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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ARC grant operations, including grant management and grant projects represent the most significant aspect of ARC programs and OIG reviews. For this reporting period OIG activity included issuance of eleven reports, including seven grant audits and three management evaluation reports and the Annual Financial Statement audit. Follow-up on prior recommendations and monitoring of contractor grant audits were also emphasized.

Overall there is a high degree of implementation of ARC policies and procedures. Individual grant audits disclosed that grants were generally implemented in accordance with applicable regulations and project objectives. Findings and recommendations pertained to matching funds, progress reports, performance measures, un-supported or questioned costs, expired end dates that could result in ineligible payments, and competitive bidding.

Agency action included grant follow-up and pro-active efforts to address recommendations, including older grants identified for follow-up and potential deobligations. Follow-up on prior recommendations disclosed de-obligations of approximately \$283,000 with respect to grants identified for follow-up in prior reports which involved funds for better use in connection with needed projects in the Appalachian Region.

Management reports emphasized inactive grants, expired end dates that could result in ineligible payments and Data Act implementation. ARC received another unqualified opinion in the Annual Financial Statement audit.

The peer review of OIG compliance with audit standards performed by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission OIG disclosed no deficiencies.

The OIG was certified by the Office of Special Counsel (OSC) to be in compliance with the Prohibited Practices and Whistleblower Protection provision of 5 USC-2032(c).

In December 2013 OMB issued an updated Designated Federal Entity (DFE) list that identified the Federal Co-Chair and the Governors of the thirteen Appalachian States as the ARC Agency Head. The applicable Dodd-Frank legislation provides that the Agency Head can terminate the Inspector General with a two thirds vote. No problems have resulted from the implementation of this provision.

Within the OIG community and the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) the IG continues to emphasize issues impacting efficiency, effectiveness and credibility of OIG-wide audit operations and actions to address these issues. These issues include identification and support of revised performance auditor qualifications to address performance auditing skills gaps, addressing open and unimplemented recommendations, independent peer reviews of the efficiency and effectiveness of audit operations and reporting of actual monetary rather than primarily potential monetary benefits.

**PURPOSE AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL SEMIANNUAL REPORT**

The Inspector General Act of 1978 requires the IG to keep the Federal Co-Chair and Congress fully and currently informed about problems and deficiencies in the Commission's operations and the necessity for corrective action. In addition, the Act specifies that semiannual reports will be provided to the Federal Co-Chair by April 30 and October 31 and to Congress 30 days later.

The Federal Co-Chair may transmit comments to Congress along with the report but may not change any part of the report. The specific requirements prescribed in the Act, as amended (Public Law 100-504), are listed below.

Reporting Requirements

Section 4(a)(2)	Review of legislation and regulations	Page
Section 5(a)(1)	Problems, abuses, and deficiencies	Page
Section 5(a)(2)	Recommendations with respect to problems, abuses, and deficiencies	Page
Section 5(a)(3)	Prior significant recommendations not yet implemented	*
Section 5(a)(4)	Matters referred to prosecutive authorities	*
Section 5(a)(5) and 6(b)(2)	Summary of instances where information was refused	*
Section 5(a)(6)	Listing of audit reports showing number of reports and dollar value of questioned costs	App A
Section 5(a)(8)	Statistical table showing number of reports and dollar value of questioned costs	App B
Section 5(a)(8)	Statistical table showing number of reports and dollar value of recommendations that fund be put to better use	App C

* None.

I. INTRODUCTION - OIG

The Inspector General Act Amendments of 1988, (Pub. L. No. 100-504) provides for the establishment of an Office of Inspector General (OIG) at Designated Federal Entities (DFEs), including the ARC. The ARC OIG became operational on October 1, 1989, with the appointment of an IG and provision of budgetary authority for contracted audit and/or investigation activities.

II. BACKGROUND - ARC

A. APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION

The Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965, (Pub.L. No. 89-4) established the Appalachian Regional Commission. The Act authorizes a Federal/State partnership designed to promote long-term economic development on a coordinated regional basis in the 13 Appalachian States. The Commission represents a unique experiment in partnership among the Federal, State, and local levels of Government and between the public and private sectors. It is composed of the Governors of the 13 Appalachian States and a Federal representative who is appointed by the President. The Federal representative serves as the Federal Co-Chair with the Governors electing one of their numbers to serve as the States' Co-Chair.

- Through joint planning and development of regional priorities, ARC funds are used to assist and encourage other public and private resources to address Appalachia's unique needs. Program direction and policy are established by the Commission (ARC Code) with the vote of a majority of the State members and the affirmative vote of the Federal Co-Chair. Emphasis has been placed on highways, infrastructure development, business enterprise, energy, human resources, and health and education programs. Specific priority initiatives to stimulate economic growth and opportunity in the region include the Partnership for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER), Southern/South Central Appalachia Workforce Training and Central Appalachia Broadband.

- To ensure that funds are used effectively and efficiently, and to strengthen local participation, ARC works with the Appalachian states to support a network of multicounty planning and development organizations, or local development districts (LDDs), throughout the Region. The 73 LDDs cover all 420 counties in Appalachia. The LDDs' roles include identification of priority needs of local communities and assisting with participation in ARC programs.

- Administratively, the Commission has a staff of 56 persons that includes 48 Commission employees responsible for program operations, and the office of the Federal Co-Chair that includes OIG staff. The Commissions' administrative expenses, including salaries, are jointly funded by Federal and State funds.

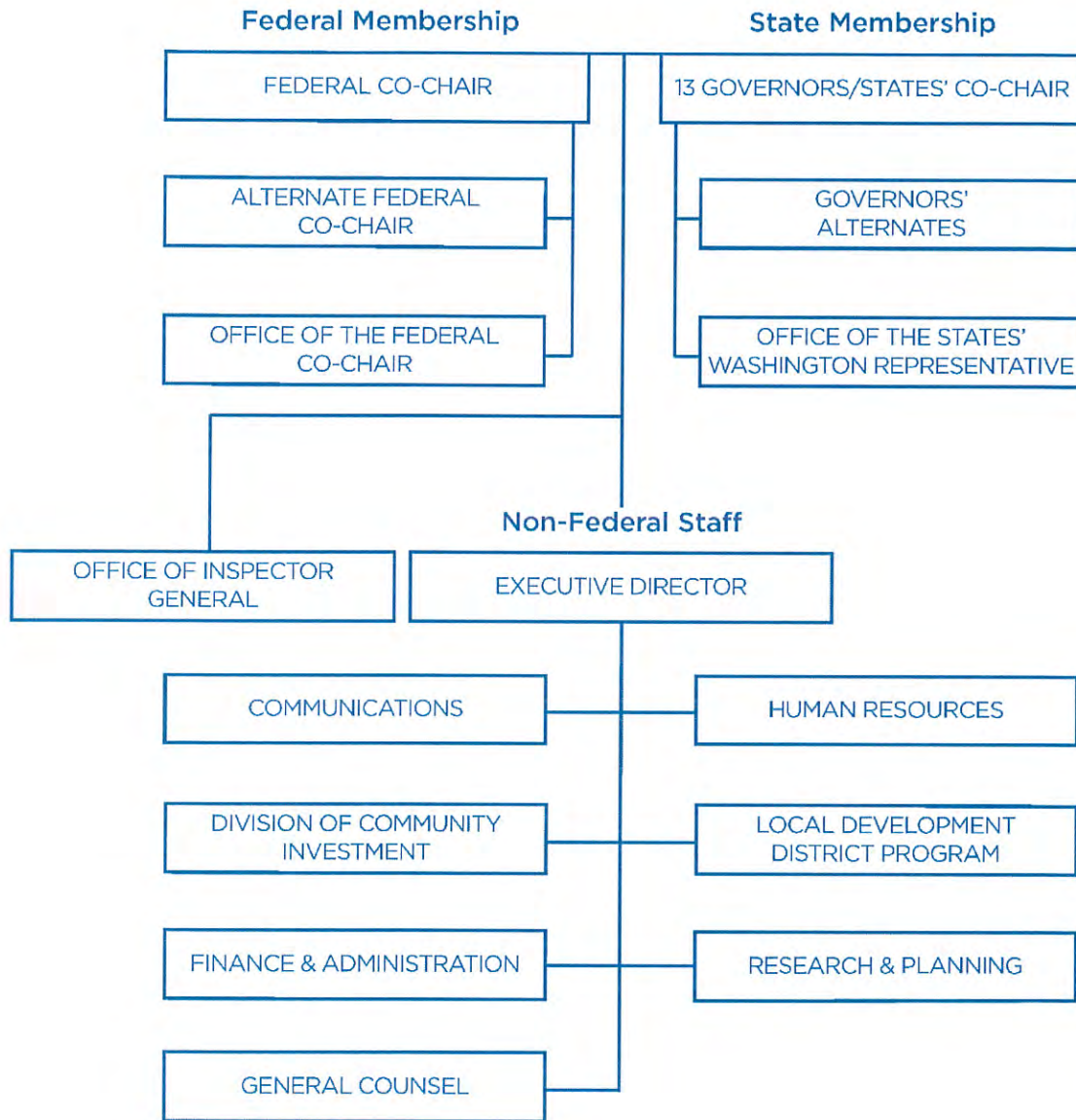
- The Commission's appropriation for FY 2016 was \$146 million.

Although Congress changed the funding method for the Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS) in July 2012, ARC continues to support and participate in completion of the ADHS including fulfilling planning and approval responsibilities.

ARC's non-ADHS funds are distributed to state and local entities in accordance with an allocation formula intended to provide fair and reasonable distribution of available resources. ARC staff has responsibilities for program development, policy analysis and review, grant development, technical assistance to States, and management and monitoring. In order to avail itself of federal agency expertise and administrative capability in certain areas, ARC often relies on other departments and agencies for program administration, especially with respect to highways and infrastructure projects. For example, the Appalachian Regional Development Act authorizes the Secretary of Transportation to administer the Commission's highway programs. Working with State Departments of Transportation, ARC continues to actively monitor the status of construction in each State and disposition of any remaining ADHS.

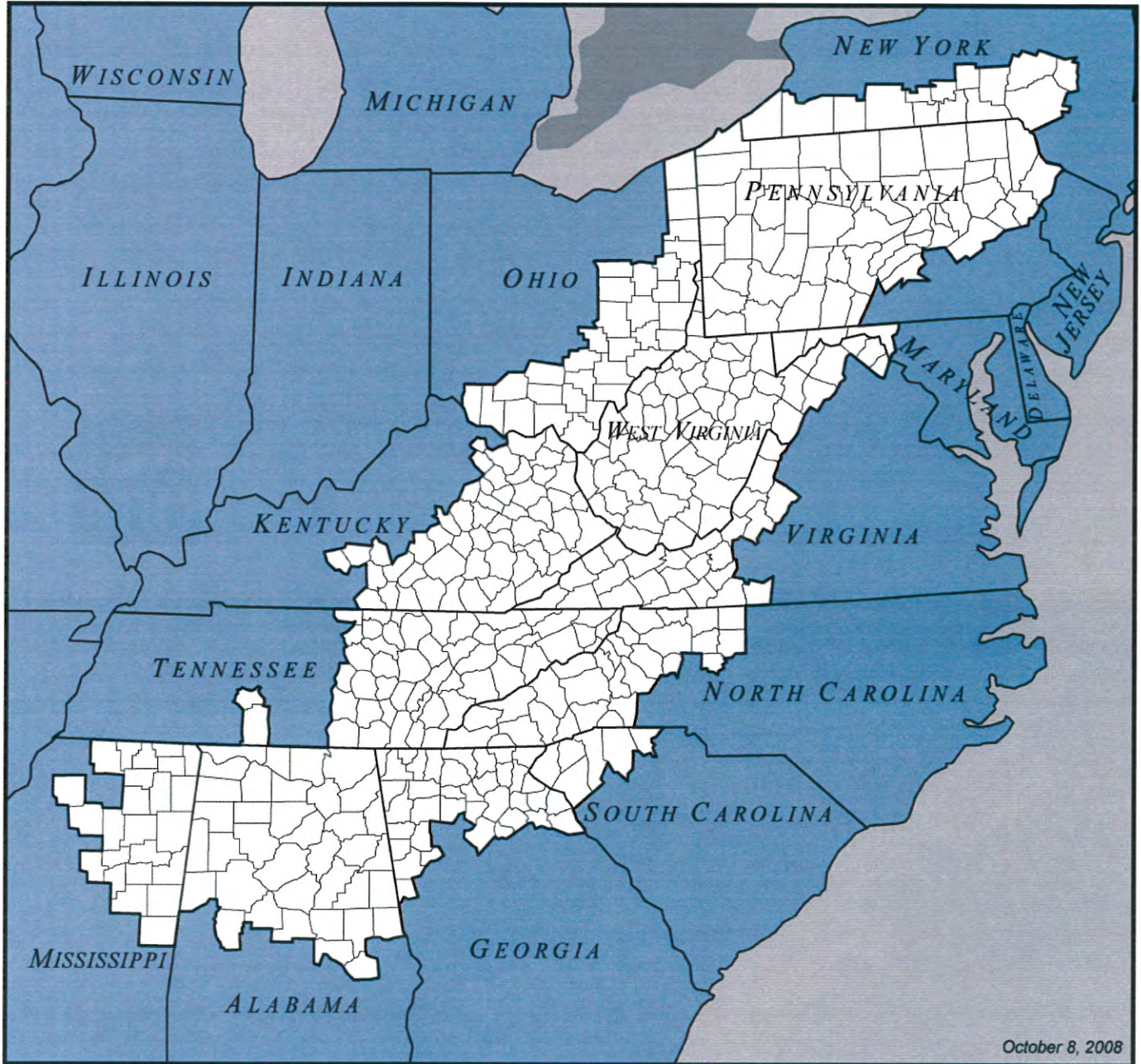
ARC relies on Child Agencies, including the Departments of Agriculture (USDA), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to administer construction related grants to oversee non-highway infrastructure grants. Also utilization of State agencies to administer construction related grants is being emphasized.

Appalachian Regional Commission Organization Chart





APPALACHIAN REGION



Appalachia, as defined in the legislation from which the Appalachian Regional Commission derives its authority, is a 205,000-square-mile region that follows the spine of the Appalachian Mountains from southern New York to northern Mississippi. It includes all of West Virginia and parts of 12 other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

B. OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

The ARC OIG is an independent Federal audit and investigative unit that reports directly to the Agency Head.

Role and Authority

The Inspector General Act of 1978, (Pub.L. No. 95-452), as amended in 1988, states that the IG is responsible for (1) audits and investigations; (2) review of legislation; and (3) recommendation of policies for the purpose of promoting economy and efficiency in the administration of, or preventing and detecting fraud and abuse in, the program and operations of the establishment. In this regard, the IG is responsible for keeping the Agency Head and Congress fully informed about the problems and deficiencies in ARC programs and operations and the need for corrective action. The IG has authority to inquire into all ARC programs and activities that are federally funded. The inquiries may be in the form of audits, surveys, investigations, inspections, evaluations, personnel security checks, or other appropriate methods. The two primary purposes of these inquiries are (1) to assist all levels of ARC management by identifying and reporting problem areas, weaknesses, or deficiencies in procedures, policies, program implementation, and employee conduct and (2) to recommend appropriate corrective actions.

Relationship to Other Principal ARC Offices

The States' and Federal Co-Chairs, acting together as the Commission, establish policies for ARC's programs and its administration. These policies are provided under the ARC Code and implemented by the Commission staff, which is responsible for monitoring project performance and providing technical assistance as needed. The Federal Co-Chair, as the Federal fiscal officer, is responsible for the proper use and protection of Federal funds, for ensuring compliance with applicable Federal laws and regulations, and for taking appropriate action on conditions needing improvement, including those reported by the OIG. The operation of the OIG neither replaces established lines of operating authority nor eliminates the need for the Commission offices to take reasonable measures to protect and enhance the integrity and effectiveness of their operations. All Commission offices are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the programs entrusted to them and reporting information or incidences needing further audit and/or investigation to the OIG.

Funding and Staffing

The OIG funding level for FY 2016 was \$710,000. Staffing consists of the Inspector General, an Assistant Inspector General for Audit, and a Confidential Assistant. Grant review activities continue to emphasize use of contracted services (e.g., independent public accounting firms or other OIG offices) supplemented by programmatic and performance reviews conducted by OIG staff.

In order to comply with Pub.L. No. 110-409, the Inspector General Reform Act of 2008, the OIG contracts with other IGs for counsel and investigative services to the degree needed.

III. OIG ACTIVITY

A. Audits, Inspections, Evaluations and Reviews

Grant reviews focused on grant implementation and administration in line with ARC and OMB policies and procedures. Management reviews focused on headquarters program and grant management activities. During the reporting period seven grants audits and three management reports and the Financial Statement audit were issued.

Audits of seven grants with total ARC funding of \$4.5 million reported overall implementation of grants in accordance with policies, procedures and regulations. Findings and recommendations were related to untimely progress reports, documentation and support for matching funds, indirect costs and identification of performance results. Emphasis was placed on grantee identification and support for performance measures included in grant applications and approvals.

Management reports emphasized ARC follow-up on inactive grants to determine the need to follow-up actions and potential for deobligations and use of available funds for other projects in Appalachia. Follow-up on prior reports and recommendations identified \$283,000 for which funds became available for use on other projects. A report on expired end dates identified numerous grants with balances totaling \$17 million for which grant related expenditures after the end date would be deemed ineligible based on Federal and ARC provisions and the absence of Basic Agency Monitoring Reports (BAMR) that are used by ARC to identify project status and needed actions.

ARC agreed with recommendations for follow-up on these grants and emphasized justifiable extensions prior to expiration dates to preclude ineligible costs.

A review of ARC actions to implement the Data Act determined that ARC had initiated actions to comply with the Data Act and reporting requirements.

Agency actions on prior reports include implementation of controls to better identify grants needing follow-up. Actions have also been initiated to improve and increase obtaining information about accomplishment of performance measures.

ARC Financial Statement Audit

The Financial Statement audit for FY 2016 resulted in an unqualified opinion. The prior seven years reports have been issued with a clean audit opinion since ARC adopted federal financial reporting rules in 2007.

Peer Review

Offices of the Inspectors General (OIGs) are required to perform (and undergo) reviews of other OIG offices every three years to ensure audit policies and/or procedural systems are in place that provide reasonable assurance of compliance with government auditing standards (GAS). The OIG peer conducted in FY 2017 by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission OIG disclosed no findings and the next peer review of ARC is scheduled for FY 2019.

B. INVESTIGATIONS

The Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, provides that the IG may receive and investigate complaints or information concerning the possible existence of an activity constituting a violation of law, rules, or regulations; mismanagement; gross waste of funds; or abuse of authority. The OIG does not employ criminal investigators and utilizes other OIGs to perform needed investigations. Also, the results of investigations may be referred to the appropriate Federal, State, or local prospective authorities for action.

C. OTHER

OIG Working Groups

Smaller OIG offices have some significantly different operational concerns than larger OIG offices in trying to maintain effective and efficient oversight of agency programs. One challenge involves the significant human and capital resources being allocated to mandated reviews. The IG is an active member of the small working group that meets periodically to discuss such issues and recommends actions/best practices to facilitate smaller OIG operations.

Requests for Information

Each year we receive and comply with requests for information from various governmental entities compiling statistics on OIG offices or their audited agencies. CIGIE requests information for its annual OIG profile update and compilation of OIG statistics. The yearly compilation summarizes the results of audit and inspection activities for of all federal OIG offices.

Implementation of OIG Reform Act

The OIG has implemented the requirements of Pub.L. No. 110-409 the Inspector General Reform Act of 2008.

OSC Certification

The OIG received the Office of Special Counsel (OSC) Certification of compliance with 5 USC-2302(c) dealing with Prohibited Practices and Whistleblower Protection provisions.

IV. REPORTING FRAUD, WASTE, AND ABUSE

A region wide toll-free hotline is maintained to enable direct and confidential contact with the ARC OIG, in line with governmental and longstanding OIG initiatives as identified in the IG Act of 1978; to afford opportunities for identification of areas subject to fraud, waste, or abuse. Also, in accordance with the Inspector General Reform Act of 2008, the ARC OIG implemented another communication channel allowing anonymous reporting of fraud, waste or abuse via a link on our website's home page. The web link is, <http://ig.arc.gov/>.

V. LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY REVIEW

The OIG reviews legislation germane to ARC, OIG and the OIG community. Our comments are provided, as appropriate to agency officials, and/or to the CIGIE for incorporation with comments from all other OIGs.

VI. DODD-FRANK LEGLISATION – Reporting to Full Commission

OMB issued an updated list of Designated Federal Entity (DFE) Agency Head in December 2013 that confirmed legislation identifying the 13 Appalachian Governors as part of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Agency Head (Commissioners) designations. No problems have been experienced with respect to implementation of the legislation.

VII. OIGs Audit Community Wide Issues

OIG audit units have provided very valuable services to the taxpayers including significant monetary benefits and major program improvements. However, as with any organization, improvements are possible and within the OIG community there are areas where OIG-wide audit performance and credibility can be significantly improved by addressing the following issues.

Performance Audit Skills Gaps

- There is a continuing significant need to address the long standing issue of broader qualifications with respect to performance auditing that constitutes the majority of audit work at most OIGs. Currently the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) 0511 auditing series and classification requires 24 credits of accounting or an equivalent level of accounting credits and experience and the 0343 Management Analyst series is not used to any significant degree. Performance related primary audit skills, attributes and competencies have been identified as oral and written communications, analytics, problem solving, interpersonal relationships, and critical thinking and are far more important than accounting for effective performance auditing.

The IG has recommended that the CIGIE Audit Committee support a Performance Audit classification that identifies qualifications and competences more closely related to performance auditing or a separation of the 0511 series between financial and performance auditing with elimination of accounting as a required performance auditing qualification. Such a classification would better assure the employment of professional staff that better meet the current and future OIG audit environment, increase audit effectiveness and reduce waste attributable to primary use of out of touch and out dated auditor qualifications. Regardless of eventual OPM decisions a primary need is OIG Audit to recognize and accept the need for significant qualification changes to address performance audits and emphasize recruiting and employing audit staff best suited to meet the OIG audit workload.

Other government and private sector audit organizations including the Government Accounting Office (GAO) have recognized and addressed this issue.

Other options are significantly increased use of an upgraded management analyst series with educational requirements or actions initiated by GAO to address skills gap issues related to performance auditing.

This issue remains under OPM consideration.

Implementation of Recommendations

For unimplemented recommendations that a recent Congressional report noted as 15,222 open recommendations with potential monetary savings of \$87 billion dollars actions include tracking of unimplemented recommendations, follow-up with higher level agency officials, inclusion in semi-annual reports and follow-up reports. The IG Act provision 5(a)(12) that provides for including in the semi-annual report information concerning any significant management decision with which the IG is in disagreement is seldom, if ever, used to highlight disagreement with management decisions on significant programmatic or potential large monetary benefit recommendations.

The issue is currently under review by the Federal Audit Executive Council (FAEC).

Actions on reported implementation of recommendations ranges from obtaining implementation plans, accepting agreement with the recommendation as sufficient to consider the recommendation implemented, accepting the agency audit resolution officials decisions, or confirming implementation actions in some cases. Emphasis should be placed on validation of implementation actions with respect to significant program monetary benefits recommendations.

Audit Peer Reviews

- Develop and implement peer review guides to independently assess OIG audit efficiency and effectiveness that highlights key operational elements, such as planning, field work, report timeliness, staff utilization and training, supervision, audit follow-up and actual results. The required peer review of compliance with audit standards does not address these key operational elements that determine OIG efficiency and effectiveness. Such reviews should contribute to increased OIG audit efficiency and effectiveness such as addressing timely reporting that often surfaces as a criticism.

Some OIGs conduct internal assessments of key operational elements. These reviews are considered independent since they are conducted by staff from other units within the OIG. This reasoning conflicts with a major reason for establishment of OIGs being that agency internal audit units were not considered sufficiently independent even though audits were conducted by units not connected with the audited unit.

Actual Versus Potential Monetary Results

- Identify outcome based performance measures that, over a multi-year period, provide for reporting of actual savings in relation to the multi billions of potential audit related savings reported annually based primarily on questioned and undocumented costs with low actual savings potential. OIG recommendations result in saving in excess of OIG operational costs. However, actual savings are not included in the OIG Annual Report to the President or in most OIG Semi-annual reports.

A primary argument presented against including some actual rather than only potential monetary benefits over a multi-year period in OIG Semi-annual reports (SAR) and the CIGIE Annual Report to the President is the difficulty in obtaining this information. However, the IG Act and OMB Circular A-50, Audit Follow-up specifically require the agency head to identify actual monetary related benefits

resulting from OIG reports when transmitting the OIG SAR to Congress. Section 5(b)(2)(c)(i) & (ii) of the IG Act specifies that the agency head will include the disallowed costs that were recovered by management through collection, offset, property in lieu of cash or otherwise and the dollar of disallowed costs that were written off by management as part of the agency head transmittal of the OIG SAR to Congress. OMB circular A-50 states that the Agency follow-up official Semi-annually provide the head of the agency the amount of collections, offsets, write-offs, demands for payment and other monetary benefits resulting from audits.

Based on this available information and OIG Semi-annual reports that identify agreed with disallowances tracking of some actual savings over a multi-year period appears reasonable and would better support OIG credibility. Such reporting would also be in conformance with the intent of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) that emphasizes reporting projected and actual results.

SCHEDULE OF AUDIT, INSPECTION, EVALUATION & REVIEW REPORTS
ISSUED OCTOBER 1, 2016 TO MARCH 31, 2017

Report No.	Report Title/Description	Program Dollars or Contract/Grant Amount*	Questioned/Unsupported Costs**	Funds to Better Use***
17-01	City of Lawrenceburg, TN	\$500,000		
17-02	Performance Periods/End Dates			
17-03	Older Open Basic Agency Grants			
17-04	West Liberty, KY	\$750,000		
17-05	Data Act Implementation			
17-06	City of Louisville, MS	\$400,000		
17-07	Fiscal Year 2016 Financial Statement			
17-08	Lake Cumberland Area Development District	\$308,788		
17-09	Morehead State University	\$329,235	\$329,235	
17-10	Kentucky Housing Corporation	\$500,000		
17-11	NE Mississippi Planning Development District	\$1,810,611		
Total		\$4,519,395	\$329,235	

SCHEDULE OF AUDIT, INSPECTION AND EVALUATION REPORTS
WITH QUESTIONED OR UNSUPPORTED COSTS (THOUSANDS)

	<u>No. of Reports</u>	<u>Questioned Costs</u>	<u>Unsupported Costs</u>
A. For which no management decision was made by the commencement of the reporting period	0		
B. Which were issued during the reporting period	1	\$ 329	\$ 329 ^{1/}
Subtotals (A + B)	1		
C. For which a management decision was made during the reporting period			
(i) dollar value of disallowed costs			
(ii) dollar value of costs not disallowed			
D. For which no management decision has been made by the end of the reporting period	1		\$ 329
E. Reports for which no management decision was made within 6 months of issuance			

^{1/} Costs that are questioned in audit reports primarily relate to unsupported costs for which support is provided subsequent to the audit Report. Thus amounts noted are similar.

SCHEDULE OF AUDIT, INSPECTION AND EVALUATION REPORTS WITH
RECOMMENDATIONS THAT FUNDS BE PUT TO BETTER USE AND SUMMARY OF
MANAGEMENT DECISIONS (THOUSANDS)

	<u>No. of Reports</u>	<u>Dollar Value</u>
A. For which no management decision was made by the commencement of the reporting period		
B. Which were issued during the reporting period	1	
Subtotals (A + B)	1	
C. For which a management decision was made during the reporting period		
(i) dollar value of recommendations that were agreed to by management		
--based on proposed management action	2	\$ 283 ¹ / ₁
--based on proposed legislative action		
(ii) dollar value of recommendations that were not agreed to by management		
D. For which no management decision has been made by the end of the reporting period		
E. Reports for which no final management decision was made within 6 months of issuance	0	0

1. Based on value of grants recommended for follow-up in prior report. Management agrees to follow-up on identified grant and the value noted is actual deobligations during the reporting period.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

The following definitions apply to terms used in reporting audit statistics:

Questioned Cost	A cost which the Office of Inspector General (OIG) questioned because of an alleged violation of a provision of a law, regulation, contract, or other agreement or document governing the expenditure of funds; such cost is not supported by adequate documentation; or the expenditure of funds for the intended purpose is unnecessary or unreasonable.
Unsupported Cost	A cost which the OIG questioned because the cost was not supported by adequate documentation at the time of the audit.
Disallowed Cost	A questioned cost that management, in a management decision, has sustained or agreed should not be charged to the Commission.
Funds Be Put To Better Use	A recommendation made by the OIG that funds could be used more efficiently if management took actions to implement and complete the recommendation.
Management Decision	Management's evaluation of the findings and recommendations included in the audit report and the issuance of a final decision by management concerning its response to such findings and recommendations, including actions concluded to be necessary. Interim decisions and actions are not considered final management decisions for the purpose of the tables in this report.
Final Action	The completion of all management actions that are described in a management decision with respect to audit findings and recommendations. If management concluded that no actions were necessary, final action occurs when a management decision is issued.

**THE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION**

**serves American taxpayers
by investigating reports of waste, fraud, or abuse
involving Federal funds.**

**If you believe an activity is
wasteful, fraudulent, or abusive of Federal funds,
please call
toll free 1-800-532-4611
or (202) 884-7667 in the Washington metropolitan area**

or write to:

**Office of Inspector General
Appalachian Regional Commission
1666 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Rm. 700
Washington, DC 20009-1068**

**Information can be provided anonymously.
Federal Government employees are protected from reprisal,
and anyone may have his or her identity held in confidence.**