



HIGHLIGHTS

Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

ISP-I-20-05

What OIG Inspected

OIG inspected executive direction, policy and program implementation, resource management, and information management operations at the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs.

What OIG Recommends

OIG made 6 recommendations: 5 to the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and 1 to the Executive Secretariat.

In its comments on the draft report, the Department concurred with all 6 recommendations. OIG considers all 6 recommendations resolved. The Department's response to each recommendation, and OIG's reply, can be found in the Recommendations section of this report. The Department's formal written responses are reprinted in their entirety in Appendix B.

November 2019

OFFICE OF INSPECTIONS

DOMESTIC OPERATIONS

Inspection of the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs

What OIG Found

- The Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs successfully supported Department of State policies and its overseas missions despite operating in crisis mode as it implemented multiple high-priority administration policies for the region and managed ordered departures for four missions from 2017 to 2019.
- Multiple crises and priorities challenged the staff's work-life balance. Bureau leadership responded to these challenges by implementing new processes to help relieve workload pressures.
- The bureau developed effective interdepartmental and interagency relationships despite its heavy workload pressures and staff vacancies.
- Unclear lines of authority, staffing issues, and the separation of the Venezuela Working Group from the Office of Andean Affairs resulted in workplace stress and confusion regarding taskings and supervision.
- Bureau staff did not fully understand the status and role of the recently constituted Migration Working Group.
- The bureau's lack of management controls for procuring information technology equipment resulted in \$300,000 in unnecessary purchases.
- The bureau did not have a records management program and lacked a content management process for its intranet site.
- Spotlight on Success: The Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs organized an annual grants training for its overseas mission employees to improve their management of foreign assistance and public diplomacy grants.