

United States Office of Government Ethics

Compliance Division

Ethics Program Review

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

Results in Brief

The United States Office of Government Ethics (OGE) conducted a review of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's (CFPB) ethics program in May 2013. Our review found CFPB's ethics program to be in substantial compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies.

Highlights

- The CFPB Director exercises personal leadership in support of the CFPB ethics program.
- In addition to having written procedures governing the financial disclosure program, which are required, the Ethics Office has developed standard operating procedures for all elements of the ethics program.
- Ethics-related requirements are included in position vacancy announcements (or their equivalent).
- The Ethics Office requires those seeking to enter public filing positions to submit a draft public report to help screen for potential conflicts-of-interest prior to a job offer being made.
- The Ethics Office provides in-person training throughout the year to different audiences within CFPB to help emphasize specific ethics rules and requirements.
- In-person, post-employment briefings are provided to departing employees.
- The Ethics Office collects forwarding contact information from termination public filers to help ensure their reports are timely filed and follow-on information can be obtained.

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Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

OGE provides leadership for the purpose of promoting an ethical workforce, preventing conflicts of interest, and supporting good governance. The purpose of a review is to identify and report on the strengths and weaknesses of an ethics 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. OGE has the authority to evaluate the effectiveness of executive agency ethics programs. See Title IV of the Ethics in Government Act (EIGA) and 5 CFR part 2638.

To assess CFPB's ethics program, OGE examined a variety of documents provided by CFPB ethics officials. These included: the annual ethics program questionnaire; public and confidential financial disclosure reports that were required to be filed in 2012; and a sample of advice and counseling provided to CFPB employees. In addition, members of OGE's Program Review Branch met with CFPB ethics officials to obtain additional information, clarify certain matters, and verify the accuracy and origin of data collected. This is OGE's first program review of CFPB's ethics program.

Agency Background

In July 2010, Congress passed and the President signed into law the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (Dodd-Frank Act), as part of an effort to overhaul financial regulation and to make lending, especially mortgages and credit cards, fairer and more transparent for consumers. To increase accountability for the supervision and enforcement of laws governing consumer financial products and services, the Dodd-Frank Act created CFPB as an independent regulatory Federal executive branch agency tasked with the responsibility of watching out for American consumers in the market for consumer financial products and services.

CFPB formally began operations on July 21, 2011 and is tasked with administering and enforcing consumer financial protection laws, supervising depository and non-depository institutions, and preventing unfair, deceptive, and abusive acts by financial service firms. Under the leadership and direction of the CFPB Director, CFPB employs more than 1,000 employees located throughout its headquarters office in Washington, DC and its four regional offices across the nation.

Program Administration

The ethics program is organizationally located in CFPB's General Law and Ethics Division, hereafter referred to as the Ethics Office, which is located within CFPB's Legal Division. In January 2012, the CFPB Director appointed the Deputy General Counsel for General Law and Ethics to the Designated Agency Ethics Official (DAEO) position and the Assistant General Counsel for General Law and Ethics to the position of Alternate DAEO (ADAEO), in accordance with 5 C.F.R. § 2638.202(c). Assisting the DAEO and ADAEO is a staff of four

full-time ethics officials, which consist of two Senior Ethics Counsels, an Ethics Program Manager, and a part-time paralegal. The DAEO also designates three other employees to occasionally serve as Deputy Ethics Officials for varying purposes within the program.

The Ethics Office is responsible for carrying out the majority of ethics-related functions, including: developing policies and procedures for the overall operation of CFPB's ethics program; administering and monitoring CFPB's financial disclosure program; implementing the ethics training program; and providing employees with ethics advice and counseling services. However, other offices have responsibility for other aspects of the ethics program. The Office of Human Capital (OHC) provides personnel support which includes: notifying the Ethics Office when employees join or leave the agency and assisting persons interested in employment with CFPB by informing them of the Bureau's ethics rules and restrictions. Additional support is provided to help meet initial ethics orientation and post-employment requirements. The Office of Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) has authority to approve the agency's acceptance of travel payments from non-Federal sources under the authority of 31 U.S.C § 1353.

CFBP ethics officials have established written procedures for the administration of all elements of CFPB's ethics program. These procedures are included in a document titled: *Ethics Office Standard Operating Procedures*. While written procedures for administering the public and confidential financial disclosure systems are required (as discussed later in this report) OGE considers establishing written procedures for other elements of the ethics program to be a model practice. Written procedures strengthen the ethics program by providing consistency and continuity.

Agency Leadership Support

The CFPB Director has demonstrated support of the agency's ethics program. At the beginning of his tenure in early 2012, the Director sent an "all-hands" electronic message to all employees within the agency stating his expectation that employees conduct themselves in accordance with the highest levels of integrity and ethical standards and to keep in mind that the appearance of an ethical problem may be just as damaging as an actual ethical problem. In addition, as part of the New Employee Orientation, a video clip message from the Director is played to all new employees. It should be noted that this message also notified employees of his DAEO and ADAEO appointments and emphasized that employees should consult with an ethics official and with their supervisor when they have questions about an ethical issue or about their ethical responsibilities. OGE considers this direct, high-level support of the ethics program to be a model practice.

Model Practices

OGE identifies model practices and shares them when it appears they may benefit agency ethics programs. The following are model practices OGE noted CFPB implemented to enhance its ethics program:

- The CFPB Director visibly demonstrated support of the ethics program by expressing his expectations regarding ethical conduct.

- The Ethics Office has developed standard operating procedures for all elements of the ethics program.
- CFPB includes notification of ethics requirements and prohibitions within position vacancy announcements (or their equivalent).

Financial Disclosure

Title I of the Ethics in Government Act requires that agencies ensure confidence in the integrity of the federal government by demonstrating that officials are able to carry out their duties without compromising the public trust. High-level federal officials publicly disclose their personal financial interests using the OGE Form 278. Title I also authorizes OGE to establish a confidential financial disclosure system, in which less senior executive branch personnel in certain designated positions may be required to complete the OGE Form 450. Financial disclosure serves to prevent, identify, and resolve conflicts of interest by providing for a systematic review of the financial interests of officers and employees. The financial disclosure reports assist agencies in administering their ethics programs and also assist in providing counseling to employees. *See* 5 C.F.R. part 2634.

To evaluate the administration of CFPB's financial disclosure program, OGE examined all available public reports and a judgmental sample of confidential reports that were required to be reviewed and certified in 2012. According to internal records provided to OGE by the Ethics Office, 55 public and 627 confidential reports were required to be filed in 2012. OGE examined all 55 public reports (12 new entrant, 36 annual and 7 termination reports) and selected 57 confidential reports (27 new entrant and 30 annual reports) to determine timeliness of filing, review, and certification, as well as, to assess the overall quality of review.

Written Procedures Governing Financial Disclosure

Section 402(d)(1) of the EIGA requires that each executive branch agency establish written procedures for collecting, reviewing, evaluating, and, where applicable, making publicly available financial disclosure reports filed by the agency's officers and employees. Establishing written procedures is an essential step in ensuring that agency personnel follow an appropriate methodology when filing, collecting, reviewing, and evaluating financial disclosure reports.

As required by EIGA, CFPB has developed written procedures for administering both the public and confidential financial disclosure systems. OGE found these procedures to be in compliance with applicable statutory requirements and OGE guidance.

Electronic Filing System

In 2012, CFPB launched online financial disclosure filing, or e-filing, to help manage the financial disclosure filing requirements for both public and confidential filers. Both CFPB

public and confidential filers' are required to use this system to electronically prepare, submit, and digitally sign their financial disclosure reports.

OGE notes that the DAEO and ADAEO are certifying officials for public reports filed by the Director, Deputy Director, and all CFPB Associate Directors. For all other public reports certifying officials may include the Senior Ethics Counsels and the Ethics Program Manager. With regard to confidential reports, the certifying official is often the filer's immediate supervisor who reviews the report to help identify potential conflicts-of-interest after the Ethics Office has conducted its initial review for technical and substantive deficiencies. OGE's examination of the financial disclosure program occurred during CFPB's transition to this new electronic filing system.

Public Financial Disclosure System

Of the 55 public reports OGE examined, 89 percent were filed timely. However, OGE noticed that 84 percent of these reports were not certified within the required 60-day timeframe. For those reports not certified within the required 60-day timeframe, OGE found documentation that ethics officials were seeking additional information from the majority of these filers. Reviewer notes showed evidence of a very detailed and careful review of these reports by ethics officials, which in many cases resulted in the opportunity for the Ethics Office to render advice/counseling to filers aimed at preventing ethics-related violations. OGE did not detect, during its examination of these reports, any actual or potential conflicts of interest that the Ethics Office had not already addressed during its review.

While OGE is making no formal recommendation for improvement, OGE reminds the Ethics Office that public reports which do not require additional information or remedial action should be certified within 60 days of each report's receipt date.

Ethics Pre-Employment Vetting Review

The CFPB Ethics Office has established a pre-employment vetting process for applicants seeking executive positions whose incumbents are required to file public financial disclosure reports. Individuals who are initially selected are required to submit pre-employment draft public reports to the Ethics Office. The Ethics Office reviews the reports for potential conflicts in relation to the duties of the position. Based on the analysis and recommendations of the Ethics Office, the CFPB hiring official determines whether to hire the prospective employee given any applicable ethics restrictions and concerns identified by the Ethics Office. If the hiring official decides to proceed with hiring, the Ethics Office will provide written communication to the prospective employee detailing their ethics restrictions, if any, and obtain their agreement to conform to such restrictions.¹ When the prospective employee has been cleared, the Ethics Office notifies OHC so they can make a formal job offer. OGE examined the written analyses of 15 prospective employees, all of whom were approved by the Ethics Office, and found them all to be thoughtful

¹ This communication serves as ethics guidance addressing their specific circumstances as reported on their public report and as a supplement to the initial ethics orientation training that they will receive upon their appointment to CFPB.

and clearly written to address potential ethics issues that could arise if the prospective employee is selected for the position. Moreover, we found the application of the relevant laws and regulations to be consistent, appropriate and more than adequately documented.

OGE recognizes this as a model agency practice. This practice not only informs prospective employees of potential ethics issues before they begin work at the agency, but also raises awareness of CFPB's ethics program and promotes an ethical culture within the agency.

Confidential Financial Disclosure System

Of the 57 confidential reports OGE selected for examination, 68 percent were timely filed and 68 percent were certified within the required 60-day timeframe. As with the public system, it was clear that ethics officials were appropriately following up with confidential filers to obtain additional information required to certify reports and recorded ongoing communication between the reviewer and filer. OGE did not detect, during its examination of these reports, any actual or potential conflicts of interest that the Ethics Office had not already addressed during its review.

Training for Certifying Officials

Recognized as a model practice, the Ethics Office conducts one hour training sessions to help employees who are responsible for certifying confidential reports to understand their role in the financial disclosure process. This training, which is generally provided in late January and early February, helps to prepare certifying officials to identify and analyze potential conflicts of interest when reviewing a confidential report, work with the Ethics Office to resolve identified ethics issues, and use CFPB's e-filing system.

Model Practices

- As a condition of pre-employment, CFPB screens prospective employees for potential conflicts and provides them with written notification of ethics restrictions and responsibilities of government service before a final offer of employment is made.
- In-person training is provided by the Ethics Office to employees who are responsible for the review and certification of confidential reports.

Supplemental Ethics Regulation

As authorized by Executive Order 12674 and implemented by 5 C.F.R. § 2635.105, an agency may modify or supplement the Standards of Ethical Conduct, with the concurrence of OGE, to meet the particular needs of that agency. A supplemental agency regulation is issued jointly by the agency and OGE and is published in title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

On April 27, 2012, with the concurrence of OGE, CFPB published in the Federal Register an interim final rule aimed at preventing conflicts of interest and supplementing OGE's Standards of Ethical Conduct rules. The rule, which became final on June 26, 2012, establishes restrictions

on outside employment and business activities; prohibitions on the ownership of certain financial interests; restrictions on seeking, obtaining or renegotiating credit and indebtedness; prohibitions on recommendations concerning debt and equity interests; disqualification requirements based on credit or indebtedness; prohibitions on purchasing certain assets; and restrictions on participating in particular matters involving outside entities.

To determine compliance with CFPB's prior approval requirement, OGE limited its review to the outside activities that were reported on both the public and confidential financial disclosure reports that OGE selected for examination. OGE identified 10 outside employment activities listed on the appropriate schedule/part of the public/confidential reports and confirmed that all filers had received prior approval, when appropriate, before engaging in the outside employment

Education and Training

OGE found CFPB's education and training program to exceed the minimum training requirements found at subpart G of 5 C.F.R. part 2638, as evidenced by the agency's commitment to provide, each year, in-person, verbal initial ethics orientation briefings. CFPB's 2013 training plan provides for a mixture of both in-person and computer-based ethics training, covering a range of ethics issues, targeted to different audiences within CFPB. In addition to conducting the requisite initial and annual ethics training, the Ethics Office conducts a variety of supplementary training throughout the year.

Initial Ethics Orientation

Agencies must provide new employees with an initial ethics orientation (IEO) that includes the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch (the Standards), any agency supplemental standards, contact information for the agency's ethics officials, and one hour to review the materials. This training must be provided within 90 days from the time an employee begins working for an agency. *See* 5 C.F.R. § 2638.703.

CFPB meets and exceeds these minimum IEO requirements by providing all new employees with an in-person, verbal IEO briefing as part of CFPB's multi-day new employee orientation, coordinated by the Office of Human Capital. Orientation occurs during an employees' first week of employment.²

During the on-site portion of this review, OGE observed a live initial ethics orientation training session provided by the Ethics Office and found it to be informative, compliant with content requirements and well-suited to the variety of ethics issues that new CFPB employees may face while on the job. The instructor's use of case-based scenarios within the presentation and a question-and-answer format was useful and effective in engaging the employees in attendance. Training completion is tracked using a sign-in sheet that is collected by the instructor at the end of each class. As a follow-up to the brief, usually on the same day, the Ethics Office emails those in attendance a copy of the IEO presentation to keep for future reference, a copy of the

² To help implement the IEO requirements, the Office of Human Capital provides the Ethics Office on a bi-weekly basis a report of all new hires and their filing status.

Standards and CFPB's supplemental standards, the contact information for ethics officials, the Director's "all-hands" message on ethics, and the sign-in sheet to keep as confirmation of their attendance.

Supplemental Ethics Regulation Training

In addition to the requisite initial ethics orientation, the Ethics Office requires all new employees to receive an additional hour of mandatory training on CFPB's supplemental ethics regulation found at 5 C.F.R. § 9401. This training, which is to be completed during the first 90 days of employment at CFPB, is offered by the Ethics Office to new employees through a combination of online and in-person training sessions. According to CFPB's training plan, 13 one-hour training sessions were planned for 2013.

Annual Ethics Training

Executive agencies are required by 5 C.F.R. § 2638.704 and 5 C.F.R. § 2638.705 to provide covered employees with annual ethics training. The training must include a review of the Principles, the Standards, any agency supplemental standards, the Federal conflict of interest statutes, and the names, titles, office address, and telephone numbers of the DAEO and other agency ethics officials available to advise the employee of ethics issues. Annual ethics training is a vital component of an agency's ethics program and is intended to assist employees in carrying out their official responsibilities in a manner consistent with ethics-related statutes and regulations. Additionally, annual training helps to prevent violations and maintain the public's confidence that Government officials act impartially and free of conflicts of interest. OGE notes that in 2012, the Ethics Office provided in-person annual ethics training to all employees addressing CFPB's new supplemental regulation. Employees were also directed to the Ethics Office's intranet page to view the Principles, the Standards, and the Federal conflict of interest statutes. The contact information for the Ethics Office was also made available. According to CFPB's annual questionnaire, 98% of CFPB employees had completed the training by the end of 2012.

To help satisfy the annual training requirement for 2013, CFPB's annual training plan indicated that in-person training will be provided to public filers while confidential filers will satisfy their requirement through a combination of online and in-person training. As the Ethics Office prepares to satisfy the annual training requirement for 2013, OGE reminds the Ethics Office that all covered employees should receive their annual ethics training by the end of the year.

Additional Outreach Efforts

OGE found the Ethics Office to be proactive in keeping CFPB employees aware of ethics-related issues throughout the year. In particular, OGE identified three training initiatives during its examination of the education and training program:

- As previously mentioned, the Ethics Office conducts one hour training sessions to help employees who are responsible for certifying financial disclosure reports understand their

role in the financial disclosure process. In preparation for the 2013 annual filing cycle, 66 certifying officials were trained, as documented in CFPB training records.³

- In 2012, the Ethics Office provided in-person ethics training to new CFPB examiners during their first week of New Examiner Training. CFPB examiners are responsible for conducting examinations at banks and different types of non-bank consumer financial services companies. The purpose of this training is to discuss the variety of ethics issues that new Examiners may face while conducting field examinations.
- The Ethics Office also provides targeted training regarding pertinent ethics topics as requested by offices and divisions within CFPB. In 2012, the Ethics Office provided specialized ethics training to the Office of Technology and Innovation (T&I) that covered unique ethics issues that would likely face T&I employees during the course of their duties. This training, developed in cooperation with management officials in T&I, allowed the Ethics Office to use scenarios tailored to the needs of the T&I Division.

OGE believes these training opportunities help to raise awareness of ethics issues and ultimately protect CFPB from problems created by inadvertent violations of ethics rules.

Model Practices

- Ethics officials give employees an in-person overview on the importance of the ethics rules during IEO and provide IEO materials to them for future reference.
- New employees are required to receive one hour of in-person training on CFPB's new supplemental ethics regulation.
- Ethics officials are proactive in raising awareness of ethics-related issues throughout the year.

Advice and Counsel

The DAEO is required to ensure that a counseling program for agency employees concerning all ethics and standards of conduct matters, including post-employment matters, is developed and conducted. *See* 5 C.F.R. § 2638.203. The DAEO may delegate to one or more deputy ethics officials the responsibility for developing and conducting the counseling program. *See* 5 C.F.R. § 2638.204.

OGE's examination of the advice and counseling services found CFPB in compliance with the requirements of § 2638.203 and 5 C.F.R. § 2638.204. OGE also found the advice and counseling process to be clearly defined in CFPB's written procedures. These procedures highlight how the Ethics Office determines the appropriate way to respond to an employee's request for advice, either by e-mail or a more formal legal memorandum.

³ Since the majority of these certifying officials are covered employees, and the minimal training requirements found at 5 C.F.R. § 2638.704 and 5 C.F.R. § 2638.705 are discussed, the Ethics Office allows this training to satisfy their annual training requirement. OGE confirmed that this training met the annual training requirement.

To evaluate CFPB's advice and counseling program, OGE examined 38 examples of advice that had been memorialized in writing by the Ethics Office in 2012 and 2013. The examined advice, ranged from impartiality to gift questions, documented the specific issue(s) in question and the basis for the counseling being rendered. The advice was given in a practical, easy-to-comprehend format and appeared consistent with appropriate laws and regulations. The advice was also rendered timely, which is key in preventing conflicts of interest and other ethics violations from occurring.

OGE also found the Ethics Offices' approach to providing guidance on post-employment restrictions to departing CFPB employees to be effective. As part of CFPB's exit-process, departing employees are provided with written materials that outline the basic post-employment restrictions. The Ethics Office also provides in-person, post-employment briefings to departing public filers. Once briefed, these employees are required to sign an attestation form acknowledging their receipt of the briefing.

During the examination of the attestation form, OGE identified a model agency practice. For purposes of communicating with public filers after they leave CFPB concerning financial disclosure reporting issues, the Ethics Office requires departing public filers to provide on their attestation form a forwarding phone number and email address as well as the date of their last day as a CFPB employee. OGE recognizes that it can be difficult to collect termination public reports within 30 days of a public filer's departure from a covered position as well as obtain follow-on information needed to certify the report. OGE believes this approach helps the Ethics Office address this issue.

Model Practices

- In-person, post-employment briefings are provided to departing employees.
- The Ethics Office collects forwarding contact information from termination public filers to help ensure their reports are timely filed and follow-on information can be obtained.

Conflict Remedies

In accordance with CFPB's implementing procedures, when CFPB employees, their spouse or minor child(ren) hold a prohibited holding, the Ethics Office generally requires the employee to divest of the interest. If divesting of the interest results in a capital gain, the employee may be able to deter paying capital gains tax on the property sold by requesting, through the DAEO, a Certificate of Divestiture (CD) from OGE. According to OGE's internal records, 15 employees have been issued a CD by OGE.

Enforcement

The Dodd-Frank Act established the Office of Inspector General (OIG) within the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (Board), the government agency component of the

broader Federal Reserve System, as the independent oversight authority for CFPB. Within this framework, the OIG conducts audits, investigations, and other reviews for both the Board and the CFPB. During the course of its review, OGE met with representatives on the Inspector General's (IG) staff to discuss CFPB's system of enforcement and to determine the effectiveness of the working relationship between CFPB ethics and OIG officials. OGE determined that CFPB is meeting the requirements of 5 C.F.R. § 2638.203(b)(12) by utilizing the services of the OIG when appropriate, including the referral of matters to and acceptance of matters from the OIG. OGE also determined through discussions, that both offices communicate and coordinate with one another on matters of mutual interest, including ethics-related matters, on a regular basis. OGE finds this to be important since the DAEO is required to ensure that prompt and effective action, including administrative action, is undertaken to remedy ethics violations.

OGE's review of CFPB's system of enforcement also focused on the requirement at 5 C.F.R. § 2638.603 that agencies concurrently notify OGE of all referrals to the Department of Justice (Justice) of alleged violations of the criminal conflict of interest statutes, declinations to prosecute by Justice, follow-up actions on referrals, and the disposition of referrals. OGE confirmed that the OIG is responsible for referring potential violations to Justice on behalf of CFPB and for concurrently notifying OGE of the referral.

While OGE found OIG officials aware of the requirement to concurrently notify OGE when referrals are made to Justice, OIG officials acknowledged that they have not routinely been doing so. According to internal information provided by the Ethics Office, between June 2012 and March 2013, seven cases were referred by the Ethics Office to the OIG for investigation on behalf of CFPB regarding potential violations of the criminal conflict of interest statutes. OGE followed-up with OIG officials on the status of these seven cases and was advised that of the seven cases, two had been referred to Justice for alleged violations of 18 U.S.C. § 207 (post-employment restrictions) and § 208 (acts affecting a personal financial interest).

Since OGE had not been concurrently notified of these two referrals, OGE discussed the lack of concurrent notification with OIG officials. However, prior to the conclusion of this review, OGE received information on the required OGE Form 202, Notification of Conflict of Interest Referral regarding the two referred cases. In both instances, Justice declined to prosecute. Although the five remaining cases were still pending review and preliminary investigation, OGE was given assurance that should any of these cases result in a referral to Justice OGE would be concurrently notified of these and all future referrals.

To address OGE's concern that the CFPB DAEO may not always be aware of when a referral is made by the OIG to Justice regarding criminal conflicts of interest, OIG officials also agreed to concurrently notify the CFPB DAEO when referrals are made to Justice. OGE believes this will help the DAEO better administer CFPB's system of enforcement. Based on the actions already taken and the assurances received from OIG officials, OGE is not making a formal recommendation for improvement in this area.

1353 Travel Acceptances

Federal agencies may allow employees to accept payments from non-Federal sources for travel, subsistence, and related expenses incurred on official travel under the authority of the General Services Administration (GSA) regulation at 41 C.F.R. chapter 304, implementing 31 U.S.C. § 1353. Semiannual reports of payments accepted under 31 U.S.C. § 1353 must be submitted to OGE by May 31 and November 30 of each year.

During CFPB's initial start-up period as a new federal agency, CFPB employees were not permitted to accept on behalf of the agency travel payments from non-Federal sources under the authority of §1353. According to the ADAEO, this was due to the Ethics Office's initial uncertainty over the agency's statutory gift acceptance authorities and limitations under the Dodd-Frank Act. As a result, negative reports were submitted by CFPB to OGE for the first two semiannual reporting periods covering October 1, 2011 through March 31, 2012 and April 1, 2012 through September 30, 2012. OGE identified that both were submitted to OGE in a timely manner using the required GSA standard form (SF) 326.

According to the ADAEO, the Ethics Office has since analyzed the legal issues regarding CFPB's funding and statutory gift acceptance authorities. As a result, CFPB now allows its employees to accept payments from non-Federal sources for travel, subsistence, and related expenses incurred on official travel. The authority to approve the acceptance of these types of payments rests with OCFO who is responsible for collecting the information to be reported, drafting its semiannual report of payments of more than \$250 per event, and forwarding the report to OGE.

While the Ethics Office does not have a formally documented role in OCFO's decision-making process,⁴ OGE was advised that the Ethics Office is frequently consulted by OCFO officials to ensure that offers are free from conflict-of-interest concerns and in compliance with §1353. OGE examined the most recent semiannual report submitted by CFPB to OGE covering the reporting period of October 1, 2012 through March 31, 2013, and found 10 payments that had been accepted. This report was timely submitted.

Agency Comments

CFPB was given the opportunity to review a draft version of this report. The agency's comments were incorporated into this report.

⁴ OCFO is currently drafting procedures to administer the acceptance of travel payments from non-Federal sources.