



Office of Inspector General U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

At a Glance

21-P-0241
September 20, 2021

Why We Did This Audit

We performed this audit to determine whether the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency effectively planned a long-term solution to address remote access concerns while transitioning to the U.S. General Services Administration's Enterprise Infrastructure Solutions contract. This contract will replace its predecessor contracts, which expire in May 2023, for governmentwide network and telecommunications solution programs.

Remote network access became mission critical in March 2020 as the EPA responded to the coronavirus pandemic. Continuing operations under the duress of pandemics and natural disasters requires the Agency to adapt its network to support a virtual workforce.

This audit supports an EPA mission-related effort:

- *Operating efficiently and effectively.*

This audit addresses these top EPA [management challenges](#):

- *Maintaining operations during pandemic and natural disaster responses.*
- *Complying with key internal control requirements (risk assessments).*
- *Enhancing information technology security.*

Address inquiries to our public affairs office at (202) 566-2391 or OIG_WEBCOMMENTS@epa.gov.

[List of OIG reports.](#)

EPA Effectively Planned for Future Remote Access Needs but Should Disconnect Unneeded Services in Timely Manner

What We Found

The EPA effectively planned a long-term solution to address remote access concerns while transitioning to the U.S. General Services Administration's Enterprise Infrastructure Solutions contract. Specifically, in its solicitation for network and telecommunications services under the EIS contract, the EPA included a requirement that the selected vendor provide remote access solutions to support 12,500 concurrent remote users, with the capability to expand to 20,000 concurrent remote users. This range of concurrent remote users should meet the EPA's future workforce needs, since it exceeds the EPA's fiscal year 2020 workforce by almost 6,000 users.

During our audit fieldwork, we identified a matter not directly related to our objective but related to the EPA's transition to the EIS contract. The EPA did not disconnect GSA services, such as analog phone and digital subscriber lines, that were no longer needed in a timely manner. Specifically, as part of its EIS transition activities, which began in 2015, the EPA identified unneeded GSA services, but as of May 2021, 268 of the services determined to be unneeded were still not disconnected. In addition, we reviewed eight EPA disconnection orders for unneeded services and found that it took from one to 61 months to disconnect them. These delays cost the EPA at least \$7,850.

The EPA did disconnect over 18,000 of unneeded GSA services from November 2016 through April 2021. Because the EPA has taken steps to disconnect unneeded services as part of its EIS transition activities, we make no recommendations regarding this finding.

The Agency did not provide a formal written response to the draft report.

Because the EPA did not disconnect unneeded GSA services in a timely manner, the Agency paid at least \$7,850 for services it was not using.