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Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency Disaster Assistance Working Group Joint Review: Management Challenges of Federal Agencies in Preparing for and Responding to Natural Disasters

WASHINGTON DC— Seven Offices of Inspectors General (OIGs), as members of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) Disaster Assistance Working Group, conducted a cross-cutting review to assist agencies across the Federal Government to better prepare for, and respond to, future natural disasters.

The CIGIE Disaster Assistance Working Group helps coordinate the Federal IG community's oversight efforts regarding disaster-related funds. This review is the result of collaboration between seven OIGs under CIGIE's Disaster Assistance Working Group comprising the following agencies: the U.S. Departments of Defense (DOD), Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, and Transportation and the U.S. Small Business Administration.

This comprehensive review analyzed 28 disaster-focused OIG reports issued between June 2015 and November 2021 and includes 89 recommendations. The review categorizes the disaster recovery-specific conclusions and recommendations to align with the top management and performance challenges previously identified by the OIG community.

While many of these OIG reports focused on the Federal Government's preparedness to respond to the devastation caused by hurricanes in 2017, this review seeks to provide agencies with best practices and lessons learned to implement better internal controls and systems and minimize barriers to spending disaster funds efficiently and effectively.

Department of Housing and Urban Development Inspector General, the Honorable Rae Oliver Davis: "I commend each of the participating OIGs for their collaboration and cooperation on this cross-cutting initiative. I am confident this report will have a significant impact on the efficiency of disaster preparedness through improved management and internal controls across Federal agencies."

Acting Department of Defense Inspector General, the Honorable Sean O'Donnell: "This collaborative work shows that building resiliency to environmental stresses, such as natural disasters, is a top management challenge facing not just the DOD but the whole Government. We are pleased to contribute to this important project, which will help lead to lasting improvements."

Department of Health and Human Services Inspector General, the Honorable Christi A. Grimm: “I applaud this joint effort to help programs across the Federal Government better protect people from natural disasters by improving readiness and response capabilities.”

Department of Homeland Security, Inspector General, Dr. Joseph V. Cuffari stated: “I appreciate the unprecedented collaboration across the seven Offices of Inspectors General to identify common disaster recovery challenges, and I am confident this report will have a positive impact on future disaster recovery efforts.”

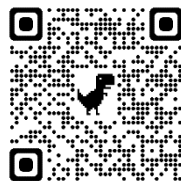
Department of the Interior Inspector General, the Honorable Mark Lee Greenblatt: “This cross-cutting report will be a valuable tool to Federal agencies and our stakeholders, providing a broad view of the Federal Government’s preparedness for and response to natural disasters.”

Department of Transportation (DOT) Inspector General, the Honorable Eric J. Soskin: “DOT OIG is very pleased to have had the opportunity to contribute to this valuable report, which reflects the excellent work of several Offices of Inspectors General, including our own, over the past few years. Our colleagues at DOT are often involved in providing assistance and funding emergency relief for natural disasters that affect the Nation’s transportation network, and the report’s findings and conclusions make it clear that the associated challenges and risks faced by DOT are often similar to those faced by other major Departments within the U.S. Government. The potential solutions described in this report also have widespread applicability across agencies. DOT OIG looks forward to working with our partners from HUD OIG again on other projects of multi-agency interest.”

Small Business Administration Inspector General, the Honorable Hannibal “Mike” Ware: “A balance between speed and internal controls is achievable and necessary to ensure timely governmental assistance to disaster victims. Through this collaborative initiative, OIGs are providing their respective agencies with cross-governmental insights that will assist in balanced implementation of programs aimed to mitigate the damage caused by disasters.”

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