



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

THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

November 23, 2021

**MEMORANDUM**

**SUBJECT:** Dispute Resolution and Related Planned Corrective Actions for Office of Inspector General Report No. 20-P-0065, *EPA Needs to Improve Management and Monitoring of Time-Off Awards*, issued December 30, 2019

**FROM:** Sean W. O'Donnell

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sean W O'Donnell".

**TO:** Faisal Amin, Chief Financial Officer

Lynnann Hitchens, Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator Performing  
Delegated Duties of Assistant Administrator  
Office of Mission Support

Thank you for meeting with the Office of Inspector General on October 6, 2021, as part of the dispute resolution process for the subject audit report. Based upon that meeting and our review of additional materials provided by the Office of Mission Support, we agree that the corrective actions, both planned and taken, meet the intent of the three previously unresolved audit report recommendations.

For Recommendation 1, the Agency will revise its awards manual to incorporate guidance for determining an appropriate time-off award amount based upon the employee's efforts and accomplishments related to the award nomination. We agree with the Office of Mission Support's estimated completion date of October 31, 2022, for the awards manual update.

For Recommendation 2, the Agency adopted an interim awards policy that includes a decision chart for supervisors to use to assess time-off award nominations, as well as a requirement for higher-level review and approval for awards that combine \$4,500 in cumulative cash and more than one workday (in other words, 8 to 10 hours) of time-off. We agree with the Office of Mission Support's corrective actions and consider them complete.

For Recommendation 3, the Agency plans to review time-off award use as part of its on-site human capital accountability reviews of program and regional human resources operations. These reviews have been delayed due to restrictions related to the coronavirus pandemic. We therefore agree with the Office of Mission Support's revised estimated completion date to review time-off award use by June 30, 2022. The Office of Mission Support instituted additional internal controls to manage time-off award use:

- Time-off awards expire one year after effective date.
- Time-off awards combined with high-dollar cash awards require a higher-level review by program management.

- Supervisors monitor time-off award balances using a leave earnings and balance dashboard, which was developed in January 2021 by EPA's payroll provider.

Recommendations 1 and 3 in the subject report are now considered resolved with corrective actions pending, and Recommendation 2 is considered completed. You should track implementation of EPA corrective actions for Recommendations 1 and 3 in the Agency's audit tracking system until all actions are completed.

We will post this memorandum on our public website at [www.epa.gov/oig](http://www.epa.gov/oig).

cc: Arron Helm, Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Administration and Resources  
Management, Office of Mission Support  
Mara Kamen, Director, Office of Human Resources, Office of Mission Support  
Mitchell Hauser, Audit Follow-Up Coordinator, Office of Mission Support  
David Bloom, Deputy Chief Financial Officer  
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