



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

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DOJ OIG Releases Report on Efforts to Safeguard Minors in DOJ Youth-Centered Programs

Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz announced today the release of a report examining DOJ's efforts to safeguard minors participating in its youth-centered grant programs during fiscal year 2017. Certain projects funded by the DOJ's Office of Justice Programs, Office on Violence Against Women, and Office of Community Oriented Policing Services involve or serve at-risk youth participants who come into direct contact with staff and volunteers supporting the projects.

The DOJ Office of the Inspector General (OIG) identified a number of significant issues pertaining to DOJ's lack of consistent policies and procedures to mitigate the risk of harm to minors participating in these programs, including:

- **Policies and Procedures to Safeguard Minors.** DOJ has not established policies and procedures specifically related to safeguarding minors across all DOJ grant programs involving youth, although some guidelines do exist for certain specific programs or awards. For the majority of DOJ youth-centered grant programs, DOJ does not provide any special requirements or specific guidance to grantees related to background checks.
- **Importance of Layered Approach to Background Checks.** Multiple tools and strategies exist to assess an individual's suitability to interact with minors, and DOJ officials and available guidance stated that the most effective background checks involve a layered approach that utilizes multiple sources of information. However, the OIG found that DOJ does not uniformly provide guidance to grantees regarding sources of background check information, best practices for screening employees and volunteers, and additional methods to identify and mitigate the risk of child abuse.
- **No Formal Monitoring of Background Screening Requirements.** DOJ grant-making components generally do not conduct formal monitoring of grantee background screening procedures for individuals in direct contact with minors. Without such monitoring, DOJ cannot ensure that grantees conduct an adequate level of due diligence with respect to individuals in contact with minors.

Today's report contains six recommendations to DOJ to ensure that its grantees have adequate controls in place to safeguard minors participating in DOJ-funded programs, and to ensure appropriate monitoring by DOJ to mitigate the risk of victimization of minors in its programs. DOJ agreed with all of the recommendations.

Report: Today's report can be found on the OIG's website under "Recent Reports" at the following link: <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/2019/a1914.pdf>.

Video: To accompany today's report, the OIG has released a 2-minute video featuring the Inspector General discussing the report's findings. The video and downloadable transcript are available at the following link: <https://oig.justice.gov/multimedia/video-03-14-19.htm>.

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