

## **U. S. Office of Government Ethics**

# **Field Office Ethics Program Survey**

## INTRODUCTION

To better serve the ethics community of executive branch departments and agencies (agency) and its field office ethics programs throughout the country, the Office of Government Ethics (OGE) would like to learn more about your experiences, opinions, and needs regarding various facets of your field office's ethics program. The results of this survey will be used to improve the services provided by OGE in support of field office ethics programs.

This survey is being distributed to the primary ethics official at field office ethics program locations throughout the country. We ask that you, as the primary ethics official, complete the survey. However, if administration of the ethics program is delegated to another person in your office, please forward the survey to that person for completion. Administration includes reviewing financial disclosure reports, providing ethics advice, and/or conducting ethics training. The survey takes about 20 minutes to complete.

Please provide responses to the survey questions based on your experiences at the field office in which you work. For the purposes of this survey, "field office" is the regional, district, or other level office for which you administer the ethics program for your agency. For example, if you administer the program for the entire region (whether or not the region has sublocations) your answers should pertain to the entire region. However, if you administer the program for a designation other than a region, for example, a district office, your answers should pertain to the district office only.

This survey is anonymous. There is nothing on it to identify you. Please mail back your completed survey in the enclosed addressed envelope by June 5, 1998. Also, please return the enclosed postcard separately after completing the survey. We need the cards returned so that we can remind those who do not answer. There is no way to link the number on the postcard with your returned survey. A prompt response will save the expense of costly follow-up mailings.

In the event that the return envelope is misplaced, the return address is:

Attention: Phyllis A. Hoffer U.S. Office of Government Ethics 1201 New York Avenue, NW. Washington, DC 20005

Important Note: This survey is intended for completion by Federal employees only.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 1. How many years of experience have you had in administering an executive branch agency ethics program? Administering the program includes collecting and reviewing financial disclosure reports, providing ethics-related advice and counseling, and/or conducting ethics training. (Check one.)
  - 1. ☐ More than 3 years (continue)
  - 2.  $\Box$  1 to 3 years (continue)
  - 3. Less than 1 year (continue)
  - 4. □ No experience (**Stop**. If you have no experience, please mail the survey back to OGE in the enclosed return envelope. Mail the postcard separately. Thank you for your cooperation.)

### **PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND STAFFING**

The next few questions ask about where your ethics program is organizationally located within the structure of your field office.

- 2. In which of the following operational units in your field office is administration of the ethics program organizationally located? (Check one.)
  - 1. Legal office
  - 2. Ethics office
  - 3. 
    Regional/field director's office
  - 4. □ Personnel office
  - 5. Other (specify)
- 3. Do you believe that administration of the ethics program is organizationally located in the best place to carry out the program's responsibilities? (Check one.)

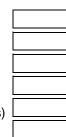
  - 2. Probably yes (go to question 6)
  - 3. Uncertain (go to question 6)
  - 4. □ Probably no (continue)
  - 5. D No (continue)
- 4. If you indicated in the previous question that you believe the ethics program is probably not or not organizationally located in the best place to carry out the program's responsibilities, which operational unit do you think would be best? (Check one.)
  - 1. □ Legal office
  - 2. □ Ethics office
  - 3. 
    Regional/field director's office
  - 4. □ Personnel office
  - 5. Other (specify) -----
- 5. Please provide the reasons why you think the program could be best administered in the operational unit you specified in question 4. (Check all that apply.)
  - 1. More staff to administer the program
  - 2. Staff is more qualified to administer the program
  - 3. Staff has a closer relationship to people seeking ethics advice
  - 4. Better computer capability
  - 5. Higher organizational visibility/power
  - 6. Other (specify)

The next several questions ask about which job disciplines administer the ethics program in your field office.

- 6. Which of the following job disciplines in your field office is **primarily responsible** for administration of your office's ethics program? (Check one.)
  - 1. Attorney
  - 2. 
    Management analyst
  - 3. 
    Personnel specialist
  - 4. D Paralegal
  - 5. Other (specify)
- 7. Which of the following job disciplines in your field office, if any, **assist** in the administration of your office's ethics program? (Check all that apply.)
  - 1. Attorney
  - 2. 
    Management analyst
  - 3. D Personnel specialist
  - 4. D Paralegal
  - 5. Other (specify)
- 8. In your opinion, is the job discipline you identified as being the one primarily responsible in question 6 also the most appropriate job discipline to administer the ethics program in your office? (Check one.)
  - 1.  $\Box$  Yes (go to question 11)
  - 2. Probably yes (go to question 11)
  - 3. Uncertain (go to question 11)
  - 4. □ Probably no (continue)
  - 5. D No (continue)
- 9. If you indicated in the previous question that you believe the ethics program is probably not or not administered by the most appropriate job discipline, which do you think would be best? (Check one.)
  - 1. Attorney
  - 2. 
    Management analyst
  - 3. Personnel specialist
  - 4. D Paralegal
  - 5. Other (specify)
- 10. Please provide the reasons why you think the ethics program could be best administered by the job discipline you identified in question 9. (Check all that apply.)
  - 1. Issues are complex and require a high level of knowledge of ethics laws and regulations.
  - 2. Extensive knowledge of ethics laws/regulations is not required for most program aspects.
  - 3. UMuch of the work is administrative; hence, the need for legal opinions is limited.
  - 4. A major portion of the work is closely aligned with the personnel function.
  - 5. D Personnel has better control of who needs to file financial disclosure reports and when.
  - 6. Other (specify) \_

For the next questions, think about your office's ethics program workload and staffing levels.

- 11. In 1997, what was the approximate workload in your field office in each of the following ethics program elements? (Provide the estimated number of reports or employees, as appropriate, next to each program element. If you had no activity in any particular element, enter 0.)
  - 1. Public financial disclosure reports (SF 278) collected/reviewed
  - 2. Confidential financial disclosure reports (OGE 450) collected/reviewed
  - 3. New employees provided initial ethics orientation
  - 4. Employees provided annual verbal ethics briefing (SF 278 filers)
  - 5. Employees provided annual verbal or written briefing (non-SF278 filers)
  - 6. Employees provided advice and counseling (verbal/written)
- 12. How many employees in your field office, including yourself, work on the ethics program and approximately how much of their time do they spend on it? (Provide the number of employees next to the percentage of time they spend working on the ethics program. For example, 2 employees spend 80% or more of their time and 1 employee spends less than 5% of his/her time working on ethics program issues.)
  - 1. 80% or more
  - 2. 79% to 50%
  - 3. 49% to 20%
  - 4. 19% to 5%
  - 5. less than 5%
- 13. In your opinion, is the staffing level (number of ethics staff and amount of time spent on the program given the workload) adequate to effectively administer your office's ethics program? (Check one.)
  - 1. I Yes
  - 2. D Probably yes
  - 3. Uncertain
  - 4. D Probably no
  - 5. 🗆 No
- 14. In your opinion, has the ethics program staff in your field office, including yourself, received adequate ethics-related training to effectively administer your office's program? (Check one.)
  - 1.□ Yes
  - 2. D Probably yes
  - 3. Uncertain
  - 4. Probably no
  - 5. 🗆 No



#### **ETHICS PROGRAM OPERATIONS**

For the next questions we would like to obtain your views on the operation of your field office's ethics program over the last year. For example, we would like to know if your office had or did not have significant difficulty collecting financial disclosure reports from those employees who were required to file, reviewing financial disclosure reports within the required time frame, getting employees to show up for required annual ethics briefings, and communicating with your agency's Designated Agency Ethics Official (DAEO).

15. Think back over the last year. For each of the following ethics program elements or functions, indicate those for which your office has generally experienced no significant problems, significant problems that have been resolved, or significant problems that still exist. (Check one column for each row.)

	No Significant Problems	Significant Problems Resolved	Significant Problems Still Exist	No Basis to Judge
<ol> <li>Public financial disclosure report collection</li> <li>Public financial disclosure report review</li> <li>Confidential disclosure report collection</li> <li>Confidential disclosure report review</li> <li>New employee identification</li> <li>New employee initial ethics orientation</li> <li>Annual verbal briefing SF 278 filers</li> <li>Annual verbal briefing non-SF 278 filers</li> <li>Annual written briefing non-SF 278 filers</li> <li>Employee attendance at ethics briefings</li> <li>Insufficient number of ethics staff</li> <li>Communications with the DAEO</li> <li>Ethics training for ethics officials</li> <li>Materials/methods for conducting training</li> <li>Ethics advice and counseling</li> <li>Other (specify)</li> </ol>				

16. For the ethics program elements or functions which you indicated have significant problems that still exist, briefly tell us what are the specific problems and for which elements or functions. (Specify.)

### BUDGET

Many agencies have recently experienced budget reductions. The ethics program, among others, may have been affected by these reductions. We would like your opinion on the effect any reductions have had on your office's ethics program.

- 17. To what extent, if at all, have budget reductions at your office or agency negatively affected your office's ethics program in the past year? (Check one.)
  - 1. Don't know (go to question 20)
  - 2. □ No budget reductions (go to question 20)
  - 3. □ To little or no extent (go to question 20)
  - 4. □ To some extent (continue)
  - 5. 
    To a moderate extent (continue)
  - 6. 
    To a great extent (continue)
  - 7. □ To a very great extent (continue)
- 18. What aspects of your office's ethics program have been negatively affected because of budget reductions? (Check all that apply.)
  - 1. Collecting and/or reviewing public financial disclosure reports
  - 2. Collecting and/or reviewing confidential financial disclosure reports
  - 3. □ Providing ethics advice and counseling
  - 4. 
    Providing initial ethics orientation
  - 5. Conducting annual verbal ethics briefings for SF 278 filers
  - 6. Conducting verbal ethics briefings for non-SF 278 filers
  - 7. Distributing written ethics briefings for non-SF 278 filers
  - 8. 
     Ethics training for ethics officials
  - 9. Other (specify)
- 19. What steps, if any, have you taken or do you plan to take to cope with the effects of the budget cuts on your office's ethics program? (Specify)

#### **PROGRAM SUPPORT**

The next questions ask your opinion about your satisfaction with the level of support for the ethics program provided by management at your field office and your agency.

- 20. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the level of support the ethics program receives from **management at your field office**? For example, are the resources provided sufficient, does the program have a high visibility, etc. (Check one.)
  - 1. □ Very Satisfied
  - 2. C Satisfied
  - 3. □ As satisfied as dissatisfied
  - 4. Dissatisfied
  - 5. □ Very dissatisfied
  - 6. □ No basis to judge
  - 7. □ I am management

- 21. In your opinion, what kinds of additional support does the ethics program need from **management at your field office**? (Check all that apply.)
  - 1. ☐ Human resources
  - 2. ☐ Monetary resources
  - 3. □ Ethics training for ethics officials
  - 4. Improved dissemination of ethics information/materials
  - 5. Higher visibility of ethics program
  - 6. □ No additional support
  - 7. Other (specify)
- 22. Now think about support for your program from your **agency headquarters**. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the level of support received from **management at your agency headquarters** (including the DAEO) in administering your office's ethics program? For example, are resources designated by headquarters sufficient, does the program have a high visibility, is ethics information communicated in a timely manner, etc? (Check one.)
  - 1. □ Very Satisfied
  - 2. 
    Satisfied
  - 3. □ As satisfied as dissatisfied
  - 4. Dissatisfied
  - 5. U Very dissatisfied
  - 6. □ No basis to judge
- 23. In your opinion, what kinds of additional support, if any, are needed from **management at your agency headquarters** to help you more effectively administer your office's ethics program? (Check all that apply.)
  - 1. □ Human resources
  - 2. ☐ Monetary resources
  - 3. Ethics training for ethics officials
  - 4. Improved dissemination of ethics information/materials
  - 5. □ Higher visibility of ethics program
  - 6. □ No additional support
  - 7. Other (specify)

#### ETHICS PROGRAM EVALUATION

For the next few questions think about any reviews that have been conducted to evaluate the operation of your field office's ethics program.

- 24. By what methods, if any, has your field office's ethics program been evaluated or monitored to determine if it is in compliance with executive branch ethics laws and regulations? (Check all that apply.)
  - 1. 
    Field office internal review
  - 2. DAEO internal review
  - 3. □ Agency Inspector General review
  - 4. □ OGE annual questionnaire
  - 5. □ OGE ethics program review
  - 6. 
    Evaluation never performed (go to question 28)
  - 7. □ Don't know (go to question 28)
  - 8. D Other (specify) \_\_\_\_

- 25. When was the most recent evaluation of your office's ethics program completed?
  - 1. 🗆 1998
  - 2. 🗆 1997
  - 3. 🗆 1996
  - 4. 
    Prior to 1996
  - 5. 
    Don't know
- 26. What were the results of the evaluation? (Check one.)
  - 1. 
    The ethics program was in compliance with ethics laws and regulations.
  - 2. 
    The ethics program was generally in compliance except for minor problems.
  - 3. The ethics program was not in compliance in one or more significant program elements.
  - 4. □ Don't know.
- 27. In your opinion, has your office's ethics program improved since the last evaluation?
  - 1. □ Yes
  - 2. □ Probably yes
  - 3. Uncertain
  - 4. □ Probably no
  - 5. 🗆 No
  - 6. □ No basis to judge

### TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In order to better focus OGE's training development resources, we would like to know more about your field office's ethics program training needs. To the extent possible, please answer the following questions from the perspective of the ethics staff as a whole. If you cannot answer from that perspective or if you are the only staff, answer for yourself.

28. Think back over the last year. Identify the topics on which you have provided ethics advice or made decisions and the extent of the research generally conducted in order to provide the advice or make the decisions. (Check one column for each row. Check "No basis to judge" if a particular topic was not addressed.)

		Little or No	Moderate	Extensive	No Basis
		Rese <u>arc</u> h	Research	<b>Research</b>	<u>To</u> Judge
1.	18 U.S.C. 202 (special Government employe	es)			
2.	18 U.S.C. 203/205 (representation)				
3.	18 U.S.C. 207 (post employment)				
4.	18 U.S.C. 208 (conflicting financial interests)				
5.	18 U.S.C. 209 (supplementation of salary)				
6.	Gifts from outside sources				
7.	Gifts between employees				
8.	Impartiality in performance of official duties				
9.	Seeking other employment				
10.	Misuse of position, resources, information				
11.	Outside employment/activities				
12.	Review of public reports (SF 278)				
13.	Review of confidential reports (OGE 450)				
14.	Other (specify)				

- 29. Which of the following ethics-related materials and information do you have readily available to you? (Check all that apply.)
  - 1. OGE SF 278 review guide

  - 3. 
     Ethics laws Conflict of Interest Statutes, Ethics in Government Act, etc.
  - 4. OGE regulations Standards of Ethical Conduct, Training, 18 U.S.C. 208 Exemptions, etc.
  - 5. 
    OGE DAEOgrams
  - 6. 
    OGE Newsgram
  - 7. OGE Informal Advisory Letters/Formal Opinions
  - 8. OGE training materials (excluding videotapes)
  - 9. OGE training videotapes
  - 10. □ None of the above
- 30. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that you have sufficient ethics-related materials and information on each of the following topics in order to give ethics advice or make decisions? (Check one column for each row.)

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	No basis to judge
<ol> <li>18 U.S.C. 202 (SGE)</li> <li>18 U.S.C. 203/205 (representation</li> <li>18 U.S.C. 207 (post employment)</li> <li>18 U.S.C. 208 (conflicting fin. int.)</li> <li>18 U.S.C. 209 (salary supp.)</li> <li>Gifts from outside sources</li> <li>Gifts from outside sources</li> <li>Gifts between employees</li> <li>Impartiality in performance of duties</li> <li>Seeking other employment</li> <li>Misuse of position, resources, info</li> <li>Outside employment/activities</li> <li>Review of public reports</li> <li>Review of confidential reports</li> <li>Other (specify)</li></ol>						

Primary Secondary Don't use/

31. Which of the following sources are your primary sources for obtaining ethics-related materials and information and which are secondary sources? (Check one column for each row.)

	Source	Source	NA
<ol> <li>OGE (other than OGE's Web site)</li> <li>OGE's Web site</li> <li>Your own agency (other than the Web site)</li> <li>Your own agency's Web site</li> <li>Other organizations or Web sites</li> <li>Other (specify)</li> </ol>			

- 32. In your opinion, on which topics, if any, do you need training or additional training? (Check all that apply.)
  - 1. 🗆 18 U.S.C. 202 (SGE)
  - 2. 
     18 U.S.C. 203/205 (representation)
  - 3. 
    18 U.S.C. 207 (post employment)
  - 4. 
    18 U.S.C. 208 (conflicting financial interests)
  - 5. 
    18 U.S.C. 209 (supplementation of salary)
  - 6.  $\Box$  Gifts from outside sources
  - 7. □ Gifts between employees
  - 8. 
    Impartiality in performance of official duties
  - 9. 
    Seeking other employment
  - 10. 
    Misuse of position, resources, information
  - 11. 
    Outside employment/activities
  - 12. 
    Review of public financial disclosure reports
  - 13. 
    Review of confidential financial disclosure reports
  - 14. 
    Presentation skills for ethics trainers
  - 15. □ No training is needed
  - 16. □ Other (specify)\_\_\_\_

To determine where OGE should consider scheduling regional ethics training classes for ethics officials, we need to know where the demand is highest. Again, to the extent possible, please answer from the perspective of the entire ethics staff.

- 33. Which of the following ethics-related events, if any, would you be interested in attending? (Check all that apply.)
  - 1. 
    Regional ethics training class for ethics officials
  - 2. 
    Regional lunchtime speakers' program
  - 3. □ Satellite broadcast
  - 4. □ Would not attend (go to question 35)
  - 5. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_
- 34. If you would be interested in attending a two- to three-day ethics training class on a variety of topics, in which one of the following cities would you probably attend? If the city in which your office is located is not listed, select the one city to which you would probably be authorized to go for the training. (CHECK ONE.)
  - Albuquerque, NM
     Anchorage, AK
     Atlanta, GA
     Billings, MT
     Boston, MA
     Chicago, IL
     Cleveland, OH
     Dallas/Fort Worth, TX
     Denver, CO
     Indianapolis, IN
     Kansas City, KS/MO
     Anchorage, NK
  - 12. 🗌 Las Vegas, NV
  - 13. 
    Los Angeles, CA
  - 14. 
    Memphis, TN
  - 15. 🗆 Miami, FL

- 16. 🗆 Minneapolis, MN
- 17. New Orleans, LA
- 18. I New York, NY
- 19. 🗌 Oklahoma City, OK
- 20. D Philadelphia, PA
- 21. D Phoenix, AZ
- 22. D Pittsburgh, PA
- 23. D Portland, OR
- 24. Salt Lake City, UT
- 25. 🔲 San Diego, CA
- 26. 🗆 San Francisco, CA
- 27. 🗌 San Juan, PR
- 28. 🛛 Seattle, WA
- 29. 🗌 Washington, DC
- 30. U Would not attend

We would also like to know whether or not your field office has implemented or plans to implement changes to the way you provide annual ethics briefings and what types of training methods you would like to use for **conducting** ethics training in the future.

35. The 1997 interim rule amendments to OGE's ethics training regulation, among other things, give agencies options as to the method by which they provide annual ethics briefings for covered employees who are **not** public financial disclosure report filers. For those covered employees, annual training may now be provided by means of written briefings for up to two out of every three years or, as previously required, annual verbal briefings may be continued.

We would like to know whether or not your field office has implemented/will implement the change to provide written briefings instead of verbal briefings and, if so, when was it/will it be implemented? (Check one.)

- 1. 🗆 In 1997
- 2. 🗆 In 1998
- 3. □ Sometime after 1998
- 4. Will not be implemented
- 5. Don't know if the change will be implemented
- 36. What types of training methods would you like OGE to provide for your use for **conducting** ethics training over the next few years? **Select your top 3 choices.** (Check up to 3.)
  - 1. 
    Training is not conducted by this office
  - 2. UVideotapes (on a variety of ethics-related topics)
  - 3. Audiotapes (on a variety of ethics-related topics)
  - 4. □ Teleconferencing
  - 5. □ Satellite broadcast
  - 6. 
    Interactive computer-based training
  - 7. □ Group discussions/case studies
  - 8. 🗆 Quizzes
  - 9. 
    Lectures
  - 10. 
    Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

OGE is developing computer-based ethics training. In order for us to direct our resources most efficiently, we would like to know a few specifics about your office's computer-related capabilities and the level of computer access for employees who are required to receive ethics training.

- 37. Which of the following statements best describes your use of OGE's Web site on the Internet? (Check one.) (Stop by for a visit at WWW.USOGE.GOV)
  - 1. 
    I have access to and have used information from OGE's Web site.
  - 2. □ I have access to but have not used OGE's Web site.
  - 3. □ I have Internet access but I was not aware that there was an OGE Web site.
  - 4. □ I do not have Internet access.

38. To the best of your knowledge, which of the following computer-related capabilities are available to the employees in your field office who are required to receive ethics training and where is access to those capabilities located? (Check one column for each row.)

	At each employee's desk	Shared among several employees	Not available	Don't know
1. Computer with a CD-ROM player				
2. Computer with audio capability				
3. Computer with video capability				
4. Computer with Internet access				
5. Computer with external E-mail				
6. Computer without above capabilities	; 📙			

- 39. We would also like to know whether or not your computer operating system is Windows and, if it is, which version? (Check one.)
  - 1. U Windows 3.1
  - 2. U Windows 95
  - 3. □ Other operating system
  - 4. Don't know

# YOU HAVE THE LAST WORD

Thank you for completing this survey. Your opinions and ideas are valuable to us, so we would like to give you another opportunity to express them.

40. What ideas and comments do you have regarding how field offices, agencies, and/or OGE can help improve the administration of field office ethics programs?

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