

## LINKING TAXPAYER DOLLARS TO PERFORMANCE RESULTS: ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH THE INTEGRATION OF RESULTS WITH INVESTMENT

Our emphasis on sound financial practices, performance results and program accountability reflects a strong desire to use taxpayers' dollars as effectively as possible. The Department strives to tie the performance of our programs with budget requests and to strengthen the link between financial investments and program quality.

In order to tie performance to budget submissions, federal agencies are required to identify a number of high-priority performance goals to further the administration's agenda for building a high-performing government and identify strategies and a means to achieve them. The draft goals are expected to be completed in FY 2010.

### Linking Program Performance With Budget Submissions

The Department participates closely with the Performance Improvement Council (PIC) to establish guidelines and metrics to more closely align program and management performance with Budget requests. The Office of Management and Budget established the PIC in FY 2007 under *Executive Order 13450: Improving Government Program Performance* as a tool to spend taxpayers' dollars more effectively and with greater accountability.

The PIC is composed of senior staff from each federal agency who are responsible for coordinating areas of performance management activities, such as ensuring that data from annual performance plans and reports are used in agency budget justifications. Collectively, the PIC is tasked with establishing program performance standards and evaluation criteria, exchanging information among agencies, coordinating and monitoring performance assessments, keeping the public informed, obtaining advice from stakeholders and making policy recommendations.

Additionally, *GPR*A requires agencies to develop annual program performance plans that include challenging performance metrics that can be used to judge the effectiveness of each program. Programs deemed ineffective or that are not delivering results based on established performance measures are reviewed for inclusion in the Department's annual budget submission to Congress.

To further our commitment to provide more effective oversight for our fiscal resources, the Department has identified a senior manager for performance management systems in the Office of the Deputy Secretary to oversee the furtherance of accountability for results for both our strategic priorities and our internal management processes. In addition, the administration has appointed a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Performance Improvement—a position housed in the Department's Office of Management.

### Performance Evaluations Improve Accountability

Each year, the Department publishes evaluations of selected programs to further demonstrate accountability for the taxpayers' investment in education spending. These evaluations serve to identify best practices as well as programs that cannot demonstrate accountability for results, as well as to inform senior management about programs in need

of additional support. The Department uses evaluations to identify programs that should be eliminated from the budget or recommended for reduced funding. The Department also uses evaluations to support budget requests for increases in program funds. Several offices in the Department have the responsibility for designing and implementing evaluations of program and management activities and operations. Those offices include the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) and the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development (OPEPD). Additionally, the Department's Office of Inspector General (OIG) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) audits and reports provide guidance and feedback on improvements in management and program operations. Finally, the Department provides guidance to grant recipients on developing evaluations based on scientifically rigorous evidence. More detail is available at:

[http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/evidence\\_based/evidence\\_based.asp](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/evidence_based/evidence_based.asp).

### **Ensuring Accountability and Oversight of *Recovery Act* Funds**

The Risk Management Service (RMS), in the Office of the Secretary, is responsible for Departmentwide grants policy related to identifying and working with high-risk grantees to minimize risk to federal funds that may adversely affect the advancement of the Department's priority goals.

In FY 2009 RMS took a two-phased approach to providing technical assistance to states receiving *Recovery Act* funds. The first phase targets states that received the most *Recovery Act* money and were identified as having fiscal and programmatic concerns. RMS is coordinating the provision of technical assistance to states based on basic federal grants in fiscal management requirements, such as cash management, internal controls, procurement, allowable activities, data quality and sub-recipient monitoring. In its second phase, RMS has developed a regular series of *Recovery Act* technical assistance Web conferences to enhance the ongoing provision of oversight and technical assistance to grantees receiving *Recovery Act* funds to ensure that they are held accountable to the taxpayer and that these and other Department grant funds are spent appropriately.

### **Cost Saving Measures Underway at the Department**

A major priority of the new administration is to ensure that federal agencies control costs and conduct their internal lines of business to be as effective and efficient with the use of the taxpayers' dollar as possible. The Department has undertaken measures to evaluate and implement administrative cost-saving opportunities that have already realized immediate savings and costs avoided, as well as longer-term plans that will realize additional savings in years to come. The Department has identified a number of cost saving measures that include equipment consolidation, reduction in contract and travel costs, eliminating extraneous office space and consolidating teleconferencing facilities and conference spaces. Additional cost-saving measures are under review for FY 2010.