





Program Evaluation at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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Overview

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- History of Program Evaluation at EPA
 - Current Efforts to Build Capacity for Program Evaluation
 - Program Evaluation and Managing for Results

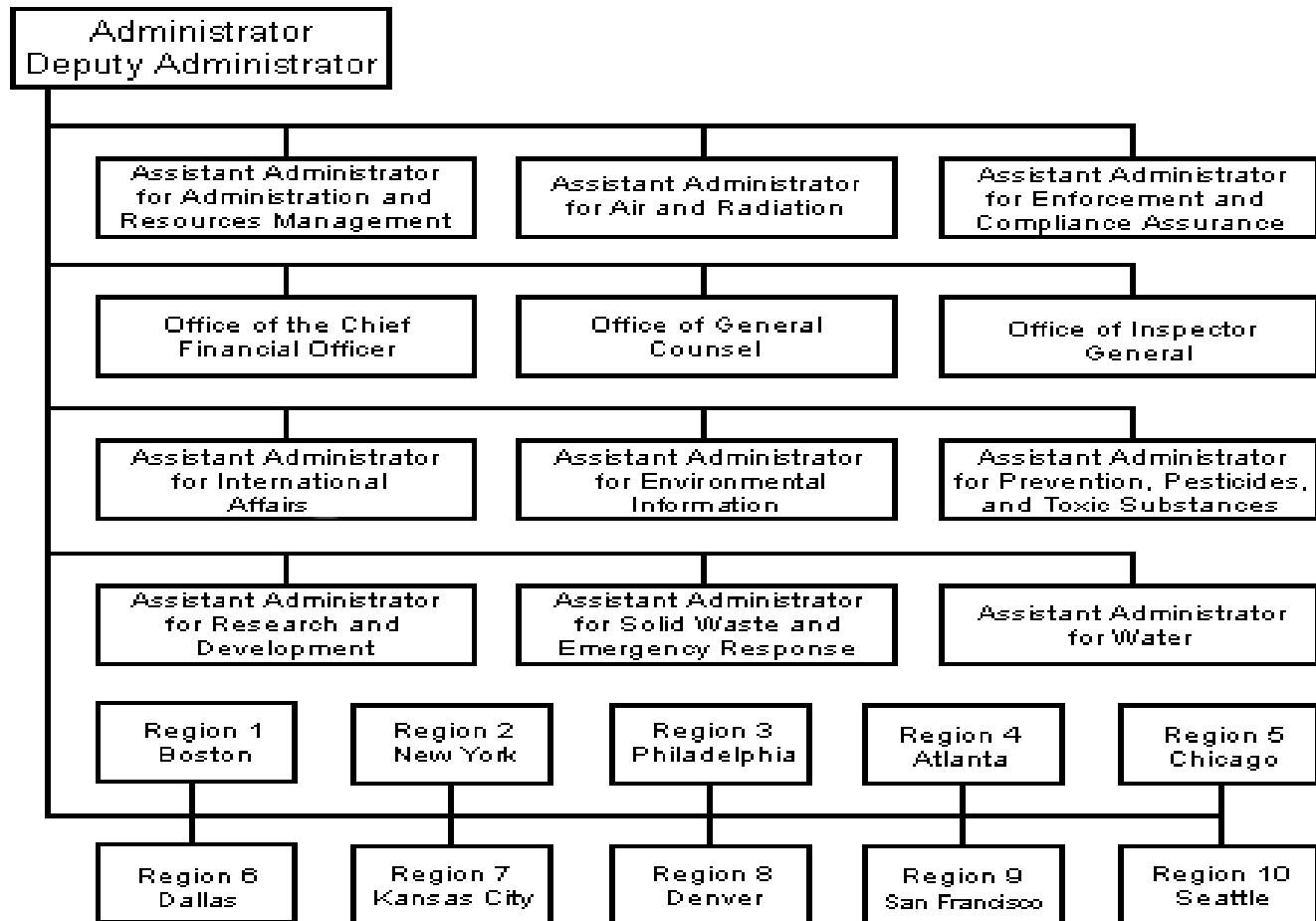
Evaluation at EPA

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- 1970s – 1995: centralized Program Evaluation entity
 - 1995 – present: decentralized approach

Current EPA Entities Focused on Evaluation

- Organizational Entities
 - Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation
 - Office of the Chief Financial Officer
 - Office of Inspector General
 - EPA Program and Regional Offices

EPA Organizational Chart





Capacity Building at EPA

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- Program Evaluation Network
 - Program Evaluation Competition


Program Evaluation Network



- A forum to share information, ideas and expertise about program evaluation on a continual basis.
- Created in April 1999
- Membership of 170 staff and first-line managers from across EPA
- Quarterly Meetings
 - 40-60 people attend each meeting

Program Evaluation Network



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- Information Sharing
 - Conferences
 - Training Opportunities
 - Presentations/Discussions on Evaluation Techniques
 - Interviewing
 - Logic Modeling
 - Presentations of EPA Program Evaluations

Program Evaluation Competition



- Competition provides resources for contractor support and technical assistance for small-scale program evaluations
- Any EPA Headquarters or Regional Office may submit a proposal for funding
- Projects usually last 6-12 months and require less than \$75,000 in resources

Objectives of the Competition



- Build capacity of EPA offices to conduct program evaluations
- Demonstrate the value of program evaluation to managers and staff
- Encourage self-initiated and self-funded evaluations
- Improve programs through better decisions

Results of the Competition

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- Is the Program Evaluation Competition meeting its objectives?

Program Evaluation Drivers



- **Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)**
 - Strategic Plan: “...a description of the program evaluations used in establishing or revising general goals and objectives, with a schedule for future program evaluations”
 - Annual Report: “...include the summary findings of those program evaluations completed during the fiscal year covered by the report.”
- **Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART)**
 - OMB tool assessing the effectiveness of Federal Programs

Impact of GRPA on Program Evaluation at EPA


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- Strategic Plan
 - Annual Report

Program Assessment Rating Tool



- OMB tool developed to assess the effectiveness of government programs.
- Initiated for the FY2004 Budget, each year additional programs undergo the PART exercise
- Focuses on planning and performance measurement

Impact of the PART on Program Evaluation


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- Program Assessment Rating Tool assessments have been conducted for 20 EPA programs.
 - During the FY 2004 Process 11 programs were assessed. The FY 2005 Process reassessed those 11 programs and 9 additional EPA programs.

PART Evaluation Questions



- Are independent evaluations of sufficient scope and quality conducted on a regular basis or as needed to support program improvements and evaluate effectiveness and relevance to the problem, interest, or need?


PART Evaluation Questions

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- Do independent and quality evaluations of this program indicate that the program is effective and achieving results?


Impact of the PART on Program Evaluation

- Very few programs received credit for the program evaluation questions during both the FY 2004 and FY2005 process.
- FY 2004 two programs received credit for having independent evaluations and only one received a positive score for evaluations that indicated the program was effective.
- As of now, for the FY 2005 PART four programs received credit for independent evaluations and three received a positive score for evaluations indicating the program was effective.

Impact of the PART on Program Evaluation

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- OMB gives a number of reasons for not awarding credit to EPA programs for program evaluation
 - Evaluations have either been insufficient in scope or strictly process-focused.
 - Evaluations do not examine how well the program is meeting its mission and long-term goals.
 - Although quality evaluations have been performed, they have not been independent and comprehensive.

What's Next

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- Increase use of program evaluation in EPA programs
 - Improve the results of EPA programs