



Board of Ethics and Government Accountability (BEGA) – AGO

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Central Purpose

- The Board of Ethics and Government Accountability (BEGA) is responsible for overseeing the Office of Government Ethics and the Office of Open Government. The Office of Government Ethics (OGE) administers and enforces the District of Columbia Code of Conduct. The Office of Open Government (OOG) is an independent office under BEGA and enforces government-wide compliance with the D.C. Freedom of Information Act and the Open Meetings Act.

Key Facts

Specifically, BEGA is responsible for:

- Investigating alleged violations of the Code of Conduct, holding adversarial hearings and, where appropriate, levying sanctions;
- Issuing Advisory Opinions, providing “safe-harbor” for good-faith reliance on these opinions;
- Issuing Advisory Opinions on its own initiative;
- Conducting mandatory ethics training for District government employees;
- Updating and maintaining the District Ethics Manual;
- Receiving and reviewing public financial disclosure statements from public officials and certification statements from Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners;
- Overseeing compliance of certain government employees who must file confidential financial disclosure statements with their agency heads;
- Receiving and auditing lobbyist registration forms and lobbyist activity reports;
- Enforcing the Open Meetings Act;
- Monitoring the District’s compliance with the Freedom of Information Act; and
- Assisting government agencies in the implementation of open government practices.

Goals/Performance Measures

- Conduct timely and appropriate investigations and enforcement actions. BEGA measures its performance in this area by how quickly a case resolved setting goals of 90 days to complete investigations and 75 days thereafter for complete resolution of a matter.
- Conduct mandatory training on the Code of Conduct and produce ethics training materials and a plain-language guide.
- Issue formal, written Advisory Opinions upon application made by an employee or public official subject to the Code of Conduct and issue, on its own initiative, an advisory opinion on any general questions of law it deems of sufficient public importance. BEGA measures its performance in this area by how quickly a formal opinion can be issued after a request setting a goal of 30 days after receipt of all necessary information.
- Promote Transparency and Open Government Policies.
- Ensure compliance with the Open Meetings Act (OMA) by training all boards and commissions on the procedural requirements of the OMA.
- Serve as the District’s Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) officer and ensure compliance among agency FOIA officers with the Act by conducting yearly training, and providing formal and informal advice.

Programs/Services

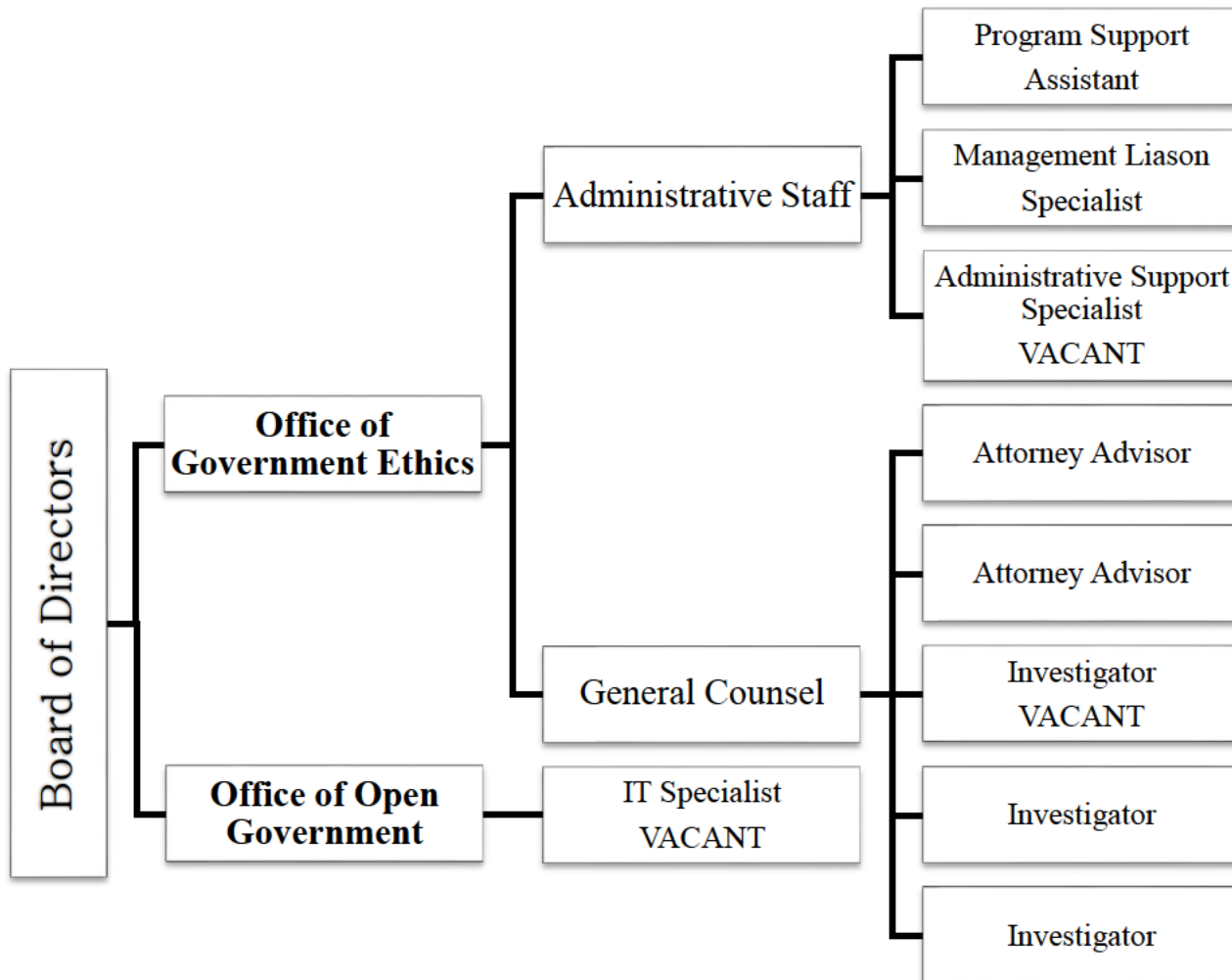
The District of Columbia Board of Ethics and Government Accountability operates through the following two (2) programs:

- Office of Open Government – administers and enforces the Code of Conduct through the Ethics Board, monitors the District’s compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), assists the public and promotes effective use of the District’s FOIA, and resolves disputes between agencies and requesters regarding access to government records.
- Board of Ethics and Government Accountability/Office of Government Ethics – receives, investigates, assesses, and adjudicates violations of the Code of Conduct; provides mandatory ethics training; issues rules and regulations governing the ethical conduct of employees and public officials; and provides for an anonymous and confidential receipt of information related to violations of the Code of Conduct or other information with regard to its administration or enforcement.

First Quarter CY2015 Hot Button Issue(s)

- (OGE) – Passage of legislation adopting a Comprehensive Code of Conduct, which BEGA has been statutorily authorized to draft and submit to the Council for consideration.
- (OOG) – Passage of legislation requiring agencies to publish and regularly maintain data in machine-readable formats, and to ensure the data is published without copyright restriction.
- (OOG) – Passage of legislation granting the OOG greater oversight and enforcement authority regarding FOIA compliance; FOIA annual reporting; and records management policies and procedures
- (OOG) – Passage of legislation granting the OOG greater oversight and enforcement authority regarding compliance with the Open Meetings Act; bring Advisory Neighborhood Commissions under the Open Meetings Act.
- (OOG) – Increased funding that will allow the OOG to meet training and compliance requirements.

Organization Chart



Boards and Commissions relevant to the agency (if any)

Board Name	Name of Chairperson	No. of Members
Board of Ethics and Government Accountability	Robert J. Spagnoletti	3

Budget FY2015

Total Budget	\$ 1,437,583.04
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No. of Employees

Current No. of FTEs	13
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Union Representation

Union(s)	Union Representative	No. of Members
N/A	N/A	N/A

Facility Location(s)

Facility Name / ID	Address	Zip Code	Ward	Main Phone No.
BEGA Main Office/OGE	441 4 th Street NW, Suite 830 South	20001	2	(202) 481-3411
Office of Open Government	441 4 th Street NW, Suite 540 South	20001	2	(202) 481-3411

Key Projects/Initiatives

Project/Initiative Name	Brief Description	Delivery Date
(OGE) Conduct timely and appropriate investigations and enforcement actions.	<p>The OGE will hold weekly meetings with staff to discuss progress on cases and to ensure that staff is receiving necessary guidance and feedback with regard to case development. Measurable success from one meeting to the next on given cases will be expected and targets for task completion will be set.</p> <p>The OGE will ensure that current software for lobbyist filing will include a feature that automatically generates demand letters for late filers and that those letters will be sent within 35 days of the end of a filing period. This will help ensure that all OGE administrative/ministerial enforcement actions are conducted timely and appropriately.</p>	September – 2015
(OGE) Conduct mandatory training on the Code of Conduct and produce ethics training materials and a plain-language guide.	<p>The OGE will develop a monthly newsletter that will be distributed via email to District employees. The purpose of the newsletter will be to keep employees abreast of developments in the area of ethics. It will include a synopsis of OGE issuances for the previous month, public pending actions of note, and useful advice and guidance on matters of general interest.</p> <p>The OGE will expand its training component to include ethics training in a collaborative effort with DCHR. Currently OGE conducts ethics trainings on an invitation basis when an agency requests training. Holding monthly city-wide ethics trainings through DCHR will</p>	September – 2015

Project/Initiative Name	Brief Description	Delivery Date
	substantially increase the number of trainings and employees who receive training.	
(OGE) Issue formal, written Advisory Opinions upon application made by an employee or public official subject to the Code of Conduct and issue, on its own initiative, an advisory opinion on any general questions of law it deems of sufficient public importance.	<p>The OGE will add to its training offerings issues that arise with regard to formal advice issued. These examples and discussion topics during our regular training sessions will provide employees with concrete, reality based examples, of ethics principles and how they are applied in practice.</p> <p>The OGE will tailor its training offerings to trending ethics inquiries that result in the issuance of formal and informal advice. An example of this might be Post-employment matters that typically trend upward when there is to be an expected change in administrations or Hatch Act trainings during an election year. This will serve the dual purpose of informing employees of topical ethics issues as well as providing a forum for discussing and understanding OGE interpretations of these issues.</p>	September 30 -- 2015
(OOG) Promote Transparency and Open Government Policies	<p>The OOG will expand access to BEGA records, meetings and trainings through the use of online technologies. Technologies will include such tools as web streaming, interactive web-based trainings, and civic engagement tools allowing for public review and comment on the BEGA Best Practices Report.</p> <p>The OOG will engage community stakeholders to obtain their input in the development of transparency guidelines. Community stakeholders are in the best position to inform the government about the types of information they are seeking and how that information can promote civic engagement in government operations and the legislative process. OOG will conduct outreach to community stakeholders, establish a working group of community, nonprofit and IT professionals to offer input into the type of information that will be of the most utility to those living and working in the District.</p> <p>Creation of Office of Open Government Website that will maintain central repository of District Boards and Commissions meetings; FOIA reports and OOG FOIA requests/responses; data portal containing District Government and comparative regional data.</p>	<p>December – 2015</p> <p>March – 2015</p> <p>January – 2015</p>
(OOG) Ensure Compliance with FOIA and OMA	<p>The OOG will implement online training courses to be completed by agency FOIA Officers and Boards and Commissions Points of contact on the OMA. User progress and completion will be monitored by the OOG.</p> <p>The OOG will develop policies and procedures to ensure compliance with the OMA. As part of this effort, the OOG will also work with the</p>	<p>March – 2015</p> <p>June -- 2015</p>

Project/Initiative Name	Brief Description	Delivery Date
	Executive Office of the Mayor, Office of Boards and Commissions to ensure all newly sworn board and commission members are trained on the procedural requirements of the OMA.	

Capital Program(s)

Project Name	Budget ID	Funding Source	Project Budget	Current Balance	Delivery Date
N/A					

Important/Significant Dates

Event	Brief Description	Delivery Date
(OGE and OOG) Submission of 2014 BEGA Best Practices Report	The report is issued annually to the Mayor and Council of the District of Columbia by the Board of Ethics and Government Accountability. The report contains recommendations concerning ethics and open government legislation and policy.	[December – 2014]
OGE – Lobbyist Registration and Activity Reporting	OGE oversees all lobbyist registration and activity reporting. The registration occurs once per year while activity reporting takes place on a semi-annual basis.	January 1, 2015
OGE – Financial Disclosure Filing	Certain Government employees and elected officials must file financial disclosure statements by May 15 th of each year. Public filers must file with BEGA while Confidential filers must file with their agencies.	May 15, 2015

Key Contracts

Project Name	Vendor Name	Total Contract Value	Contract Term
N/A			

Key Agreement(s) / Memorandum(s) of Understanding

Project Name	Brief Description	Agreement Term
N/A		

Grant(s) Awarded (or Pending Award) to Agency

Grant Name	Name of Grantor	Total Grant Amount	Current Grant Balance	Grant Expiration
N/A				

Active Litigation(s)

Project Name	Brief Description
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Consent Decree(s)

Project Name	Brief Description	Agreement Term
N/A		