



HIGHLIGHTS

Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

ESP-IB-23-04

What OIG Reviewed

Federal law provides statutory protections for employees of federal contractors and grantees who engage in whistleblowing. The law also requires agencies to ensure that contractors and grantees of the agency inform their employees in writing of the employees' whistleblower rights and remedies and to insert a clause communicating this duty in certain contracts. The Department of State, Office of Inspector General (OIG) initiated this evaluation to determine the extent to which the Department of State (Department) and the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) are communicating statutory whistleblower notification requirements to their contractors and grantees.

What OIG Recommends

OIG made six recommendations to both the Department and USAGM to amend contracts that OIG found were missing required whistleblower language. The recommendations also suggest use of a more explicit clause regarding notification of whistleblower protections in future contracts, and development of a mechanism to ensure that grantees know of their duty to inform employees of whistleblower protections.

September 2023

OFFICE OF EVALUATIONS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

Evaluation of Whistleblower Protection Notification to Contractor and Grantee Employees at the Department of State and U.S. Agency for Global Media

What OIG Found

OIG drew a sample of both Department and USAGM contracts and reviewed them to determine whether they included the required clause regarding informing employees of whistleblower protection. OIG found that nearly 25 percent of the Department contracts lacked the required clause. USAGM included the required clause in 90 percent of contracts reviewed.

OIG also found that neither agency has a method of explicitly ensuring that grantees inform their employees of whistleblower protections. The Department relies on generic statements in grant documents that require compliance with all relevant laws and regulations, while USAGM includes some limited whistleblower material in its annual grantee training.