

**UNITED STATES
OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT ETHICS**



**Fiscal Year 2011
Budget Request and
Annual Performance Plan**

**Prepared for the
Committee on Appropriations**

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UNITED STATES OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT ETHICS

Mission Statement

The United States Office of Government Ethics (OGE) exercises leadership in the executive branch to prevent conflicts of interest on the part of Government employees, and to resolve those conflicts of interest that do occur. In partnership with Executive Branch departments and agencies, OGE fosters high ethical standards for employees and strengthens the public's confidence that the Government's business is conducted with impartiality and integrity. OGE's mission directly supports the President's goal of responsibly governing the Nation.

Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011 Priorities Overview

OGE has identified and developed strategies to accomplish three budget priorities for fiscal years (FY) 2010 and 2011. Each priority supports OGE's long-term strategic goals of strengthening the ethical culture within the Executive Branch, preventing conflicts of interest, and promoting good governance.

OGE's budget priorities for FY 2010 and FY 2011 are to:

- Modernize Government ethics laws, regulations, and programs.
- Harness technology to promote transparency, training, and oversight.
- Promote continuity and succession planning in the Executive Branch ethics program.

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Section I – Purpose

A. About OGE

OGE, established by the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, is the agency within the Executive Branch that provides overall direction of Executive Branch policies designed to prevent and resolve conflicts of interest and to promote high ethical standards for Executive Branch employees. Specifically, OGE is responsible for promulgating and maintaining enforceable standards of ethical conduct for nearly 4 million civilian employees and uniformed service members in over 130 Executive Branch agencies and the White House; overseeing a financial disclosure system that reaches 25,000 public and nearly 300,000 confidential filers; providing direct education and training products to 5,600 ethics officials; conducting outreach to the general public, the private sector and civil society; and sharing good practices with and providing technical assistance to state, local, and foreign governments and international organizations.

OGE's greatest resource is its multi-disciplinary staff of attorneys, ethics and finance experts, and support staff. OGE leverages its human resources by organizing cross-functional teams to perform such diverse tasks as reviewing the financial disclosure reports of Senate-confirmed, Presidential appointees for financial conflicts of interest, training Executive Branch ethics officials, and enhancing oversight of Executive Branch ethics programs. By necessity, OGE's multi-disciplinary staff must be flexible in order to identify and respond to emerging needs within the ethics community and the Government as a whole.

B. Long-Term Strategic Goals

OGE's budget priorities for FY 2010 and FY 2011 support the three goals set out in OGE's five-year strategic plan, put in place in FY 2007. The daily work of OGE is driven by performance measures for the objectives established for each of these goals:

Strengthening ethical culture within the Executive Branch: OGE strives to improve the effectiveness of ethics policy, enhance assistance to and oversight of agency ethics programs, increase employees' awareness of their ethical responsibilities, and increase OGE's focus on senior officials' roles in implementing ethics programs.

Preventing conflicts of interest: OGE enhances assistance to the President and the Senate in the Presidential appointment process, monitors compliance with conflict of interest laws, and administers an effective confidential financial disclosure system.

Promoting good governance: OGE supports and cooperates with federal, state, and local agencies implementing programs that help support good governance, enhances outreach to the public and private sector and civil society, and supports United States foreign policy anti-corruption and good governance initiatives.

Section II – Budget Request Overview

A. Budget Request Overview Narrative

OGE is requesting \$14,227,000 in appropriated funds for FY 2011. This level of funding will support 80 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, allow OGE to execute its new responsibilities under Executive Order 13490 of January 21, 2009, maintain quality services in support of the Executive Branch ethics program, and meet the goals and objectives of its Strategic Plan. This request includes an increase of \$655,000 over FY 2010 for personnel and benefits costs to support 80 FTE, and fund a projected January 2011 pay raise and anticipated within grade increases and promotions. There are little, if any, increases for other object classes. The following object classification table summarizes OGE's request.

B. Table: Budget Request by Object Classification in (000's)

| Object class | <u>2009 Actual</u> | <u>2010 Appropriated</u> | <u>2011 Request</u> |
|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 11.1 Salaries | \$7,824 | \$8,640 | \$9,130 |
| 12.1 Benefits | \$1,952 | \$1,989 | \$2,060 |
| 21.0 Travel | \$78 | \$140 | \$150 |
| 22.0 Transportation (freight) | \$1 | \$5 | \$5 |
| 23.1 Rental payments to GSA | \$1,429 | \$1,447 | \$1,487 |
| 23.3 Communications & utilities | \$35 | \$65 | \$65 |
| 24.0 Printing and Reproduction | \$42 | \$75 | \$80 |
| 25.2 Other Services | \$911 | \$1,385 | \$1,015 |
| 26.0 Supplies and materials | \$151 | \$154 | \$130 |
| 31.0 Equipment | \$547 | \$100 | \$105 |
| 99.0 Subtotal | \$12,965 | \$14,000 | \$14,227 |
| 99.0 Reimbursable (National conference) | \$66 | \$500 | \$500 |
| 99.9 Totals | \$13,031 | \$14,500 | \$14,727 |

Section III – Fiscal Year 2009 Accomplishments

In Presidential transition years, OGE must be particularly flexible in order to continue normal program operations while simultaneously addressing the unique, often unforeseeable, challenges posed by a transition period. It is imperative for OGE's components to work in concert toward common goals. Following a right-sizing of OGE's budget for FY 2009, OGE effectively prepared for and managed the highest volume on record of public financial disclosure filings by nominees for Senate-confirmed, Presidential appointments, while restoring its other programmatic leadership capabilities to normal levels. Specifically, OGE more than doubled monitoring and compliance productivity, tripled training efforts for the approximately 5,600 ethics officials throughout the Government, provided daily expert technical assistance to ethics officials, and assumed unanticipated responsibility for additional duties under a new ethics-related Executive Order.

A. Leadership

Leading and shaping Executive Branch ethics policy and programs is OGE's primary mission. Highlights of OGE's ethics leadership efforts in FY 2009 include:

- Regularly communicating with the senior leadership of the departing Administration, representatives of the Presidential candidates, the Presidential Transition Team, and senior leadership of the new Administration about their ethical requirements.
- Providing expert assistance to Government organizations as they established new ethics programs and processes. Noteworthy examples include a new ethics program within the Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, new policies within the Department of the Treasury addressing the Troubled Asset Relief Program, a new standardized contract clause at the Department of State establishing standards for personal services contractors, and the Panel on Contracting Integrity's recommendations to the Secretary of Defense regarding organizational conflicts of interest requirements for contractors involved in major weapons systems acquisitions.
- Partnering with other Government agencies in employee exchanges, which allowed ethics officials to receive intensive training at OGE and improved OGE's understanding of the practical needs of the ethics community.
- Encouraging agencies to adopt a strategic, proactive approach for their ethics programs, which OGE calls the "Compliance Plus" approach, in order to move beyond a passive, reactive approach of merely complying with statutory and regulatory requirements. The "Compliance Plus" approach allowed OGE to share model practices with the entire Government ethics community through workshops and its website.

- Updating ethics officials on legislative developments affecting the federal ethics community and individual agencies.
- Leveraging training technologies that enable on-demand access to training, which dramatically increased training delivered at OGE's office and at agency facilities.
- Representing the United States at anti-corruption and good governance meetings of international organizations of which the U.S. is a member, such as UNODC, the Council of Europe's GRECO, APEC, and the OECD.
- Using OGE's experience to assist with the development or enhancement of good governance programs throughout the world by meeting with, at the request of U.S. foreign policy agencies, 41 delegations, totaling 332 people from 80 countries.
- Sharing good practices with state and local government agencies whose responsibilities include ethics and good governance programs, and with non-government organizations studying ethical culture in private and government sectors.

B. Transition

OGE's work during the ongoing Presidential transition underscores the importance of OGE's leadership across the Executive Branch. OGE's role in the Presidential transition enables OGE to impress upon the Government's most senior leaders the value of cultivating an ethical Government workforce. Highlights of OGE's facilitation of the Presidential transition in FY 2009 include:

- Hosting in-person meetings with representatives of both major Presidential candidates' campaign teams prior to the election, and providing those representatives with training on the legal requirements imposed by the Executive Branch ethics program and on the development of effective ethics programs.
- Producing and posting on OGE's website guidance directed at Senate-confirmed, Presidential appointees, including a video message from OGE's Director stressing the importance of ethics and financial disclosure, and a Presidential Transition Guide.
- Producing posters that creatively and succinctly conveyed key ethics concepts, which the Transition Team displayed in its headquarters.
- Certifying more than 480 financial disclosure reports of nominees to Senate-confirmed, Presidentially appointed positions and White House officials.
- Maintaining a 100 percent on-time Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) response rate, despite an exponential increase in FOIA requests.

- Issuing eight substantive policy memoranda since January 2009 that implement the new Ethics Pledge contained in Executive Order 13490; three additional memoranda are pending.
- Providing training to ethics officials on the new requirements under the Ethics Pledge, and providing guidance regarding new lobbyist restrictions to individual agencies.
- Using electronic survey technology to conduct an online assessment of agency implementation of the Ethics Pledge requirements and the issuance of Ethics Pledge waivers.
- Conducting focused reviews of select agencies' processes and procedures for collecting, reviewing, and certifying financial disclosure reports.
- Processing a significantly increased volume of termination public financial disclosure reports from departing officials from the outgoing Administration.
- Providing guidance to departing Administration personnel on issues such as seeking employment and post-Government employment.

C. **Administrative Improvements**

During the challenging period of the Presidential transition, OGE made some significant internal changes in order to improve agency efficiency, as well as employee satisfaction and well-being. OGE initiated a much-needed technology upgrade to its aging computer systems and ramped up efforts to ensure employee security. Highlights of OGE's administrative improvements in FY 2009 include:

- Appointing and developing new leadership within the organization.
- Designing a total replacement of OGE's computer network and a migration plan from an eDirectory environment to an Active Directory environment in order to meet the security standards established by the Federal Desktop Core Configuration.
- Successfully competing and awarding a contract for the technology replacement.
- Fully implementing Personal Identity Verification (PIV) for all employees in accordance with HSPD-12.
- Completing all requirements of Eagle Horizon, the 2009 Continuity of Operations Exercise.
- Establishing an agency SWAT team to map and streamline OGE's hiring procedures in accordance with the President's 2009 Hiring Initiative.

Section IV – Budget and Performance Plan by Priorities

OGE has identified three budget priorities for FY 2010 and FY 2011 that support its strategic goals of strengthening the ethical culture within the Executive Branch, preventing conflicts of interest, and promoting good governance:

- Modernize Government ethics laws, regulations, and programs.
- Harness technology to promote transparency, training, and oversight.
- Promote continuity and succession planning in the Executive Branch ethics program.

OGE's budget priorities are discussed in detail below, including the measures and strategy OGE intends to employ to accomplish each priority.

A. Priority 1 – Modernize Government Ethics Laws, Regulations, and Programs

OGE's most ambitious priority is to modernize Government ethics laws, regulations, and programs through five specific initiatives. First, OGE will implement fully Executive Order 13490 of January 21, 2009 (Executive Order), requiring OGE to undertake several tasks. Second, OGE plans to draft significant revisions to its authorizing legislation based on its 31 years of experience in implementing the Executive Branch ethics program. Any statutory changes necessarily will require OGE to update its regulations as well. Third, OGE will increase efforts to address ethics issues relating to contractor ethics. Fourth, OGE will complete comprehensive baseline reviews of all Cabinet-level ethics programs by the end of FY 2010. Finally, OGE will continue to coordinate with state, local, and foreign governments to exchange and learn from ethics-related governance initiatives.

1. Full Implementation of Executive Order 13490

Executive Order 13490 strengthened the Executive Branch ethics program and added significant requirements for OGE. Since the Order was issued, a working group comprising one-third of OGE's attorneys, including the General Counsel, has been dedicated to providing interpretive guidance on the Ethics Pledge for Political Appointees found at the beginning of the Executive Order. Through this dedicated effort, which included issuing eight substantive guidance documents, OGE has largely implemented the Ethics Pledge. OGE is now in the initial stages of implementing other provisions of the Executive Order and will continue these efforts into FY 2011 and beyond. Implementing the next phase of the Executive Order includes:

- Extending the Ethics Pledge's post-Government cooling-off period to all Executive Branch procurement personnel;
- Evaluating for the President the adequacy of current restrictions on procurement lobbying and related disclosure requirements;

- Reporting to the President on activities involving lobbying for Presidential pardons;
- Revising the Standards of Ethical Conduct to apply the lobbyist gift ban to all Executive Branch employees; and
- Reporting annually to the President on implementation of the Ethics Pledge.

Full implementation of the Executive Order will require significant OGE resources over the next two years. During this time, OGE will continue to provide interpretive guidance, training, and support to ethics officials in every agency. OGE also will review compliance with the Ethics Pledge and will develop and produce the separate, required reports. Additionally, OGE will collaborate with other Executive Branch agencies as required by several of the remaining Executive Order provisions. For example, the Director of OGE is required to consult with the Attorney General, the Counsel to the President, and the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to develop a plan for extending the post-Government cooling-off period to procurement employees. Likewise, any changes to the Standards of Ethical Conduct currently require OGE to consult with the Office of Personnel Management and the Department of Justice.

2. Reauthorization and Ethics Act Modernization

Within the first half of FY 2010, OGE will develop a legislative proposal to reauthorize OGE and to update the Ethics in Government Act. The 1978 Ethics in Government Act (EIGA) created OGE and a single Executive Branch ethics program. Over the years, OGE has adapted the Executive Branch ethics program to maintain relevance in the modern Government. However, there has been no comprehensive revision of the EIGA sufficient to meet the evolving Government workplace and financial landscape since its enactment in 1978. Thus, although the EIGA's financial disclosure requirements are the ethics community's primary tool for preventing personal financial conflicts of interest, these static requirements have not kept pace with the increasing complexity of investment instruments. Similarly, the current provisions of the EIGA limit transparency by preventing agencies from posting Public Financial Disclosure Reports on Government websites.

With more than three decades of implementing experience, OGE will develop a legislative proposal that will allow OGE to be more flexible in adapting to new technologies and a changing financial and Government workplace climate, to further streamline the review of the financial disclosure forms of nominees to Senate-confirmed, Presidential appointments for financial conflicts of interest, and to ensure OGE's Director has sufficient tools to fulfill his statutory responsibilities. Any legislative reform achieved in FY 2010 will require OGE to revise parts 2634 and 2636 of title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations in FY 2010 and FY 2011. OGE also may need to update the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Executive Branch Employees at 5 C.F.R. Part 2635. Any regulatory changes will require significant collaboration with the Department of Justice and the Office of Personnel Management.

3. Enhanced Oversight of Contractor Ethics

OGE has been at the forefront of increasing ethics oversight of Government contractors for many years, efforts which have gained traction in the Executive and Legislative Branches in recent years. In 2008 and 2009, Congress passed two major pieces of contractor reform legislation, the 2009 Defense Authorization Act and the Major Weapons Acquisition Reform Act of 2009, which require OGE to participate in the development of solutions to contractor ethics issues.

OGE continues to provide its expertise to the Federal Acquisition Regulatory (FAR) Council law team as it develops a unified, Government-wide set of ethical requirements for Government contractors implemented through standard contract clauses. In FY 2010 and FY 2011, OGE will contribute to new contract provisions dealing with the organizational and personal conflicts of interest of Government contractors. In addition to the FAR team, OGE will participate in the Department of Defense's (DoD) Panel on Contracting Integrity, which has been tasked by the 2010 Defense Authorization Act to review post-Government employment laws for DoD employees. This builds on OGE's prior outreach on contractor ethics, including coordination with the National Procurement Fraud Task Force, the Inspector General community, and the newly created Contractor Oversight Subcommittee of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. OGE also has worked with the Department of State to assist in its development of a contract clause detailing the ethical obligations of personal services contractors.

Executive Order 13490 also includes significant, new contractor ethics-related responsibilities for OGE. OGE is required to evaluate and report on extending the Ethics Pledge's post-Government cooling-off period to all Executive Branch procurement personnel and on the adequacy of current procurement lobbying restrictions and disclosure. To accomplish these tasks, OGE will need to augment its staff with an expert in acquisition matters.

4. Review of the Ethics Programs of Cabinet-Level Departments

OGE will conduct a comprehensive benchmarking review of Cabinet-level ethics programs in FY 2010. The ethics programs of these agencies touch the vast majority of Executive Branch employees including the majority of Senate-confirmed, Presidential appointees. A concerted review of Cabinet-level agencies will allow OGE to examine a meaningful range of program structures and processes in order to efficiently identify vulnerabilities and model practices relevant to the broader ethics community. These Cabinet-level reviews will provide agency heads and Designated Agency Ethics Officials with useful benchmarks for charting and measuring improvements to their programs in appropriate areas. These reviews also will allow OGE to better focus its training and desk officer support efforts. OGE will devote a significant amount of its human resources to staffing the multi-disciplinary teams that will conduct these reviews.

5. Good Governance Initiatives and International Assistance

In FY 2010 and FY 2011, OGE will actively continue to seek and to share good practices and learning experiences with international organizations, and state, local and foreign governments which administer programs similar to those of OGE. Domestically, OGE will continue to be active with the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws (COGEL), an organization whose members are primarily federal, state, and local government agencies with ethics and other good governance responsibilities. The next COGEL conference will be held in Washington, D.C. in December 2010. OGE, along with other federal agencies who are members of COGEL, will assist with the organization this conference.

A number of international organizations of which the United States is a member rely upon OGE as a technical resource in the area of ethics and good governance; in turn, OGE receives the immediate benefit of the research conducted by those organizations for its use in policy considerations. OGE will continue to actively participate with these organizations as a technical expert. Further, in support of U.S. foreign policy initiatives to assist other countries with technical expertise in the areas of ethics and good governance and to enhance their laws and programs, OGE will continue to provide expert evaluators for the Group of States Against Corruption and to work with the team that will be conducting the third-round evaluation of the United States. OGE also will help support member countries' efforts at implementing the UN Convention Against Corruption and the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption, to assist with programs of the Public Governance Directorate of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development and of the forum of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. OGE also will continue to meet with multiple foreign delegations visiting the United States, sponsored primarily by the Department of State's visitors program and, will continue to participate on behalf of the United States in various international seminars focusing on prevention and good governance.

B. Priority 2 – Harness Technology to Promote Transparency, Training, and Oversight

OGE's second budget priority is to increase its use of technology to improve transparency in the ethics program and enhance training and oversight of agency ethics programs. OGE will pursue three major initiatives aimed at achieving this goal. First, OGE will assist the White House and the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) to develop Ethics.gov, envisioned to be a virtual clearing-house for a multitude of ethics-related documents. Second, OGE will launch new training materials using web-based technologies that will allow OGE to expand its training audience and make training available on demand. While OGE will continue presenting live training events, adding on-demand training will increase exponentially the number of ethics officials and Executive Branch employees reached by OGE. Third, OGE expects to enhance oversight of agency ethics programs by employing new assessment technologies in connection with its program review function.

1. Ethics.gov

The Administration and OGE are committed to greater transparency in Government. To that end, the President publicly committed to creating Ethics.gov, a clearing-house for ethics documents. The Administration charged OGE with assisting in the establishment of this website, and the President's FY 2010 budget included \$275,000 in start-up money for this effort. OGE already is participating in a working group with the White House and OSTP on this project. While Ethics.gov will evolve over the life of the Administration, OGE anticipates that the first iteration of Ethics.gov will go on-line during FY 2010. Future content of Ethics.gov will be shaped by a variety of factors including available funding, public interest in ethics-related content, and potential legislative changes. As discussed earlier, the EIGA never envisioned the degree to which technology could promote transparency, such as the posting of public financial disclosure reports on the internet.

2. Interactive Web-based Training

In FY 2010 and FY 2011, OGE will develop and deliver on-demand, self-paced tutorials and live instructor-led, web-based training directed at ethics officials, staff of Inspectors General, and Executive Branch employees generally. Web-based training products allow students to access training on demand from any location. Expanded web-based training will allow OGE efficiently to reach the more than 50 percent of ethics officials that do not reside in the Washington, D.C. metro area and cannot readily attend classroom training. Further, because the vast majority of ethics officials devote only part of their official time to the ethics program, web-based training is a particularly effective means for providing specialized training on a need-to-know basis.

3. Oversight-Enhancing Assessment Technology

OGE will use electronic survey software and other automated assessment tools to complement its oversight responsibilities. A large, geographically-dispersed ethics community presents obvious challenges to providing effective oversight. Electronic survey software and other automated assessment tools will allow OGE to assess a broader swath of the ethics community more efficiently than in the past. OGE will integrate these technologies into its comprehensive and focused reviews. All OGE components will assist in the development of survey content. The information gleaned through use of these technologies will improve the focus of costly in-person program reviews while addressing the needs and vulnerabilities of the ethics community.

C. **Priority 3 – Promote Continuity and Succession Planning of the Executive Branch Ethics Program**

As the leader of the Executive Branch ethics community, OGE set as its third budget priority promoting continuity and succession planning in the Executive Branch ethics program. OPM projects that 36 percent of Executive Branch employees will be

eligible to retire by the end of 2010, and 61 percent of them will be eligible by the end of 2016. OGE confirmed through its surveys of ethics officials that the Executive Branch ethics program is not immune to this impending workforce turn-over. OGE also learned that many agency ethics programs may lack sufficient continuity and succession planning. With three specific measures, OGE will provide leadership to promote continuity in the Executive Branch ethics program. First, OGE will continue to introduce senior Executive Branch officials to the ethics program during the nomination process of Senate-confirmed, Presidential appointees. Second, OGE will use the National Government Ethics Conference in May 2010 as a forum for emphasizing the importance of continuity and succession planning through a cohesive learning experience. Third, OGE will pilot a new ethics official certification program to encourage the recruitment and professional development of ethics officials.

1. Public Financial Disclosure by Nominees to Senate-Confirmed, Presidential Appointments

OGE anticipates continuing its record pace of reviewing and certifying the financial disclosure reports of nominees to Senate-confirmed, Presidential appointments. By the end of FY 2009, OGE reviewed the reports of nominees for nearly 45 percent of the approximately 1,200 Senate-confirmed, Presidential appointees. A high volume of nominee financial disclosure reporting will continue through FY 2010, and beyond. Thirty years of experience shows that the nominee financial disclosure aspect of transition really never ends. Even in the last year or two of an Administration, OGE reviews approximately 250 nominee reports for conflicts of interest annually. In addition, OGE will review the annual filings for all Senate-confirmed, Presidential appointees and the most senior White House staff members.

For most nominees to Senate-confirmed, Presidential appointments, the financial disclosure program represents their first encounter with the Executive Branch's ethical requirements. OGE takes advantage of this opportunity to impress upon them the importance of the ethics program. OGE works closely with nominees and ethics officials at their prospective agencies to ensure compliance with all financial disclosure and conflicts of interest requirements. These early interactions typically help to stress the importance of a conflict-free Government workplace.

2. 17th and 18th National Government Ethics Conferences

In May 2010, OGE will host its 17th National Government Ethics Conference. This major training event will address two distinct training audiences, new ethics officials and the Executive Branch ethics community as a whole. During the first portion, the Conference for New Ethics Officials, OGE will introduce new ethics officials to the legal framework for ethics in the Executive Branch through an intensive, two-day series of seminars designed to build a working knowledge of the ethics community, fundamentals of the conflict of interest laws, standards of conduct regulations, financial disclosure rules, and ethics program elements. The conference will provide new ethics officials with a foundation to enable them to fully benefit from the larger National Government

Ethics Conference. To meet the educational needs of the Executive Branch ethics community, the broader National Government Ethics Conference presentations will focus on emerging ethics issues, the Ethics Pledge, program management, continuity and succession planning, and other important ethics issues. Over 600 Executive Branch ethics officials and representatives from state, local, and foreign governments, are expected to participate.

All conference materials will be electronically archived, and selected presentations will be electronically recorded. Following the conference, substantial training resources will be devoted during the remainder of FY 2010 and throughout FY 2011 to editing, refining, and distributing conference presentations and materials. In this way, OGE substantially enhances the practical value of its national ethics conferences. Notably, in FY 2011 several training events and electronically-based training products designed for web delivery will be developed. In addition, OGE will continue to place pertinent materials on OGE's website to facilitate public access.

In 2011, OGE will hold the 18th National Government Ethics Conference. As in previous years, and to ensure resources are used efficiently, OGE plans to host the Conference for New Ethics Officials in the same timeframe as the larger National Government Ethics Conference. In developing the agenda for this conference, OGE will rely upon data it gathers through the use of survey technology, monitoring activities, and requests for technical advice.

3. Ethics Official Certification Program

In FY 2010 and FY 2011, OGE will launch and refine a certification program for ethics officials throughout the Executive Branch. OGE will identify milestones in formal training and practical experience in Executive Branch ethics warranting certification and will establish specific standards for that certification. OGE expects its certification program to enhance the professionalism of Government ethics as a career field and to help identify persons who are best qualified for ethics official positions.

Section IV – Improve Employee Satisfaction and Wellness

A. Model Employer Behavior for Executive Branch Agencies

Consistent with the President’s priority of responsibly governing the Nation and the President’s expectation that the Government will be a model employer, in FY 2010 and FY 2011, OGE will strive both to gain efficiencies in the workplace, and to increase employee satisfaction and well-being. OGE’s Administrative and Technology teams will work to create a supportive work environment in which employees will be able to fulfill their Government responsibilities. OGE’s management will continue to encourage employees’ professional development and provide a safe and hospitable working environment.

1. Information Technology Replacement and New Initiatives

In FY 2010 and FY 2011, OGE will move to virtual computing and green computing by completing the technology upgrade initiated in FY 2009. OGE will install the new network replacement components, move from an eDirectory environment to an Active Directory environment, configure the hardware and software, and provide employees with the necessary training to utilize this new technology. This virtual computing environment will have fewer moving parts to fail and will consume less power than OGE’s current computing environment. As a result, in the future OGE’s system will require less maintenance than the current legacy system, components of which are over a dozen years old. Fewer moving parts also will produce less heat. Lower replacement volume, less power consumption, and lower heat production will create a “greener” computing environment at OGE. More reliable, efficient computing will allow employees to complete their tasks with fewer obstacles and greater efficiency.

OGE is mindful of the Administration’s Cloud Computing initiative. OGE expects to review federal guidelines for the secure use of Cloud Computing by federal agencies and implement these guidelines as needed to support OGE’s mission. Finally, OGE also will review federal guidelines for the secure use of social media by federal agencies.

2. Administrative Improvements

In FY 2010 and FY 2011, OGE will continue to evaluate and improve its continuity and succession planning to provide a stable work environment for employees. Beginning in FY 2010 and continuing into FY 2011, OGE will conduct internal management surveys, complete an assessment of OGE’s human capital needs, and develop a Strategic Human Capital Plan. The Plan will define and specifically address additional workforce needs resulting from the new, substantive responsibilities under the Executive Order. OGE plans to conduct a business systems analysis to assess and improve all administrative processes, including personnel actions, acquisitions, and procurements. OGE will continue to explore electronic information technology solutions for personnel data security and Official Personnel Folder documentation. OGE will

document and submit to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management the necessary paperwork to re-certify OGE's Senior Executive Service performance system. Finally, OGE will participate in the national level COOP exercise, Eagle Horizon 2010.

3. Create a Performance Culture

In addition to providing robust information technology and administrative support, OGE management will continue to support employees' professional development. OGE encourages details between its agency divisions and to other Government entities for the purpose of increasing the knowledge and skills of the employees who fulfill OGE's mission. OGE employees benefit from a combination of formal course work and experiential assignments; working with Congress, the White House, and other Executive Branch agencies. OGE also invites guest speakers to discuss issues of relevance to agency programs. Similarly, OGE encourages employees to participate in an ethics round-table discussion group.

To enhance quality of life standards for employees, OGE supports flexible work schedules and encourages a team environment. OGE's flexible work options and benefits include part-time employment, compressed work schedules, telecommuting, staggered start-time options, and accommodations for nursing mothers. OGE creates a team environment by recognizing employee service at an annual awards ceremony, encouraging employees to participate in volunteer and sporting programs after hours, and permitting its employees to organize a lunchtime book club and an off-duty movie club. OGE employees also came together to actively support the Feds Feed Families initiative and charitable holiday activities.

B. Wellness Programs

OGE offers a number of health and wellness opportunities to employees. OGE provides employees with access to a Health Unit one block from OGE's offices through the Federal Occupational Health Service (FOH), a program of the Department of Health and Human Services. Employees can visit the Health Unit for regular health screenings and certain basic unexpected health needs. An FOH nurse visits OGE monthly to offer blood-pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes screenings for all employees. Through FOH, OGE offers its employees flu shots seasonally and tetanus shots occasionally. FOH also hosts periodic brown bag lunches to discuss topics such as healthy diets, sunscreen use, and the importance of regular health screenings. Finally, OGE employees can access counseling services through the Employee Assistance Program.

The building in which OGE leases its office space contains a fitness facility, renovated in 2009, that is available without charge to the employees of all building tenants. The building also provides an underground bike rack in its parking garage for tenants' employees who bike to work. OGE employees also have formed a softball team and a running team.

With regard to nutrition, OGE's building does not contain a cafeteria, but its downtown location is surrounded by numerous eateries that offer healthy dining choices. Additionally, there are full-size refrigerators and designated food preparation areas within OGE's office space. Many, if not most employees utilize these facilities to bring lunch to work. In addition to three drinking fountains and water in kitchen facilities, bottled water is available for employees who have pooled personal funds for a commercial bottled water service.

OGE also has one snack and one beverage vending machine in its office space. While the machines currently offer a small number of healthy options, in FY 2010 OGE will ensure that its supplier stocks the machines with more healthy, nutritious offerings. OGE also will explore whether employees would patronize a vending machine offering healthy refrigerated food items such as yogurt and fruit.