



## ***EPA COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE IN FISCAL YEAR 2006 ESSENTIAL FACTS***

**More than 2.8 million regulated entities and assistance providers received compliance assistance (CA)<sup>1</sup>** from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) during the last fiscal year (October 1, 2005 to September 30, 2006). EPA's assistance helped business and industry, schools, local and tribal governments, federal facilities and other regulated entities and assistance providers to understand and implement new regulations; address problems with existing regulations; or address geographical, national, regional, local or facility-specific environmental issues. According to recipients who responded to outcome surveys about this assistance, EPA's CA activities had a positive impact.

***How did the Agency reach 2.8 million entities with assistance?*** EPA used a variety of approaches, including the following:

- more than **45,000 specific activities led by EPA**, such as CA presentations, workshops, distributed materials, on-site visits, responses to inquiries, and ongoing facility-specific work, that reached **878,350 entities**;
- more than **1.8 million user sessions** through 14 sector-specific, web-based Compliance Assistance Centers that EPA supports financially using cooperative agreements (<http://www.assistancecenters.net/>); and
- more than **100,000 user sessions** through the web-based National Environmental Compliance Assistance Clearinghouse (<http://www.epa.gov/clearinghouse>).

In addition to these entities reached, EPA regions and Headquarters also provided **CA to 11,161 facilities** during compliance inspections.

***How did EPA measure the results or impact of CA?*** EPA and the Centers used several methods to evaluate the benefits and use of compliance assistance information. The primary method was to survey recipients or users, asking whether, as a result of CA provided, the regulated entity increased understanding of regulatory requirements, improved environmental management practices, or reduced/eliminated/treated pollution. For assistance providers, EPA asked whether the recipients increased their ability to provide CA to customers/clients as a result of the CA provided. Responses to these questions depended in part on the goal(s) of CA activity and the problem being addressed.<sup>2</sup>

***Did recipients of CA increase their understanding of environmental requirements?*** Yes, survey respondents **increased their understanding** of regulatory requirements according to **94%** of those responding to EPA surveys, **88%** responding to Centers surveys, and **74%** responding to Clearinghouse surveys. These relatively high percentages reflect an essential goal of most CA, which is to educate

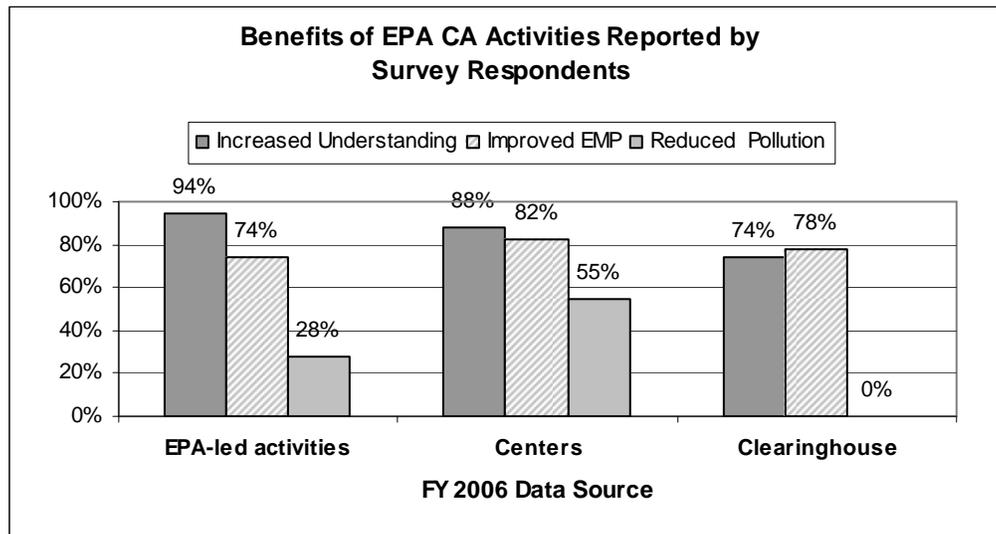
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<sup>1</sup> *What is "compliance assistance?"* EPA's compliance assistance includes activities, tools or technical assistance that provides clear and consistent information to help: the regulated entities understand and meet their obligations under environmental regulations; or compliance assistance providers to aid the regulated community in complying with environmental regulations. EPA's compliance assistance may also help regulated entities find cost effective ways to comply with regulations and/or go "beyond compliance" through the use of pollution prevention, environmental management practices, and innovative technologies, thus improving their environmental performance. To be counted as a compliance assistance project or activity, at least one objective must be related to achieving or advancing regulatory compliance.

<sup>2</sup> *Who responded to surveys?* The Clearinghouse and the Centers' received responses from 29 and 898 users, respectively, to FY 2006 on-line surveys. Of 74,549 regulated entities that received assistance involving direct, one-on-one interaction with EPA, 26,175 reported outcomes as a result of EPA's assistance. The number of survey respondents was much smaller than the total reached by assistance for several reasons, including a lack of sufficient resources to measure the outcomes of all activities, constraints on Information Collection Requests (ICRs), missed measurement opportunities, and some activities not being conducive to measurement. And even in instances where EPA did conduct surveys, not all of the recipients of EPA assistance were willing to respond.

regulated entities about what they must do to maintain or achieve compliance with environmental requirements. In many instances, it is a preventative approach. For example, compliance with hazardous waste storage requirements can help prevent spills and other accidents from occurring.

***Did regulated entities take action to improve their environmental management practices?*** Yes, survey respondents **improved environmental management practices**, according to **74%** of those responding to EPA surveys, **82%** responding to Centers surveys, and **78%** responding to Clearinghouse surveys. Important actions included getting a new permit, performing an environmental self-audit, or changing a process or practice.



***What other benefits resulted from EPA assistance?*** Although EPA could not quantify all the benefits to human health and the environment that resulted from CA last year, EPA does know from EPA and Centers' surveys that smaller portions of respondents (28% and 55%, respectively) did reduce, eliminate or treat pollution, as a result of the CA provided.

***How did CA support EPA's national priorities for enforcement and compliance assurance?***

- Last year, about 15% of EPA's CA activities (6,910) addressed these national priorities, and targeted significant environmental risks and noncompliance patterns.
- Three national priorities -- Tribal (2,918 activities), Clean Water Act-Stormwater (2,154 activities) and Clean Air Act-New Source Review/Prevention of Significant Deterioration (1,259 activities) -- accounted for the majority of CA activities reported by EPA.

For more detailed information about each of the ten enforcement and compliance assurance priorities for Fiscal Years (FY) 2005 through 2007, see <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/data/planning/priorities/index.html>.

The statistics in this fact sheet do not capture all of EPA's CA activities, but EPA is working to increase reporting about CA and increase measurement of outcomes that result from it. For additional highlights about EPA's assistance to Tribes, Federal Facilities and selected Regional initiatives, refer to the report entitled *Compliance and Enforcement Annual Results: FY 2006 Compliance Assistance Activities Highlights*, (November 15, 2006, 6 pages):

<http://epa.gov/compliance/resources/reports/endofyear/eoy2006/2006cahighlights.html>

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