

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF  
**GOVERNMENT ETHICS**



Preventing Conflicts of Interest  
in the Executive Branch

**Summary of Performance  
and Financial Information  
Fiscal Year 2014**

## OVERVIEW

The U.S. Office of Government Ethics, established by the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, provides overall leadership and oversight of the executive branch ethics program 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 Principles of Ethical Conduct for Government Officers and Employees is, “[p]ublic service is a public trust, requiring employees to place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws and ethical principles above private gain.” Public servants are expected to make impartial decisions based on the interests of the public when performing their job duties. OGE, in concert with agency ethics practitioners throughout the executive branch, ensures that employees fulfill this great trust.

To carry out its leadership and oversight responsibilities, OGE promulgates and maintains enforceable standards of ethical conduct for approximately 2.7 million employees in over 130 executive branch agencies and the White House; oversees a financial disclosure system that reaches more than 27,000 public and more than 370,000 confidential financial disclosure report filers; ensures that executive branch agency ethics programs are in compliance with applicable ethics laws and regulations; provides education and training to the more than 5,000 ethics officials executive branch-wide; conducts outreach to the general public, the private sector, and civil society; and provides technical assistance to state, local, and foreign governments and international organizations.

### OGE Mission

Provide overall leadership and oversight of the executive branch ethics program designed to prevent and resolve conflicts of interest

#### Advance a strong **uniform** executive branch ethics program

Interpret and advise on ethics laws, policies, and program management issues

Hold executive branch agencies accountable for carrying out effective ethics programs

Contribute to the professional development of ethics officials

Modernize and implement the ethics rules and regulations

#### Contribute to the **continuity** of senior leadership in the executive branch

Assist in the President’s constitutional duty to nominate and appoint officers to the executive branch

Support succession planning in executive branch ethics programs

Promote leadership support of the executive branch ethics program overall

#### Promote **transparency** of the executive branch ethics program

Raise the visibility of the systems in place to identify and resolve conflicts of interest

Make ethics documents publicly available

### Management Objectives

Promote professional development opportunities aimed at building OGE employees’ knowledge, skills, and abilities  
Transform the way OGE conducts business through process improvement

## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

OGE is committed to effectively and efficiently managing funds appropriated by Congress to execute its important mission. There were no significant changes to OGE’s financial position in fiscal year 2014. OGE’s financial statements and footnotes appear in the Part III of [OGE’s Annual Financial Report for FY 2014](#).

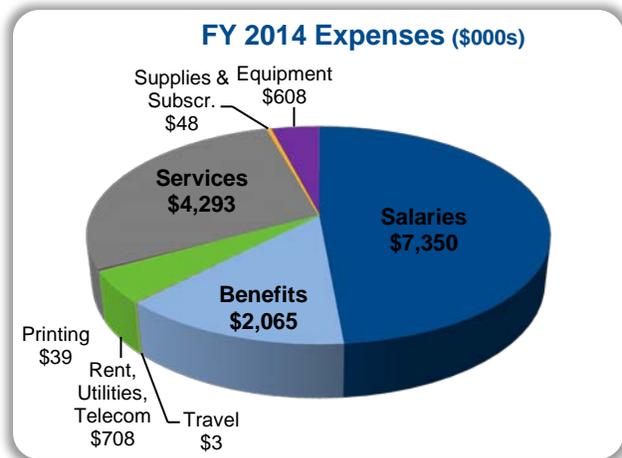
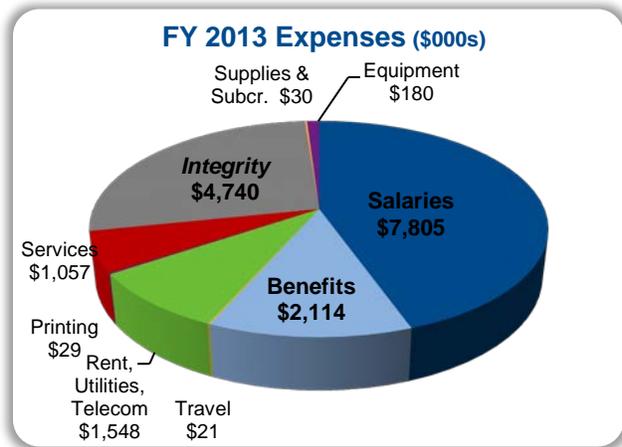
Selected Financial Data	2013	2014
Total Assets	\$5,824,344	\$9,813,490
Total Liabilities	\$1,653,737	\$1,738,019
Net Cost of Operations	\$14,761,745*	\$11,912,015

In fiscal year 2014, OGE maintained an unmodified opinion on its financial statements and no material internal control weaknesses were found.

\*In fiscal year 2013, OGE received additional funds to implement the STOCK Act, which included a mandate for OGE to develop a system for electronically filing and reviewing public financial disclosures.

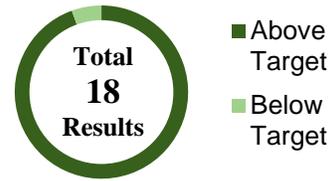
**Salaries & Benefits:** OGE is a lean [organization](#), operating with fewer than its 80 authorized full-time equivalents. OGE’s greatest resource is its multidisciplinary staff of attorneys, ethics and finance experts, and support personnel who work in concert to carry out OGE’s mission.

**Integrity:** In fiscal year 2013, OGE received additional funding to implement the STOCK Act, which included a mandate for OGE to develop an electronic financial disclosure system available executive branch-wide, at no cost to participating agencies. Currently, a number of agencies use systems that charge a per user cost. In fiscal year 2014, OGE substantially completed development of *Integrity*. Throughout fiscal year 2014, OGE devoted significant resources to developing *Integrity*, conducting rigorous verification and validation testing of the system, and evaluating the system to ensure compliance with government security, privacy, and various other technical requirements. These expenditures comprise a large portion of OGE’s expenditures on services in fiscal year 2014. It is anticipated that *Integrity* will greatly enhance the executive branch public financial disclosure program and meaningfully increase OGE’s oversight capability.



# PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

In fiscal year 2014, OGE met or exceeded 17 of its 18 performance goals. Below are performance highlights from each of OGE’s major activities that support OGE’s strategic goals. These highlights demonstrate that OGE has been successful in achieving its strategic goals and accomplishing its mission.



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



OGE is the supervising ethics office for a decentralized ethics community comprised of thousands of ethics officials in over 130 agencies across the executive branch. OGE’s Desk Officer program serves as a vital communications link to this ethics

community. OGE’s Desk Officers provide agencies with assistance in resolving difficult ethics issues requiring expertise that only the supervising ethics office can offer. OGE also issues advisories to disseminate critical information to the executive branch ethics community and to promote uniform, consistent interpretation of ethics laws, regulations, and policies.

93% of ethics officials believe that OGE Desk Officer assistance helps them perform their duties

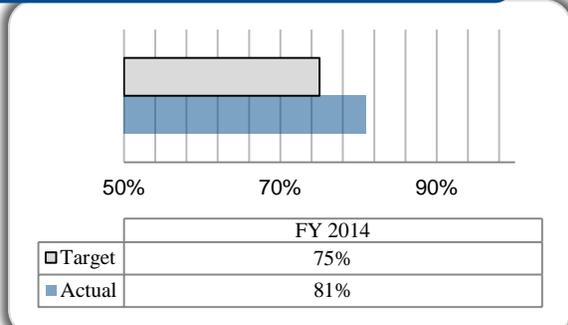
Desk Officers responded to over **1,943** requests for assistance

OGE issued **8** advisories

87% of ethics officials felt that OGE advisories help them perform their job duties

The only target goal OGE did not reach was for the percentage of ethics officials who believe OGE timely addresses new ethics issues. This may be a result of OGE broadening the focus of the question as to whether ethics officials believe OGE is timely communicating on all issues, not exclusively new or emerging issues. OGE found that 94 percent of respondents to the Annual Survey of Ethics Officials believe OGE timely communicates ethics-related information.

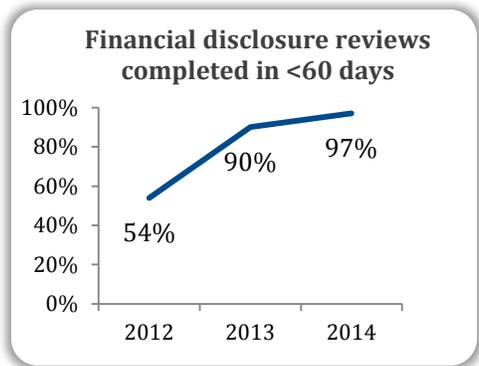
OGE conducted **31** agency ethics program reviews and issued **58** recommendations



81% of agencies subject to review implemented recommendations for improvements

In addition to providing day-to-day assistance through the Desk Officer program and issuing [advisories](#), OGE holds executive branch agencies accountable for carrying out an effective ethics program by conducting agency ethics program reviews and reviewing the financial disclosure reports of senior executive branch officials. Through [ethics program reviews](#) — plenary reviews and inspections — OGE evaluates agency ethics programs. Where necessary, OGE provides recommendations for program improvement and suggests remedial actions to correct deficiencies.

OGE also reviews the annual, termination, and transaction reports of executive branch leaders appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate (PAS), as well as other reports filed by Designated Agency Ethics Officials (DAEOs) and certain White House officials. The timely review of these reports helps ensure that these senior officials remain free from conflicts of interest. In fiscal year 2014, OGE reviewed over 900 public financial disclosure reports. Additionally, OGE reviewed over 700 periodic transaction reports. Since 2012, OGE has created new procedures and has devoted significant resources toward completing its reviews more efficiently.



Ethics training is also essential to ensuring uniformity in the application of ethics laws and policy. OGE has worked diligently to promote continuous learning, thereby increasing the overall skill of the executive branch’s corps of professional agency ethics officials. In turn, OGE leverages these agency ethics officials to train the broader federal workforce regarding their

ethical responsibilities. In fiscal year 2013, OGE increased registrations for its educational offerings by 238 percent. OGE increased registrations by an additional 37 percent in fiscal year 2014. OGE training is noteworthy not only for its quantity but also for its quality. As a result of attending courses offered by OGE, ethics officials overwhelmingly reported that they better understand the subject matter presented and believe they can more effectively perform their jobs.



OGE also held the first National Government Ethics Summit in fiscal year 2014. The

**NATIONAL GOVERNMENT ETHICS SUMMIT**

520 attended the plenary days that featured topics of broad interest

>360 registered for invitational days that focused on specialized topics

Broadcast sessions received 4,377 unique views

Summit consisted of 7 days of live instruction and over 120 training sessions throughout September 2014. OGE designed the Summit to strengthen the executive branch ethics program by providing attendees with opportunities to deepen their knowledge of the ethics rules, share lessons learned through extensive practical experience, listen to viewpoints from outside government, and build connections with ethics officials who can assist in resolving even the most complex ethics issues. OGE also provided access to this valuable content by broadcasting many of the sessions and a number of virtual-only events by live streaming video on the internet and posting the recorded videos on its [YouTube](#) and [Google+](#) pages.

Strategic Goal 2: Contribute to the continuity of senior leadership in the executive branch.

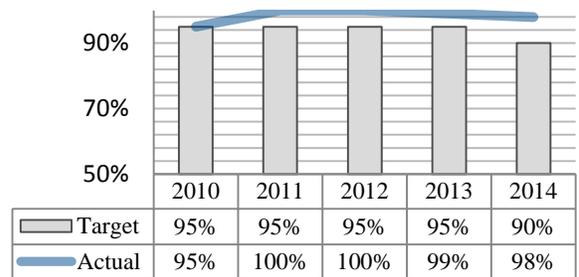
**Total  
4  
Results**

- Above Target
- Below Target

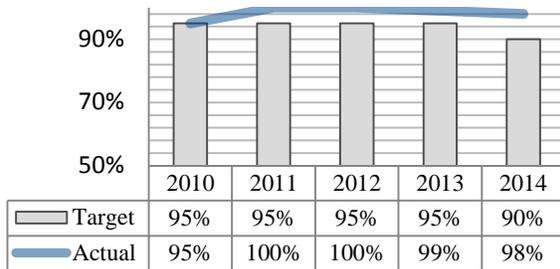
OGE contributes to the continuity of senior leadership in the executive branch by assisting in the President’s constitutional duty to nominate and appoint officers to the executive branch, supporting succession planning in executive branch ethics programs, and promoting leadership support of the executive branch ethics program overall.

OGE reviews the financial interests of Presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed (PAS) nominees for possible conflicts of interest with their prospective duties. OGE also identifies and resolves potential conflicts of interest on the part of nominees by establishing written ethics agreements with them prior to confirmation. For most PAS nominees, OGE’s financial disclosure program represents their first encounter with the ethics requirements of the executive branch. Thus, the ethics review of PAS nominees’ financial interests provides OGE with the opportunity to impress upon these most senior executive branch officials the importance of their roles as top leaders in creating and fostering an ethical culture at their agencies.

**OGE successfully resolves technical reporting issues in financial disclosure reports of PAS nominees no later than 5 days after nomination**



**Identifiable substantive conflicts of interest of PAS nominees are successfully resolved by ethics agreements no later than 5 days after nomination**



In fiscal year 2014, OGE reviewed the [reports](#) of nominees for approximately 25 percent of the 1,100 to 1,200 Senate-confirmed, Presidentially appointed positions. OGE measures its performance based on the successful and timely resolution of conflicts and technical reporting issues for nominee financial disclosure reports. OGE’s standard is to resolve conflict of interest and technical reporting issues no later than 5 days after a nomination is made. OGE continues to exceed its targets in this area.

Also in fiscal year 2014, OGE worked to develop *Integrity*, OGE’s system for electronically filing and reviewing public financial disclosures (OGE Forms 278 and 278-T) submitted by certain high-level executive branch officials. *Integrity* will enhance the filing, review, and program management aspects of the executive branch public financial disclosure program. *Integrity* will also meaningfully increase OGE’s oversight capability by allowing OGE to monitor agencies’ progress in administering their individual financial disclosure programs.



*Strategic Goal 3: Promote transparency of the executive branch ethics program.*



- Above Target
- Below Target

OGE directs resources toward raising the visibility of the systems in place to identify and resolve conflicts of interest and making ethics documents publicly available. Transparency increases accountability and builds public confidence in the impartiality of government decision making.

In fiscal year 2014, OGE worked to increase the number of external stakeholders that are aware of OGE and the executive branch ethics program. OGE's website is its primary tool for communicating with its external stakeholders. OGE also used social media to broaden its reach to key external stakeholders. Specifically, OGE uses its [Twitter](#) account to drive traffic to substantive ethics content on its website and to provide information about the executive branch ethics program to the public. OGE also expanded its use of social media by creating new [Google+](#) and [YouTube](#) pages, which OGE used to live stream content from the National Government Ethics Summit and other ethics education.

First-time visitors to [www.oge.gov](#) increased by 5%.  
421,739 people visited [www.oge.gov](#)



OGE also responded to 632 requests for information and assistance from its non-executive branch external stakeholders on topics such as public financial disclosure, gifts from outside sources, and post-employment. This assistance increases OGE's external stakeholders' understanding of the executive branch ethics program and related ethics rules and regulations.

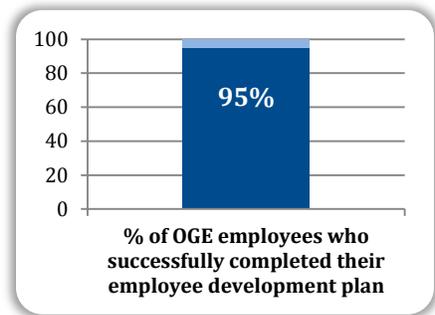
*Management Objectives: Promote professional development opportunities aimed at building OGE employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities. Transform the way OGE conducts business through process improvement.*



- Above Target
- Below Target

In fiscal year 2014, OGE expanded the use of a unique professional development process that OGE developed and piloted in 2013, called the Employee Development Program (EDP). Each employee identifies learning objectives that are

tied directly to OGE's strategic plan and to the organizational goals of the employee's work unit. The employee then identifies specific measurable formal training, mentoring, self-study, or on-the-job training activities to will complete in the covered period.



OGE developed or updated 20 standard operating procedures

In an effort to work smarter, OGE also continued to review its processes and procedures for ways to improve the ethics community and its internal operations. OGE made significant progress in automating and making paperless additional processes such as ethics agreements compliance, online training, and purchase card approval and transactions.

## USEFUL SITES

OGE's homepage is [www.oge.gov](http://www.oge.gov). Several of the more frequently visited sites are listed here:

<b>General Information</b>	
<b>About OGE</b>	<a href="http://www.oge.gov/About/About/">http://www.oge.gov/About/About/</a>
<b>Organizational Chart</b>	<a href="http://www.oge.gov/About/Organization/OGE-Organizational-Chart/">http://www.oge.gov/About/Organization/OGE-Organizational-Chart/</a>
<b>Performance and Strategic Documents</b>	<a href="http://www.oge.gov/About/ManagementReports-and-Policies/Performance-and-Strategic-Docs/Performance--Strategic-Documents/">http://www.oge.gov/About/ManagementReports-and-Policies/Performance-and-Strategic-Docs/Performance--Strategic-Documents/</a>
<b>Important Dates and Deadlines</b>	<a href="http://www.oge.gov/Program-Management/Dates-and-Deadlines/Dates-and-Deadlines/">http://www.oge.gov/Program-Management/Dates-and-Deadlines/Dates-and-Deadlines/</a>
<b>Director's Notes</b>	<a href="http://www.oge.gov/Blog/Director_s_Notes/">http://www.oge.gov/Blog/Director_s_Notes/</a>
<b>International Activities</b>	<a href="http://www.oge.gov/About/International-Activities/International-Activities/">http://www.oge.gov/About/International-Activities/International-Activities/</a>
<b>Access to Records</b>	
<b>Forms Library</b>	<a href="http://www.oge.gov/Forms-Library/Forms-Library/">http://www.oge.gov/Forms-Library/Forms-Library/</a>
<b>Presidential Appointee and Nominee Records</b>	<a href="http://www.oge.gov/Open-Government/Presidential-Appointee---Nominee-Records/">http://www.oge.gov/Open-Government/Presidential-Appointee---Nominee-Records/</a>
<b>Program Review Reports</b>	<a href="http://www.oge.gov/Program-Management/Program-Review/Program-Review-Reports/Program-Review-Reports/">http://www.oge.gov/Program-Management/Program-Review/Program-Review-Reports/Program-Review-Reports/</a>
<b>Travel Reports</b>	<a href="http://www.oge.gov/Open-Government/Travel-Reports/Travel-Reports/">http://www.oge.gov/Open-Government/Travel-Reports/Travel-Reports/</a>
<b>Information Regarding the Ethics Laws and Regulations</b>	
<b>Ethics Laws and Regulations</b>	<a href="http://www.oge.gov/Laws-and-Regulations/">http://www.oge.gov/Laws-and-Regulations/</a>
<b>Standards of Conduct</b>	<a href="http://www.oge.gov/Laws-and-Regulations/Employee-Standards-of-Conduct/Employee-Standards-of-Conduct/">http://www.oge.gov/Laws-and-Regulations/Employee-Standards-of-Conduct/Employee-Standards-of-Conduct/</a>
<b>Legal Advisories</b>	<a href="http://www.oge.gov/OGE-Advisories/Legal-Advisories/Legal-Advisories/">http://www.oge.gov/OGE-Advisories/Legal-Advisories/Legal-Advisories/</a>
<b>Ethics Training</b>	
<b>You Tube</b>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/OGEInstitute">https://www.youtube.com/user/OGEInstitute</a>
<b>Google+</b>	<a href="https://plus.google.com/112724308837600656840/posts">https://plus.google.com/112724308837600656840/posts</a>
<b>OGE News</b>	
<b>News Media</b>	<a href="http://www.oge.gov/Media-Resources/News-Releases/News-Releases/">http://www.oge.gov/Media-Resources/News-Releases/News-Releases/</a>
<b>RSS Feed</b>	<a href="http://www.oge.gov/Program-Management/Dates-and-Deadlines/RSS-Feeds/">http://www.oge.gov/Program-Management/Dates-and-Deadlines/RSS-Feeds/</a>
<b>Twitter</b>	<a href="https://twitter.com/officegovethics">https://twitter.com/officegovethics</a>

If you need additional assistance, you can contact OGE by email at [contactoge@oge.gov](mailto:contactoge@oge.gov).