

U.S. OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT ETHICS

OGE AGENCY PROFILE



PREVENTING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

U.S. OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT ETHICS

The U.S. Office of Government Ethics (OGE), established by the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, provides overall leadership and oversight of the executive branch ethics program, which is designed to prevent and resolve conflicts of interest. OGE's mission is part of the very foundation of public service. The first principle in the Fourteen General Principles of Ethical Conduct for Government Officers and Employees is "Public service is a public trust, requiring employees to place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws, and ethical principles above private gain."

As the statutorily established supervising ethics office for the executive branch, OGE ensures that the ethics program remains an effective prevention mechanism to guard against conflicts of interest and violations of ethical standards. OGE works to prevent corruption in the federal executive branch in partnership with officials across government and civil society. Each day, some part of the ethics program is at work in every agency in the executive branch. The program ensures that Presidential appointees are aware of their ethical obligations and role in creating an ethical culture in their organizations as they begin government service. It ensures that public servants at all levels remain free from conflicts of interest, and even the appearance of conflicts of interest, as they carry out the responsibilities the American people have entrusted to them. It ensures that employees who are seeking to leave the government avoid conflicts of interest and, after they leave, it ensures that they do not exercise undue influence over their former agencies on behalf of others. Above all, the program works to protect the public's trust in government.

"Public service is a public trust, requiring employees to place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws and ethical principles above private gain."

Principle 1 of The 14 Principles of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch



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About OGE

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Office of Government Ethics (OGE), established by the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, provides overall leadership and oversight of the executive branch ethics program, which is designed to prevent and resolve conflicts of interest. OGE's mission is part of the very foundation of public service.

Every day, thousands of dedicated public servants work to protect the executive branch from ethical lapses and failures. When their efforts at prevention fall short, agencies can be crippled by scandal, the public's trust can be eroded, important work may be delayed or derailed, and leaders may be forced from office.

Without expert guidance, agencies and their leaders are left to best-guess at the solutions to complex ethical dilemmas, with little or no consistency across the executive branch. Without well-trained ethics officials, agency leaders and employees are deprived of counsel that can help them manage risks. Without timely guidance, emerging challenges go unaddressed. Some of OGE's most vital work is supporting ethics officials to ensure that they properly understand and are able to implement the ethics laws and policies that OGE issues and interprets.

At its heart, the ethics program stands for the bedrock principle that public service is a public trust.



01

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH ETHICS PROGRAM & THE OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT ETHICS

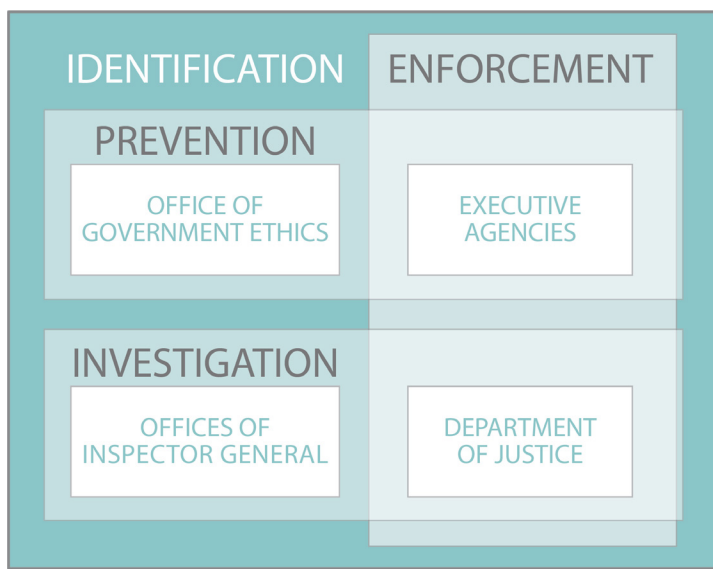
Though the roots of the executive branch ethics program go back further, 1978 was the pivotal year when Congress enacted sweeping post-Watergate civil service reforms. That year, OGE was established under the Ethics in Government Act, which came out of the same Congressional committee in the same month as the Inspector General Act.



INTEGRITY

The Ethics in Government Act vests OGE with responsibility for providing “overall direction of executive branch policies related to preventing conflicts of interest on the part of officers and employees of any executive agency.” As this statutory language makes clear, the primary objective of the executive branch ethics program is one of *prevention*.

OGE undertakes this important prevention mission as part of a framework comprising executive branch agencies and entities whose work focuses on institutional integrity. In addition to government ethics, this framework includes merit system protections in the civil service; full and open competition in procurement; fiscal controls; transparency programs; investigation of waste, fraud, and abuse; and criminal, civil, and administrative enforcement.



The ethics program works to ensure that public servants carry out the governmental responsibilities entrusted to them with impartiality, and serve as good stewards of public resources. Toward these goals, the mission of the ethics program centers on preventing conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest that stem from employees' financial interests, business or personal relationships, misuse of official position, official time, or public resources; and the receipt of gifts. Taken together, the systems in place to identify and resolve conflicts of interest establish a foundation on which to build and sustain an ethical culture in the executive branch.

The executive branch ethics program is a shared responsibility. As the supervising ethics office, OGE sets policy for the entire executive branch ethics program. The head of each agency is statutorily responsible for leading the ethics program in their agency. This responsibility includes creating an ethical culture by demonstrating a personal commitment to ethics and providing the necessary resources to implement a strong and effective agency ethics program.



The agency head is responsible for selecting a Designated Agency Ethics Official (DAEO). The DAEO, with the support of professional ethics staff, is the employee with primary responsibility for directing the daily activities of an agency's ethics program and coordinating with OGE. Each agency's employees, including supervisors, human resources officials, and the Inspector General play a significant role in maintaining the integrity of government programs and operations.

To carry out its vital leadership and oversight responsibilities for the executive branch ethics program, OGE:

- promulgates, maintains, and advises on enforceable standards of ethical conduct for more than 2.7 million employees in over 130 executive branch agencies, including the White House;
- offers education and training to the more than 5,000 ethics officials executive branch-wide;
- operates and maintains *Integrity*, an electronic public financial disclosure management application used by nearly all of the 26,000 public executive branch filers, including all of the highest level executive branch officials;
- oversees a financial disclosure system that reaches more than 26,000 public and nearly 380,000 confidential financial disclosure report filers;
- monitors executive branch agency ethics programs and senior leaders' compliance with applicable ethics laws and regulations;
- plays a unique role in the Presidential appointments process and in the preparation for Presidential transitions;
- conducts outreach to the general public, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations; and
- makes thousands of ethics documents publicly available.

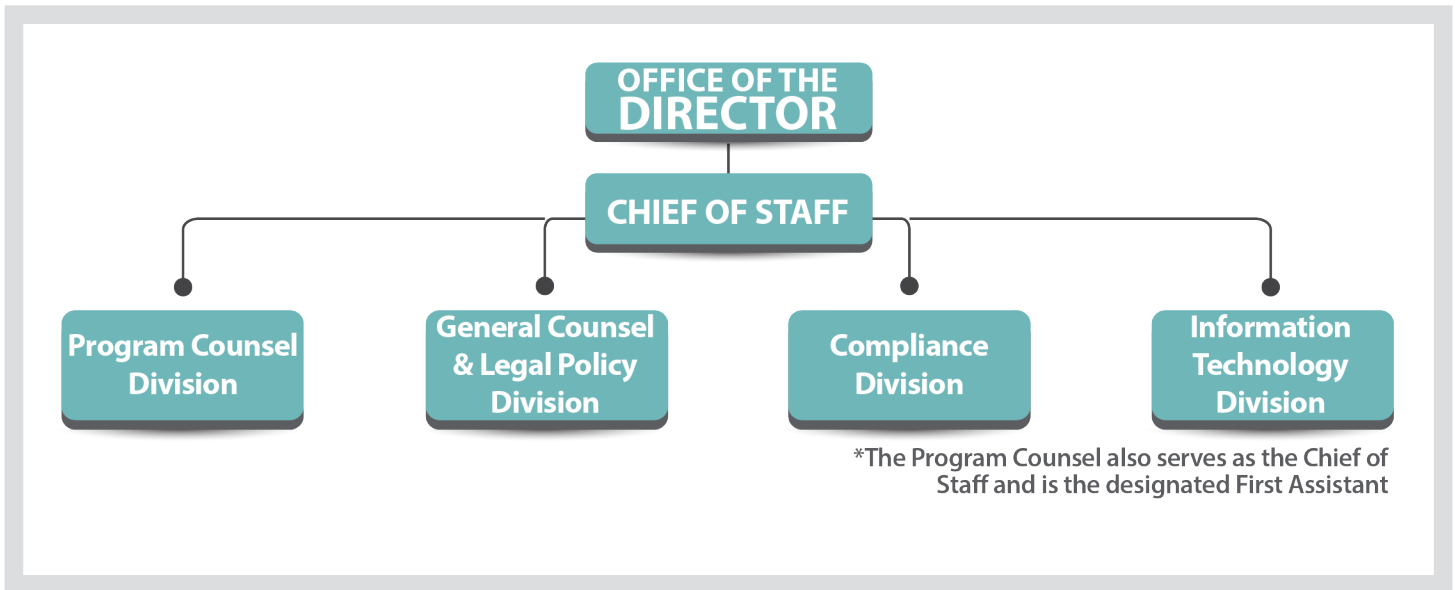
OGE's Director is a Senate-confirmed Presidential appointee serving a five-year term. In addition to the Office of the Director, OGE is divided into four divisions guided by OGE's Chief of Staff and senior leadership, who work in concert to carry out OGE's mission.

OGE

LEADERSHIP & STRUCTURE

ORGANIZATION

OGE is headed by a Director who is appointed to a five-year term by the President. As noted in the organizational chart and staff directory, in addition to the Office of the Director, OGE is divided into four divisions, guided by OGE's Chief of Staff and senior leadership, who work in concert to carry out OGE's mission.



Office of the Director

The Office of the Director provides overall direction to the executive branch ethics program and is responsible for ensuring that OGE fulfills its congressional and Presidential mandates. The Director is appointed to a five-year term by the President and is confirmed by the Senate. The Director is a member of the Council of Inspectors General for Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) and the Integrity Committee of CIGIE, which reviews allegations of misconduct against inspectors general. The Director serves as a member of the Administrative Conference of the United States.

Chief of Staff

The Chief of Staff is the designated First Assistant, directs OGE's overall operations and finances, and supervises OGE's executives and managers. OGE's Chief of Staff also serves as Program Counsel, whose responsibilities include: strategic planning; monitoring ethics program performance; supporting agency ethics offices through OGE's Desk Officer program; overseeing the training of thousands of ethics officials; ensuring OGE's legal compliance; developing and implementing OGE's external communication strategy; managing OGE's congressional affairs; and spearheading strategic initiatives, including the development of an executive branch-wide electronic filing system for public financial disclosures.

ORGANIZATION

Program Counsel Division

The Program Counsel Division (PCD) is responsible for (1) coordinating and conducting outreach between OGE and its many stakeholders, such as Congress, OMB, government watchdog groups, and the public; (2) developing and providing training to agency ethics officials; (3) carrying out initiatives that reach across executive branch agencies, such as e-filing; (4) providing agency-specific legal support to OGE; (5) managing OGE's budget, performance, and legislative affairs programs; and (6) supporting agency ethics officials in carrying out the executive branch ethics program, through its Desk Officer program.

Legal, External Affairs and Performance Branch

LEAP provides agency-specific legal support to OGE. LEAP manages OGE's strategic initiatives, including e-filing, performance management, budget, communications, and legislative affairs programs. LEAP serves as OGE's liaison to the Office of the Federal Register and the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs within the Office of Management and Budget, and oversees OGE's Freedom of Information Act, Privacy Act, and Records Management programs.

Agency Assistance Branch

The Agency Assistance Branch (AAB) provides vital services and support to agency ethics officials throughout the executive branch. Through its Desk Officer program, AAB provides timely and accurate advice to ethics officials in response to questions regarding unique or emerging ethics-related issues. In addition to responding to requests for advice, AAB Desk Officers actively reach out to the ethics community to address issues and challenges that are of common interest, in order to arrive at and share collaborative solutions.

AAB develops and provides substantive training to agency ethics officials and OGE staff to help them attain the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out the duties of their position.

KEY STAFF

- Chief of Staff and Program Counsel
- Chief, Legal, External Affairs and Performance Branch
- Chief, Agency Assistance Branch

ORGANIZATION

General Counsel & Legal Policy Division

The General Counsel and Legal Policy Division (GCLPD) is responsible for (1) establishing and maintaining a legal framework for the executive branch ethics program, (2) providing assistance to the President and Senate in the Presidential appointment process; and (3) managing the incumbent public financial disclosure program.

Ethics Law and Policy Branch

The Ethics Law and Policy Branch (ELPB) develops, drafts, and issues all executive branch ethics regulations. ELPB reviews agency-specific regulations supplementing executive branch ethical standards. When appropriate, ELPB drafts recommendations for changes in the conflicts of interest and ethics statutes. ELPB sets forth executive branch-wide policy and interpretive guidance of the executive branch ethics laws and regulations. ELPB publishes written guidance in the form of Legal Advisories to promote consistent interpretation and application of the ethics laws, regulations, and policy guidance across the entire executive branch.

Presidential Nominations Branch

The Presidential Nominations Branch (PNB) works closely with the White House and agency ethics officials to help prospective Presidential nominees to Senate-confirmed positions comply with the extensive financial disclosure requirements of the Ethics in Government Act. PNB carefully evaluates the nominee's financial disclosure report and works with the agency ethics official to prepare an individualized ethics agreement to avoid and resolve potential conflicts of interest before the nominee enters government service. PNB reviews the financial disclosure reports of the most senior White House staff members. For copies of certified public financial disclosure reports and ethics agreements of Presidential nominees and appointees transmitted to OGE, click [here](#).

Incumbent Financial Disclosure Branch

The Incumbent Financial Disclosure Branch (IFDB) ensures that executive branch leaders who have been appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, as well as Designated Agency Ethics Officials (DAEOS), remain free of conflicts of interest after they take office by collecting and analyzing their annual, termination, and periodic transaction public financial disclosure reports. IFDB reviews each report to ensure completeness and to resolve potential conflicts of interest. IFDB posts these reports to OGE's website.

KEY STAFF

- General Counsel
- Chief, Ethics Law and Policy Branch
- Chief, Presidential Nominations Branch
- Chief, Incumbent Financial Disclosure Branch

ORGANIZATION

Compliance Division

The Compliance Division (CD) is responsible for (1) monitoring and reviewing agency ethics programs to ensure compliance with applicable ethics requirements established by statutes, rules, regulations, and Executive Orders; (2) managing elements of the public financial disclosure program; and (3) supporting OGE's administrative operations.

Program Review Division

The Program Review Branch (PRB) exercises systemic oversight of the executive branch ethics program through ethics program reviews. Ethics program reviews are designed to ensure consistent and sustainable ethics program compliance with established executive branch ethics laws, regulations and policies, and to provide recommendations for meaningful program improvement. PRB monitors compliance with ethics agreements made by Presidential Appointees during their Senate confirmation process to ensure commitments made to resolve potential conflicts of interests are timely met and appropriately resolved. Additionally, PRB is responsible for reviewing agency requests to institute alternative financial disclosure procedures and exempt Schedule C employees from public financial disclosure requirements.

Administrative Operations Branch

The Administrative Operations Branch (AOB) is responsible for providing overall administrative and legal compliance support to OGE. AOB is responsible for (1) ensuring compliance with administrative requirements for OGE; (2) overseeing human resources functions; (3) purchasing and contracting; and (4) property management and other administrative programs. The Deputy Director for Compliance is supported by a Human Resources Officer and specialists in the Department of Treasury's Bureau of Fiscal Service, and other agencies that perform services through interagency shared services agreements.

KEY STAFF

- Deputy Director for Compliance
- Chief, Program Review Branch

Information Technology Division

The Information Technology Division (ITD) is responsible for maintaining OGE's information technology systems, equipment, and security, as well as creating and operating network applications.

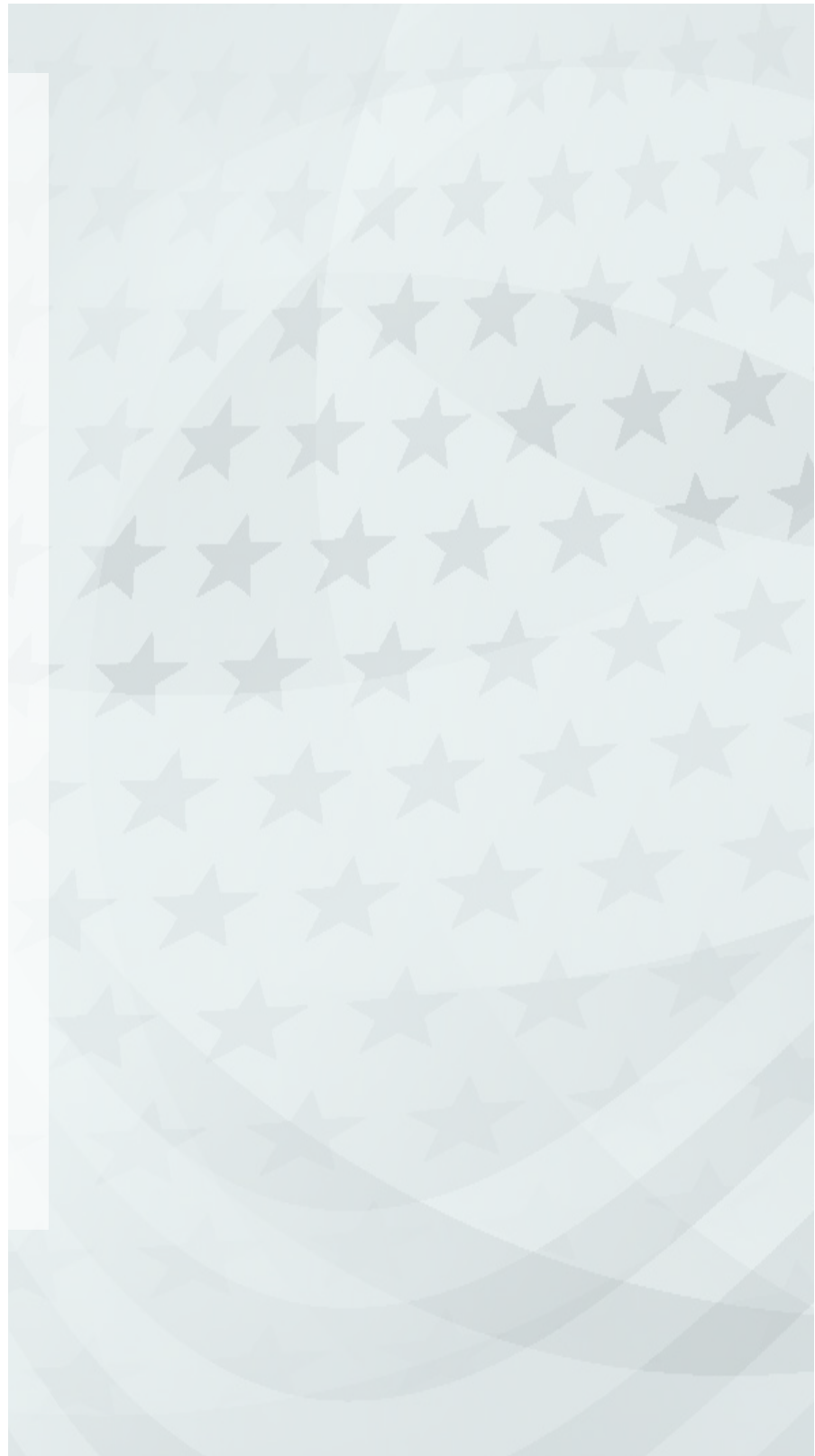
KEY STAFF

- Chief Information Officer

02

OGE'S MAJOR FUNCTIONAL AREAS

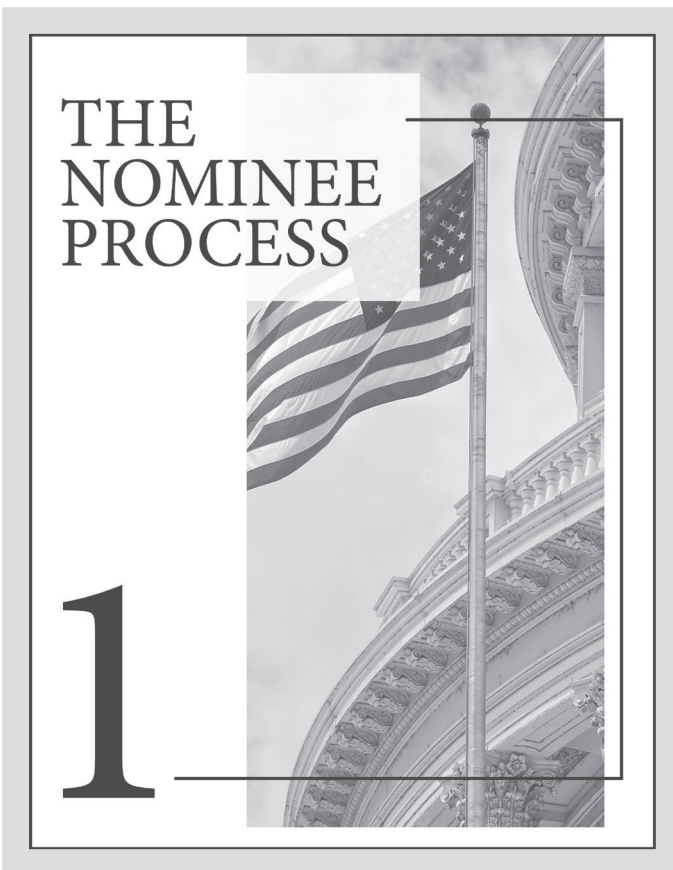
The work performed by OGE's staff of approximately 75 employees covers a wide range of activities for such a small agency. Speaking broadly, most of OGE's work to achieve uniformity, accountability, continuity, and engagement in the ethics program can be grouped into nine major areas:



PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATIONS & SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITIONS

OGE provides an independent review of the financial disclosure reports of candidates for the highest level positions in the executive branch: Presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed nominees and candidates for the Offices of the President and Vice President of the United States. OGE makes sure that these individuals have complied with the extensive requirements for financial disclosure under the Ethics in Government Act. These requirements are highly complex, and ensuring full compliance is necessarily labor-intensive. OGE's goal with regard to a nominee's disclosures is to ensure that the Senate receives a thorough accounting of relevant financial interests in order to facilitate its advice-and-consent role in considering the President's nominees. The goal as to a

Presidential candidate is to provide the electorate with similar information. OGE does not recruit, conduct background investigations, or politically vet nominees.



OGE's review of nominees' disclosures presents a critical opportunity to evaluate their financial interests for potential conflicts of interest and introduces top leaders to the importance of ethical leadership. OGE approaches this function from the perspective of managing risk. To that end, OGE requires nominees to reduce the potential for ethical issues to arise in the first place, and OGE prescribes mechanisms for addressing conflicts of interest if issues do arise. In evaluating potential risks, OGE consults with agency ethics officials who are familiar with their agencies' programs and activities. Based on these consultations, OGE and agency ethics officials prepare an ethics agreement that describes the steps a nominee will take to avoid conflicts of interest. After confirming with the agency that there are

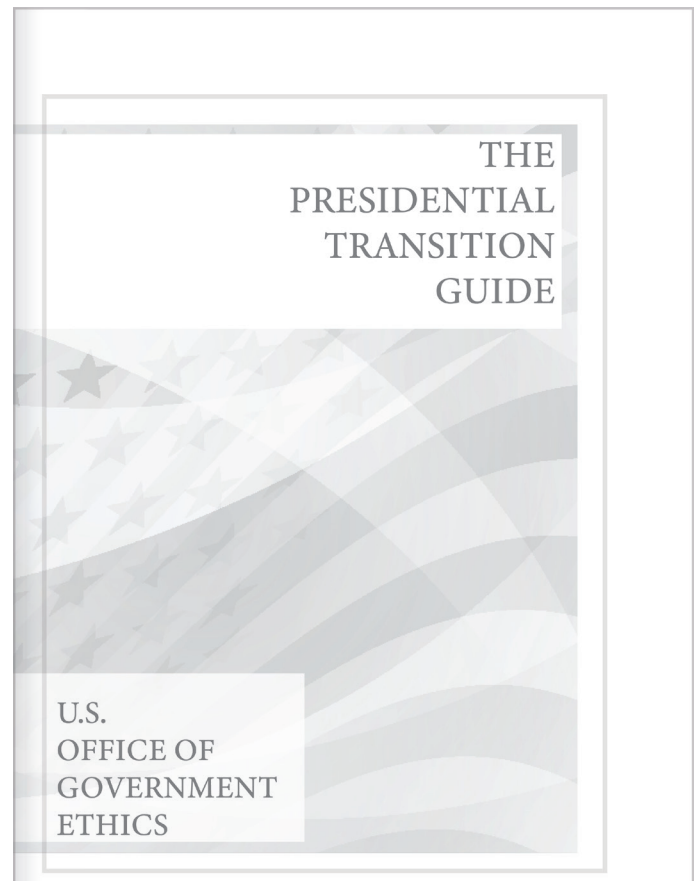
no unresolved conflicts of interest, OGE then transmits the financial disclosure report, the ethics agreement, and a cover letter directly to the Senate.

The nominee function is never more important than during the transition between Presidential administrations. A Presidential transition is a critical time when the nation is vulnerable, with the potential for manmade, natural, or economic disasters to strike while the government's top leadership positions are vacant. OGE works expeditiously to make sure that prospective candidates are free of conflicts of interest, so that top leadership positions can be filled quickly.

During Presidential transitions, nominations going through OGE typically double in volume and increase in complexity. When a President is reelected, the increased volume of work is challenging, due to the turnover of appointees between the first and second terms. When a new President is elected, however, the challenge is even greater, and delivering on the promise of a smooth transition demands a full commitment of resources.

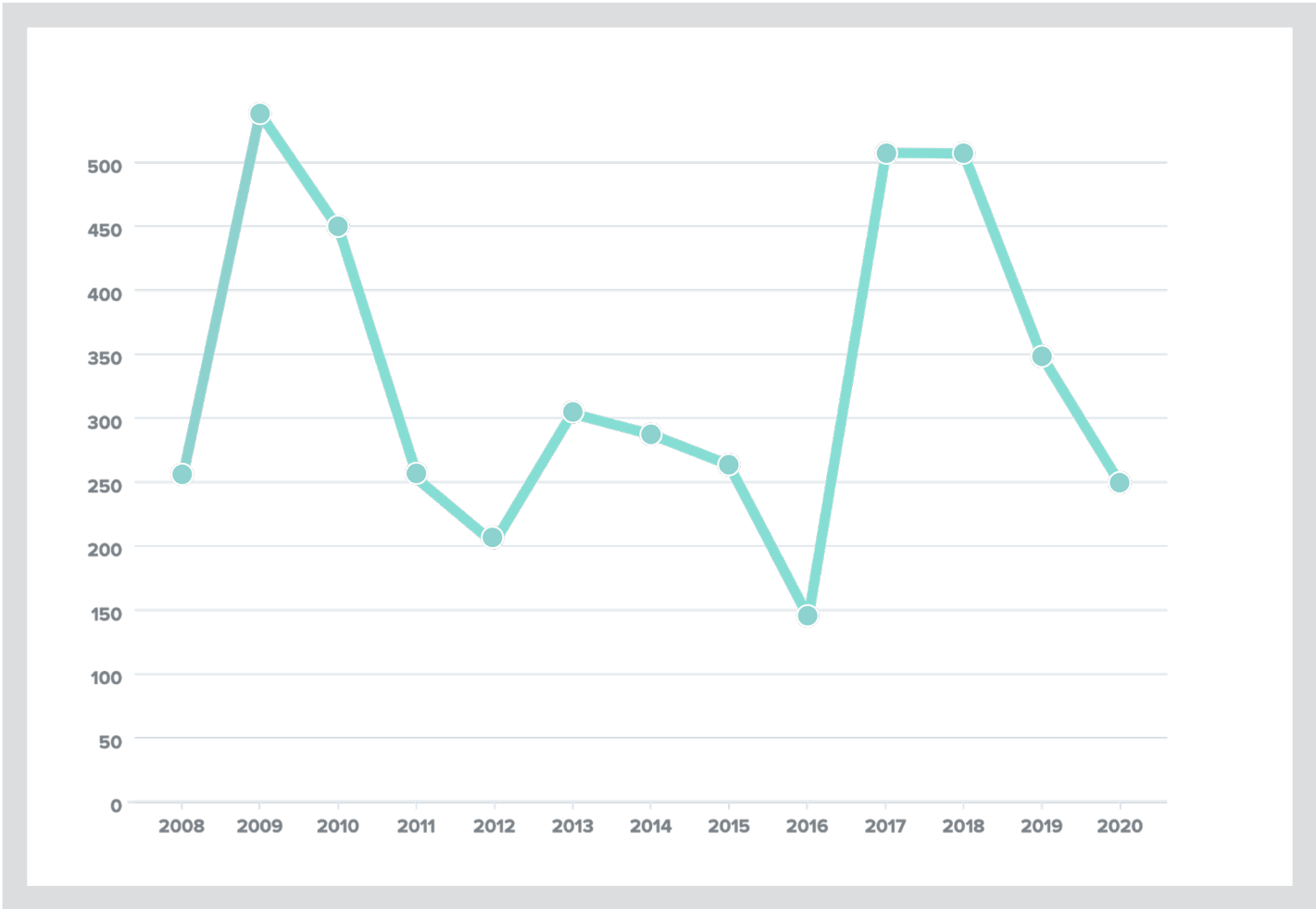
To manage this challenge, OGE must prepare for the possibility of a full transition every four years. Starting two years before a transition, OGE begins training additional staff members to review nominee packages. One year before the inauguration, OGE steps up both its internal training and the training it provides to agency ethics officials. This training focuses not only on reviewing nominees, but also on counseling outgoing officials on legal restrictions applicable to them when they are seeking post-government employment and after they leave government. For example, prior to the most recent Presidential election, OGE convened a virtual National Government Ethics Summit for hundreds of participants that focused on preparation for the Presidential transition. Over the remainder of the fiscal year, OGE conducted an Election Readiness training series for experienced agency ethics officials.

OGE takes a number of other measures to prepare prior to a Presidential election. OGE reviews its nominee processes, updates and publishes critical guidance documents, including the [Nominee Guide](#), [Presidential Transition Guide](#), [Public Financial Disclosure Guide](#), and [Guide to Drafting Nominee Ethics Agreements](#). OGE actively participates as a member of the executive branch-wide Agency Transition Directors Council and in collaboration with the Partnership for Public Service's Center for Presidential Transition. In addition, in coordination with OMB, GSA, OPM, DOJ, and the National Archives and Records Administration, OGE provides expertise and content for the Presidential Transition Directory and the 6 and 3 month progress reports to Congress on election readiness. OGE presents to external stakeholders, congressional staff, and other interested parties about its preparations.



Finally, OGE works with representatives of Presidential candidates in connection with their financial disclosure reports and their early transition efforts. Prior to a Presidential election, OGE publishes a detailed [Transition Guide](#) to advise transition teams on the government ethics aspects of the Presidential transition, including ethics clearance during the nominations process. OGE meets with representatives of the campaigns regarding their transition efforts on a number of occasions prior to the election.

In the year after a Presidential election, OGE necessarily draws down on other activities in order to commit resources to managing the volume of transition-related work. By cross-training staff and assigning nominee work across divisions and branches, OGE has developed surge capacity to manage the significantly increased nominee workload experienced during Presidential transitions. The increased volume typically lasts up to 16 months after the election when a new President is elected.



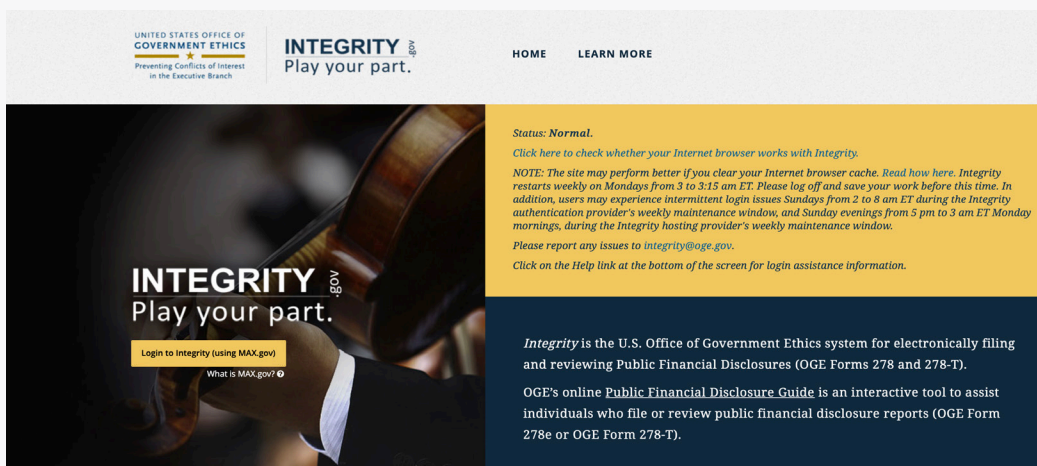
Number of Nominee Financial Disclosure Reports (Precleared)

ELECTRONIC PUBLIC FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE FILING

In 2015, OGE successfully launched *Integrity*, a secure, web-based electronic filing system used by nearly all public financial disclosure filers in the executive branch. Vital to success, *Integrity* makes a fully virtual process possible and has improved how the highest government leaders disclose potential conflicts of interest, so they can serve the public with impartiality and without conflicts, even during disruptions caused by the pandemic.

After Congress and the President tasked OGE with building an executive branchwide electronic public financial disclosure system in 2013, OGE partnered within government, secured funding, brought together the best expertise, and harnessed existing government platforms and secure infrastructure to launch the system within budget. By 2016 the system was successfully handling the test of a full Presidential transition with high satisfaction rates and successful, independent security assessments.

Integrity has transformed the entire executive branch disclosure process. Now used by nearly all public financial disclosure filers in the executive branch, *Integrity* replaced an inefficient patchwork of paper forms, scanned and emailed pdf documents, and rudimentary online systems that required filers and reviewers to begin the financial disclosure process from scratch each year. Its question wizard, designed by financial disclosure experts, helps senior government officials file faster, and file more complete and accurate disclosures.



Well-designed workflows help reviewers to process reports more quickly and with greater accuracy. The improved reporting format makes disclosures easier for Senators considering a Presidential nomination and for members of the public to understand. All of this means that more complete, accurate, and easier-to-read disclosures are available to the public sooner. To ensure *Integrity* remains effective, OGE has continued to convene its *Integrity* Advisory Council to seek ongoing input from agency representatives.

Integrity is not just an OGE success; it is a success for the whole executive branch and for the public. The system helps thousands of senior government officials to remotely and electronically file clearer and more uniform financial disclosure reports with greater efficiency. These reports are made available to the public so that they can ensure their government's leaders are free from conflicts of interest.

DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO STAKEHOLDERS

OGE provides direct assistance to stakeholders in the executive branch ethics community. The primary recipients of this support are agency ethics officials, who are responsible for providing ethics services to the 2.7 million civilian employees at the more than 130 executive branch agencies. OGE's Desk Officers assist agency ethics officials in evaluating complex issues, provide information about how other agencies are implementing ethics requirements, and give guidance on OGE's policies regarding program activities. Desk Officers are able to assist agencies in implementing recommendations made in OGE's program reviews. On average, OGE Desk Officers respond to more than 1,500 calls for assistance per year. OGE uses information collected through Desk Officer interactions to make data-driven decisions on how best to serve agency ethics programs and to identify agencies in need of special outreach or training.

For each new Designated and Alternate Designated Agency Ethics Official (DAEO/ ADAEO), OGE's Director sends a welcome letter with critical details about their important role and responsibilities, available professional development, including OGE's DAEO/ADAEO orientation program, and the array of resources OGE provides to support agency ethics officials. OGE Desk Officers meet with new agency ethics officials to provide an overview of ethics program requirements and to offer OGE's services.

OGE actively supports the investigative and enforcement communities. For example, OGE's Director serves as a statutory member of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE). OGE provides training and responds to requests from Inspectors General for assistance in interpreting the complex ethics laws and regulations in connection with their investigations. OGE has provided similar assistance and training to the Department of Justice, related to both prosecutions and civil penalty enforcement.

In addition to its recent website redesign ([OGE.gov](https://oge.gov)) and outreach on social media, including Twitter ([@OfficeGovEthics](https://twitter.com/OfficeGovEthics)), OGE has undertaken other significant efforts to improve stakeholder awareness and communications. For example, OGE holds quarterly meetings for the leaders of agency ethics programs throughout the government. OGE regularly provides technical assistance to congressional committees and members of Congress in connection with legislation related to ethics issues. OGE has initiated a

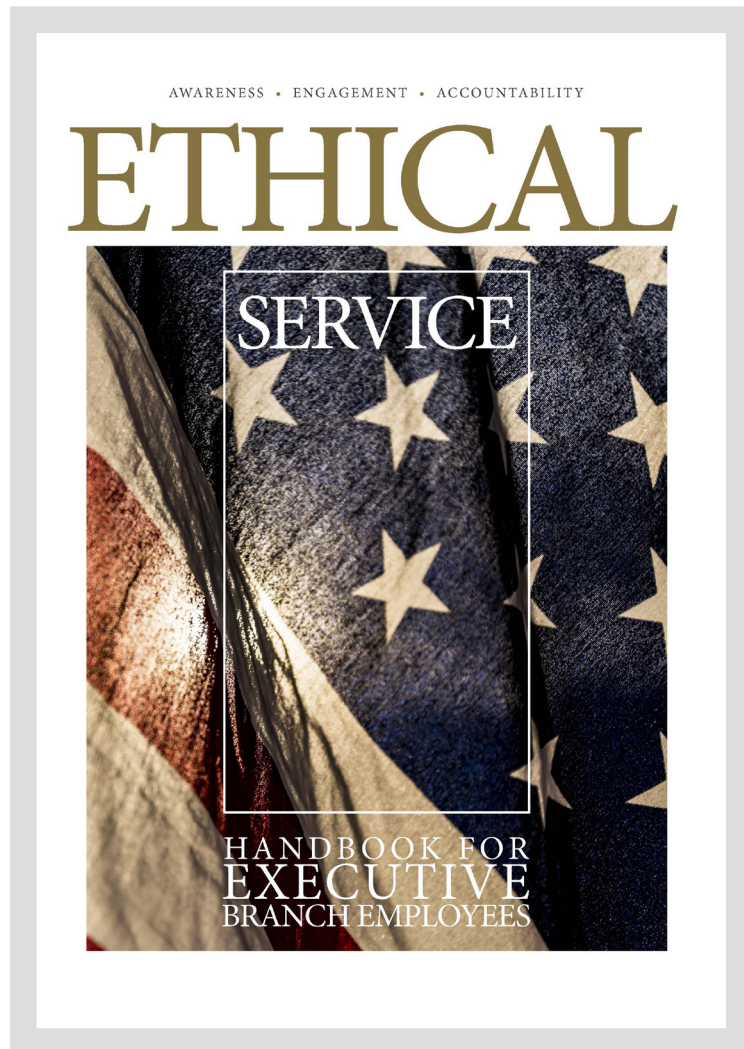
forum of ethics officials from the supervising ethics offices of the three branches of the federal government, which now meets regularly to share expertise and address common issues. Similarly, OGE regularly provides the State Department with substantial support for U.S. participation in international anti-corruption organizations.



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ENGAGING SENIOR LEADERS

Ethical culture begins with demonstrated ethical leadership throughout an organization. To advance a consistently strong program, OGE seeks opportunities to engage agency leaders on the importance of ethics and to sensitize federal managers to ethics issues.



For example, OGE's Director initiated a critical leadership initiative, engaging senior leaders by holding individual meetings with agency heads to discuss their role in setting an ethical culture at their agencies.

OGE engages with senior leadership directly and indirectly through meetings, external communications, and involvement in nominee financial disclosure reports and ethics agreements, as well as through publications and educational offerings.

OGE provides briefings to new Senior Executive Service members about the importance of ethics and their vital role in maintaining the public's trust. In addition, OGE shares trainings and tools targeted to supervisors regarding their roles and responsibilities as ethical leaders. Finally, through ongoing research and partnerships with others, OGE shares tools and tactics for leaders to use to effectively communicate the ethical expectations for their organizations.

ETHICS EDUCATION

To promote uniform implementation of agency ethics programs, OGE provides intensive training for new agency ethics leaders (DAEOs and ADAEOs), as well as comprehensive education resources for ethics officials at all experience levels, including seasonal, on-demand training before critical deadlines.

OGE supports the development of ethics officials through its [Institute for Ethics in Government Education Library](#). OGE's virtual library includes more than 150 education resources designed for use by ethics officials, including recordings of training presentations, slide decks, and job aids, which can be searched and sorted by topic, type, and complexity. OGE encourages ethics officials to use these resources to create self-paced curricula for their professional development.

OGE recognizes that maintaining strong ethical standards across the executive branch is the shared responsibility of every employee who takes the oath of office. To support the ethical service of all executive branch employees, OGE has created a collection of training resources for new and current federal employees, providing samples for ethics officials to use when communicating about ethics within organizations.



OGE holds a National Government Ethics Summit, which is a cost-effective, multi-day training event for executive branch ethics officials and external stakeholders, every four years. The Summit provides members of the government ethics community with opportunities to deepen their knowledge of the ethics rules, share lessons learned through extensive practical experience, listen to viewpoints from outside government, and build connections with fellow ethics officials who can lend a hand in resolving complex ethics issues. OGE's most recent summit provided essential training to ensure that agency ethics officials were prepared for the Presidential election, confidently able to manage emerging ethics issues, and well equipped with practices to create stronger ethics programs and ethical cultures across the executive branch.

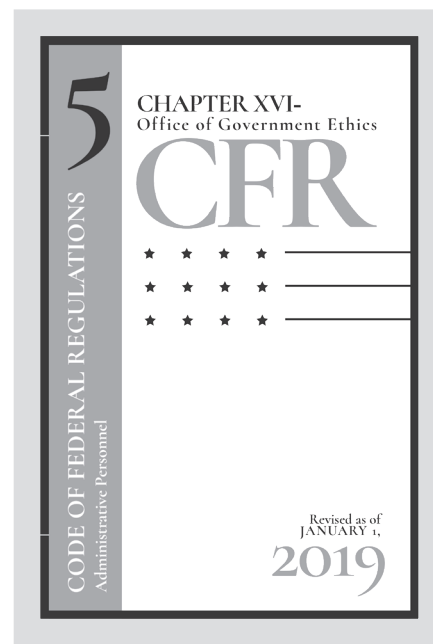
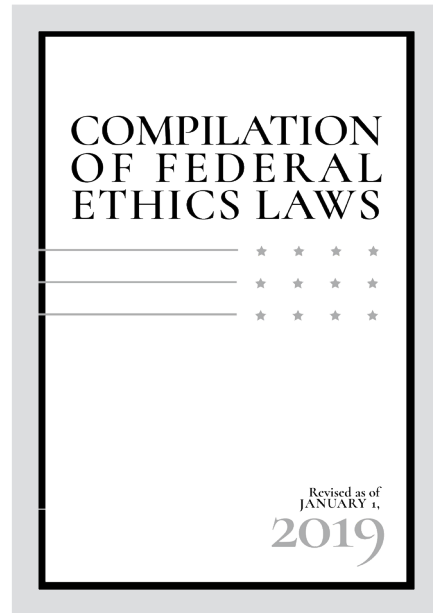
REGULATIONS & INTERPRETIVE GUIDANCE

OGE ensures uniformity in the executive branch ethics program through regulations and interpretive guidance. OGE issues and interprets regulations that are applicable to all executive branch agencies and employees, such as the [Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch](#) and regulations implementing the conflict of interest laws, among others.

OGE regularly updates and modernizes its regulations, including to address emerging ethics issues, and actively solicits stakeholder feedback. For example, OGE held two public meetings to provide direct input on its development of a legal expense fund regulation before publishing a proposed rule. Notable updates on recent steps taken related to OGE's rulemaking are made public on OGE's [website](#).

OGE oversees the establishment and modification of [supplemental ethics regulations](#) for individual agencies in order to address agency-specific ethics issues. OGE routinely updates provisions regarding civil monetary penalties (5 C.F.R. parts 2634 and 2636), separate component designations for purposes of post-employment restrictions (5 C.F.R. part 2641), and exemptions to the primary criminal conflicts of interest statute (5 C.F.R. part 2640).

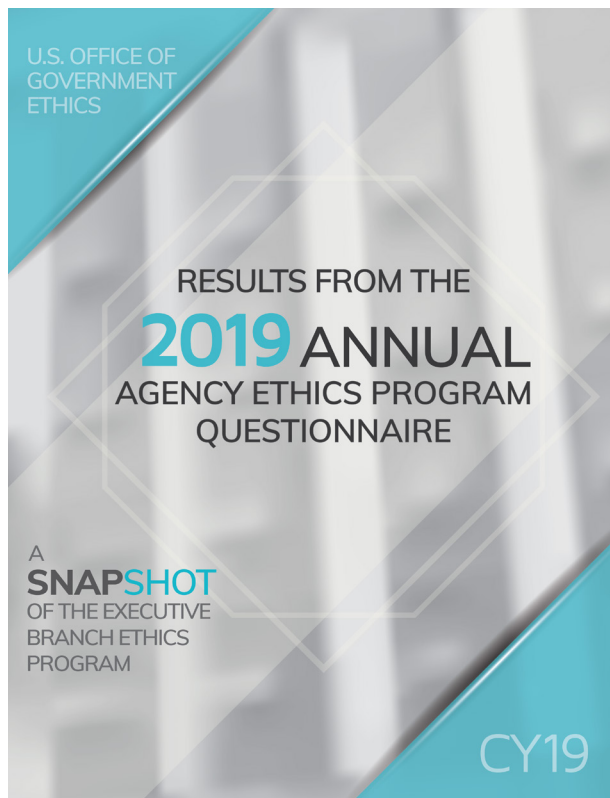
OGE issues publicly available legal and program guidance in a variety of forms. For example, in calendar years 2017 through 2020, OGE published approximately 30 legal and program advisories, a highly detailed financial disclosure guide, an updated ethics agreement guide, and dozens of summaries of key subjects related to government ethics. This guidance is used by ethics officials throughout the executive branch, as well as by outside entities that interact with the government. In addition, OGE works with agencies to develop or distribute materials addressed directly to the government employees who are covered by the ethics rules. Feedback on OGE's work has been highly favorable. Annual executive branch-wide surveys revealed that more than 90% of agency ethics officials surveyed believe that OGE's publication of guidance materials helps them to perform their jobs effectively.



OVERSIGHT OF AGENCY ETHICS PROGRAM COMPLIANCE

OGE monitors agency compliance in order to mitigate ethics program vulnerabilities at each agency and to identify executive branch-wide trends. OGE conducts agency ethics program reviews to maintain high standards of accountability and compliance with applicable ethics requirements throughout the executive branch. OGE has implemented a new risk-based approach to conducting these reviews, using data and stakeholder feedback to assist in identifying agencies and specific issues to review.

OGE reviews agency programs to identify and report on the strengths and weaknesses of the program by evaluating (1) agency compliance with ethics requirements as set forth in relevant laws, regulations, and policies, and (2) ethics-related systems, processes, and procedures for administering the program. Cabinet agencies and other agencies determined to be at high risk based on OGE's risk assessment are reviewed every four years. Other agencies are reviewed at least once every five years. If needed, OGE conducts real-time consultations and other compliance-based interventions.

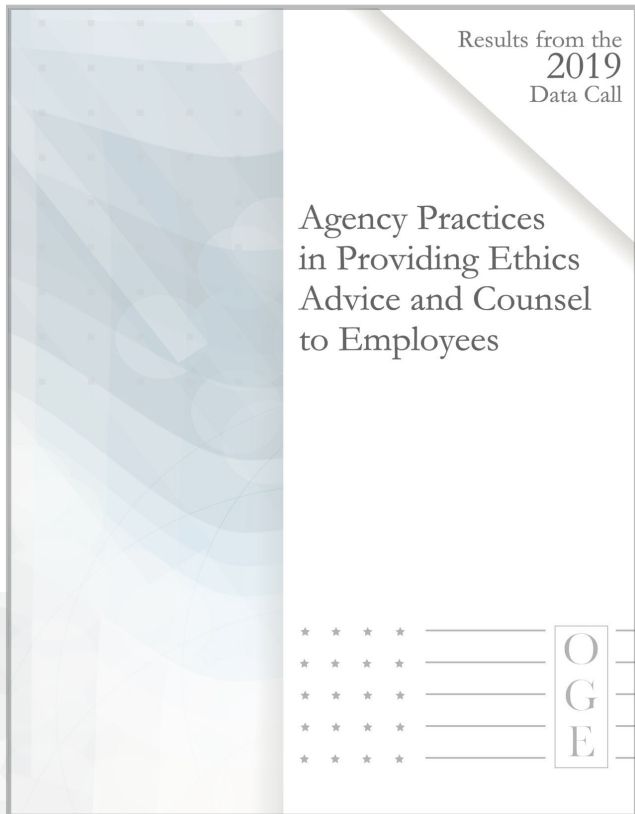


OGE examines all elements of an agency ethics program including: program administration, financial disclosure, education and training, ethics counseling, agency-specific ethics rules on outside employment, conflict remedies, enforcement, and special government employees. OGE conducts appropriate follow-up reviews to evaluate agencies' progress in implementing any recommendations made in OGE's program review reports. To enhance transparency and accountability, OGE publishes all program reviews and follow-up program reviews on its [website](#) as well as a dashboard of the number of open recommendations by category of deficiency.

In addition, OGE conducts annual oversight of every agency through its Annual Agency Ethics Program Questionnaire. Agencies are statutorily required to submit information annually to OGE, and OGE rigorously reviews agency responses and analyzes trend data

to identify areas of concern at individual agencies and across the executive branch. In addition to publishing a report with the aggregate data, OGE posts individual agency responses on its website to increase transparency and oversight. OGE uses the data to provide training on the results, encouraging agencies to use the questionnaire as a tool both to self-assess and to benchmark their agency against similarly situated agencies.

OGE holds triennial data calls for agency practices, which provide OGE with insight into each agency's implementation of a key element of their ethics program. OGE uses the results to tailor the support it provides to agencies and shares results with executive branch ethics officials so they can learn from other practitioners. OGE serves as the repository for biannual reports (1353 Travel Reports) that document payments of travel accepted from non-federal sources. Although OGE has no role in providing guidance on the travel regulations, OGE makes these reports available, on its website, as required by statute.



Additionally, OGE collects information on potential ethics violations by executive branch employees. Agencies are required to concurrently notify OGE's Director when referring any matter to the Department of Justice involving a potential violation of a criminal conflict of interest law by an employee. OGE tracks and follows up on these referrals to ensure that agencies are considering disciplinary or other corrective action in the event prosecution is declined. OGE annually publishes a survey of ethics-related prosecutions and publishes data regarding these referrals on its website.

OVERSIGHT OF SENIOR LEADERS COMPLIANCE

OGE works to ensure that executive branch leaders appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate (PAS) remain free of conflicts of interest after taking office by monitoring compliance with the commitments in their ethics agreements. OGE collects a Certification of Ethics Agreement Compliance from each appointee, which requires a personal attestation of compliance with the terms of their ethics agreement. In support of transparency and accountability, OGE posts these certifications, as well as notices of late compliance and extensions, on its website. In the event a PAS official is more than 30 days late in submitting their Certification or submits a Certification that indicates a substantive deficiency in complying with the terms of their ethics agreement, OGE, as appropriate, notifies the Senate committee of jurisdiction.

CERTIFICATION OF ETHICS AGREEMENT COMPLIANCE Senate Confirmed Presidential Appointee		
1. Appointee's Information	a. Appointee's Name:	to be completed by OGE
	b. Position Title:	to be completed by OGE
	c. Agency:	to be completed by OGE
	d. Date Ethics Agreement Signed:	to be completed by OGE
	e. Date Confirmed:	to be completed by OGE
	f. Due Date for Certification of Ethics Agreement Compliance:	to be completed by OGE
2. Resignations	<i>I completed all of the resignations indicated in my ethics agreement before I assumed the duties of my current government position.</i>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A
3. Divestitures	a. <i>I have completed all of the divestitures indicated in my ethics agreement. I also understand that I may not repurchase those assets during my appointment without OGE's prior approval.</i>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A
	b. <i>I have filed a periodic transaction report, or periodic transaction reports, (OGE Form-T) to disclose the completion of those agreed upon divestitures.</i>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A Filing Date(s) of OGE Form 278-T Report(s):
4. Managed Accounts	<i>If I have a managed account or use the services of an investment professional, I have notified the manager or professional of the limitations indicated in my ethics agreement. In addition, I am continuing to monitor purchases.</i>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A
5. Interim Recusals	<i>I complied with my interim recusal obligations pending the divestitures required by my ethics agreement.</i>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A
THIS CERTIFICATION WILL BE POSTED FOR PUBLIC VIEWING ON OGE'S WEBSITE. 1		

OGE provides expert, second-level review of periodic and annual financial disclosure reports of appointees at the highest-level executive branch positions. OGE collects and reviews the annual, termination, and periodic transaction reports of PAS filers to ensure that agencies timely review these disclosures for conflicts of interest and that filers continue to comply with their ethics agreements. OGE provides each agency head with a year-end status letter regarding their agency's compliance with financial disclosure responsibilities under the Ethics in Government Act, including the requirement to timely submit reports to OGE and to promptly provide any additional information necessary for OGE to certify the reports.

Executive branch agencies or OGE can direct an executive branch employee to sell, or otherwise divest, an asset in order to comply with a federal conflict of interest statute, regulation, rule, or executive order. If selling the asset will result in a capital gain, certain individuals may be eligible for a Certificate of Divestiture (CD). A CD allows an eligible person to defer paying capital gains taxes on property that is sold to comply with conflict of interest requirements. OGE reviews requests for CDs and makes them available electronically through the OGE Form 201 request process.

The primary criminal conflict of interest law, 18 U.S.C. § 208, prohibits employees from participating in certain government matters affecting their own financial interests or the interests of certain persons with whom they have ties outside the government. In some cases, a waiver to these restrictions may be appropriate if the financial interest is "not so substantial as to be deemed likely to affect the integrity of the services which the government may expect from such officer or employee." OGE consults with agencies prior to the issuance of such waivers and collects copies of final waivers.

Public service is a public trust, requiring employees to place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws and ethical principles above private gain.

[Learn about our mission](#)

ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS

OGE's website is its main communication tool and most important resource for OGE's stakeholders, including agency officials, the media, and the general public. OGE has completely redesigned its website to improve public access to ethics documents, ethics officials' access to key resources needed to perform their jobs, and compliance with government standards.

Notable improvements and features included developing new navigation for targeted groups, including ethics officials and federal employees; streamlining the number of pages to help users access the content they are seeking more quickly; creating three new document collections with significantly enhanced search functionality and filters: (1) [Legal Research](#), (2) [Individuals Disclosures](#), and (3) [Ethics Program Documents](#); and adding valuable new content.

For example, OGE created a set of wholly new web pages that serve as a comprehensive guide to support ethics officials in managing effective ethics programs based on each program element. Finally, in addition to these notable improvements to usability and content, OGE worked to bring its website into compliance with accessibility, design, security, data, customization, and mobile requirements.

OGE has adopted the philosophy that public availability of government ethics information assures the American public that its senior leaders are making decisions based on the interests of the public rather than their own personal financial interests. The availability of this information assists executive branch employees in understanding the basic obligations of public service, holds OGE accountable for its activities, and supports ethics officials in carrying out the duties of their positions. For this reason, OGE has made a concerted effort to post useful information on its website, including the information below.

ACCESS ETHICS DOCUMENTS

- [Officials' Individual Disclosures Search Collection](#): Financial Disclosure Reports, Certificates of Divestiture, Ethics Pledge Waivers, Ethics Agreements, Certificates of Ethics Agreement Compliance
- [Agency Ethics Documents Search Collection](#): Program Review Reports, Annual Agency Ethics Program Questionnaires, Oversight Correspondence with Agencies, 1353 Travel Reports
- [Oversight Summary Reports & Compliance Dashboards](#): Executive Branchwide Reports and Data
- [Freedom of Information Act \(FOIA\)](#): Electronic Records Room, FOIA-Processed Records Repository, Reports, Request Procedure, Contacts, Guide

RESOURCES FOR ETHICS OFFICIALS

- [Conduct Legal Research](#): Statutes, Executive Orders, OGE Regulations, Agency Supplemental Regulations, Federal Register Issuances, OGE Advisories, Legal Interpretation (DOJ and Judicial Opinions)
- [Institute for Ethics in Government Trainings](#): Upcoming Courses, On Demand Courses, Curricula, Job Aids
- [Managing Effective Ethics Programs](#)
 - [Mission, Authority, & Key Players](#); [Ethical Leadership & Building an Ethical Culture](#); [Conflicts Analysis & Resolution](#); [Education through Training & Advice](#); [Financial Disclosure](#); [Election Readiness](#); [Enforcement Responsibilities](#); [OGE Oversight](#); [OGE Support](#); [Professional Development for Ethics Officials](#); [Records Management & Release](#); [OGE Forms Library](#)

RESOURCES FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

- [Agency Ethics Program Contact Information](#)
- [Resources for Financial Disclosure Filers](#)
- [Standards of Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch](#)

NEWS

- [Leadership Notes](#)
- [News Releases](#)
- [Press Contacts](#)

ABOUT OGE

- **Our Mission, Role, and History**
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 - [Our History](#)
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- **Our People and Organization**
 - [Agency Leadership](#)
 - [Organization](#)
 - [Employee Engagement](#)
- **Government Partners in Integrity**
 - [Resources for Reporting Misconduct](#)
 - [Resources for International Anti-Corruption Bodies](#)
- **Legislative Affairs**
 - [Ethics Legislation](#)
 - [Congressional Correspondence](#)
 - [Reports to Congress](#)
 - [Appropriations](#)
- **Contact**
 - [Contact Us](#)
 - [Agency Ethics Program Contact Information](#)
 - [Careers](#)

AVAILABLE ON OTHER WEBSITES:

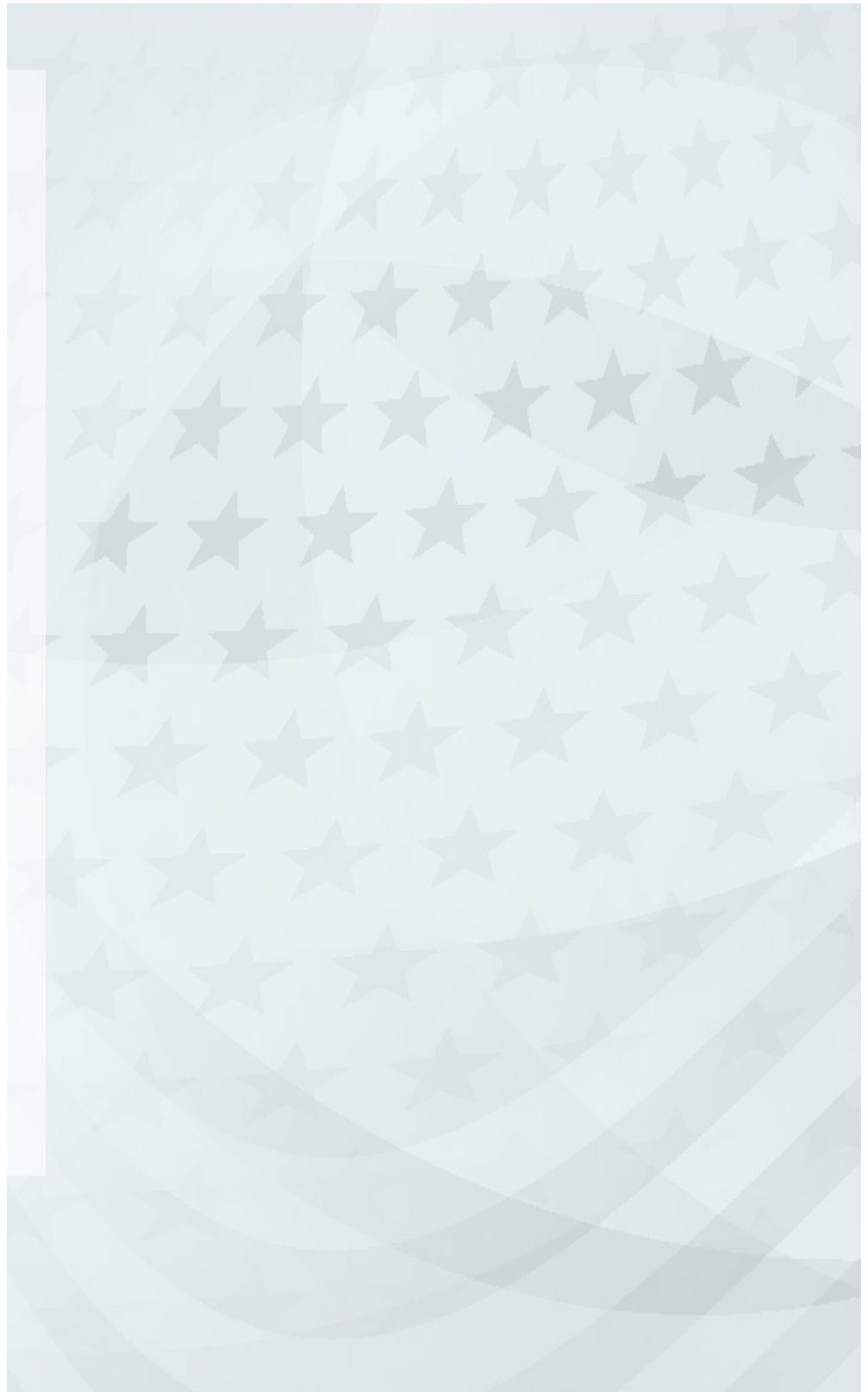
- [Integrity.gov](#): OGE's electronic filing system for public financial disclosures
- [OGE's YouTube Channel](#): training videos produced by OGE
- [OGE's Twitter account @OfficeGovEthics](#)
- [OGE's LinkedIn account](#)

03

CRITICAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

OGE's senior leadership is committed to the highest standards of excellence.

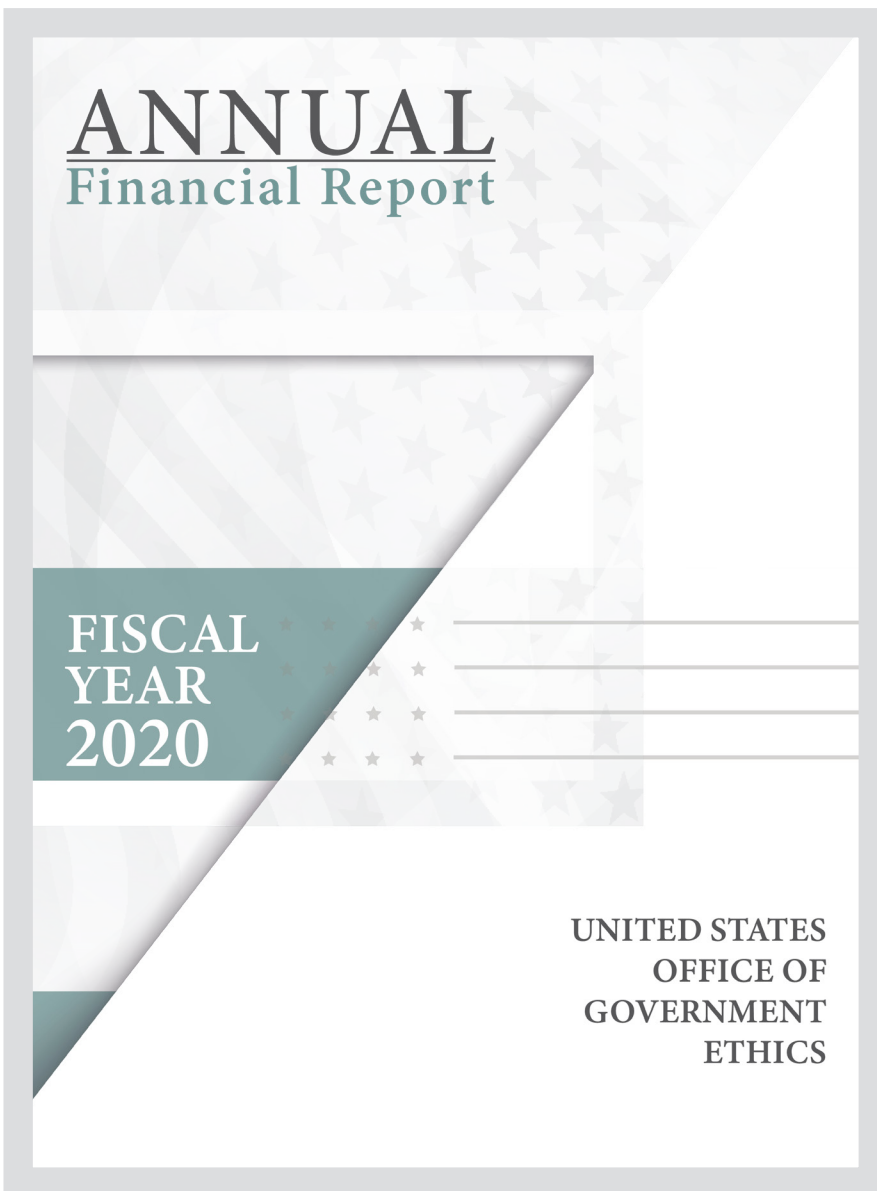
To that end, leadership keeps a constant focus on maintaining and continuing to cultivate its culture of excellence in critical management practices that enhance the quality and effectiveness of OGE's work.



FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

OGE is an excellent steward of taxpayer resources by continuously improving how the agency accomplishes its work, demonstrating strong performance, and supporting an engaged and accountable workforce.

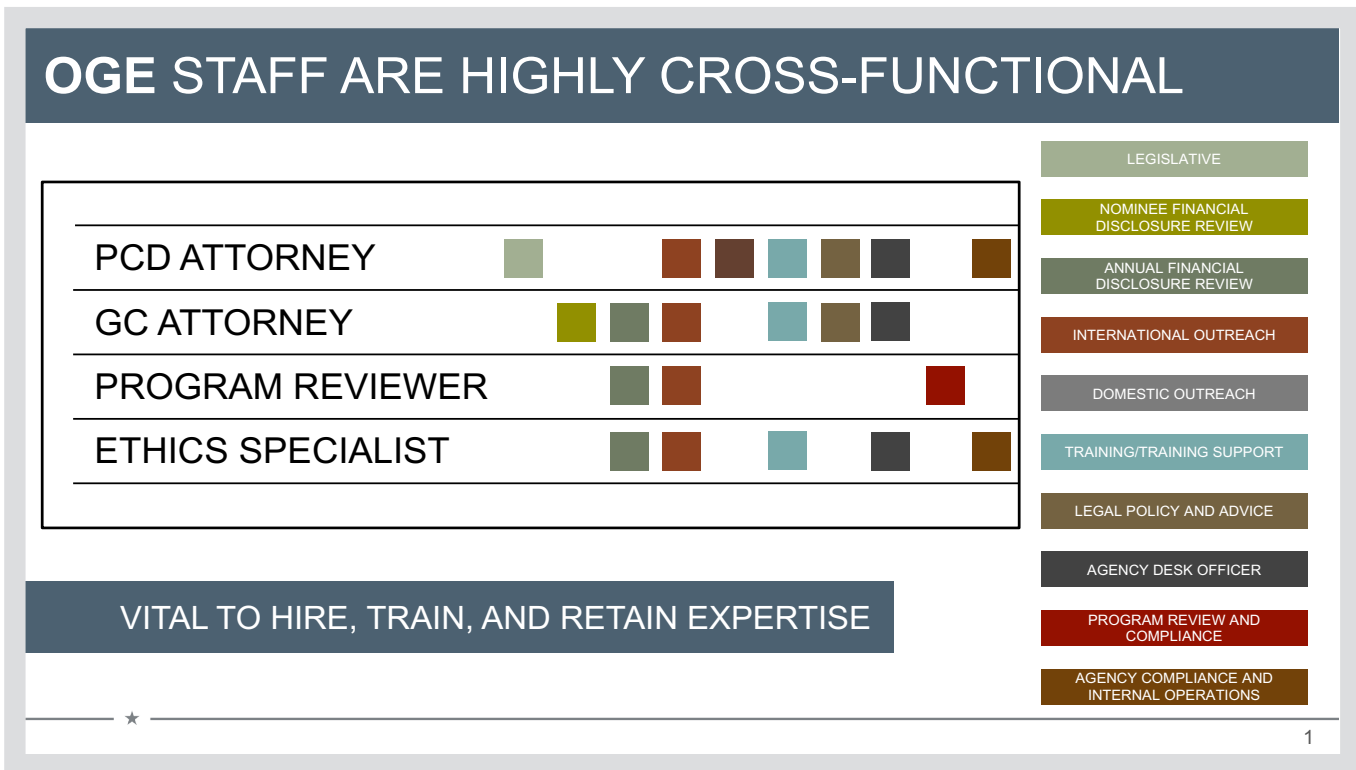
OGE seizes opportunities to leverage resources and technology to achieve savings in administrative costs associated with a wide variety of its mission work – something OGE has been able to do with great success.



Notable achievements include: using the MAX.gov platform to operate OGE’s executive branch-wide electronic filing system; delivering highly effective, low-cost virtual training; leveraging online audio/visual capabilities to conduct a well-received, low-cost government-wide National Government Ethics Summit; developing highly efficient internal information system applications and agency-wide electronic records storage to increase accountability and efficiency; leveraging executive branch-wide forums and resources to mitigate risk and increase performance data; harnessing free social media tools to improve public engagement; increasing the data sets available to measure performance; and improving transparency by increasing the content and capacity of OGE’s website with a massive redesign effort. OGE focuses on efficiency, continuous improvement, and accountability.

SUSTAINING A PERFORMANCE CULTURE & EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

OGE's highly cross-functional staff is essential in carrying out its vital work promulgating, maintaining, and advising on enforceable standards of ethical conduct for more than 2.7 million employees in over 130 executive branch agencies, including the White House; offering education and training to the more than 5,000 ethics officials executive branch-wide; and overseeing a financial disclosure system that reaches more than 26,000 public and nearly 380,000 confidential financial disclosure report filers. The cross-functionality of OGE's staff facilitates critical employee development and allows OGE to maintain its strong culture of performance.



OGE's Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) results reflect OGE's strong culture of performance. For example, in the most recent FEVS survey, 100 percent of employees indicated a willingness to do what it takes to achieve organizational goals, 98 percent indicated that the overall quality of work done by their work unit was positive, 93 percent of employees expressed an understanding that they are held accountable for achieving results and that they know how their work relates to the agency's goals and priorities, and no survey items were identified as a challenge (35% negative or more).

OGE sustains its strong culture of performance management through extensive accountability, development, and performance mechanisms. Continued attention to these areas remains critical to the agency's operations and successful performance of its mission activities. OGE tracks its progress toward annual performance goals by holding quarterly all-hands meetings; conducting mid-year strategic objective reviews; holding regular executive and senior staff meetings to discuss agency goals, priorities, and the status of significant program activities; and holding supervisors accountable for ensuring ongoing communication regarding OGE goals and priorities with all staff.

OGE recognizes high-performing employees through its award program, which includes spot awards and year-end performance bonuses. OGE's spot award program ensures employees are rewarded for outstanding work throughout the year based on a transparent set of criteria and acknowledged at an annual employee recognition event. Based on feedback gathered from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, OGE formed an employee-led group to identify new ways for OGE to recognize differences in performance in a meaningful way.

OGE is committed to meeting its employees' professional development needs by providing significant education and training opportunities, and providing employees with dedicated time and resources to pursue development. OGE incorporates the requirements of the Employee Development Plan (EDP) into employees' performance standards. In this way, OGE confirms its commitment to continuous learning and employee professional development.

OGE identifies agency knowledge and skills gaps, and uses the EDP to train employees to fill those gaps. In addition, OGE provides internal and external training and development opportunities to its employees at all levels. OGE holds regular training sessions for new employees as well as other meetings for employees within the agency, to share information and to develop and improve their knowledge and skills. These actions, collectively, ensure the ability of OGE and its employees to offer the highest quality products and services to its stakeholders.

COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES & PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

As an agency with an executive branchwide mission of its own, OGE understands the importance of compliance with other government programs such as privacy, records management, FOIA and IT security. As a result, OGE's leadership and staff approach this work with a view of robust compliance through innovative process improvement, training, and timely annual program reporting. In all of its compliance activities, OGE strives to be a model agency by finding ways to increase efficiencies through creative use of electronic applications and revising standard operating procedures.

For example, OGE has developed a strong privacy program to ensure compliance with the Privacy Act, as well as privacy requirements established by OMB. OGE's Privacy Team reviews proposed IT systems and projects that collect and manage privacy protected information using an innovative application designed to assist staff in providing necessary information to complete a Privacy Threshold Analysis or recertify existing IT systems and projects. The team timely prepares and updates privacy-related program documents such as System of Records Notices and Privacy Impact Assessments. OGE's Privacy Team works with the CIO on IT system security reviews for OGE's network and *Integrity*.

OGE maintains strong Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and records management programs, both of which are consistently rated as compliant, even as new requirements are imposed. With regard to FOIA, OGE has increased the number of documents available to the public on its website by proactively posting most documents released to requestors and devoting resources to responding to requestors. With regard to its records management program, OGE has established policies to ensure that OGE's records are maintained, handled, and disposed of in accordance with National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) requirements.

OGE demonstrates its commitment to compliance by providing regular required training to its employees and by timely submitting responses to data calls from oversight agencies in areas including IT security, privacy, FOIA, records management, information quality, Equal Employment Opportunity, and whistleblower reprisal, in addition to providing innovative annual internal ethics training for its staff and managers. OGE consistently meets 100% of its annual training goals and the reporting requirements in all of these programs.

INCREASING EFFICIENCY & EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH SECURE IT

OGE actively seeks to harness technology to improve the agency's ability to deliver on its mission and conduct its business more efficiently and effectively. OGE has developed and redesigned numerous applications that have improved agency and program efficiency, increased data access, enhanced management practices, and strengthened compliance activities. OGE devotes resources to applications that support major mission programs, such as the Desk Officer Program, the Annual Questionnaire, the records program, and financial disclosure tracking, as well as those applications that support agency operations and compliance, including Privacy Act compliance, requisition processing, budget formulation, and equipment tracking. In addition, OGE's redesigned website is its main communication tool and the most valuable resource for OGE's stakeholders, including agency officials, the media, and the general public. OGE has significantly improved public access to ethics documents and ethics officials' access to key resources needed to perform their jobs.

OGE is highly responsive to the potential security threats against automated systems as those threats grow and become more complex. OGE actively seeks to ensure that any threats are reduced and mitigated, if not eliminated. OGE upgraded its infrastructure to mitigate the risk of potential failure, to address evolving technology, and to prevent security breaches. Specifically, OGE has completed IT updates necessary to maintain the security and efficiency of OGE's ongoing daily operations, including critical software updates and migrating to a Hyper-Converged Infrastructure (HCI), providing more scalability, memory, CPU power, storage, and better performance with less hardware. OGE ensures a safe and secure IT environment that protects the privacy and integrity of financial information provided to OGE by agency ethics officials and the most senior officials of the executive branch as part of the financial disclosure review process.

