



Why This Matters

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) serves as an independent body to deter, identify, and address fraud, abuse, mismanagement, and waste in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) programs and operations. To this end, the OIG is responsible for conducting and supervising audits, investigations, and inspections relating to the programs and operations of DHS. The OIG examines, evaluates and, where necessary, critiques these operations and activities, recommending ways for DHS to carry out its responsibilities in the most effective, efficient, and economical manner possible.

DHS Response

FEMA officials agreed with our findings and recommendations. FEMA's written response is due within 90 days.

Santa Clara Pueblo, New Mexico, Needs Assistance to Ensure Compliance with FEMA Public Assistance Grant Requirements

What We Determined

Santa Clara Pueblo's (Pueblo) accounting policies, procedures, and business practices were adequate to account for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant funds according to Federal regulations and FEMA guidelines. However, the Pueblo did not have adequate procurement policies and procedures in place to comply with all Federal procurement regulations. This occurred because FEMA regional officials incorrectly advised the Pueblo that the same Federal procurement regulations that apply to States, as grantees, also apply to the Pueblo. As a result, the Pueblo could improperly contract for future disaster-related work of approximately \$7.4 million.

Our audit objective was to determine whether the Pueblo's policies, procedures, and business practices are adequate to account for and expend Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant funds according to Federal regulations and FEMA guidelines. We conducted this audit early in the Public Assistance process to identify areas where the Pueblo may need additional technical assistance or monitoring to ensure compliance.

What We Recommend

We recommend that the Regional Administrator, FEMA Region VI:

Provide additional technical assistance to the Santa Clara Pueblo to ensure it complies with Federal procurement regulations for awarding disaster contracts and to prevent the improper payment of approximately \$7.4 million in procurements.

Continue technical assistance to the Pueblo to ensure it is aware of and performs all responsibilities that Federal regulations impose on grantees.

We recommend that FEMA's Chief Counsel:

Coordinate with all FEMA Regional Administrators to advise Tribal governments within their areas of responsibility to follow 44 CFR 13.36(b) through (i), rather than 44 CFR 13.36(a) for current and future declared disasters.

For Further Information:

Contact our Office of Public Affairs at (202)254-4100, or email us at DHS-OIG.OfficePublicAffairs@oig.dhs.gov