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OSC Urges Agencies to Become 2302(c) Certified

White House-Mandated Program Requires Agencies Take Steps to Educate Employees

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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In a [letter](#) issued yesterday, the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) has reminded the heads of agencies across the federal government about their obligation to participate in OSC's [2302\(c\) Certification Program](#). The White House's [Second Open Government National Action Plan](#), released in December 2013, requires agencies to become certified under OSC's program. It is named after the [section](#) of the U.S. Code (5 U.S.C. § 2302(c)) that requires agency heads, in consultation with OSC, to ensure that "agency employees are informed of the rights and remedies available to them" under civil service and whistleblower protection laws.

The certification steps include: (1) placing informational posters about prohibited personnel practices (PPP) and whistleblower protection laws at agency facilities; (2) providing information about protections under whistleblower protection laws to new employees as part of the orientation process; (3) providing annual notification to current employees about their rights and remedies under whistleblower protection laws; (4) providing PPP training for supervisors; and (5) posting a link to OSC's website on the agency's.

After completing these steps, OSC certifies agencies under its 2302(c) program and reports annually to Congress on federal agencies' participation.

OSC experts are available to train agency employees about PPPs, and OSC strongly recommends that high-level managers receive in-person training. OSC has also made an online training [quiz](#) available.

At this time, OSC has [certified](#) 50 agencies or components. Another 18 agencies or components have [registered](#) with OSC to become certified.

"It is my firm belief that any resources expended in becoming certified under OSC's program are an investment in good government and can help prevent future wrongdoing," said Special Counsel Carolyn Lerner. "Certification under OSC's program is an important first step in establishing an open culture where legitimate concerns are addressed."

The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is an independent federal investigative and prosecutorial agency. Our basic authorities come from four federal statutes: the Civil Service Reform Act, the Whistleblower Protection Act, the Hatch Act, and the Uniformed Services Employment & Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). OSC's primary mission is to safeguard the merit system by protecting federal employees and applicants from prohibited personnel practices, especially reprisal for whistleblowing, and to serve as a safe channel for allegations of wrongdoing. For more information, please visit our website at www.osc.gov.