



Office of Compliance

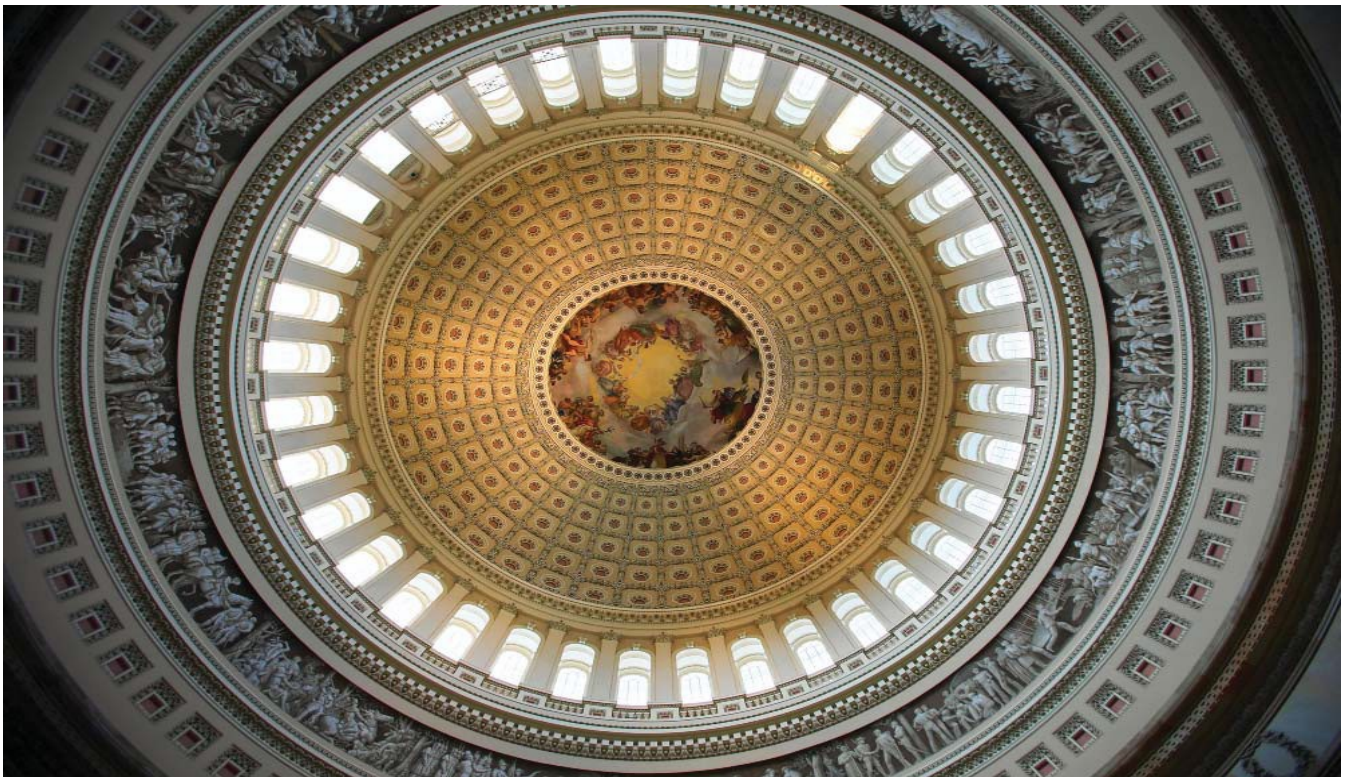
# Strategic Plan

FY 2016-2018



## Table of Contents

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR .....	1
OOA AT A GLANCE .....	2
STRATEGIC GOALS.....	3
<b>GOAL I: Promote full compliance with the workplace rights covered in the Congressional Accountability Act through effective education, outreach, and cooperative efforts with stakeholders.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>GOAL II: Efficiently administer an effective ADR program .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>GOAL III: Promote a safe and healthful workplace in the Legislative Branch and fully accessible facilities for Congressional constituents and visitors .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>GOAL IV: Advance the principles of the CAA and monitor efforts to amend, enhance, or implement the law .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>GOAL V: Promote excellent labor-management relations in the Legislative Branch .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>GOAL VI: Develop and retain a highly motivated, talented, and satisfied workforce .....</b>	<b>10</b>



## I. MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

On behalf of the Office of Compliance (OOC), we are pleased to present the OOC's fifth Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2016-2018. This Strategic Plan represents the experience and collective effort of the staff and Board of Directors of the OOC to set priorities, acquire resources, and work collaboratively to realize the safe, productive, and fair workplace envisioned by the Congressional Accountability Act (CAA). This plan is intended to be a dynamic document by which the OOC will evaluate its accomplishments over the next three years.

The OOC is an independent and non-partisan agency established in 1996, and currently one of the smallest of its kind. Yet, its mission is large and complex. With a staff of just 22 full-time equivalent employees, including 5 part-time Board members, and contracted professionals as needed, the OOC carries out mandated programs of education, alternative dispute resolution, inspection, and enforcement. About 30,000 Legislative Branch employees and countless visitors to Capitol Hill and district offices benefit from the work of the OOC.

The OOC staff remains steadfast and dedicated to ensuring that the Congressional workplace is safe and healthy and free from discrimination; and that Capitol Hill remains free of barriers to public access. While we take seriously our enforcement mission, we emphasize voluntary compliance through cooperation and education. These approaches are key to fulfilling our mission and they run throughout our plan.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the OOC. There is cause to reflect on and celebrate the OOC's many successes. For twenty years, the agency has been at the forefront of best practices for promoting and protecting the rights and obligations of Legislative Branch offices, employees, unions, and the visiting public on Capitol Hill and in district offices.

The strategic plan will measure achievements under six mission-related goals. Although budgetary restraints and other challenges exist, OOC will continue to monitor progress, improve efficiency and adjust for the future.

Barbara L. Camens  
Chair, Board of Directors

Barbara J. Sapin  
Executive Director

## II. OFFICE OF COMPLIANCE AT A GLANCE

### Fiscal Year 2015 Information

Number of OOC staff members	21
Requests for Advice and Information	302
Number of Counseling Cases Filed	63
Employees Covered by CAA	Appx. 30,000
Board of Directors	5 Part-time Members

#### OOO Mission

To ensure a fair and safe workplace throughout the Legislative Branch, and safeguard access rights for individuals with disabilities.

#### OOO Vision

To effectively enforce the Congressional Accountability Act through the efforts of a highly motivated staff skilled in the efficient use of resources.

Our strategic plan focuses on both external and internal areas of improvement. External efforts include increasing outreach and education to stakeholders; and internal efforts include, among other initiatives, implementing critical information technology enhancements. All OOC staff and Board members are important to these efforts. We are energized and determined to achieve the goals set forth in this strategic plan.

## III. STRATEGIC GOALS

- Goal I: Promote full compliance with the workplace rights covered in the Congressional Accountability Act through effective education, outreach, and cooperative efforts with stakeholders
- Goal II: Efficiently administer an effective ADR Program
- Goal III: Promote a safe and healthy workplace in the Legislative Branch and fully accessible facilities for Congressional constituents and visitors
- Goal IV: Advance the principles of the CAA and monitor efforts to amend, enhance, or implement the law
- Goal V: Promote excellent labor-management relations in the Legislative Branch
- Goal VI: Develop and retain a highly motivated, talented, and satisfied workforce



## **Goal I**

### **Promote full compliance with the workplace rights covered in the Congressional Accountability Act through effective education, outreach, and cooperative efforts with stakeholders**

#### **How can we achieve Goal I?**

Ensure that the OOC is a trusted resource for technical expertise and other information on the application of the CAA in the Legislative Branch.

**Initiative A.** Educate employing authorities on their responsibilities under the Congressional Accountability Act.

#### **Action Items:**

1. Develop respectful and cooperative relationships with employment counsel in the House, Senate, and Legislative Branch agencies through regular face to face meetings and informal discussions of OOC efforts to inspect, train, and resolve issues.
2. Work with employment counsel to develop effective methods for disseminating information to the employing office managers and employees.
3. Provide technical expertise to the employing offices on the CAA's alternative dispute resolution process and requirements.
4. Identify and spotlight stakeholders in the employing offices who are advancing the purposes of the CAA, and can model workplace programs for other offices.

**Initiative B.** Educate covered employees on their rights and protections under the Congressional Accountability Act.

#### **Action Items:**

1. Establish and maintain dynamic mini-websites within Legislative Branch agency intranets with the goal of driving traffic to [www.compliance.gov](http://www.compliance.gov), e.g. OOC section on HouseNet.gov.
2. Seek additional in-roads with the House Learning Center, Senate Office of Education and Training, human resources departments, EEO and EAP offices, and labor organizations to participate in their training venues in order to reach more people.
3. Collaborate with Legislative Branch agency IT departments on developing the most effective method of reaching all employees via e-mail.

**Initiative C.** Distribute informational materials via [www.compliance.gov](http://www.compliance.gov), by social media and other technologies.

**Action Items:**

1. Launch the new OOC website with dynamic content, such as substantive articles, educational materials, videos and blogs relevant to the Legislative Branch workplace and public access.
2. Develop interactive, on-line training modules on ADA and FMLA as a part of a new On-line Academy.
3. Assess and revise, where needed, all print and power point training materials to develop Standard training methods with enhancements for specific audiences.
4. Develop and implement an effective social media strategy that will disseminate information regularly and gain exposure for the OOC in the community.
5. Determine and implement the most effective method to directly reach Congressional and other Legislative Branch staff through e-mail or other means.

**MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING GOAL I**

1. Website data show employees have consulted the OOC website for technical expertise on the CAA.
2. OOC attends and participates in regularly scheduled meetings with employing office stakeholders.
3. Employing office stakeholders are aware of the expertise within the OOC and are encouraged to seek out this expertise.
4. Employing offices regularly disseminate OOC's print materials and include OOC information in their office handbooks distributed to managers and employees.
5. Website traffic increases by 10%. All agencies and 10% of Congressional employing offices subscribe to the online newsletter and alerts on the newly launched website.
6. After one year, Twitter followers include all stakeholders to whom we regularly communicate, at least 50 Member offices, at least 50 active affinity groups and at least 100 covered employees. The same increases occur in years two and three.

**Goal II****Efficiently administer an effective ADR program****How can we achieve Goal II?**

Ensure that stakeholders have full access to the OOC's Administrative and Judicial Dispute Resolution Procedures (ADR), including counseling, mediation, and hearing; and empower individuals to resolve their workplace disputes without engaging in protracted dispute proceedings.

**Initiative A.** Migrate to a fully electronic filing and case management agency-wide system.

**Action Items:**

1. Use the newly implemented electronic case management system (CMS) to process and track ADR case activity, retrieve case data, and identify trends.
2. Collect accurate data from CMS about recent counseling and claims, and use this trending information to develop and target subject matter training needs for specific areas.



3. Implement a secure electronic filing system that will simplify the filing of a claim and allow documents to be shared electronically.

4. Upload all ADR process information, including the Act, procedures, forms, and tutorials to the OOC website for easy access by the covered community.

**Initiative B.** Conduct all OOC proceedings with the highest level of professionalism to ensure that cases settled by the parties are resolved

appropriately and timely, and that decisions issued to resolve disputes are legally sound and well supported by case law and precedent.

**Action Items:**

1. Network with professional associations to identify highly qualified mediators and hearing officers with expertise in the substantive laws incorporated in the CAA.
2. Provide high-level administrative support for all ADR proceedings.
3. Support the early resolution of disputes during all stages of the ADR process by encouraging stakeholders to think creatively and practically about their interests, rather than to seek to prove their position during ADR proceedings.
4. Increase the pool of highly qualified Hearing Officers and Mediators.

**MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING GOAL II**

1. The number of ADR documents filed electronically increases by 30% each year once the e-filing system has been implemented.
2. Staff time spent filing, retrieving, scanning, and copying documents is reduced daily.
3. The cost of equipment, paper, ink, and postage is reduced by 25% due to filing and sharing documents electronically.

4. The OOC maintains a list of 15 highly skilled mediators and hearing officers available to meet the needs of the Office's case load. The list includes at least 2 experts in labor-management issues and 2 experts in OSH related issues.
5. The rate of cases resolved by negotiated settlements – both formal and informal – at all stages of the ADR process increases.
6. The time between the filing of a petition for review and the issuance of a decision by the Board is reduced.

## **Goal III**

### **Promote a safe and healthful workplace in the Legislative Branch and fully accessible facilities for Congressional constituents and visitors**

#### **How can we achieve Goal III?**

Develop cooperative relationships with stakeholders, provide educational and training opportunities, and timely and accurately assess facilities, programs, activities, and services for compliance with the OSH and ADA Standards.

**Initiative A.** Identify and develop relationships with stakeholders.

#### **Action Items:**

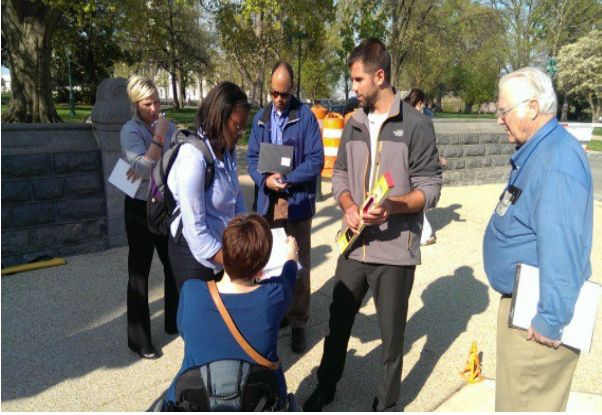
1. Conduct ADA and OSH inspections of all member offices on Capitol Hill, develop a self-inspection program for state and district offices, and reestablish and expand the Safe Office and Safety Advocate Award program.
2. Maintain an updated and centralized list of contact information for stakeholders.
3. Increase informal contacts with stakeholders and encourage use of training and educational opportunities.

**Initiative B.** Provide educational and training opportunities for stakeholders.

#### **Action Items:**

1. Provide educational materials using multiple formats including social media.
2. Conduct educational seminars and provide informal and formal training sessions for stakeholders.
3. Provide OOC staff with education and training sufficient to provide accurate and high quality training to stakeholders.





**Initiative C.** Conduct timely, accurate, and efficient OSH and ADA assessments.

**Action Items:**

1. Identify the higher risk areas based upon inspection and injury data, and conduct targeted inspections designed to limit or minimize these higher risks.
2. Identify the most severe barriers to access and provide efficient barrier removal solutions.
3. Timely process all OSH and ADA requests for inspection and provide accurate compliance assessments and sound advice concerning best practices.
4. Provide pre-construction assessments and advice to prevent the creation of hazards and barriers to access.
5. Provide OOC staff with equipment and training sufficient to conduct accurate assessments.

**MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING GOAL III**

- a. Knowledge of and participation in all OSH programs increases.
- b. Educational and training opportunities are provided and stakeholder participation in these opportunities increases.
- c. Accident and injuries decrease and the number of identified higher hazards decreases.
- d. Fewer ADA barriers and hazards are found during assessments, and fewer barriers are found in new construction and alterations.
- e. Abatement and barrier removal activity increases.
- f. The number of Safe Office and Safety Advocate Awards increases.

**Goal IV**

**Advance the principles of the CAA and monitor efforts to amend, enhance or implement the law**

**How can we achieve goal IV?**

Ensure that all employing authorities and Congress recognize the OOC's role in administering the CAA, and value and respect the agency's involvement in any proposed reforms or amendments to the CAA.

**Initiative A.** Establish working relationships with oversight committees, lawmakers, and agencies to ensure pre-decisional involvement in legislative proposals regarding the principles in the CAA and in other workplace laws protecting federal government employees.

**Action Items:**

1. Establish regular meetings of committee staff and OOC staff including Board Members.
2. Reach out to lawmakers who have shown interest in CAA enhancements.
3. Identify and establish relationships with agencies' congressional affairs staff.
4. Closely monitor legislative activity on workplace rights issues, and research questions raised by proposed legislation.

**Initiative B.** Administer the rule making process for agency regulations.

**Action Items:**

1. Develop, adopt, and submit for Congressional approval regulations that keep pace with the application of the CAA provisions in the public and private sectors.
2. Identify all other regulations that need to be updated and begin the process for finalizing those regulations.
3. Provide on-going support to Congress urging the approval of OOC's proposed substantive regulations.

**Initiative C.** Ensure appropriate funding for OOC operations.

**Action Items:**

1. Continue to develop working relationships with House and Senate appropriators.
2. Outline the agency's needs in a detailed budget plan.
3. Meet regularly with appropriators to encourage their on-going support of the agency's budget.

**MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING GOAL IV**

- a. Stakeholders afford the OOC staff and Board Members meaningful pre-decisional involvement and request the agency's technical expertise on proposals to amend the CAA.
- b. Oversight committee staff and OOC meet regularly to discuss current issues.
- c. Agencies approach OOC staff with concerns or comments about employee programs and education and outreach on the CAA.
- d. OOC secures bi-partisan support for passing its final ADA regulations.
- e. OOC adopts, and Congress passes FMLA and FLSA regulations.
- f. A plan is in place to finalize all regulations needed under the CAA.

## **Goal V**

### **Promote excellent labor-management relations in the Legislative Branch**

#### **How can we achieve Goal V?**

Administer the labor-management provisions of the CAA in the Legislative Branch through efficient application of the Federal Labor Management Relations Statute. Foster a relationship based on mutual respect and cooperation with an aim toward resolving disputes at the lowest and least confrontational levels.

**Initiative A.** Respond to requests for decisions and input from unions and management.

#### **Action Items:**

1. Resolve all questions of unit appropriateness in a timely manner.
2. Conduct fair, efficient, and timely election proceedings and certify the results of the election.
3. Fairly and timely decide issues at impasse during negotiations.
4. Timely investigate allegations of unfair labor practices and prosecute in situations warranting a complaint.
5. Timely resolve exceptions to Arbitrator awards utilizing either a mediated settlement or decision of the Board, if necessary.

**Initiative B.** Develop cooperative relationships between labor and management and find effective ways to bring them together on common interests.

#### **Action Items:**

1. Work with all parties in a labor dispute to resolve differences without resorting to a complaint.
2. Work with all parties in a representation matter to promptly resolve questions of unit eligibility. Fairly and efficiently process all elections - obtaining an election agreement when possible - and issue election certifications.

**Initiative C.** Efficiently process charges alleging unfair labor practices (ULPs).

#### **Action Items:**

1. Promote and encourage voluntary resolution of ULPs.
2. Conduct timely investigations of ULP charges and make prosecution decisions shortly after the conclusion of the investigations.
3. Promote efficient enforcement proceeding and encourage prompt resolution of ULP complaints.

## **MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING GOAL V**

- a. Decrease time between filing of election petition and election by working with the employing offices and the unions to reach agreement on issues for both.
- b. Where possible, process all requests for impasse assistance that seek to efficiently resolve matters by agreement between the parties, and issue fair and appropriate decisions when necessary.
- c. Offer opportunities to parties to mediate arbitration exceptions while those exceptions are pending before the Board.
- d. Increase the number of cases that are resolved prior to the filing of complaints.
- e. Decrease the amount of time expended on ULP prosecutions.

## **Goal VI**

### **Develop and retain a highly motivated, talented, and satisfied workforce**

#### **How can we achieve Goal VI?**

Improve overall office operations and employee morale.

**Initiative A.** Identify needed office upgrades that will improve efficiency.

#### **Action Items:**

1. Provide staff with remote access capabilities when in meetings, conducting training sessions, and working off campus.
2. Update and expand OOC's Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) developed by division managers to include every critical function of the agency.
3. Eliminate the need for external support for OOC's internal personnel, budget, and human resource functions.
4. Implement one server system instead of the current two server system.<sup>1</sup>

**Initiative B.** Identify and make improvements to increase employee satisfaction and overall agency collaborative efforts.

#### **Action Items:**

1. Implement Professional Development Plans for each staff member in line with Individual Performance Standards.
2. Identify training opportunities that will enhance workplace skills, improve job performance, and increase worker satisfaction.

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<sup>1</sup> To safeguard the security of confidential information, the OOC staff currently utilizes two separate computers at each workstation—one system that is open to the Internet, and one that is not. The two-server system is not efficient. With current IT security advances, highly sensitive information now can be protected by strong firewalls, and the office can merge the two systems into one secure accessible system via the Internet.

3. Focus managers' efforts on cross-training OOC staff and encouraging collaborative efforts among the various programs within the OOC, including inspections, ADR, communications, and operations.
4. Hold regularly scheduled brown bag lunches for staff to explain and demonstrate what they do in their positions.

**MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING GOAL VI**

- a. New employees receive a professional development plan, mid-term review meetings, and annual evaluations.
- b. The HR functions of the agency are consolidated under one Administrative Officer.
- c. Employees annually recommend training opportunities to their supervisors for themselves, and as the budget and needs of the office allow, generally requests will be granted.
- d. All-staff meetings are held every month to update all employees on the agency's current issues and activities.
- e. External activities, including House Safety Day, and other conferences become opportunities for all staff to work together in an effort to educate and engage the public.