

**U. S OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL  
STRATEGIC PLAN (FY 1998-2003)**

**MISSION**

The U.S. Office of Special Counsel's (OSC's) role is to:

1. Protect federal employees and applicants, especially whistleblowers, from prohibited employment practices;
2. Promote compliance with Hatch Act restrictions on government employees' involvement in political activities; and
3. Facilitate disclosure of wrongdoing in the federal government.

The OSC carries out its mission by:

- investigating complaints of prohibited employment practices, especially reprisal for whistleblowing, and pursuing remedies for violations;
- providing advisory opinions on, and enforcing, the Hatch Act;
- operating an independent and secure channel for disclosure, and investigation, of wrongdoing in federal agencies;
- promoting greater understanding of the rights and responsibilities of government employees under the statutes enforced by OSC.

To accomplish this mission, OSC has established four goals:

1. To consistently provide high quality services that expeditiously resolve matters brought before OSC within the time guidelines set by Congress.
2. To fulfill Congressional intent that OSC be more aggressive in protecting federal employees from prohibited personnel practices, particularly those who have suffered reprisal for whistleblowing.
3. To raise federal employees' and managers' awareness of their rights and responsibilities under the statutes enforced by OSC.
4. To develop and maintain OSC's human resources, systems and processes to support a continually improving, highly effective organization with the vigor to meet demanding program needs.

## **GOAL # 1**

**To consistently provide high quality services that expeditiously resolve matters brought before OSC within the time guidelines set by Congress.**

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To operate under procedures that ensure that our customers receive the highest quality services and that reduce the length of time in which complaints and inquiries are resolved.
2. To provide thorough investigation of complaints, and aggressive and professional litigation of meritorious cases.
3. To make available to customers the option of an alternative dispute resolution program which will allow a less formal means to efficiently resolve complaints of prohibited personnel practices.

### **STRATEGIES**

1. Reduce backlog of overage matters within each OSC program unit by 25 percent in FY 2000, 35 percent in FY 2001, and 40 percent in FY 2002. By FY 2003, adhere fully to the time guidelines set by Congress for resolution of matters within OSC's jurisdiction, including resolving prohibited personnel practices within 240 days, and reaching an initial determination of disclosures within 15 days.
2. Implement an effective ADR program at OSC that incorporates the results of OSC's FY 1999 pilot ADR program, as well as the best practices of model ADR programs at other federal agencies.

### **FACTORS AFFECTING RESULTS**

1. Additional staffing and budget levels.
2. Efficacy of revised case-handling procedures.
3. Relative stability in intake levels.
4. Stable staff attrition rate.

## **CRITICAL SUCCESS INDICATORS**

1. Number and age of overage cases.
2. Case processing time.
3. Consistent application of established quality standards.
4. Number of prohibited personnel practice complaints resolved through OSC's ADR program.

## **GOAL # 2**

**To fulfill congressional intent that OSC protect federal employees from prohibited personnel practices, particularly those who have suffered reprisal for whistleblowing.**

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. Be more aggressive in protecting whistleblowers' careers.
2. Prosecute more meritorious prohibited personnel practice cases, especially whistleblower reprisal cases, before the MSPB.

### **STRATEGIES**

1. Bring more cases on behalf of whistleblowers and other prohibited personnel practice<sup>e</sup> victims who have meritorious cases.
2. Be more aggressive in developing favorable whistleblower protection law.

### **FACTORS AFFECTING RESULTS**

1. Additional staffing and budget levels.
2. Steady intake of meritorious cases.
3. Fair treatment by MSPB and Federal Circuit Court.

### **CRITICAL SUCCESS INDICATORS**

1. Achievement of substantive enhancements in whistleblower protection law.
2. Number and quality of meritorious cases brought on behalf of whistleblowers and other prohibited personnel practice victims.
3. Number and quality of amicus and intervention briefs filed with the MSPB and Federal Circuit Court.
4. Number of stays, corrective actions, and disciplinary actions achieved by OSC in meritorious cases, either through settlement or litigation.

### **GOAL # 3**

**To raise federal employees' and managers' awareness of their rights and responsibilities under the statutes enforced by OSC.**

#### **OBJECTIVES**

1. Increase outreach and communication activities.
2. Expand access by federal employees and managers to information about their rights and responsibilities under the merit system statutes and the Hatch Act.

#### **STRATEGIES**

1. Evaluate, and target actions based on, results of FY 99 survey of agency compliance with Congressionally mandated informational program requirement.
2. Develop education and training materials for use by OSC and employing agencies.
3. Assist employing agencies in their training about employee rights and responsibilities, and OSC's role, as mandated by Congress.
4. Be aggressive in seeking, through settlement agreements, systemic training at the employing agencies, as part of OSC's corrective action strategy.
5. Apply Internet and other technology to make information more readily available to federal employees and managers.
6. Convene practitioners' forums to highlight developments in the law, and seek feedback on OSC performance.
7. Continue with the successful Hatch Act educational and advisory opinion program.

#### **FACTORS AFFECTING RESULTS**

1. Additional staffing and budget levels.
2. Allocation of adequate technical, program, and financial resources.

## **CRITICAL SUCCESS INDICATORS**

1. Feedback from other agencies, Congress, media, and others.
2. Number of requests for OSC training materials.
3. Utilization of OSC Web site, toll-free telephone line, and e-mail link.
4. Number of speaking and other outreach efforts by OSC employees.

## **GOAL # 4**

**To develop and maintain OSC's human resources, systems and processes to support a continually improving, highly effective organization with the vigor to meet demanding program needs.**

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. Improve OSC case-handling procedures.
2. Recruit, train, and retain skilled, highly motivated employees who will foster the achievement of OSC's mission.
3. Acquire and integrate technological resources that will further OSC's mission and goals.

### **STRATEGIES**

1. Review all OSC case-handling processes to eliminate inefficiencies.
2. Provide a work environment with workplace policies and programs that foster interdivisional cooperation and enable OSC employees to excel.
3. Establish plan for necessary upgrades of technology infrastructure, together with staff training.
4. Identify and deploy other necessary resources.

### **FACTOR AFFECTING OUTCOME**

Adequate staffing levels and budget.

### **CRITICAL SUCCESS INDICATORS**

1. Improved individual and organizational performance.
2. Retention of high performers.
3. Increased job satisfaction.
4. Efficient use of available technology for internal and external communication, case management, planning, evaluation, and research.