



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Justice

(202) 514-3435 | oig.justice.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 8, 2017

DOJ OIG Releases Report on the DEA's El Paso Intelligence Center

The Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) today released a report on the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC), a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) led, multi-agency intelligence center located in El Paso, Texas. The report follows up on a prior review of EPIC in June 2010.

In today's report, the DOJ OIG concludes that while EPIC's products and services provide valuable information to law enforcement personnel, deficiencies in EPIC's governance, strategic management, and operations could limit its overall effectiveness and value to law enforcement.

EPIC's mission is to support law enforcement through the timely analysis and dissemination of intelligence information, with a particular emphasis on Mexico and the Southwest border. In executing this mission, EPIC adopts an "all threats" focus that includes illegal drugs, weapons trafficking, terrorism, human trafficking, human smuggling, illegal migration, money laundering, and bulk cash smuggling. EPIC is funded and staffed by over 25 partner agencies, including the DEA.

The report released today identifies four areas in which improvements to EPIC's governance, management, and operations would result in increased effectiveness and value to law enforcement:

- **EPIC's partner agencies are not effectively engaged in governing EPIC and have reduced the number of personnel they assign to EPIC.** EPIC depends on engagement from all partner agencies in order to fulfill its mission, yet since early 2014, EPIC's governing bodies have met infrequently and allowed EPIC to operate without an approved, up-to-date strategic plan or effective performance metrics. And since October 2012, the total number of staff detailed to EPIC has decreased by 24 percent, thereby reducing EPIC's diversity in partner agency representation.
- **EPIC is not effectively performing its "all threats" mission, and instead primarily serves as a tactical drug intelligence center.** If EPIC wishes to successfully pursue its "all threats" mission, it needs to reconsider its staffing and resources. Of particular concern, we found that since September 2013 there has been a 45 percent reduction in the number of Intelligence Analysts assigned to EPIC, and that many of the Intelligence

Analysts at EPIC lack the training and experience necessary to conduct complex strategic analysis.

- **EPIC's outreach efforts to the law enforcement community are insufficient to convey the full range of products and services it can provide.**
- **At the time of our review, the DEA had not consolidated a Southwest border intelligence collection program at its Houston Field Division with a similar program at EPIC.** As noted in the report, after we completed our fieldwork, the DEA informed us that it intended to cease the funding and operation of its Houston-based program, and that the program may be transferred to an EPIC partner agency.

The report released today makes four recommendations to the DEA and EPIC management to help ensure the governance and strategic management of EPIC, and to help ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the DEA's southwest border intelligence efforts. The DEA concurred with all four recommendations.

Report: Today's report is available under "Recent Reports" on the OIG's website and at the following link: <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/2017/e1701.pdf>.

Podcast: To accompany today's report, the OIG has released a 3-minute podcast featuring a member of the review team discussing the report's findings. The podcast and a downloadable transcript are available at the following link: <https://oig.justice.gov/multimedia/>.

June 2010 Report on EPIC: The OIG's prior report on EPIC is available [here](#).