



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

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# 2000 Annual Program Performance Report

## OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL



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**OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL  
FY 2000 ANNUAL PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Office of the General Counsel (OGC) was established in 1910, (70 Stat. 742) as the law office of the Department of Agriculture. The mission of OGC is to provide legal services necessary to support activities of the USDA. OGC provides legal services primarily to the Secretary of Agriculture and officials at all levels of USDA as well as members of Congress concerning the programs and activities carried out by USDA. All legal services are centralized within OGC and the General Counsel reports directly to the Secretary.

More information regarding OGC's programs can be found in the OGC Strategic Plan.

The following table provides summary information on OGC's achievement of FY 2000 Performance Goals.

OGC PERFORMANCE SUMMARY				
Strategic Goal/ Management Initiative	FY 2000 Performance Goals	Performance		
		1999 Actual	2000 Target	2000 Actual
Goal 1: To provide effective legal services in a responsive manner to support USDA activities, consistent with the priorities established by the Secretary of Agriculture	OGC provided effective, responsive legal services especially with respect to priority matters.	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Number of regulations reviewed (p).	2,340	2,340	2,340
	Number of documents/correspondence reviewed (p).	49,000	49,000	49,000
	Numbers of cases handled (p).	17,000	17,000	17,000
	Number of legislation, legislative reports and testimony reviewed or drafted (p).	1,250	1,300	1,300
	Number of oral opinions provided (p). Establish Civil Rights Unit.	83,000 N/A	83,000 N/A	83,000 N/A
MI 1: Develop and promote a more productive and diverse workforce.	Improve communications and technology management.			
	Percentage of employees provided with Internet access.	85%	95%	100%
	Implement work tracking system.	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Consider feasibility of linking existing local areanetwork into one wide area network.	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Promote workforce diversity.			
	Conduct an outreach program regarding employment opportunities to minority law students.	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Percent of OGC managers who received diverse work force training.	85%	95%	100%

p = preliminary data.

**Goal 1:** Provide effective legal services in a responsive manner to support USDA activities, consistent with the priorities established by the Secretary of Agriculture.

**Objective 1:** Review for legal sufficiency, draft regulations submitted by USDA agencies and advise the appropriate USDA officials of the results in an effective and responsive manner.

**Objective 2:** Draft and conduct legal review of documents as requested by USDA.

**Objective 3:** Conduct litigation and provide litigation support services to the Department of Justice in cases arising out of USDA programs and activities.

**Objective 4:** Draft legislation and review for legal sufficiency legislative reports and testimony as requested by USDA officials.

**Objective 5:** Provide counseling to USDA officials concerning issues arising out of USDA programs and activities.

**Objective 6:** Create a Civil Rights unit within OGC which will provide legal services to support the Department's Civil Rights Program.

**Program Activity:** Office of the General Counsel

### Key Performance Goals

Provided effective, responsive legal services especially with respect to priority matters.

Number of regulations reviewed

Target: 2340

Actual: 2340

Number of documents/correspondence reviewed

Target: 49,000

Actual: 49,000

Number of cases handled

Target: 17,000

Actual: 17,000

Number of legislation, legislative reports and testimony reviewed or drafted

Target: 1,300

Actual: 1,300

Number of oral opinions provided

Target: 83,000

Actual: 83,000

Establish Civil Rights Unit

Target: N/A

Actual: N/A

**2000 Data:** OGC conducts legal reviews of a wide variety of agency documents. OGC utilizes a work tracking system which was developed to track work items handled by each office and division of OGC. The data is sound and reliable.

**Analysis of Results:** The data reflects that all targets have been met. FY 2000 performance for OGC has been consistent and predictable due in part to the ongoing dialogue between the Under and Assistant Secretaries concerning OGC's involvement in major initiatives/projects. This in turn has helped to regulate work flow and lessen, to some extent, the crisis mode of handling agency legal work. Crisis will still occur, because unforeseen circumstances develop which require the immediate response by OGC. However, this process provides managers with a better sense of how to prioritize the work of the office.

**Current Fiscal Year Performance:** Based on these dialogues, OGC anticipates the need for significant continued involvement in major legal initiatives and projects through the remainder

of FY 2001. OGC will continue to monitor performance and take necessary and appropriate actions in the event performance is less than expected. Since OGC's performance goal of establishing a Civil Rights Unit has been met, this objective will no longer be required.

**Program Evaluations:** None conducted in FY 2000

**Management Initiative 1:** Develop and promote a more productive and diverse workforce.

**Objective 1:** Improve internal and external communications and information management within OGC.

**Objective 2:** Promote workforce diversity.

**Key Performance Goal:**

Improve communications and technology management.

Percentage of OGC employees provided with Internet access.

Target: 95%

Actual: 100%

Implement work tracking system.

Target: Yes

Actual: Yes

Consider feasibility of linking existing local area network into one wide area network

Target: Yes

Actual: Yes

Promote workforce diversity.

Conduct an outreach program regarding employment opportunities to minority law students

Target: Yes

Actual: Yes

Percent of managers who receive diverse work force training

Target: 95%

Actual: 100%

**2000 Data:** OGC has exceeded this target by providing all OGC staff with the ability to access the Internet. All OGC staff participated in EEO training as well as a Special Emphasis Program course. Throughout the office, OGC has implemented a centralized tracking system for correspondence, archiving and database management. The data is sound and reliable.

**Analysis of Results:** The data reflects that the management initiative and objectives have either been met or exceeded. The staff is able to electronically communicate with each other, with other USDA agencies outside of OGC and outside of the Department. Staff have successfully completed all required modules of the Department's mandatory EEO on the

Internet. OGC is in the process of establishing a comprehensive training program to meet all agency requirements. The program consists of several modules which will be taught utilizing a variety of media. The first Deputy Associate General Counsel for Civil Rights, an Afro-American female, was recruited and successfully hired by OGC. She has been Acting Associate General Counsel for Civil Rights during FY 2000 and has been responsible for the day-to-day operations of the newly established Civil Rights Division. As part of the outreach program, OGC participated in the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities intern program and successfully recruited several minority staff attorneys. The centralized tracking system has been used to provide accountability to managers and workload measurement reports.

**Current Fiscal Year Performance:** For FY 2000, OGC 's performance was consistent and predictable in accordance with its plan. By improving computer technology and communication tools, OGC will be better able to respond effectively to priorities. OGC will continue to monitor the performance progress and take necessary and appropriate actions in the event performance is less than expected.

**Program Evaluations:** None conducted in FY 2000.