



Why This Matters

Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is responsible for protecting the Nation's transportation systems. The agency has the statutory responsibility for requiring individuals who have unescorted access to secured areas of the airport to be properly vetted. This is accomplished by comparing the applicant's information against Federal criminal and immigration databases to discern whether the applicant is a threat to transportation or national security.

DHS Response

TSA concurred with our four recommendations.

TSA agreed to develop a lessons learned report for future projects to show challenges that occurred throughout the Aviation Channeling Services Provider project; establish a policy that requires all projects include a comprehensive plan; communicate customer service expectations to vendors and monitor their performance for accountability; and require inspectors during fiscal year 2013 to conduct a review of badges issued without the required background checks.

For Further Information:

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

TSA's Aviation Channeling Services Provider Project

What We Determined

TSA's Aviation Channeling Services Provider project was initiated in response to concern that airports and airlines should be able to choose vendors for relaying information used to issue airport security badges. Although TSA selected three vendors according to Federal policies and procedures, it did not properly plan, manage, and implement the project.

As a result, airports nationwide experienced difficulties, causing a backlog of background checks. To address the backlog, TSA temporarily allowed airports to issue badges without the required background checks. Consequently, according to records available for our review, at least five airports granted badges to individuals with criminal records, giving them access to secured airport areas. TSA did not track which airports temporarily issued badges to individuals without the required background checks. Therefore, there may still be individuals with criminal records who have access to secured areas in our Nation's airports.

What We Recommend

Transportation Security Administration's Deputy Administrator:

- 1) Develop a lessons learned report for future projects to show challenges that occurred throughout the Aviation Channeling Services Provider project.
- 2) Establish a policy that requires all projects include a comprehensive plan that:
 - Designates an official(s) responsible for overall project status and completion;
 - Documents decisions made throughout all phases of the project's design, selection, testing, implementation, communication, and oversight; and
 - Tracks and reports all project costs.
- 3) Immediately communicate customer service expectations to vendors and monitor their performance for accountability.
- 4) Conduct a comprehensive review of badges issued under the "Exemption from TSA Regulations and Alternate Measures to Security Directive 1542-04-08 series." Create a detailed report identifying the locations and badges involved in the use of alternate measures and the actions taken to ensure all badges issued during the backlog have been issued in accordance with Federal requirements and the proper security checks.