
OI	Office of Investigations		Hub
OIG	Office of Inspector General	Uniform Guidance	Uniform Administrative
OMAO	Office of Marine and Aviation Operations		Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal
ОМВ	Office of Management and		Awards
	Budget	U.S.	United States
ОТ	Operational Technology	U.S.C.	United States Code
PES	Post-Enumeration Survey	USPTO	United States Patent and
PIIA	Payment Integrity		Trademark Office
	Information Act of 2019	Weather Act	Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017
PRDNER	Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental		
	Resources	ZTA	Zero Trust Architecture
QCR	Quality Control Review		

REPORT





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