

SUMMARY

The 1997 audit of the Navajo Election Administration (NEA) and Navajo Board of Election Supervisors (NBOES) found four findings. NEA and the Election Law amendment that became effective in February 2001 resolved three of the four findings. The amendment eliminated special elections and transferred some duties of NBOES (Board) to the Navajo Nation Office of Hearings and Appeals, thus reducing NEA and Board duties and expenditures.

The Navajo Nation Office of the Auditor General (OAG) conducted a follow-up to the 1997 audit and issued audit report no. 02-01 that presented the following unresolved and additional findings:

- NBOES size was not reduced; thus, potential savings have not been realized.
- NBOES and NEA do not comply with statutes regarding Board stipends.
- Concerns were raised on the issue of paying poll officials beyond the two days allowed, one day of training and one day of service as an official on election day.

Audit report no. 02-01 with a corrective action plan (CAP) was presented and approved by the Budget and Finance Committee on June 10, 2002 per resolution no. BFJN-59-02. Subsequently, OAG has conducted a follow-up review on the NEA and the Board's CAP implementation.

This follow-up specifically focuses on the corrective measures presented in the CAP to determine whether NEA and NBOES implemented the CAP to resolve the audit findings. Our review found a majority of the corrective measures were not implemented. Most importantly:

- NEA and NBOES did not make an in-depth assessment on the need for a 10-member Board. As such, there is no justification for a 10-member Board.
- The Board exceeded their budgeted number of special meetings in fiscal years 2002 and 2004.
- A further in-depth review of 20 special meetings conducted from February 01, 2003 to July 30, 2004 to determine if the 20 special meetings were warranted was hampered due to NEA not providing adequate information on all of the special meetings held.
- NEA staff does not: (a) assist in the evaluation of Board activities, costs, benefits, efficiency and effectiveness, (b) advance documents prior to meetings for improving efficiency, and (c) provide methods to obtain greater public input and effectively inform the public of NBOES duties and activities. The staff's lack of providing needed assistance and relevant information to NBOES and the public leads to an inefficient Board and potential for misunderstanding by the public of the Board's role in the election process.
- NEA and NBOES did not establish appropriate controls on the use of the Claims and Travel Authorization Forms. Currently, there are numerous signatory authorities to the Claims and Travel Authorization Forms for reimbursement to Board members. As a result, there is the potential for duplicate payments.

NEA and NBOES responsibilities were reduced by the Navajo Nation Council, which lowered expenditures. However, NEA and the Board did not coordinate their efforts to further reduce costs. Additionally, NEA still lacks certain fiscal controls. Although NEA and NBOES represented barriers prevented them from fully implementing the CAP, Auditor General staff found these barriers to be unacceptable. Therefore, OAG

recommends that sanctions be imposed on the Navajo Election Administration in accordance with 12 N.N.C §9(B) and §9(C).