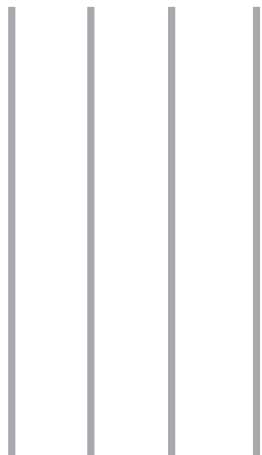


ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

UNITED STATES
OFFICE OF
GOVERNMENT
ETHICS

FISCAL YEAR

2019



MISSION

PROVIDE OVERALL
LEADERSHIP AND
OVERSIGHT OF THE
EXECUTIVE
BRANCH
ETHICS PROGRAM
DESIGNED TO
PREVENT AND
RESOLVE
CONFLICTS OF
INTEREST

Table of Contents

Section I – About OGE.....	1
Section II – Fiscal Year 2019 Performance Highlights.....	5
Section III – Fiscal Year 2019 Performance Report.....	7
Section IV – Managing for Results.....	34

Section I – About OGE

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

Each day, some part of the ethics program is at work in every agency in the executive branch. The program ensures that executive branch leaders 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, ensures that they do not exercise undue influence over their former agencies on behalf of others. Above all, it is working to protect the public’s trust in government.

Institutional Integrity in the Executive Branch

The Ethics in Government Act charges OGE with leading the effort to prevent conflicts of interest in the executive branch. 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. Potential violations of legal authorities established under this framework, including government ethics authorities, are primarily investigated by Inspectors General (IGs) staff members across the executive branch. If IGs find evidence supporting a violation, they notify the Department of Justice, which has authority to prosecute individuals who violate ethics laws.

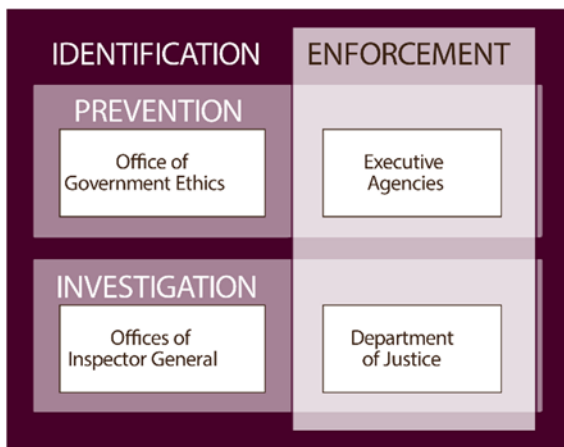


Figure 1: Institutional Integrity

Within this framework, 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.

OGE and Executive Branch Agencies

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.



Figure 2: OGE and the Executive Branch

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

How OGE Provides Leadership and Oversight

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*, a public financial disclosure management application required by the Representative Louise McIntosh Slaughter Stop Trading on Congressional Knowledge (STOCK) Act of 2012;
- oversees a financial disclosure system that reaches more than 26,000 public and more than 380,000 confidential financial disclosure report filers;
- monitors executive branch agency ethics programs and senior leaders' compliance with applicable ethics laws and regulations;

- prepares for presidential transitions and provides assistance to the President and Senate in the presidential appointments process;
- conducts outreach to the general public, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations;
- and makes ethics documents publicly available.



Figure 3: OGE Organizational Chart

OGE’s greatest resource is its multidisciplinary staff of attorneys, ethics and financial experts, as well as other key personnel. OGE is a lean organization, operating at fewer than its 80 authorized full-time equivalents (FTE). OGE is led by a Director who is confirmed by the Senate and appointed to a 5-year term by the President. As shown in

the organizational chart in Figure 3, in addition to the Office of the Director, OGE is divided into four divisions that work together to carry out OGE’s mission.

Long-Term Strategic Goals



Figure 4: Strategic Goals and Objectives Framework

The public can have greater confidence in the integrity of executive branch programs and operations when government decisions are made free from conflicts of interest. OGE’s four strategic goals for fiscal years 2018 through 2022 – uniformity,

accountability, continuity, and engagement – reflect the long-term outcomes that OGE strives to achieve in order to prevent and resolve conflicts of interest.

Strategic Goal I: Advance a Strong, *Uniform* Executive Branch Ethics Program

Strategic Goal II: Hold the Executive Branch *Accountable* for Carrying Out an Effective Ethics Program

Strategic Goal III: Contribute to the *Continuity* of Senior Leadership in the Executive Branch

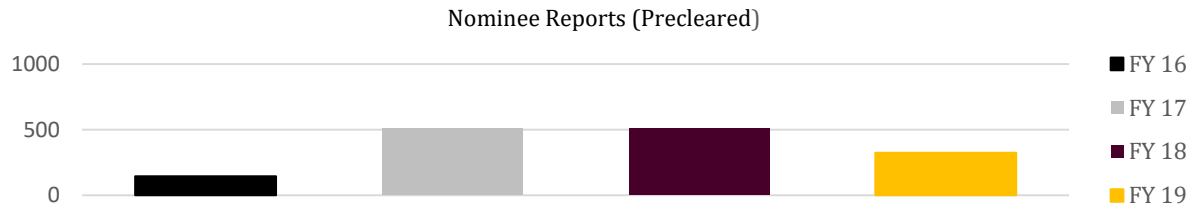
Strategic Goal IV: *Engage* the Public in Overseeing Government Integrity

Starting on page 5, this document describes OGE’s Fiscal Year 2019 Performance Highlights. Page 7 describes OGE’s performance in more detail and provides data related to the performance goals OGE used to measure its progress toward achievement of its strategic objectives.

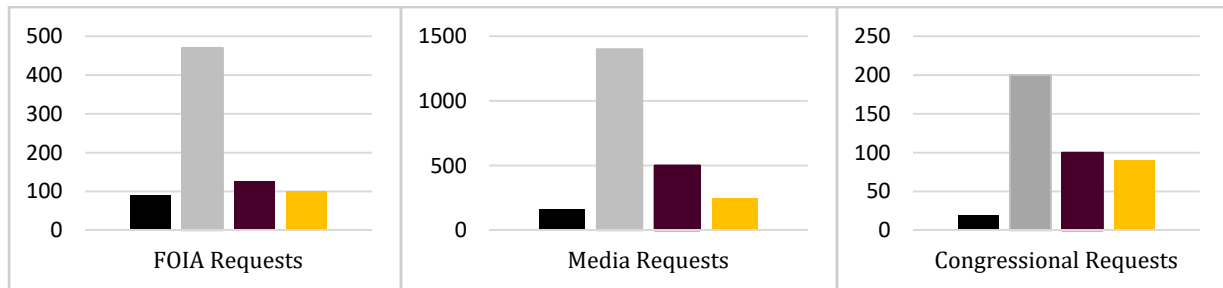
Section II – Fiscal Year 2019 Performance Highlights

OGE’s services and expertise continued to remain in high demand in fiscal year 2019. In particular, OGE was actively engaged in its vital role of supporting the presidential nominations process and responding to a continued demand for transparency and information about OGE’s work from the public, the press, and Congress.

Continuity: Presidential Nominations

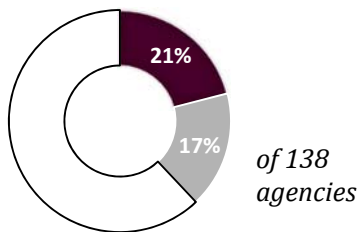


Transparency: Continuing Public Interest



Nearly 4,200 ethics documents released to citizens, press, and good government

Accountability: Agency Ethics Program Reviews



- Reviewed (FY18)
- Reviewed (FY19)
- To be Reviewed (FY20- FY22)

Uniformity: Ongoing Work

Guidance: 21 legal and program advisories publicly issued.

Expert Support: More than 1,400 advice requests answered.

Training: Over 120 OGE training products available online.

Annual Public Financial Disclosures: Nearly 1,800 analyzed.



Integrity: 5th Year of Successful Operation

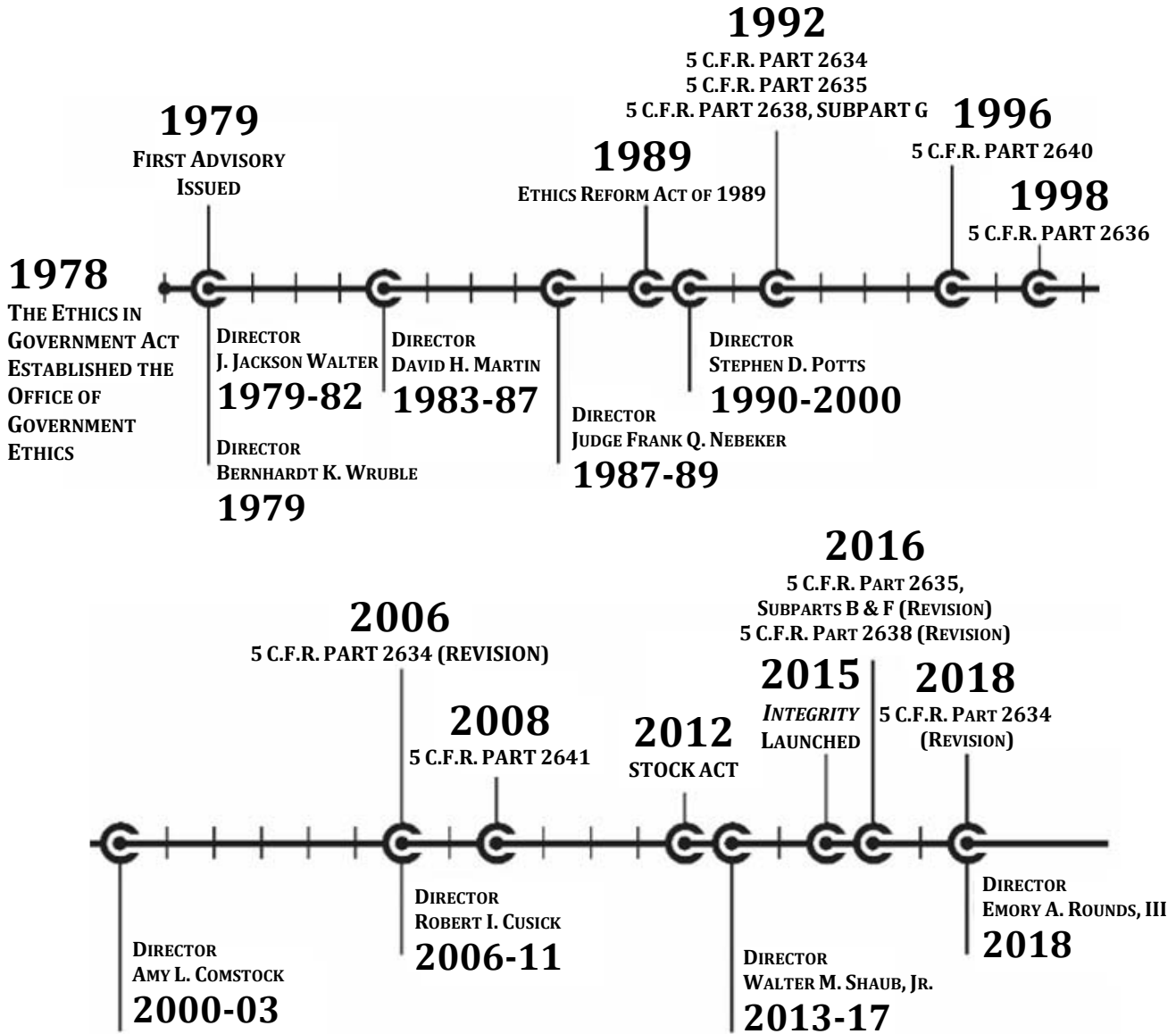
- Majority of public financial filers use *Integrity*
- 5th Successful Independent Security Assessment
- Convened the *Integrity* Executive Branchwide Advisory Council

40 YEARS

PUBLIC SERVICE IS A PUBLIC TRUST

TIMELINE OF THE U.S. OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT ETHICS

★ ★ ★ ★



Section III – Fiscal Year 2019 Performance Report

It is OGE’s mission to ensure the integrity of government programs and operations and to increase public confidence in the impartiality of government decision-making. This important mission is translated into OGE’s strategic goals and objectives. OGE’s success in achieving these goals and objectives is measured by its progress on established performance goals.

This section highlights OGE’s major accomplishments and progress toward achieving its strategic objectives in fiscal year 2019, as measured by its performance goals.¹

Strategic Goal 1: Advance a strong, uniform executive branch ethics program

OGE was established to prevent conflicts of interest on the part of executive branch employees. An absence of a strong, uniform executive branch ethics program with clear and consistent rules, guidance, support, and training could lead to ethical lapses and a loss of public confidence in government.

To achieve its strategic goal of advancing a strong, uniform executive branch ethics program, OGE developed three strategic objectives: (1.1) provide expert guidance and support to stakeholders; (1.2) strengthen the expertise of officials who are integral to the executive branch ethics programs; and (1.3) continuously refine ethics policy and issue interpretive guidance.

Strategic Objective 1.1: Provide expert guidance and support to stakeholders

OGE provided expert guidance and support to stakeholders through quality Desk Officer services; communication with ethics officials and other external stakeholders to share information; assistance for *Integrity* users; and support for the work of the enforcement and international communities. Key highlights of OGE’s work are described below.

¹ The performance goals are based on statistical data from a variety of sources, including post-training evaluations, an annual agency ethics program questionnaire, website analytics, and an annual survey of ethics officials to assess satisfaction with OGE’s services and products.

Assisted and supported agency ethics officials

OGE provides necessary support to agency ethics officials so they can provide uniform and effective ethics guidance to the more than 2.7 million federal employees in the executive branch who serve the American people. OGE provides timely, expert advice on applying ethics laws and regulations, and disseminates up-to-date ethics information ethics practitioners need to do their jobs effectively. OGE’s Desk Officers assist agencies in resolving difficult ethics issues requiring expertise that only the supervising ethics office can provide. In fiscal year

OGE Support for Agency Ethics Officials

- **Desk Officer Program**
- **Quarterly Meetings**
- **DAEO Designation Letter**
- **DAEO Orientation**
- **Welcome Letter from Director**
- **In-Person Trainings for Senior Officials**
- **Online Ethics Learning Events**

2019, OGE Desk Officers and attorneys responded to approximately 1,400 requests for assistance from agencies. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of those requests were related to public financial disclosure. Desk Officers also proactively engaged with agency ethics offices through in-person meetings to provide expertise and support, and to raise awareness of the range and availability of OGE’s services.

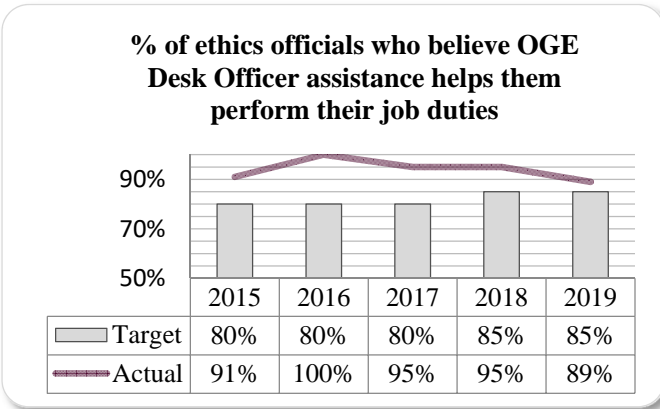


Figure 5: Desk Officer Assistance

In fiscal year 2019, OGE also launched an initiative to provide new Designated and Alternate Designated Agency Ethics Officials

(DAEOs/ADAEOs) with a welcome letter from OGE’s Director with critical details about OGE’s DAEO/ADAEO orientation program and the resources OGE provides to support agency ethics officials. Also, OGE Desk Officers met with new agency ethics officials to provide an overview of the requirements of the ethics program and to introduce them to the services provided by OGE.

Performance Goal: OGE measured the performance of the Desk Officer program by surveying ethics officials who requested assistance during fiscal year 2019. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of survey respondents indicated that Desk Officers helped them to perform their job duties.

Engaged ethics officials and other external stakeholders to share information and shape policy

OGE continued its efforts to timely communicate ethics-related information to ethics officials and other external stakeholders. To support this effort, OGE used an email listserv and its website to provide timely and relevant information to the ethics community.

In fiscal year 2019, OGE informed and collaborated with senior executive branch officials on OGE’s initiatives by organizing numerous meetings, conference calls, focus groups, and webinars. For example, OGE’s Director continued the practice of holding live quarterly meetings for senior agency ethics officials, followed by telephone sessions to recap subjects covered during the meetings for those who could not attend in person. At these meetings, which attended by senior ethics officials from over 80 executive branch agencies, OGE’s senior leaders shared information critical to managing an effective ethics program, encouraged discussion of current ethics issues facing the executive branch, and consulted with agency ethics officials regarding contemplated changes to OGE’s policies and regulations. In response to OGE’s annual survey of ethics officials, ninety-two percent (92%) of respondents indicated that they felt more informed as a result of attending these quarterly meetings.

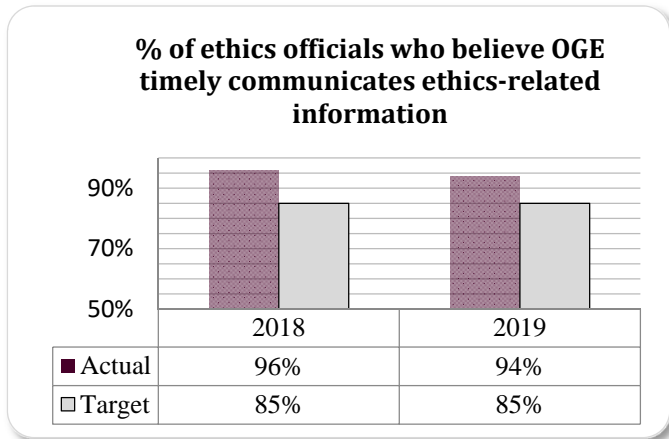
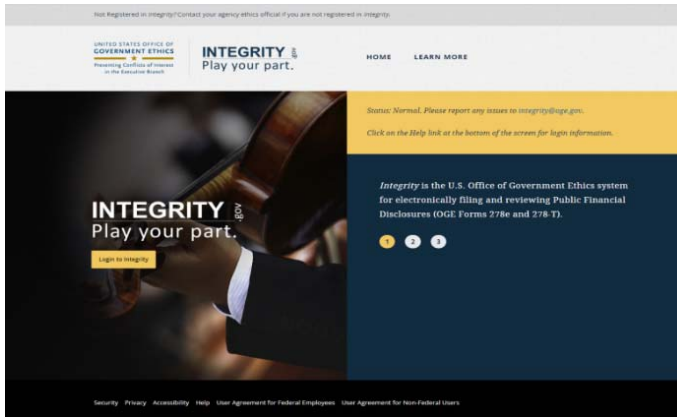


Figure 6: Timely Communication

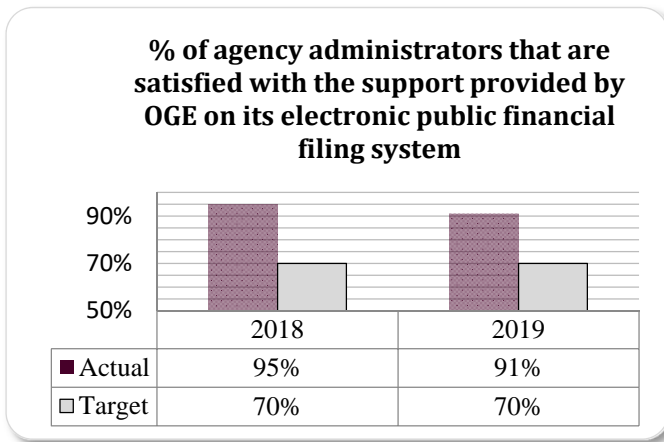
Performance Goal: OGE exceeded its goal for the percentage of ethics officials who believe OGE timely communicates ethics-related information.



Provided Support for Integrity

OGE continued to support agencies' use of *Integrity*, OGE's executive branchwide electronic public financial disclosure filing system. Use of the system expanded to more than 22,000 of approximately 26,000 filers in the executive branch. OGE continued to provide necessary help desk services and user resources, including written, online tools, and

live orientations and training. Additional information about *Integrity* can be found on page 37.

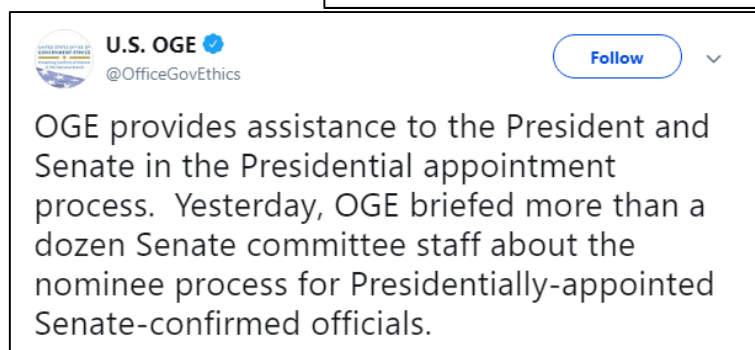


Performance Goal: OGE exceeded its goal for the percent of agency administrators who are satisfied with the support provided by OGE on its electronic public financial filing system.

Figure 7: Integrity Support

Provided technical assistance to Congress

In addition to assisting executive branch ethics officials, OGE responded to requests for assistance from other key stakeholders, including Congress. OGE serves as the legislative liaison on behalf of the entire executive branch ethics program. OGE works to build congressional understanding of the executive branch ethics program and to inform congressional oversight and revisions to ethics laws. Notably, OGE responded to four complex inquiries from Members of Congress and provided 89 telephone consultations in response to requests for technical



assistance on draft legislation and on a wide variety of executive branch ethics issues. OGE also provided briefings to staffers from seven Senate committees. Additionally, OGE provided significant expertise and support to the Government Accountability Office on two of its substantive reviews.

OGE also represented the executive branch ethics community by providing ethics expertise on 54 requests for comment on legislative materials and one request for comment on Executive Orders and Presidential Memoranda circulated by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). OGE achieved a 100 percent (100%) success rate for timely responding to all of the requests it received.

For additional information on the numerous requests OGE receives from outside entities see page 31.

Supported the vital work of the ethics enforcement communities

OGE continued to support the vital work of the ethics enforcement communities, including Inspectors General, DOJ, and employee relations personnel, who are responsible for holding agency employees accountable for abiding by the ethics laws. During fiscal year 2019, OGE staff provided direct support to approximately 20 investigators from Inspectors General offices and to federal prosecutors. OGE assisted with the interpretation and application of federal conflict of interest laws and ethics regulations in connection with live enforcement matters.



In fiscal year 2019, OGE continued to serve as a standing member of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE), participating in CIGIE's meetings, attending its annual conference, and supporting its Integrity Committee. For information on the training OGE provides to enforcement communities, see page 17.

Shared information with foreign delegations and supported anti-corruption efforts

OGE's international program supports U.S. anti-corruption foreign policy primarily in three ways: (1) OGE assists the State Department in ensuring that the U.S. meets its international anti-corruption obligations; (2) supports U.S. participation in international organizations which shape international anti-corruption norms and good governance policies; and (3) supports other countries' efforts to effectively manage conflicts of interest.

Helped meet international anti-corruption obligations



Today, OGE's Director and staff met with the @EUombudsman to compare experiences in promoting public sector integrity in the USA and EU.



U.S. OGE Retweeted



US Dept of State INL @StateINL · Jul 17
As a state party to the @UNCAC Convention Against #Corruption, the U.S. is undergoing peer review this week by fellow members #TheNetherlands and #Bangladesh, working together for #transparency @OfficeGovEthics @TheJusticeDept @US_OSC @usembassydoha @usembthe Hague



In fiscal year 2019, OGE assisted the State Department with two significant multilateral peer reviews pursuant to anti-corruption treaties. As signatory to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), the U.S. participates in the UNCAC implementation peer review mechanism that monitors states' compliance with the treaty obligations. The U.S. is currently being reviewed as part of the second cycle of the peer review, with a focus on the treaty chapters on prevention and asset recovery. In fiscal year 2019, OGE provided significant assistance to the State Department in responding to questions from international reviewers regarding the U.S. prevention framework and supported the on-site portion of the review. The U.S. is also a signatory to the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (IACAC) and participates in the IACAC peer review mechanism, known as the Mechanism for Follow-Up on the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (MESICIC). In fiscal year 2019, the U.S. concluded its review under the Fifth Round of peer review. This round focused on ethics education and training, and OGE was a significant contributor to the U.S. negotiation of the final report. Lastly, a senior OGE staff member participated as a government expert in the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) peer review of Sweden.

Shaped international anti-corruption norms and good governance policies

OGE continued to shape international anti-corruption norms and good governance policies. For example, OGE staff served as delegates to two anti-corruption working groups; provided support to State Department representatives to other anti-corruption working groups; and provided input on a paper published in fiscal year 2019 by the World Bank on the use of electronic filing systems for financial disclosure.

Supported other countries' efforts to effectively manage conflicts of interest

During fiscal year 2019, OGE assisted the State Department in a number of ways aimed at increasing resilience against corruption in other nations. For example, OGE supported the State Department's presentation on e-government integrity policies and corruption prevention mechanisms at the Anti-Corruption and Transparency Working Group of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).

OGE also continued to meet with foreign public and private sector groups through the State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program and similar programs.

Through these programs, foreign delegations come to OGE to learn about the executive branch ethics program and how that program fits into the broader context of anti-corruption, good governance, and transparency. In fiscal year 2019, OGE briefed 17 foreign delegations comprising 174 individuals representing 97 countries.

Strategic Objective 1.2: Strengthen the expertise of officials who are integral to the executive branch ethics program

OGE strengthened the expertise of officials who are integral to the executive branch ethics program by encouraging and supporting ethical leadership, conducting distance and in-person learning events, and maintaining a library of ethics resources.

Encouraged and supported ethical leadership throughout the executive branch

Ethical culture begins with ethical leadership throughout an organization from top down. OGE engaged agency leaders on the importance of ethics and sensitized federal managers to ethics issues. In fiscal year 2019, OGE's Director met with the heads of 12 executive branch agencies, including the head of each cabinet-level agency who had been confirmed by the Senate, to convey the importance of ethical leadership. During these meetings, OGE's Director emphasized that strong leadership is essential for ethical and resilient organizations. OGE's Director also expressed OGE's willingness to support agency leaders and their agencies' ethics programs, and asked for their support for and commitment to an ethical culture within their organizations. OGE also engaged with senior leadership directly and indirectly through its external communications, its involvement in nominee financial disclosure reports and ethics agreements, its publications, and its education program.

OGE also sent a memorandum to agency heads reminding them of their responsibility to foster an ethical culture and to ensure the success of their agency's ethics program. The memorandum specifically noted that this responsibility includes designating qualified employees to serve as their



agency’s top ethics officials. To assist in this regard, OGE created templates for agency heads to use when designating the agency’s top ethics officials. The template requires the agency head to confirm that the designated individual has the necessary qualifications to manage their agency’s ethics program.

Finally, OGE shared tools and tactics for leaders to use to effectively communicate the ethical expectations for their organizations.

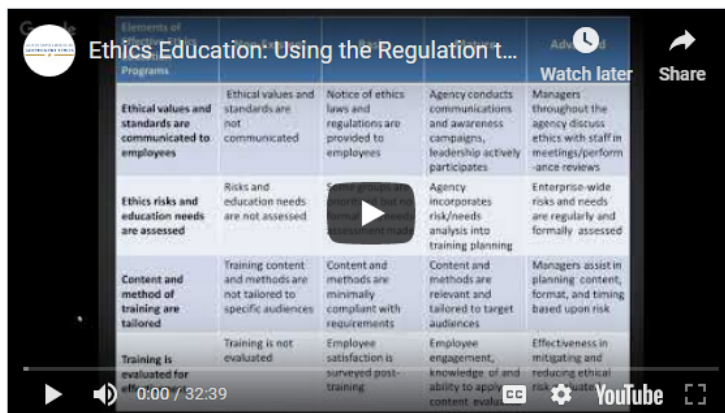
Conducted critical training and professional development for ethics officials

OGE delivered a variety of high quality distance-learning events in fiscal year 2019. OGE continued to use its YouTube page to broadcast these distance-learning events free of



Today, OGE held an education broadcast to help ethics officials ensure that government ethics education is responsive to risks in their organizations. You can watch here:

charge to anyone with an internet connection. Training delivered through YouTube increases transparency by permitting public access to the professional development training that OGE offers to ethics officials throughout the U.S. and around the world.



OGE announced courses for ethics officials, made available on-demand learning tools, and shared research findings through the Institute for Ethics in Government (IEG) learning portal. The IEG learning portal is an efficient way for agency ethics officials to obtain the educational materials that are most pertinent to their particular needs. Currently, OGE makes

available all 124 of the video and audio recordings of its distance-learning events, as well as the informational slide decks, job aids, and reference materials created to support those events. OGE frequently encourages ethics officials to use these on-demand courses and materials to train their own staffs and agency employees.

Learning events offered during fiscal year 2019 focused on significant regulatory and policy changes, as well as seasonally appropriate refreshers on ethics fundamentals, such as financial disclosure review. A typical event reaches more than 350 officials during the live broadcast, and is available on-demand for viewing after the event. In fiscal year 2019, OGE offered eight virtual events. More than 2,500 ethics officials registered for these

events, and ninety-five percent (95%) of respondents to a course evaluation reported that participating in these events made them better able to do their jobs.

In addition to the distance-learning series, OGE developed and delivered a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on outside activities ethics analysis. MOOCs enable large numbers of ethics officials to experience content OGE typically delivers through half-day live-training workshops. These multi-session presentations bring the feel of in-person classroom training to the online classroom by incorporating independent work, lectures, practical exercises, and self-assessments. Over 300 officials participated in the MOOC presented in fiscal year 2019, with ninety-three percent (93%) of respondents to course evaluations reporting that attendance made them better able to do their jobs.

Performance Goal: OGE exceeded its goal for the percentage of ethics officials who believed that after using a learning tool provided by OGE, they can more effectively perform their job functions.



Feds make important decisions with ethical implications every day. Find out how OGE is trying to improve ethical outcomes using behavioral insights by following our research blog. Find our latest post on "framing" here: [extapps2.oge.gov/Training/OGE Tr...](https://extapps2.oge.gov/Training/OGE%20Tr...)

Conducted in-person training

In fiscal year 2019, OGE provided 4 full-day orientation sessions to new DAEOs and ADAEOs to provide them with a full explanation of their roles and responsibilities as ethics program leaders and advocates. Fifty-four newly appointed DAEOs and ADAEOs participated in the program. As a follow-on to the orientations, OGE conducted 2 critical in-person trainings for new DAEOs and ADAEOs, with an intensive curriculum in ethics. The trainings consisted of 6 half-day sessions covering conflicts of interest,



U.S. OGE @OfficeG... · Jun 25

Yesterday, OGE hosted a group of new senior ethics officials from across the executive branch to discuss the importance of their work protecting the trust of citizens in their government.

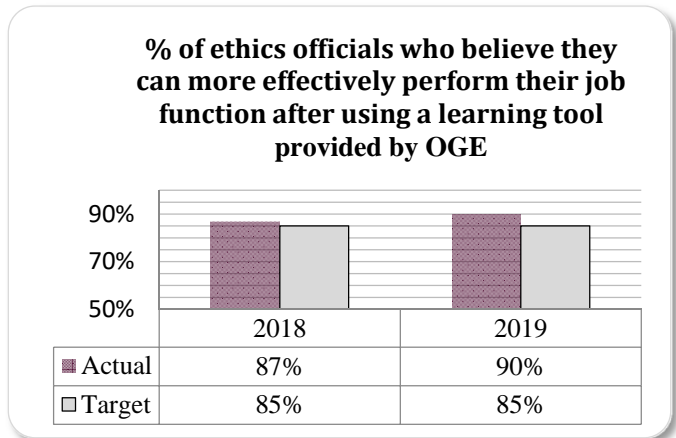


Figure 8: Learning Tools

impartiality, PAS nominee processing, seeking employment and post-employment, gifts from outside sources, travel and related benefits, and outside activities. Thirty-seven officials participated in these training sessions.



Figure 9: Training Events

During fiscal year 2019, OGE conducted four workshops for ethics officials in leadership roles. These workshops covered a number of timely topics, including training for Special Government Employees, working with Human Resources officers, and working with supervisors to promote and sustain an ethical culture.

OGE was also able to accommodate some tailored requests for education support, including a request from the Office of Special Counsel to facilitate a session on ethics at its annual meeting. In addition, OGE provided consultative services to the Department of Veterans Affairs on ways to improve ethics education and communications throughout the Department.

Performance Goal: OGE exceeded its goal for the percentage of ethics officials who believed they could more effectively perform their job function after participating in an OGE training event.

Developed resources to support an ethical federal workforce

OGE recognizes that maintaining 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 issued a program advisory in fiscal year 2019 providing guidance to agencies in implementing effective and risk-responsive ethics education programs. This advisory communicated OGE’s interpretation of its executive branchwide ethics education regulation. The advisory was supported by a distance-learning

OCT 4 2018

MEMORANDUM

To: Agency Heads

From: Emory Rounds
Director

As trusted leaders in the United States Government, we have the opportunity to improve the lives of the American people. This opportunity can be realized only with strong ethical leadership. Ethical failures hurt our ability to fulfill our missions and erode the trust of citizens in their government. Public confidence is vital to our success.

The Office of Government Ethics stands ready to help you accomplish your important work. By ensuring that government decisions are free from conflicts of interest, together we can protect the public’s confidence in its government and succeed in our critical missions. To that end, in the coming months I will be scheduling a meeting with each of you to discuss the importance of ethical leadership and how the Office of Government Ethics can assist you and your ethics program.

Until then, as the leader of your agency and its ethics program, you can take action now to protect your agency and its mission. Consider demonstrating your commitment to ethical leadership by communicating it directly to your staff, meeting with your ethics team to make sure they have the support they need, and inviting your ethics officials to executive planning meetings to help foresee and prevent ethics challenges.

Together, we can secure the public’s trust and deliver for the American people on their expectation of selfless governing and honest government.

Thank you for your service to our country.

broadcast and a suite of tools to assist agencies in planning, executing, and evaluating effective ethics education programs.

Trained enforcement communities

To ensure that executive branch ethics laws can be effectively enforced, OGE provides advice and training to the various enforcement communities, including the Department of Justice’s criminal and civil divisions, Inspectors General, and employee relations professionals. OGE routinely assisted Inspectors General and prosecutors in understanding the complexities of the ethics laws and regulations involved in ethics-related investigations. OGE provided an array of training to Inspectors General in fiscal year 2019. For example, OGE instructors provided well-received training to 100 attendees at the Inspector General Criminal Investigator Academy, focusing on investigating ethics-related matters and working with ethics officials. This particular training is an integral part of the Academy’s curriculum and complements a web-based training module OGE developed for Inspectors General investigators.



Strategic Objective 1.3: Continuously refine ethics policy and issue interpretive guidance

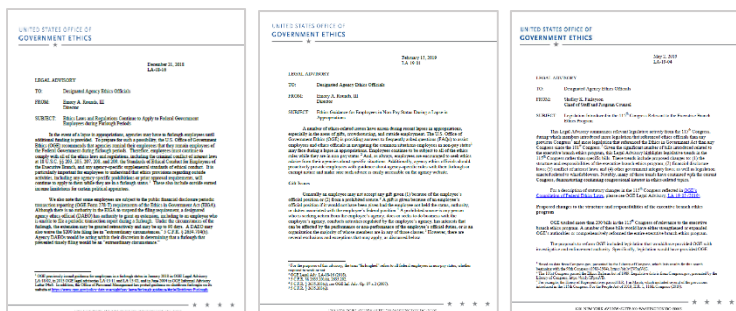
OGE continuously refined ethics policy and issued interpretive guidance by providing timely legal and program guidance, conducting in-depth reviews of regulations, publishing regulations, and renewing forms. Key highlights of OGE’s work are described below.

Provided agencies with important legal and program guidance that integrates feedback

In addition to providing day-to-day assistance through the Desk Officer program, OGE issues legal and program advisories to disseminate critical information to the executive branch ethics community and to promote uniform interpretation of ethics laws,

regulations, and policies. Executive branch ethics officials rely on advisories as an integral component of the body of interpretive and programmatic guidance maintained by OGE.

In fiscal year 2019, OGE issued nine legal advisories providing guidance on emerging ethics issues and in response to agency ethics officials on specific questions from employees. Highlights include:



- A legal advisory in December 2018, prior to the lapse in appropriations, recommending that agencies remind employees that ethics laws and regulations continue to apply to them while in a furlough status.
- An additional legal advisory related to the lapse, providing answers to frequently asked questions to assist employees and ethics officials in navigating the common situations employees in a non-pay status may face during a lapse.
- A legal advisory summarizing relevant ethics-related legislative activity from the last Congress, during which members introduced more legislation that referenced ethics officials than any previous Congress, and more legislation that referenced the Ethics in Government Act than any Congress since the 101st Congress.

In addition to legal advisories, OGE issued 12 timely and informative program advisories covering ethics program requirements. Highlights include:

- A program advisory reminding ethics officials that modifications to Presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed officials’ (PAS officials) ethics agreements require prior approval from OGE and outlining the steps OGE will take if a PAS official fails to comply timely with his or her ethics agreement.
- A program advisory reminding presidential candidates about the filing deadline for public financial disclosure reports and the certification process.
- A program advisory advising DAEOs of ways that they can use the ethics education regulations to maximize the effectiveness of their ethics education programs.



In developing legal and program advisories, OGE continued to draw upon the expertise of agency ethics officials by consulting with key members of the ethics community. OGE solicited views, convened focus groups, and obtained feedback on draft advisories. With this community input, OGE increased its ability to effectively mitigate risks, reduce inconsistencies in the application of ethics laws, and address current issues confronting executive branch ethics officials. Anecdotal feedback from agency ethics officials reflects increased satisfaction with OGE’s approach of involving ethics officials in the development of advisories produced over the past few years.

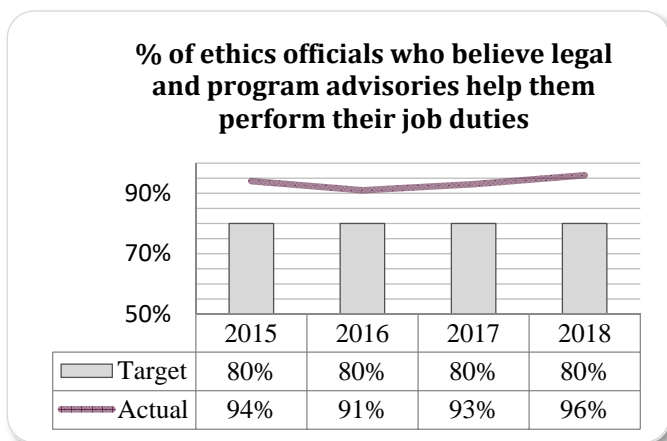


Figure 10: Advisories

Performance Goal: OGE exceeded its goal for the percentage of ethics

officials who believe advisories helped them perform their job duties.

Rulemaking

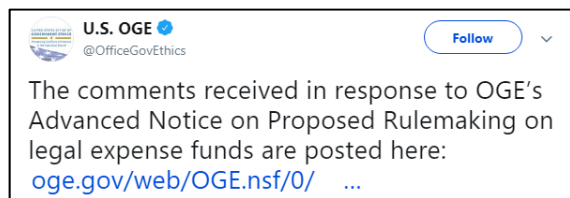
Executive branch ethics officials rely on OGE to provide clear policies and guidance on the laws and regulations, such as the criminal conflict of interest laws and Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, that serve as the building blocks of the executive branch ethics program. In fiscal year 2019 OGE: (1) published final rules, proposes rules, and advance notice of proposed rules; (2) conducted in-depth regulatory reviews; and (3) consulted on changes to agency-specific ethics regulations and separate component designations.

Published final, proposed, and advanced notice of proposed rules

In fiscal year 2019, OGE began the process of drafting a regulation regarding legal expense funds, providing OGE with the opportunity to receive valuable stakeholder input through the notice and comment rulemaking process. OGE began this process by publishing an advance notice of proposed rulemaking in the *Federal Register* that requested input on a



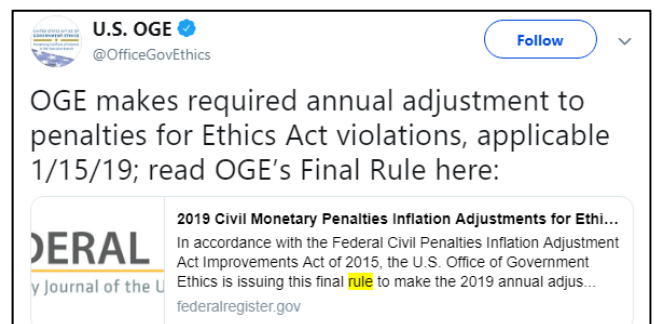
number of issues related to legal expense funds. OGE also hosted a virtual public hearing to gain input from the public, along with stakeholder meetings to gain the perspective of agency ethics officials and others. This notice and comment rulemaking process allows the creation of a regulation that ensures legal expense funds with executive branch employee recipients will be transparent, open, and accessible to the public.



In fiscal year 2019, OGE also published a final rule implementing inflationary adjustments to each of the five civil monetary penalties provided in the Ethics in Government Act.

Conducted in-depth regulatory review

OGE continued its work to modernize the Standards of Conduct in fiscal year 2019 by completing an in-depth regulatory review of the Standards. OGE expects to publish a proposed regulation modernizing these rules in fiscal year 2020. In addition, OGE continued its



review of the regulation governing financial disclosure conflict-of-interest exemptions.

Consulted on changes to agency-specific ethics regulations and separate component designations

OGE consults with agencies to publish agency-specific supplemental ethics regulations and separate component designations that tailor ethics program requirements to meet specific agency needs. In fiscal year 2019, OGE jointly issued the National



Mediation Board's supplemental regulation addressing outside employment, first as an interim final rule and subsequently as a final rule. OGE also worked on supplemental regulations for a number of other agencies, including the U.S. Postal Service, Department of Defense, Department of Agriculture, National Transportation Safety Board, and Office

of Special Counsel. Agency-specific supplemental ethics regulations calibrate ethics restrictions to the unique needs of employees of individual agencies.

In fiscal year 2019, OGE also worked to update three component designations (5 C.F.R. Part 2641, Appendix B) based on agency recommendations for the purpose of applying the post-government employment ethics restrictions to former employees of specific components of executive branch agencies. These separate component designations ensure that the post-employment rules are appropriately focused on ensuring that former federal employees do not make unfair use of their prior federal employment to influence the government, without overreaching indiscriminately to extend the restriction to separate components over which they lacked influence while serving in the government. In early fiscal year 2020, OGE plans to issue a revised regulation updating the component designations.

Forms Renewal

OGE continually works to ensure its forms are up-to-date and accurate. OGE sought and received OMB approval for a three-year renewal of the Executive Branch Personnel Public Financial Disclosure Report (OGE Form 278e) and the Executive Branch Confidential Financial Disclosure Report (OGE Form 450). The renewal included minor modifications to improve the instructions, make the forms more user-friendly, and reflect changes to the financial disclosure regulation (5 C.F.R. part 2634), which went into effect on January 1, 2019. OGE has also sought OMB approval for the three-year renewal of the Model Trust Documents.

Strategic Goal 2: Hold the executive branch accountable for carrying out an effective ethics program

As the supervising ethics office of the executive branch, OGE is responsible for conducting oversight to ensure compliance across the more than 130 federal agencies.

To achieve its strategic goal of holding the executive branch accountable for carrying out an effective ethics program, OGE has developed two strategic objectives: (2.1) monitor agency compliance with executive branch ethics program requirements; and (2.2) monitor senior leaders' compliance with individual ethics commitments.

Strategic Objective 2.1: Monitor agency compliance with executive branch ethics program requirements

OGE monitored agency compliance with executive branch ethics program requirements by conducting program reviews, issuing recommendations, collecting and analyzing program data, and collecting information on potential violations. Key highlights of OGE's work are described below.

Reviewed agency ethics programs for compliance

As part of OGE's strategy to maintain high standards of accountability and compliance with applicable ethics requirements throughout the executive branch, in fiscal year 2019 OGE began the process of moving from a five-year cycle of conducting a program review of every agency in the executive branch to a four/five-year hybrid cycle. OGE moved all cabinet level agencies to a four-year review cycle, and conducted risk assessments on all other agencies to assess what review cycle they should be placed in, with agencies at a higher risk for conflicts of interest moved to a four-year cycle and agencies at a lower risk remaining on a five-year review cycle.

Program Review Reports (Plenary and Inspections) Published in Fiscal Year 2019

Agency for Global Media
Armed Services Board of Contract Appeals
Federal Election Commission
Commission of Fine Arts
Consumer Product Safety Commission
Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency
Defense Contract Audit Agency
Defense Logistics Agency
Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency
Department of Defense
Department of Education
Department of Veteran Affairs
Election Assistance Commission
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
Federal Communications Commission Inspection
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
Federal Labor Relations Authority
James Madison Fellowship Foundation
National Endowment for the Arts
National Labor Relations Board
National Science Foundation
Postal Regulatory Commission
Tennessee Valley Authority

Through agency ethics program reviews — plenary, inspection, and follow-up —

OGE ensures consistent and sustainable agency ethics program compliance with established executive branch ethics laws, regulations, and policies, and provides recommendations for meaningful program improvement. All three types of reviews are designed to identify and remediate systemic risks in agency ethics programs. Reviews include an examination of agency ethics program materials, such as financial disclosure reports, documentation of ethics advice provided to employees, training records, and ethics agreement compliance tracking.

OGE conducted plenary reviews at cabinet-level departments and at the largest executive branch agencies. Inspections were typically conducted at smaller agencies, but also served as effective risk management tools for agencies of any size. OGE conducted appropriate follow-up reviews to evaluate agencies' progress in implementing any recommendations made by OGE in its program review reports.

In fiscal year 2019, OGE conducted 23 program reviews and published a total of 23 program review reports. OGE also conducted 26 follow-up reviews and published 21 related reports.

Milestone: OGE's original fiscal year goal of conducting ethics program reviews at twenty percent (20%) of executive branch agencies was modified as a result of the partial government shutdown from December 22, 2018, through January 26, 2019. OGE met its modified goal of conducting ethics program reviews at 23 agencies in the executive branch. These 23 agencies constitute approximately seventeen percent (17%) of the agencies in the executive branch.

Issued recommendations to improve agency ethics program compliance

When an ethics program review identifies a deficiency, the resulting report includes a corresponding recommendation directing the agency to take actions necessary to correct the deficiency. In fiscal year 2019, OGE's ethics program reviews resulted in 67 recommendations addressing specific ethics program deficiencies. OGE review teams also advised agency ethics officials of 18 additional deficiencies that would have resulted in recommendations had they not been corrected prior to the completion of OGE's review. OGE provides considerable technical assistance to agencies in correcting problems as part of its program review process, which may allow an agency to take immediate action and preclude the necessity of issuing a recommendation.

OGE's recommendations for program improvement have significant impact. In just one example, an agency ethics program review identified risk related to an agency's special government employees (SGEs). As a result of OGE's review of the agency's ethics program and its recommendations for improvement, the agency took action to address each of the deficiencies, resulting in one-hundred percent (100%) of all newly hired SGEs receiving ethics training and a significant improvement in the timely filing of financial disclosure reports and the quality of conflict of interest reviews. These improvements have strengthened the agency and mitigated risk.

Performance Goal: In cases in which OGE identified a program weakness during a program review, OGE exceeded its target for the percentage of program reviews that resulted in improvements in the agency's ethics program.

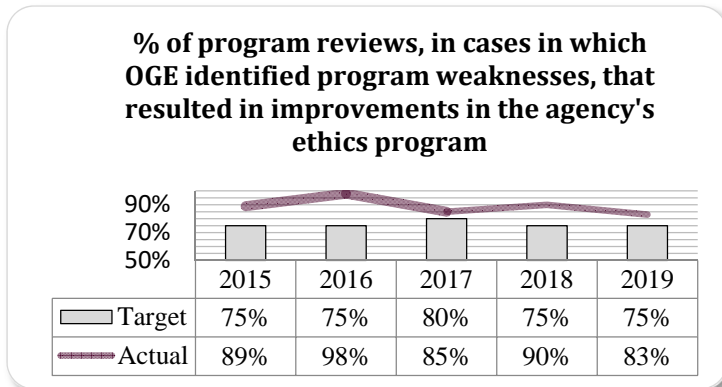


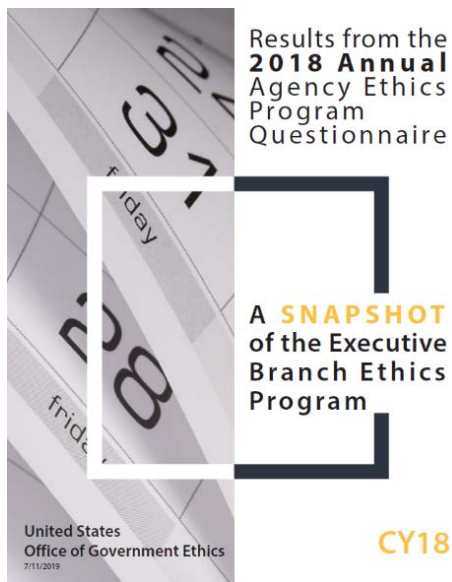
Figure 11: Program Review Recommendations

Collected and analyzed program data from executive branch agencies

OGE collects ethics program data from each of the more than 130 executive branch agencies through

its Annual Agency Ethics Program Questionnaire (Annual Questionnaire). This data collection assures that each agency does a year-end assessment of its ethics program. Agency responses to the Annual Questionnaire give OGE a view into each agency's ethics program, and the compiled data provides OGE with an annual overview of the entire executive branch ethics program. In fiscal year 2019, OGE administered the Annual Questionnaire using a custom electronic application which has improved OGE's ability to

analyze the information collected and increased the efficiency of the data collection process. Notably, one-hundred percent (100%) of agencies complied with the requirement to submit their ethics program data.



In fiscal year 2019, OGE continued to share key highlights from its Annual Questionnaire with ethics officials and the public by posting on its website a report summarizing data highlights and trends as well as each agency's responses to the Annual Questionnaire. Having access to this data allowed ethics officials to compare aspects of their programs with those of other agencies, including how best to allocate ethics program resources. This data also helps the public gain a better understanding of the scope and impact of the executive branch ethics program.

Collected information on potential ethics violations by executive branch employees

Agencies are required to concurrently notify OGE's Director when any matter involving a potential violation by an executive branch employee of criminal conflict of interest laws (18 U.S.C. §§ 202-209) is referred for investigation or prosecution to the Department of Justice. Agencies submit these notifications and information regarding the

disposition of the matter to OGE. In fiscal year 2019, agencies submitted nearly 100 such notifications. OGE tracks and follows up on these conflicts of interest referrals to the Department of Justice to ensure that agencies are considering disciplinary or other corrective action in the event of declinations of prosecution.

OGE also published its annual survey of prosecutions involving the criminal conflict of interest criminal statutes (18 U.S.C. §§ 202-209) and other related statutes for calendar year 2018. OGE published information on 12 new prosecutions and encourages agencies to use these reported cases as examples when conducting ethics training.

Responded to agencies' requests to tailor their financial disclosure programs

OGE supports agencies' efforts to tailor their financial disclosure programs to hold employees accountable for compliance with ethics rules and to deploy resources where they will be most effective. OGE has authority to grant an agency's request to extend the coverage of public financial disclosure requirements to any position upon a finding that the position is of "equal classification" to positions whose incumbents are required to file public financial disclosure reports. OGE also has authority to grant an agency's request to exclude a position from the coverage of public financial disclosure requirements upon a finding that the position is of a confidential nature and has no policymaking role. In fiscal year 2019, OGE evaluated one equal classification request and determined that twenty-seven positions were of equal classification with other public financial disclosure filing positions. OGE did not receive any requests to exclude a position from coverage of public financial disclosure requirements.

**Strategic Objective 2.2:
Monitor senior leaders' compliance with individual ethics commitments**

OGE monitored senior government leaders' compliance with their individual ethics commitments by requiring certification of completion of the terms of their ethics agreement to resolve conflicts of interest. OGE also reminded leaders of their ethics responsibilities, conducted second-level reviews of financial disclosure reports, reviewed Certificates of

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 completed all of the resignations indicated in my ethics agreement before I assumed the duties of my current government position.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A
3. Divestitures	a. I have completed all of the divestitures indicated in my ethics agreement. I also understand that I may not repurchase these assets during my appointment without OGE's prior approval.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A
	b. I have filed a period transaction report, or periodic transaction reports, (OGE Form 278-T) to disclose the completion of these agreed upon divestitures.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A
		Filing Date(s) of OGE Form 278-T Report(s):

Divestiture, and consulted with agencies on waivers. Key highlights of OGE's work are described below.

Monitored compliance with commitments made by incoming agency leaders to resolve conflicts of interest

OGE continued working to ensure that executive branch leaders appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate (PAS) remained free of conflicts of interest after taking office. OGE identifies and resolves potential conflicts of interest on the part of PAS nominees by establishing written ethics agreements with them prior to confirmation. OGE then monitors PAS ethics agreement compliance through the collection and review of documentation provided by agency ethics officials. These Certifications of Ethics Agreement Compliance require appointees to attest to their ethics agreement compliance. OGE continued the practice of posting these certifications on its website. OGE also issued a program advisory in fiscal year 2019 reminding ethics officials that modifications to PAS officials' ethics agreements require prior approval from OGE and outlining the steps OGE will take if a PAS official fails to comply timely with his or her ethics agreement.



In fiscal year 2019, 236 PAS appointees were required to certify that they had complied with their ethics agreements. OGE received ninety-three percent (93%) of the PAS appointees' Certifications by the applicable due date.

Reminded leaders of their responsibilities

In fiscal year 2019, in addition to OGE's Director meeting with the heads of executive branch agencies to convey the importance of ethical leadership, OGE also issued a memorandum to agency heads reminding them of their responsibility to foster an ethical culture and to ensure the success of their agency's ethics program. OGE also continued to conduct training for new Senior Executive Service members about the importance of ethics and their vital role in maintaining the public's trust. For additional information on the meetings and this memorandum, see page 16.

Reviewed the public financial disclosure reports of top officials

OGE also helps ensure that senior officials remain free from conflicts of interest by timely reviewing the annual, termination, and periodic transaction financial disclosure reports of PAS officials, as well as new entrant and other public financial disclosure reports filed by Designated Agency Ethics Officials (DAEOs) and certain White House officials. In fiscal year 2019, OGE closed 1,771 public financial disclosure reports (new entrant, annual, termination, and periodic transaction reports).

Performance Goal: In fiscal year 2019, OGE closed eighty-seven percent (87%) of its reviews of public financial disclosure reports, including new entrant, annual, termination, and periodic transaction reports required to be submitted to OGE, within 60 days of receipt. OGE did not reach its target goal of ninety percent. OGE believes the partial government shutdown from December to January was a contributing factor in not meeting the goal.

Reviewed requests for Certificates of Divestiture (CDs)

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) to offset the tax burden. In fiscal year 2019, OGE reviewed 108 requests for CDs and timely published to its website all CDs that it issued.

Consulted with agencies regarding the issuance of waivers to the primary criminal conflict of interest law, 18 U.S.C. § 208

The primary criminal conflict of interest law, 18 U.S.C. § 208, requires an employee to be disqualified (“recused”) from a particular matter if the matter would have a direct and predictable effect on the employee’s own financial interests or on certain financial interests that are treated as the employee’s own, such as those of the employee’s spouse or a prospective employer. In some cases, a waiver to these restrictions may be appropriate. OGE consulted with agencies on nearly 100 waivers, prior to their issuance, and collected copies of final waivers.

Strategic Goal 3: Contribute to the continuity of senior leadership in the executive branch

OGE has a vital role in supporting the President's constitutional duty to nominate and appoint officers to the executive branch, and to prevent the highest officials in Government from having conflicts of interest.

To achieve its strategic goal of contributing to the continuity of senior leadership in the executive branch, OGE has developed two strategic objectives: (3.1) prepare for a presidential transition; and (3.2) provide assistance to the President and the Senate in the presidential appointment process.

Strategic Objective 3.1: Prepare for a presidential transition

OGE prepared for the possibility of new executive branch leadership by participating in meetings, updating resources, and reviewing presidential candidate reports. Key highlights of OGE's work are described below.

Participated in meetings and updated resources

In fiscal year 2019, OGE participated in working groups focused on how to prepare and improve future transitions. In addition, OGE reviewed and updated key resources such as the *Public Financial Disclosure Guide* and the *Confidential Financial Disclosure Guide*, incorporating feedback from the ethics community. OGE also significantly refined and streamlined its internal processes based on its experience from the last presidential transition.

Milestone: OGE met its milestone to actively engage and/or coordinate with agencies and organizations focused on preparing for and executing smooth presidential transitions.



U.S. OGE
@OfficeGovEthics

Follow

Want to understand what has to be reported on a public financial disclosure report? Check out OGE's newly revised guide. oge.gov/web/oge.nsf/Pu ...

Reviewed presidential candidate reports

In fiscal year 2019, OGE reviewed, certified, and made available public financial disclosure reports of 21 individuals who declared their candidacy for the Office of the President of the United States.

Strategic Objective 3.2: Provide assistance to the President and the Senate in the presidential appointment process

OGE provided assistance to the President and the Senate in the presidential appointment process by conducting expert second-level reviews of financial disclosure reports of nominees to the highest-level executive branch positions. Key highlights of OGE's work are described below.

Provided expert second-level reviews of financial disclosure reports of nominees to the highest-level executive branch positions

In fiscal year 2019, OGE continued to use a substantial portion of its staff to analyze and resolve potential conflicts of interest of the highest-level, incoming executive branch leaders. OGE's review of nominees' disclosures presented a critical opportunity to evaluate their financial interests for potential conflicts of interest and introduced top leaders to the importance of ethical leadership. OGE's staff approached this function from the perspective of managing risk. To that end, OGE required nominees to reduce the potential for conflicts in the first place, and prescribed mechanisms for addressing conflicts of interest if issues arose. In evaluating potential risks, OGE consulted with agency ethics officials who were familiar with their agencies' programs and activities. Based on these consultations, OGE and agency ethics officials prepared ethics agreements that describe the steps nominees would take to avoid conflicts of interest. After confirming with the agency that there were no unresolved conflicts of interest, OGE transmitted the review package, consisting of the financial disclosure form and ethics agreement, directly to the Senate following a presidential nomination.

In fiscal year 2019, OGE reviewed the reports of nominees for approximately thirty-three percent (33%) of the PAS positions. OGE cleared eighty-six percent (86%) of the nominee reports it received in fiscal year 2019. In addition, OGE continued providing agency ethics officials with guidance and instruction to improve their review of financial disclosure reports.

Performance Goals: OGE exceeded both of its performance goals related to the nominee financial disclosure work. See the chart below for additional details.

	Target	Actual
Initial comments on draft financial disclosure reports of presidential nominees for Senate-confirmed appointments are provided to the agency within established time frames.	85%	92%
Final financial disclosure reports of presidential nominees for Senate-confirmed appointments are certified by OGE within seven business days of receipt from the agency.	90%	99%

Strategic Goal 4: Engage the public in overseeing government integrity

OGE’s prevention mission involves engaging the public to inform them about the systems in place to detect and resolve conflicts of interest of their government leaders. This, in turn, allows the public to engage in overseeing the integrity of its government.

To achieve its strategic goal of engaging the public in overseeing government integrity, OGE has developed two strategic objectives: (4.1) inform the public about OGE and the executive branch ethics program; and (4.2) make ethics information publicly available.

Strategic Objective 4.1: Inform the public about OGE and the executive branch ethics program

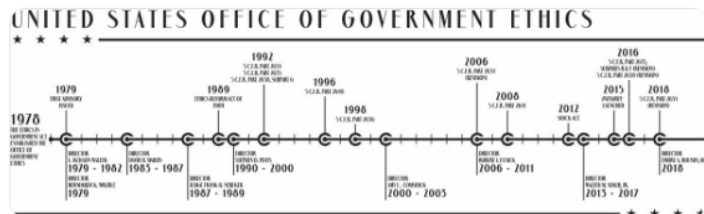
OGE informed the public and other key stakeholders about OGE and the executive branch ethics program by providing relevant, understandable information to citizens; refining its website; collaborating with a broad array of citizens; and timely responding to requests for information and assistance. Key highlights of OGE’s work are described below.

Provided relevant, understandable information to enable citizens to hold their government accountable

It is critical that the public have confidence in the impartiality of government decision-making. Therefore, OGE has a responsibility to communicate effectively about the ethics program to its stakeholders. OGE has a wide spectrum of external stakeholders, ranging from the media and government watchdogs to its major federal partners and the public. OGE continued to create communications that were accurate, compelling, relevant, tailored to each targeted audience, and delivered through effective communication channels.

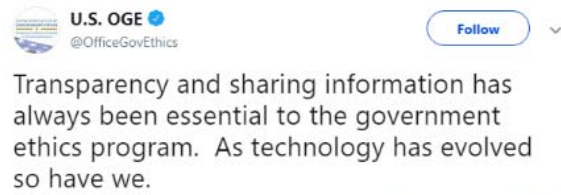


Check out some key dates and milestones from the last 40 years of ethics in the executive branch.



In the last few weeks we’ve reorganized our Open Government page to make finding ethics documents easier. Check it out and tell us what you think:
[oge.gov/web/oge.nsf/Op ...](https://oge.gov/web/oge.nsf/Op...)

Using social media (Twitter and YouTube), OGE created content to help citizens understand the structure of the ethics program, learn how to access various ethics documents, and contribute to government accountability. For example, after OGE reorganized the Open Government page to make finding ethics documents easier, OGE published a series of Twitter threads encouraging the public to review the various ethics documents available online, including ethics documents for senior executive branch officials, program oversight documents and reports, oversight correspondence with Congress and agencies, as well as documents released under FOIA.



Refined OGE's website and began a complete redesign of OGE's web presence

OGE's website is its primary tool for communicating with its external stakeholders and is a valuable tool for building confidence in the systems designed to detect and resolve conflicts of interest in the federal executive branch. OGE refined its website to improve public access to ethics documents and agency ethics program contact information, along



U.S. OGE @OfficeG... · 5/13/19
Based on feedback from you and other stakeholders, a revised webpage with Agency Ethics Program Contact Information has been posted. The updated list includes:



- the names of the most senior ethics official at each agency;
- contact information for employees seeking ethics advice;
- a point of contact for requesting ethics documents such as public financial disclosure reports; and
- a link to each agency's ethics webpage.

with ethics officials' access to key resources needed to perform their jobs. During fiscal year 2019, OGE also began the process of redesigning its website. OGE began the process by seeking feedback from the public and other stakeholders. OGE expects to launch the new website in fiscal year 2020.

See page 32 for additional information about the posting of key ethics documents on OGE's website.

Performance Indicator: An indicator of OGE's success in expanding its outreach efforts is the number of page views of web pages targeted to the public on OGE's website (400,000), as well as OGE's Twitter engagement rate (.8%).

Collaborated with and engaged a broad array of stakeholders

Ethics in government is a shared concern across all segments of society. OGE sees value in sponsoring public forums where diverse stakeholders can openly discuss ideas and share information to help inform OGE's efforts.

To share information and foster valuable collaboration, OGE continued to participate as a member of private sector, state, and local ethics organizations, such as the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws (COGEL) and the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics (APPE), in addition to federal interagency groups. OGE also accepted speaking invitations to address its external audiences, including invitations from professional associations and international anti-corruption groups, to discuss topics including conflicts of interest, ethical leadership, and program management. For example, OGE presented at a DC Bar Association class on the application of federal ethics laws and regulations to federal employees who volunteer or work at nonprofits.

OGE also organized in-person meetings with ethics practitioners and the leadership of good governance and government watchdog groups in fiscal year 2019. These meetings created opportunities to collaborate and share resources and information that enhanced the executive branch ethics program.

Performance Indicator: OGE conducted 11 outreach activities during the fiscal year.

Timely responded to external requests for information and assistance

OGE responded to a large volume of requests for information and assistance from its external stakeholders on topics such as conflicts of interest, enforcement, public financial disclosure, gifts from outside sources, and post-employment. In many cases, a request was related to an issue that fell outside of OGE's jurisdiction. In those instances, OGE made an effort to direct citizens to the appropriate resource.

In fiscal year 2019, OGE responded to approximately 250 requests for assistance from the press. These interactions resulted in more accurate reporting about the ethics



OGE works every day to make sure that citizens have access to information about their government and its leaders. In recent years OGE has taken significant steps to improve citizens' access to ethics disclosures and related records.

laws and regulations and OGE's work. These interactions also multiplied OGE's ability to reach the public to promote further understanding of the executive branch ethics program and its role in ensuring government integrity. OGE also responded to requests for assistance from other stakeholders, including more than 100 requests from private citizens. This

engagement promoted understanding of the executive branch ethics program and related ethics laws and regulations.

Performance Indicator: In fiscal year 2019, OGE received approximately 1,100 requests from non-government, external stakeholders. This coverage helped the public understand the framework for government ethics in the executive branch.

Strategic Objective 4.2: Make ethics information publicly available

OGE made ethics information publicly available by timely posting the documents online and administering a strong Freedom of Information Act program. Key highlights of OGE's work are described below.

Timely made ethics documents available online



In fiscal year 2019, OGE continued to timely make ethics documents available on its website. These documents included public financial disclosure reports and ethics agreements, program review reports on agency ethics programs, reports on payments for travel received from non-federal sources in connection with attendance of employees at certain meetings, and written policy guidance.

Each year, approximately 26,000 individuals file public financial disclosures across the more than 130 agencies. To assist the press and public citizens to understand the process and timing of their release, OGE held a press call, published frequently asked questions, and update its ethics contact page to include a point of contact at each agency for submitting document requests.

Of significance, in fiscal year 2019, OGE processed requests from the public and the news media to inspect nearly 4,200 documents under the Ethics in Government Act, including public financial disclosure reports, periodic transaction reports, certificates of divestiture, Ethics Pledge waivers, and other covered records.

Performance Goal: OGE exceeded its target to timely post eighty-five percent (85%) of ethics documents online within established time frames.

Administered a strong Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) program

In fiscal year 2019, OGE significantly reduced the backlog of FOIA requests caused by a dramatic increase in FOIA requests the previous two fiscal years. In addition, OGE continued to receive a higher-than-average number of new FOIA requests in fiscal year 2019. OGE has no full-time, dedicated FOIA staff, and relies on five cross-functional staff



U.S. OGE
@OfficeGovEthics

Follow

On our FOIA page you can find out how to make a request, read documents that have been frequently requested, and see all the documents that have been released since January 1, 2017.
[oge.gov/Web/OGE.nsf/Fr ...](https://oge.gov/Web/OGE.nsf/Fr...)

with competing demands. Nevertheless, OGE was able to process many of its oldest and more complex requests to address the backlog, while keeping pace with the newer requests. Notably, the Department of Justice recognized a member of OGE's FOIA team with a Sunshine Week award in fiscal year 2019, based on the employee's contributions to the reduction of OGE's backlog. Despite

an extremely challenging FOIA workload and limited staff resources, OGE has prioritized implementing FOIA guidelines by maintaining and updating its effective system for responding to FOIA requests, along with increasing proactive disclosures, utilizing technology, improving timeliness in responding to requests, and applying a presumption of openness in responding to requests.

OGE also continues to conduct regular self-assessments of its FOIA processing procedures and response templates and, when appropriate, makes changes to increase efficiency, improve search processes, increase transparency, and otherwise improve the operation of OGE's already strong FOIA program.

Section IV – Managing for Results

This section describes OGE’s accomplishments related to its management objectives and the steps OGE has taken to maintain a culture of performance.

Management Objectives

OGE devotes significant resources toward sustaining a strong culture of performance management, strengthening organizational compliance and fiscal stewardship, and continuously enhancing its information systems and processes. These efforts are critical to OGE achieving its mission-focused strategic objectives. Organized by management objective, this section highlights major accomplishments that OGE achieved in fiscal year 2019.

Management Objective 5.1: Sustain a strong culture of performance management

OGE is committed to sustaining a strong culture of performance management by providing professional development opportunities and frequent internal communication.

OGE meets its employees’ professional development needs by providing significant education and training opportunities and support through the dedication of time and resources. In fiscal year 2019, all OGE employees participated in the OGE Employee Development Plan (EDP) program. The EDP identifies specific formal training, mentoring, self-study, and/or on-the-job training activities that the employee will complete in the covered period. Significantly, the EDP also identifies objective measures for assessing the employee’s acquisition of the targeted knowledge or skills. In addition to these significant investments in internal opportunities for professional development, OGE supported its employees in enhancing their knowledge and skills by sponsoring their participation in external training programs. These programs included classes at Graduate School USA and the Treasury Executive Institute, as well as events hosted by the federal performance, legal, IT, and communications communities.

In fiscal year 2019, OGE pursued efforts to increase employees’ understanding and commitment to a performance culture using a variety of internal communications methods. For example, OGE continued to conduct regular “all hands” meetings with the entire OGE staff to discuss progress toward meeting agency goals and to promote an understanding of OGE’s priorities and direction. OGE also held regular executive and senior staff meetings to discuss agency goals, priorities, and the status of significant program activities. OGE held supervisors accountable for ensuring ongoing communication regarding OGE’s goals and priorities with all staff. In addition, OGE held a mid-year Strategic Objective Review to review progress on each of the agency’s strategic objectives established by OGE’s strategic plans. This review informed OGE’s strategic decision-making, budget formulation, and near-term agency actions, as well as preparation of the Annual Performance Plan.

OGE has one of the highest engagement rates in the executive branch

To evaluate its progress in maintaining a culture of performance, OGE participated in the executive branchwide Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (EVS) in fiscal year 2019, achieving an eighty percent (80%) participation rate. The results show that OGE has a highly engaged workforce. OGE had an eighty-eight percent (88%) score on the engagement index score which looks at questions related to leadership, supervisors, and intrinsic work experiences. Notably, OGE’s score is one of the highest amongst government agencies and significantly higher than the governmentwide average.

Further evidence of OGE’s success at maintaining a culture of performance is its ninety-three percent (93%) positive rating for employees knowing how their work relates to the agency’s goals and priorities. Notably, one-hundred percent (100%) of employees indicated a willingness to do what it takes to achieve these goals and ninety-three percent (93%) of employees expressed an understanding that they are held accountable for achieving results. Overall, OGE’s 2019 EVS results recognized 66 items identified as strengths (65 percent positive or higher) and identified no items as a challenge (35 percent negative or higher).

Performance Goal: OGE exceeded its performance target of eighty percent (80%) by eight percentage points on the Employee Engagement Index score on the Employee Viewpoint Survey.



Continuously reviewed and improved OGE’s operating procedures

In an effort to work smarter in fiscal year 2019, OGE continued to review its processes and procedures for ways to make improvements in programs that support the ethics community and OGE’s internal operations. OGE continued to streamline and standardize internal processes. In fiscal year 2019, OGE developed or updated 35 standard operating procedures in each of its key program areas.

Performance Goal: OGE exceeded its performance goal to create or revise four standard operating procedures for key agency programs.

Management Objective 5.2: Strengthen organizational compliance and fiscal stewardship

OGE continued to strengthen its organizational compliance and fiscal stewardship by continuously evaluating its practices and systems to identify areas in need of improvement. OGE remained a good steward of taxpayer dollars as reflected by its existing track record of strong financial management. In fiscal year 2019, OGE continued to pursue efficiencies, such as the economies of scale received from using shared service centers for a significant number of support services.

OGE also ensured that its employees received required annual training in the following program areas: ethics, cybersecurity, privacy, records management, No FEAR Act, Hatch Act, and whistleblower protection. In fiscal year 2019, OGE continued to strengthen its privacy program by updating its system of records notices and updating key privacy policies.

Performance Goals: OGE met its goal for the number of employees that took required training (i.e., records management, cybersecurity, privacy, and ethics training). OGE also met its performance goal of receiving an unqualified opinion on its annual financial report from an independent auditor.

Enhanced its Records Management Program

OGE took significant steps to enhance its records management program in order to ensure agency records are available to the public and OGE staff, and to comply with records management requirements. These enhancements included: conducting annual records management training; maintaining and updating records liaisons and file custodians for each OGE division/branch; issuing records management guidance; issuing electronic records guidance; issuing personnel records guidance; conducting an inventory of systems of records; and updating records file plans for OGE divisions.

Management Objective 5.3: Continuously enhance OGE's information systems and processes

OGE continued to prioritize its activities to continuously enhance and secure its information systems and processes, including OGE's executive branchwide electronic filing system, *Integrity*, as well as numerous internal applications. These efforts also included OGE's maintenance of previously redesigned and streamlined workflows for agency programs that increased the use of technology, enhanced management practices, and strengthened compliance activities.

Refreshed IT infrastructure

OGE maintains a strong, secure IT infrastructure, which is necessary to allow OGE to conduct its mission-critical work every day. OGE upgraded this infrastructure to mitigate the risk of potential failure, to address evolving technology, and to prevent security breaches. As potential security threats against automated systems grow and become more complex, OGE remained proactive to ensure that any threats are reduced and mitigated, if not eliminated. In fiscal year 2019, OGE completed IT updates necessary for 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. Most notably, throughout the fiscal year, OGE ensured a safe and secure IT environment that protected 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.

Conducted agencywide cybersecurity risk assessment and mitigation plan

In fiscal year 2019, OGE undertook a complete assessment of the cybersecurity risks associated with the agency's network, website, and internal applications. OGE used the results of this assessment to develop mitigation strategies that are tracked and managed through a Plan of Action and Milestones (POAM) process. Also, in fiscal year 2019, OGE scheduled an independent, third-party review of its systems and efforts at mitigation to ensure OGE meets cybersecurity compliance targets.

Performance Goal: OGE met its performance goal of managing risk for the majority of categories on the Cybersecurity Risk Management Assessment.

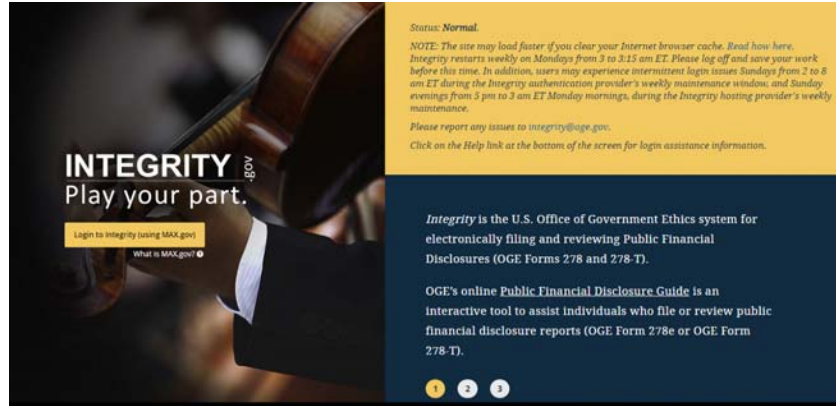
Successfully operated Integrity and used the system to review and analyze the financial disclosure reports submitted during the presidential appointments process

Fiscal year 2019 continued to be a time of significant demand for *Integrity*. As a result, OGE focused on ensuring high-quality system operations and support for *Integrity* for its critical use by new, incoming PAS nominees, many of whom had extremely complex financial disclosure filings.

The system assisted filers in reporting information more easily and more accurately. OGE also continued to provide a high level of support for agency administrators and reviewers through its Help Desk services and online tools, including a comprehensive online user guide and on-demand video tutorials, as well as regular biweekly *Integrity* webinars during the annual filing season. In its annual user survey, 91% of agency administrators who responded ranked the *Integrity* support provided by OGE as very satisfactory or satisfactory.

While OGE’s focus remained primarily on steady-state operations, bug-fixing, and targeted enhancements, OGE continued to convene *Integrity* Advisory Council

meetings in fiscal year 2019 to seek input from agencies that use the system. Composed of representatives from agencies with a large *Integrity* user community, the Council is tasked with making recommendations to OGE about desired changes. Through this feedback, OGE is able to consider the views of the user community in determining how best to use available resources for *Integrity* enhancements. Overall, in fiscal year 2019, OGE continued to successfully operate *Integrity*.



Performance Goal: OGE met its goal related to the percent of non-maintenance downtime of *Integrity*, OGE’s network, and OGE’s website. See the table below for additional information.

Performance Goal	Target	Actual
Percent of non-maintenance downtime of <i>Integrity</i> , OGE’s network, and OGE’s website.	<i>Integrity</i> = Establish Baseline Network and Website = <1.0%	<i>Integrity</i> Baseline = Non-maintenance downtime in FY19 was 0 hours total. Network and Website = <1.0%

Developed and launched new technological solutions

In fiscal year 2019, OGE developed or refined several web applications and automated tools that enable the agency to conduct business with greater efficiency and effectiveness. For example, OGE enhanced its Financial Disclosure Tracking System (FDTS) by updating it in a number of ways, including by adding a day counting feature to the nominee report; creating new waiver queries in the portal; and working on the process for amending OGE Form 201 requests, which are used to request copies of the public financial disclosure reports and other specified records of certain executive branch officials under

the Ethics in Government Act. OGE also developed an employee administrative records system in fiscal year 2019 for tracking travel cards, PIV cards, and transit subsidies.

Maintained internal applications and streamlined data collection

In recent fiscal years, OGE developed and/or redesigned numerous internal applications that streamlined workflows for agency programs, made data more retrievable, enhanced management practices, and strengthened compliance activities. These applications supported internal operations such as requisition, budget formulation, and equipment tracking, as well as major programs, such as the desk officer and financial disclosure programs. In fiscal year 2019, OGE devoted resources toward maintaining these various applications, which have become critical to agency operations.