



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL

July 21, 2017

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Project Notification:
EPA Oversight of Research Fellowship Programs
Project No. OA-FY17-0156

FROM: Michael Petscavage, Director
Contract and Assistance Agreement Audits
Office of Audit

A handwritten signature in red ink, reading "Michael Petscavage", is positioned to the right of the "FROM:" field.

TO: Robert Kavlock, Acting Assistant Administrator and EPA Science Advisor
Office of Research and Development

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to begin the field work phase of our audit on the Office of Research and Development's fellowship programs. Specifically, we will focus on the EPA's participation with the following programs: Association of Schools & Programs of Public Health, American Association for the Advancement of Science, and National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council Resident Research Associateship Program. The OIG annual plan for fiscal year 2017 included a planned project on Greater Research Opportunities Undergraduate Fellowships, and we are replacing that planned project with this broader review of multiple fellowship programs.

The OIG's field work objectives are to determine:

- Whether the EPA's non-competitive awards to non-profit organizations for fellowships are in the public's best interest and are an effective use of taxpayer dollars.
- Whether the EPA's execution of the fellowship program maximizes the environmental research results and meets the EPA's mission.
- The accuracy and allowability of costs reported by non-profit organizations from fellowship cooperative agreements.

The OIG plans to conduct work at EPA headquarters and non-profit organizations' offices. Applicable generally accepted government auditing standards will be used in conducting our work. The anticipated benefits of this project are to identify operational efficiencies of funds and processes that will lead to improvements to the EPA's involvement in the fellowship programs.

We will contact you to arrange a mutually agreeable time to discuss our objectives and the purpose of the preliminary research phase of our project. We would also be particularly interested in any areas of concern that you may have. We will answer any of your questions about the project process, reporting

procedures, methods used to gather and analyze data, and what we should expect of each other during the course of the project. Throughout the project, we will provide updates on a regular basis.

We respectfully note that the OIG is authorized by the Inspector General Act of 1978 to have timely access to personnel and all materials necessary to complete its objectives. We will request your resolution if an agency employee or cooperative agreement recipient refuses to provide requested records to the OIG, or otherwise fails to cooperate with the OIG. We may report unresolved access matters to the Administrator and include the incident in the Semiannual Report to Congress.

Any information related to the project should be addressed to me at (202) 566-0897 or petscavage.michael@epa.gov, or Mary Anne Strasser at (303) 312-6972 or strasser.maryanne@epa.gov.

cc: Bruce Rodan, Associate Director for Science, Office of Research and Development
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