



COLORADO HIV AND AIDS PREVENTION GRANT PROGRAM

Performance Audit, July 2013 Report Highlights



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PURPOSE

- Determine whether the grant award and renewal process ensures that grant funding addresses the State's HIV and AIDS prevention and education needs.
- Determine whether the monitoring process is sufficient to ensure that grantees are meeting established project goals and deliverables.

BACKGROUND

- The Program was created in 2006 to address local community needs in the areas of HIV and AIDS prevention and education.
- The Program is administered by the Department and is funded with revenue from the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement.
- A seven-member Advisory Committee reviews grant applications and makes grant funding recommendations.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department should:

- Improve the grant solicitation process to better provide targeted coverage of rural areas and respond to emerging needs.
- Improve monitoring activities and take corrective action when appropriate to ensure the timely identification and resolution of grantee performance issues.
- Strengthen the Program's conflict-of-interest policies, procedures, and practices.
- Ensure compliance with Colorado's open meetings law and improve other aspects of Advisory Committee activities.
- Clarify in Program rules and bylaws that the scope of the Advisory Committee's authority and responsibility with respect to the Program is advisory.

The Department agreed with all of our recommendations.

AUDIT CONCERN

The Program's effectiveness is undermined by problems with allocating grant awards, poor monitoring of grantee performance, gaps in managing conflicts of interest, noncompliance with Colorado's open meetings law, and a lack of clarity and common understanding about responsibilities and authority for Program administration and oversight.

KEY FACTS AND FINDINGS

- As of December 31, 2012, approximately 11,700 people were reported to be living in Colorado with HIV or AIDS.
- Approximately \$11.4 million in funding has been awarded for 160 grant projects since the Program's inception.
- Overall priority setting for Program funding appears reasonable based on state epidemiological profiles and state and national HIV/AIDS needs assessments and prevention strategies.
- The Program is not actively using the grant solicitation process to ensure that funded grants address the needs of both urban and rural residents, that the Program is responding to emerging needs, or that Program funding is being maximized for new projects while holding some resources in reserve for unexpected costs and contingencies.
- Grant project performance thresholds established by the Department were not met for 31 (23 percent) of the 136 performance goals for the 10 sampled projects we reviewed. Problems with grantee performance were not identified in a timely manner for four sampled projects.
- Conflict-of-interest forms for 22 grant applications were not on file for one Advisory Committee member. Additionally, in nine cases an Advisory Committee member reviewed and scored a grant application despite the member's having disclosed some type of personal or professional relationship, affiliation, or interest with the applicant.
- Minutes for five Advisory Committee meetings were not kept, and minutes for four Advisory Committee meetings have not been made publicly available. Not all Advisory Committee meetings receive advance public notice, and meeting notices lack specific agenda information.
- The scope of the Advisory Committee's statutory responsibility and authority have been misunderstood and interpreted too broadly. As a result, the Advisory Committee's role with respect to the Program has grown beyond the General Assembly's intent that the Advisory Committee serve in an advisory, rather than a controlling, capacity.