



Department of Environmental Protection Office of Inspector General

May 1, 2026

Report A-2526DEP-004

Audit of Information Technology Contracted Consultant Purchase Orders

INTRODUCTION

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (Department) Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted an audit of Information Technology (IT) Contracted Consultant Purchase Orders. This audit was initiated as a result of the OIG Annual Audit Plan for Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

AUDIT SCOPE, OBJECTIVES, AND METHODOLOGY

The scope of this audit included a review of contracted IT Staff Augmentation Services procured under the State Term Contract (STC) and managed by the Department's Office of Technology and Information Services (OTIS) during the period of July 1, 2024, to the present. The objectives of the audit were to:

1. Determine selected contractors' and consultants' compliance with the STC, Request for Quotes (RFQs), purchase orders, and any applicable laws, rules, policies, procedures, and directives.
2. Determine whether approved payments are supported by required documentation.
3. Evaluate Department administration, internal controls, and oversight of IT Staff Augmentation Services.

To achieve our audit objectives, our methodology included:

- Reviewing applicable statutes, regulations, contracts, and Department policies.
- Obtaining documentation for review and analysis of consultant and contractor records and files.
- Interviewing Department staff.

BACKGROUND

OTIS issues purchase orders to contractors to procure IT Staff Augmentation Services from consultants to augment the workforce on a temporary basis. These purchase orders are issued in accordance with the Department of Management Services' (DMS) STC No. 80101507-23-STC-ITSA and the Department's Request for Quotes (RFQs). Based on each contractor's RFQ response submission, the Department issues purchase orders to a contractor for the specific consultant identified in that contractor's RFQ response. Each purchase order identifies the consultant's name, position, hourly labor rate, and how many hours will be charged to each funding source. Consultant positions include but are not limited to: Systems Administrators, Applications Development Analysts, Business

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Analysts, Systems Analysts, Enterprise Architects, Project Managers, and a Database Administrator. Each purchase order states that services must be provided in accordance with the STC and applicable RFQ. The term of the STC spans from October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2027. The STC requires that each contractor:

- shall provide consultants in accordance with the Department's RFQ;
- shall adhere to all work policies, procedures, and standards established by DMS and the Department; and
- is fully responsible for satisfactory completion of all work on this Contract.

Each RFQ outlines requirements that each contractor and consultant must adhere to, as well as the duties and responsibilities of the consultant's supervisor (Department Supervisor) and Contract Manager. In conducting the audit, we selected a sample of 32 purchase orders. The sampled purchase orders were issued based on the following four RFQs, which largely contained the same requirements:

- RFQ 202418_SA_Renewals: associated with 26 purchase orders reviewed.
- RFQ 202427_SA_EAS: associated with 2 purchase orders reviewed.
- RFQ 202429R_SA_EAS: associated with 2 purchase orders reviewed.
- RFQ 202410_SA_PMS: associated with 2 purchase orders reviewed.

RESULTS OF AUDIT

During the audit, we reviewed a sample of purchase orders for contracted IT Staff Augmentation Services in order to evaluate compliance with applicable requirements, as well as Department oversight activities. We also reviewed a sample of consultant time reports and contractor invoices to determine whether charges to each program area were supported by documentation. A summary of our review is below.

Procurement of Staff Augmentation Services

RFQ Distribution

The STC states, *Customers [the Department] shall issue Request for Quotes to at least 25 vendors to provide IT Staff Augmentation services in accordance with section 287.0591(5), Florida Statutes.* We selected a sample of six RFQs to evaluate compliance with this requirement. Based on our review, one RFQ appeared to have been issued to only 23 vendors (contractors). For all other RFQs sampled, OTIS was unable to provide documentation demonstrating issuance to at least 25 vendors (contractors).

RFQ Response Deadline

The RFQs all contained due dates for the contractors' responses, and we selected four RFQs to sample to determine whether each contractor's RFQ response was submitted timely. We noted most contractor submissions were dated prior to the RFQ due date and one was dated after the due date. However, OTIS was unable to provide documentation demonstrating timely RFQ response submissions.

Purchase Order Issuance

Of the 32 purchase orders we reviewed, we found 2 were issued outside of the dates in their associated RFQ. The RFQ specified that the term of the Contract would begin upon

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issuance of a purchase order and continue through June 30, 2024. However, these two purchase orders were both issued after June 30, 2024.

Shared Cost Funding

The RFQs state that contractors shall be paid upon submission of a monthly invoice to the Department after delivery and acceptance of services. Some purchase orders were funded by multiple program areas, referred to as shared cost funding. Each consultant records their time and work activities in the Time Work Report (TWR) and e-mails their TWR to their Department Supervisor for review and approval. The TWR hours are generally broken down by project/program area. However, the contractor invoices must include one line of total hours multiplied by the fixed hourly rate for the consultant. The Contract Managers are responsible for applying the consultant's hours to the appropriate program area when processing each invoice for payment.

All but one of the sampled purchase orders we reviewed were funded by more than one program area. We compared the hours recorded on a sample of TWRs to the amounts applied to each program area for each corresponding invoice. Our review was limited to a sample of purchase orders during the months of January and July 2025. Our review determined that the itemized hours the consultant recorded for each program area on their TWR did not match the hours charged to each program area on the corresponding payment. A summary of our comparison is shown in the table below.

Program Area/Funding Source	JANUARY 2025		JULY 2025	
	Hours Recorded by Consultant on TWR	Hours Applied to Program Area	Hours Recorded by Consultant on TWR	Hours Applied to Program Area
Shared Costs	206	115.75	399	128
Division of Administrative Services	0	160.5	0	168
Division of Air Resource Management	39	5.5	0	0
Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration	0	9.25	0	0
Division of Law Enforcement	0	1	0	0
Division of Recreation and Parks	0	77.25	0	0
Division of State Lands	4	27.75	152	115
Division of Waste Management	121.5	107.5	198.5	148.5
Division of Water Resource Management	281.5	203.75	93.75	295.75
Division of Water Restoration Assistance	37.5	38	80	97
Florida Geological Survey	0	2	0	0
Office of Environmental Accountability and Transparency	0	1.5	0	165
Office of General Counsel	0	2	0	0
Office of Inspector General	0	0.75	0	0
Office of Resilience and Coastal Protect.	184	121	238	133
Office of Technology and Information Services	533	505	509.75	420.75
Office of the Secretary	0	1.75	0	0
Office of Water Policy and Ecosystem Restoration	0	1.25	0	0
Regulatory Districts	0	25	0	0
TOTAL	1406.50	1406.50	1671.00	1671.00

Based on the table above, some program areas were charged for consultants' time when no consultant had recorded time spent on projects for the program area charged. During our review, we discussed these discrepancies with OTIS. OTIS was unable to provide

their methodology for how the hours reported on the TWR as worked for each program area were reconciled with the hours applied to each program area when each month's invoice payment was processed.

TWR Requirements

The RFQs generally require consultants to use Appendix H, the TWR, to record the number of hours worked each day and a summary of the tasks assigned (services rendered). Appendix H includes a fillable form where each consultant enters the date, hours, a task description, and the Division or Program Area associated with the work they completed. It also contains a Performance Expectation portion, with five performance evaluation questions which are to be completed by the Department Supervisor, and electronic signature lines for the consultant, Department Supervisor, and Contract Manager to sign and certify that the TWR is true and correct.

Once each consultant completes their TWR and emails it to the Department Supervisor, the Department Supervisor and the Contract Manager review each consultant's TWR monthly and are required to complete the following steps:

- Department Supervisor reviews TWR to validate approved tasks/deliverables and time.
- Department Supervisor completes Performance Expectation portion of TWR by rating consultant performance and documenting issues that occurred during that period of service.
- Department Supervisor electronically signs TWR.
- Contract Manager reviews TWR and supporting documentation.
- Contract Manager electronically signs TWR.

Our review found the TWRs provided by OTIS did not utilize Appendix H, as required. The TWRs we reviewed included the date, hours, and the Division or Program Area, but did not include a task description. Additionally, the TWRs did not include the completed performance expectations nor signatures from the consultant, Department Supervisor, or Contract Manager. Most RFQs required that *Consultants must receive a "Pass" on the monthly Performance Expectations ratings worksheet on the TWR* and specify that this rating must be completed by the Department Supervisor. We requested documentation for performance evaluations completed by the Department Supervisor for a sample of five consultants, and OTIS stated that there was no documentation available.

Leave Approvals

The consultants are required to notify the Department Supervisor and Contract Manager via e-mail referencing time off or if they will not be at work during a regular scheduled workday. The Department Supervisor is required to ensure all supporting leave approvals are attached to the TWR. Based on our review, no leave approvals were attached to the TWRs reviewed during the audit. We requested leave approval e-mail notifications for three of the consultants for the months of January and July 2025. OTIS provided leave approval e-mails for every day in which these three consultants were not at work.

Non-Standard Working Hours

We reviewed some of the TWRs associated with our sampled purchase orders for compliance with requirements pertaining to non-standard hours and telecommuting. The

RFQs require *Written correspondence between DEP Supervisor and consultant documenting requests and approvals for all work schedule exceptions (non-standard hours worked)*. This correspondence is required to be attached to the TWR. Of the 16 consultants included in our purchase order sample, we noted the following for two of the consultants:

- Weekend Work: One consultant reported 176 hours of weekend work, and one consultant recorded 22 hours of weekend work. However, there was no approval documentation attached to the TWRs. Upon request, OTIS provided written correspondence documenting approval for some, but not all, of the dates.
- Holiday Work: The Department observes nine holiday days and consultants are required to be out of the office on these days unless prior written approval from the Department Supervisor has been obtained. One consultant reported work on 3 holidays, and another consultant reported working on 2 holidays. However, no approval documentation was attached to the TWRs, as required. Upon request, OTIS provided documentation of prior written approval from one consultant's Department Supervisor; however, the documentation provided for the other consultant was not specific to work on the holiday and instead references overtime for the entire month.

Contract Manager Notification of Non-Standard Working Hours

The Department Supervisor should also ensure the Contract Manager is informed via e-mail when a consultant needs to work outside of their regular work schedule, and if the consultant needs to work in a Department building over the weekend or on a State holiday, the Contract Manager must approve it in advance. We requested the emails for the dates the two consultants, referenced above, worked on weekends and holidays; however, none were able to be provided by OTIS.

Telecommuting

Telecommuting is not permitted and any exceptions must be approved in writing by the Department's Chief Information Officer, and the consultant is expected to perform work onsite in the workspace allocated by the Department. Based on building access records, our review noted that one consultant did not appear to enter the Department building on any of the weekend or holiday dates that they reported working hours. Our review determined the consultant did not have written approval to telecommute.

Invoice Documentation

The RFQs require each contractor to submit their monthly invoices no later than the twentieth day of the month following the services rendered. Based on our review, the sample contractor invoices we reviewed were submitted timely. Purchase order invoices are required to contain specific information, including the contractor's contact details, the billing contact's name, email, and phone number, the period of service, consultant position details, fixed hourly rate and number of approved hours, and the tasks/services provided during that period of service. Based on our review, we determined that the invoices reviewed from each contractor largely contained these required components; however:

- Most contractors did not include a specific Billing Contact, only providing general contact information for the company.

- Of the 31 sampled invoices, 9 did not include the tasks/services provided during the period of service.

Compliance with Statutory, Department, and STC Requirements

We reviewed 67 consultants for compliance with subcontracts, background screenings, and E-Verify requirements. A summary of our review is below.

Subcontracted Consultants

The STC specifies that *The Contractor will not subcontract any work under the Contract without prior written consent of the Department*. The RFQs further specify that this consent should be obtained from the Department's Contract Manager. Based on our review, 45 consultants appeared to work for a subcontractor. We requested documentary evidence of written Contract Manager consent from the Department for a sample of 9 consultants. OTIS stated that none was able to be provided.

Background Screening

Department Administrative Directive 390 specifies that all IT positions, including contractors providing IT services, are classified as positions of special trust and require a level 2 background screening. The RFQs associated with these purchase orders further require each contractor to provide proof of the consultant's background check completion and the receipt to the Contract Manager, which will become part of each consultant's official contract file. Each contractor must also require subcontractors to adhere to these same guidelines. Based on our review, we determined the following:

- The consultant contract files for all except one consultant contained an email from the Bureau of Human Resource Management confirming the background screening had been completed.
- Of the 67 consultants analyzed, 37 had no receipt/proof of payment available in their contract file. A further 14 consultants had receipts from a prior screening, but no receipt for the more recent rescreening.

E-Verify

In accordance with the RFQs and pursuant to Section 448.095(5)(a), Florida Statutes (F.S.), contractors and subcontractors are required to utilize the United States Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) E-Verify system. The Department accepts the employer's E-Verify company information page from the DHS website as confirmation of enrollment, which is to be maintained in the contract file. OTIS maintains contract files for each consultant, and during our review we evaluated whether this documentation was maintained in each consultant's contract files. For the 67 consultant files evaluated, we found:

- Compliant: 17 consultants had E-Verify documentation for their contractor and/or subcontractor in their contract file.
- Partially Compliant: 30 consultants had documentation for either the contractor or subcontractor, but not both.
- Noncompliant: 20 consultants had no E-Verify documentation for either entity, when applicable.

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For consultant files that did not contain proof of contractor or subcontractor enrollment, we reviewed the E-Verify Employer Search to check whether the contractors or subcontractors appeared on the Participating Employer List. Based on our review:

- 6 subcontractors did not appear on the Participating Employer List.
- 1 contractor and one subcontractor appeared to enroll in E-Verify after the issuance of the July 2024 purchase orders.
- 1 contractor's E-Verify enrollment appeared to be terminated in October 2020.

Mandatory Online Training

Our review identified conflicting guidance about when consultants must complete mandatory online training. The RFQs state that required training must be finished within 10 working days, or within 10 days of receiving training credentials. However, two consultants in our sample were instructed in their "Welcome to DEP [Department]" emails from OTIS that new-hire training was due within 30 days of receiving access to the Learning Management System. This discrepancy shows that the Department's onboarding communication does not align with the RFQ requirements.

CONCLUSION

During the audit, we reviewed a sample of purchase orders for contracted IT Staff Augmentation Services in order to evaluate compliance with applicable requirements as well as Department oversight activities. We also reviewed a sample of consultant time reports and contractor invoices to determine whether charges to each program area were supported by documentation. Based on our review, we noted some areas where controls could be strengthened. Our findings and recommendations are listed below.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding 1: Funding Allocation – For shared cost funding purchase orders, the amount charged to some Department program areas for consultants' time did not always correlate to the time worked in those program areas as reported by the consultants TWRs.

The RFQs state *Invoices for POs [Purchase Orders] funded by multiple DEP program areas are referred to as "shared cost funding". These POs include multiple lines for funding one position. Contractor invoice must include one line of total hours multiplied by the fixed hourly rate. The Contract Manager will apply the hours to the appropriate line when submitting the PO-based invoice for payment.*

Each consultant records their time and work activities in the TWR and e-mails their TWR to their Department Supervisor for review and approval. The TWR hours are generally broken down by project/program area. However, the contractor invoices must include one line of total hours multiplied by the fixed hourly rate for the consultant. The Contract Managers are responsible for applying the consultant's hours to the appropriate program area when processing each invoice for payment. Our review determined the consultants' hours recorded for each program area on their TWR did not always match the hours charged to each program area on the corresponding payment. Some program areas were charged for consultants' time when the consultants had not reported any time worked in

those program areas. During our review, we discussed these discrepancies with OTIS. OTIS was unable to provide their methodology for how the hours reported on the TWR as worked for each program area were reconciled with the hours applied to each program area when each month's invoice payment was processed.

Recommendation:

We recommend OTIS ensure the amount charged to each of the Department's program areas for shared cost funding purchase orders correlates to the time worked on projects in the program area as reported by the consultants' TWRs.

Management's Response:

OTIS leadership is in the process of re-structuring IT governance for the agency and the Business Management Services area. These changes will improve how resources are allocated to IT projects.

Finding 2: TWR and Performance Evaluation Requirements – TWRs submitted by consultants did not contain all required information, were not signed, and the Department did not complete monthly performance evaluations as required.

The RFQs generally require consultants to use Appendix H, Time Work Report & Performance Expectations/Evaluation to record the number of hours worked each day and a summary of the tasks assigned (services rendered). Appendix H includes a fillable form where each consultant enters the date, hours, a task description, and the Division or Program Area associated with the work they completed. It also contains a Performance Expectation portion, with five performance evaluation questions which are to be completed by the Department Supervisor, and electronic signature lines for the consultant, Department Supervisor, and Contract Manager to sign and certify that the TWR is true and correct.

Once each consultant completes their TWR and emails it to the Department Supervisor, the Department Supervisor and the Contract Manager review each consultant's TWR monthly and are required to complete the following steps:

- Department Supervisor reviews TWR to validate approved tasks/deliverables and time.
- Department Supervisor completes Performance Expectation portion of TWR by rating consultant performance and documenting issues that occurred during that period of service.
- Department Supervisor electronically signs TWR.
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- Contract Manager electronically signs TWR.

Our review found the TWRs provided by OTIS did not utilize Appendix H, as required. The TWRs we reviewed included the date, hours, and the Division or Program Area, but did not include a task description. Additionally, the TWRs did not include the completed performance expectations nor signatures from the consultant, Department Supervisor, or Contract Manager. Most RFQs required that *Consultants must receive a "Pass" on the monthly Performance Expectations ratings worksheet on the TWR* and specify that this rating must be completed by the Department Supervisor. We requested documentation

for performance evaluations completed by the Department Supervisor for a sample of five consultants, and OTIS stated that there was no documentation available.

Recommendation:

We recommend OTIS ensure that consultants use the correct form to document hours worked, the TWRs are reviewed and signed by all required parties, and performance evaluations are conducted and documented as required.

Management's Response:

OTIS leadership agrees with the recommendations provided. New RFQs no longer incorporate a Time Work Report nor require performance evaluations.

Finding 3: Non-Standard Working Hours – Some consultants worked weekends, holidays, or telecommuted but did not always have approval for the non-standard working hours, as required.

We reviewed some of the TWRs associated with our sampled purchase orders for compliance with requirements pertaining to non-standard hours and telecommuting. The RFQs require *Written correspondence between DEP Supervisor and consultant documenting requests and approvals for all work schedule exceptions (non-standard hours worked)*. This correspondence is required to be attached to the TWR. Of the 16 consultants included in our purchase order sample, we noted the following for two of the consultants:

- Weekend Work: One consultant reported 176 hours of weekend work, and one consultant recorded 22 hours of weekend work. However, there was no approval documentation attached to the TWRs. Upon request, OTIS provided written correspondence documenting approval for some, but not all, of the dates.
- Holiday Work: The Department observes nine holiday days and consultants are required to be out of the office on these days unless prior written approval from the Department Supervisor has been obtained. One consultant reported work on 3 holidays, and another consultant reported working on 2 holidays. However, no approval documentation was attached to the TWRs, as required. Upon request, OTIS provided documentation of prior written approval from one consultant's Department Supervisor; however, the documentation provided for the other consultant was not specific to work on the holiday and instead references overtime for the entire month.
- Telecommuting: Telecommuting is not permitted and any exceptions must be approved in writing by the Department's Chief Information Officer, and the consultant is expected to perform work onsite in the workspace allocated by the Department. Based on building access records, our review noted that one consultant did not appear to enter the Department building on any of the weekend or holiday dates that they reported working hours. Our review determined the consultant did not have written approval to telecommute.

Contract Manager Notification of Non-Standard Working Hours

The Department Supervisor should also ensure the Contract Manager is informed via e-mail when a consultant needs to work outside of their regular work schedule, and if the consultant needs to work in a Department building over the weekend or on a State

holiday, the Contract Manager must approve it in advance. We requested these emails for the dates the two consultants mentioned above worked on weekends and holidays; however, none were able to be provided by OTIS.

Recommendation:

We recommend OTIS ensure approval is completed and documented by the Department Supervisor for any consultants working non-standard hours or telecommuting, and the Contract Manager is informed as required.

Management's Response:

OTIS leadership agrees with the recommendations provided. OTIS leadership has been reminded of the documentation required to work non-standard hours.

Finding 4: E-Verify – Not all contractors and subcontractors were enrolled in E-Verify and E-Verify documentation was not always maintained in the Contract file, as required.

In accordance with the RFQs and pursuant to Section 448.095(5)(a), F.S., contractors and subcontractors are required to utilize the DHS E-Verify system. The Department accepts the employer's E-Verify company information page from the DHS website as confirmation of enrollment, which is to be maintained in the contract file. OTIS maintains contract files for each consultant, and during our review we evaluated whether this documentation was maintained in each consultant's contract files. For the 67 consultant files evaluated, we found:

- Compliant: 17 consultants had E-Verify documentation for their contractor and/or subcontractor in their contract file.
- Partially Compliant: 30 consultants had documentation for either the contractor or subcontractor, but not both.
- Noncompliant: 20 consultants had no E-Verify documentation for either entity, when applicable.

For consultant files that did not contain proof of contractor or subcontractor enrollment, we reviewed the E-Verify Employer Search to check whether the contractors or subcontractors appeared on the Participating Employer List. Based on our review:

- 6 subcontractors did not appear on the Participating Employer List.
- 1 contractor and one subcontractor appeared to enroll in E-Verify after the issuance of the July 2024 purchase orders.
- 1 contractor's E-Verify enrollment appeared to be terminated in October 2020.

Recommendation:

We recommend OTIS ensure that all contractors and subcontracts are enrolled in the DHS E-Verify system and documentation is maintained in the contract files as required.

Management's Response:

OTIS leadership agrees with the recommendations provided. The Business Management Services section will work to correct procedures moving forward to ensure all E-Verify documentation is saved in the contract file.

Finding 5: Procurement Requirements – We were unable to verify that RFQs were sent to at least 25 contractors, and responses were received timely from contractors due to lack of documentation retention. Additionally, two purchase orders were issued after the deadline included in the applicable RFQ.

Our review determined that OTIS did not maintain documentation regarding RFQ distribution to contractors or contractors' submission dates, as summarized below.

RFQ Distribution

The STC states the Department *shall issue Request for Quotes to at least 25 vendors to provide IT Staff Augmentation services in accordance with section 287.0591(5), Florida Statutes*. We selected a sample of six RFQs to evaluate compliance with this requirement. Based on our review, one RFQ appeared to have been issued to only 23 vendors (contractors). For all other RFQs sampled, OTIS was unable to provide documentation demonstrating issuance to at least 25 vendors (contractors).

RFQ Response Deadline

The RFQs all contained due dates for the contractors' responses, and we selected four RFQs to sample to determine whether each contractor's RFQ response was submitted timely. We noted most contractor submissions were dated prior to the RFQ due date and one was dated after the due date. However, OTIS was unable to provide documentation demonstrating timely RFQ response submissions.

Purchase Order Issuance

Of the 32 purchase orders we reviewed, we found 2 were issued outside of the dates in their associated RFQ. The RFQ specified that the term of the Contract would begin upon issuance of a purchase order and continue through June 30, 2024. However, these two purchase orders were both issued after June 30, 2024.

Recommendations:

We recommend OTIS ensure RFQs are sent to at least 25 vendors and vendor responses are received timely and documentation is maintained. We also recommend OTIS ensure purchase orders are not issued after the dates specified in the RFQs.

Management's Response:

OTIS leadership agrees with the recommendations provided. Procedures have changed since the completion of the audited RFQs. OTIS must now work through Division of Administrative Services (DAS) to post RFQs to the MFMP system. DAS has a select list of OTIS contractors to send the collaboration to in MFMP, and in addition adds 25 vendors to ensure this requirement is always met. Additionally, RFQ timelines are adhered to and no vendor is awarded if a response is provided after the date indicated in the timeline of events.

STATEMENT OF ACCORDANCE

Statement of Accordance

The Mission of the OIG is to promote accountability, integrity, and efficiency by providing quality audits, investigations, management reviews, and technical assistance.

This audit was conducted pursuant to Section 20.055, F.S., and in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, as published by the United States Government Accountability Office, and *Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspectors General*, as published by the Association of Inspectors General. The audit was conducted by Shelby Bremigan and Melanie Prescott and supervised by Susan Cureton.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

This report and other reports prepared by the OIG can be obtained through the Department's website at <https://floridadep.gov/oig> or by contacting:

Office of Ombudsman and Public Services
public.services@floridadep.gov
(850) 245-2118

Candie M. Fuller,
Inspector General