

FEDERAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1996

(Public Law 104-208)

SEC. 801. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ``Federal Financial Management Improvement Act of 1996."

SEC. 802. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

(a) Findings.—The Congress finds the following: (1) Much effort has been devoted to strengthening Federal internal accounting controls in the past. Although progress has been made in recent years, Federal accounting standards have not been uniformly implemented in financial management systems for agencies. (2) Federal financial management continues to be seriously deficient, and Federal financial management and fiscal practices have failed to— (A) identify costs fully; (B) reflect the total liabilities of congressional actions; and (C) accurately report the financial condition of the Federal Government. (3) Current Federal accounting practices do not accurately report financial results of the Federal Government or the full costs of programs and activities. The continued use of these practices undermines the Government's ability to provide credible and reliable financial data and encourages already widespread Government waste, and will not assist in achieving a balanced budget. (4) Waste and inefficiency in the Federal Government undermine the confidence of the American people in the government and reduce the federal Government's ability to address vital public needs adequately. (5) To rebuild the accountability and credibility of the Federal Government, and restore public confidence in the Federal Government, agencies must incorporate accounting standards and reporting objectives established for the Federal Government into their financial management systems so that all the assets and liabilities, revenues, and expenditures or expenses, and the full costs of programs and activities of the Federal Government can be consistently and accurately recorded, monitored, and uniformly reported throughout the Federal Government. (6) Since its establishment in October 1990, the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board (hereinafter referred to as the ``FASAB") has made substantial progress toward developing and recommending a comprehensive set of accounting concepts and standards for the Federal Government. When the accounting concepts and standards developed by FASB are incorporated into Federal financial management systems, agencies will be able to provide cost and financial information that will assist the Congress and financial managers to evaluate the cost and performance of Federal programs and activities, and will therefore provide important information that has been lacking, but is needed for improved decision making by financial managers and the Congress. (7) The development of financial management systems with the capacity to support these standards and concepts will, over the long term, improve Federal financial management.

(b) Purpose.—The purposes of this Act are to— (1) provide for consistency of accounting by an agency from one fiscal year to the next, and uniform accounting standards throughout the Federal Government; (2) require Federal financial management systems to support full disclosure of Federal financial data, including the full costs of Federal programs and activities, to the citizens, the Congress, the President, and agency management, so that programs and activities can be considered based on their full costs and merits; (3) increase the accountability and credibility of federal financial management; (4) improve performance, productivity and efficiency of Federal Government financial management; (5) establish financial management systems to support controlling the cost of Federal Government; (6) build upon and complement the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-576; 104 Stat. 2838), the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (Public Law 103-62; 107 Stat. 285) and the Government Management Reform Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-356; 108 Stat. 3410); and (7) increase the capability of agencies to monitor execution of the budget by more readily permitting reports that compare spending of resources to results of activities.

SEC. 803 IMPLEMENTATION OF FEDERAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENTS.

(a) In General.—Each agency shall implement and maintain financial management systems that comply substantially with Federal financial management systems requirements, applicable Federal accounting standards, and the United States Government Standard General Ledger at the transaction level.

(b) Audit Compliance Finding.— (1) In general.—Each audit required by section 3521(e) of title 31, United States Code, shall report whether the agency financial management systems comply with the requirements of subsection (a). (2) Content of Reports.—When the person performing the audit required by section 3521(e) of title 31, United States Code, reports that the agency financial management systems do not comply with the requirements of subsection (a), the person performing the audit shall include in the report on the audit— (A) the entity or organization responsible for the financial management systems that have been found not to comply with the requirements of subsection (a); (B) all facts pertaining to the failure to comply with the requirements of subsection (a), including— (i) the nature and extent of the noncompliance including areas in which there is substantial but not full compliance; (ii) the primary reason or cause of the noncompliance; (iii) the entity or organization responsible for the non-compliance; and (iv) any relevant comments from any responsible officer or employee; and (C) a statement with respect to the recommended remedial actions and the time frames to implement such actions.

(c) Compliance Implementation.— (1) Determination.—No later than the date described under paragraph (2), the Head of an agency shall determine whether the financial management systems of the agency comply with the requirements of subsection (a). Such determination shall be based on— (A) a review of the report on the applicable agency-wide audited financial statement; (B) any other information the Head of the agency

considers relevant and appropriate. (2) Date of determination.—The determination under paragraph (1) shall be made no later than 120 days after the earlier of— (A) the date of the receipt of an agency- wide audited financial statement; or (B) the last day of the fiscal year following the year covered by such statement. (3) Remediation plan.— (A) If the Head of an agency determines that the agency's financial management systems do not comply with the requirements of subsection (a), the head of the agency, in consultation with the Director, shall establish a remediation plan that shall include resources, remedies, and intermediate target dates necessary to bring the agency's financial management systems into substantial compliance. (B) If the determination of the head of the agency differs from the audit compliance findings required in subsection (b), the Director shall review such determinations and provide a report on the findings to the appropriate committees of the Congress. (4) Time period for compliance.—A remediation plan shall bring the agency's financial management systems into substantial compliance no later than 3 years after the date a determination is made under paragraph (1), unless the agency, with concurrence of the Director— (A) determines that the agency's financial management systems cannot comply with the requirements of subsection (a) within 3 years; (B) specifies the most feasible date for bringing the agency's financial management systems into compliance with the requirements of subsection (a); and (C) designates an official of the agency who shall be responsible for bringing the agency's financial management systems into compliance with the requirements of subsection(a) by the date specified under subparagraph (B).

SEC. 804. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

(a) Reports by the Director.—No later than March 31 of each year, the Director shall submit a report to the Congress regarding implementation of this Act. The Director may include the report in the financial management status report and the 5- year financial management plan submitted under section 3512(a)(1) of title 31, United States Code.

(b) Reports by the Inspector General.—Each Inspector General who prepares a report under section 5(a) of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.) shall report to Congress instances and reasons when an agency has not met the intermediate target dates established in the remediation plan required under section 3(c). Specifically the report shall include— (1) the entity or organization responsible for the non-compliance; (2) the facts pertaining to the failure to comply with the requirements of subsection (a), including the nature and extent of the non-compliance, the primary reason or cause for the failure to comply, and any extenuating circumstances; and (3) a statement of the remedial actions needed to comply.

(c) Reports by the Comptroller General.—No later than October 1, 1997, and October 1, of each year thereafter, the Comptroller General of the United States shall report to the appropriate committees of the Congress concerning— (1) compliance with the requirements of section 3(a) of this Act, including whether the financial statements of the Federal Government have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards; and (2) the adequacy of applicable accounting standards for the Federal Government.

SEC. 805. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.

(a) Audits by Agencies.—Section 3521(f)(1) of title 31, United States Code, is amended in the first sentence by inserting “and the Controller of the Office of Federal Financial Management” before the period.

(b) Financial Management Status Report.—Section 3512(a)(2) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by— (1) in subparagraph (D) by striking “and” after the semicolon; (2) by redesignating subparagraph (E) as subparagraph (F); and (3) by inserting after subparagraph (D) the following: “(E) a listing of agencies whose financial management systems do not comply substantially with the requirements of Section 3(a) the Federal Financial Management Improvement Act of 1996, and a summary statement of the efforts underway to remedy the noncompliance; and”

(c) Inspector General Act of 1978.—Section 5(a) of the Inspector General Act of 1978 is amended— (1) in paragraph (11) by striking “and” after the semicolon; (2) in paragraph (12) by striking the period and inserting “; and”; and (3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph: “(13) the information described under section 05(b) of the Federal Financial Management Improvement Act of 1996.”

SEC. 806. DEFINITIONS.

For purposes of this title:

(1) Agency.—The term “agency” means a department or agency of the United States Government as defined in section 901(b) of title 31, United States Code.

(2) Director.—The term “Director” means the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

(3) Federal Accounting Standards.—The term “Federal accounting standards” means applicable accounting principles, standards, and requirements consistent with section 902(a)(3)(A) of title 31, United States Code.

(4) Financial management systems.—The term “financial management systems” includes the financial systems and the financial portions of mixed systems necessary to support financial management, including automated and manual processes, procedures, controls, data, hardware, software, and support personnel dedicated to the operation and maintenance of system functions.

(5) Financial system.—The term “financial system” includes an information system, comprised of one or more applications, that is used for— (A) collecting, processing, maintaining, transmitting, or reporting data about financial events; (B) supporting financial planning or budgeting activities; (C) accumulating and reporting costs information; or (D) supporting the preparation of financial statements.

(6) Mixed system.—The term “mixed system” means an information system that supports both financial and nonfinancial functions of the Federal Government or components thereof.

SEC. 807. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This title shall take effect for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997.

SEC. 808. REVISION OF SHORT TITLES.

(a) Section 4001 of Public Law 104-106 (110 Stat. 642; 41 U.S.C. 251 note) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 4001. SHORT TITLE.

“This division and division E may be cited as the ‘Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996’.”

(b) Section 5001 of Public Law 104-106 (110 Stat. 679; 40 U.S.C. 1401 note) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 5001. SHORT TITLE.

“This division and division D may be cited as the ‘Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996’.”

(c) Any reference in any law, regulation, document, record, or other paper of the United States to the Federal Acquisition Reform Act of 1996 or to the Information Technology Management Reform Act of 1996 shall be considered to be a reference to the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996. This Act may be cited as the “Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government Appropriations Act, 1997”.