



||| | | | | | ■ 2019–2023 STRATEGIC PLAN



VISION

A legislative branch free of discrimination and harassment, safety and health hazards, accessibility barriers, and employment and labor violations.



MISSION

To effectively and efficiently implement and enforce the Congressional Accountability Act, as amended by the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 Reform Act.

PAGE 3

GOAL I

Advance the principles of the Congressional Accountability Act, as amended by the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 Reform Act.

PAGE 6

GOAL II

Provide an efficient and effective Administrative Dispute Resolution program.

PAGE 8

GOAL III

Promote safe and healthful workplaces in the legislative branch and fully accessible facilities for congressional constituents and visitors.

PAGE 10

GOAL IV

Educate the legislative branch community on their rights and responsibilities under the Congressional Accountability Act and promote courtesy and respect in the congressional workplace.

PAGE 12

GOAL V

Foster excellent labor-management relations in the legislative branch.

PAGE 14

GOAL VI

Develop and retain a highly motivated, talented, and satisfied workforce.

GOAL I

Advance the principles of the Congressional Accountability Act, as amended by the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 Reform Act.

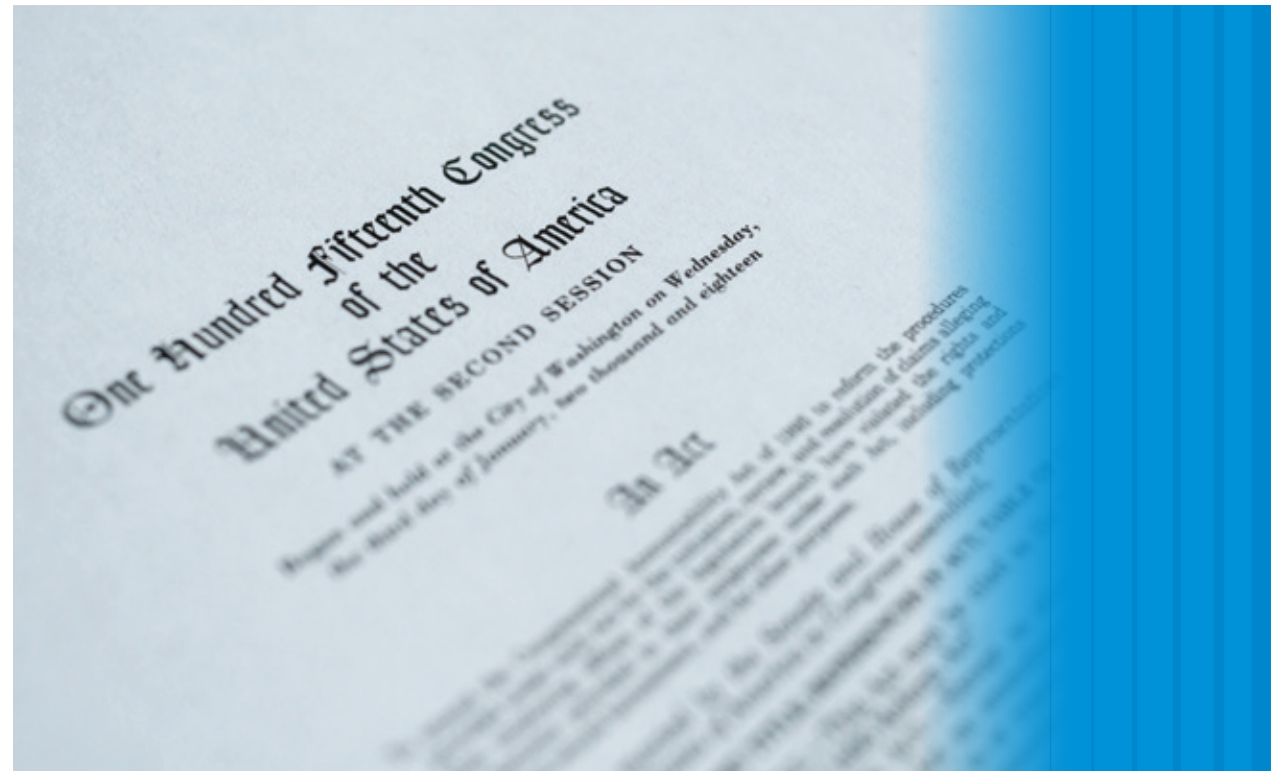
HOW WE ACHIEVE GOAL I:

The Office of Congressional Workplace Rights (OCWR) will provide necessary services and resources to the covered community for the effective implementation of the Congressional Accountability Act (CAA) and its comprehensive reforms.

Initiative A—Implement the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 Reform Act, P.L. 115-397.

Action Items:

1. Revise OCWR Procedural Rules to reflect Reform Act amendments.
2. Review and revise all current OCWR notices and forms to reflect Reform Act amendments and revised procedures.
3. Prepare and timely submit Reform Act reports on settlements to congressional oversight committees.



4. Prepare and timely submit Reform Act reports on OCWR's internal education and training programs to oversight committees.
5. Redesign OCWR Logo.
6. Revise all OCWR education and training materials to reflect Reform Act amendments.
7. Revise OCWR website to reflect Reform Act amendments.
8. Redesign notices of employee rights under the CAA, as amended by the Reform Act, for posting by employing offices in the legislative branch.
9. Implement and make available a secure OCWR electronic filing system for claims.
10. Design, develop, and administer biennial legislative branch climate survey.
11. Develop and administer Standard Operating Procedures for permanent retention of OCWR records.
12. Appoint one or more confidential advisors.
13. Respond to recommendations of the Comptroller General of the United States contained in its Report to Congress on its Study of OCWR Management Practices.
14. Respond to recommendations of the Comptroller General of the United States contained in its audit of OCWR cybersecurity systems.
15. Ensure equal access to OCWR services and resources for employees outside of the Washington, DC area.



Enacted in December 2018, the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 Reform Act (Pub. L. 115-397) made significant changes to the CAA, strengthening transparency and streamlining the adjudication process.

Initiative B—Advance the goals of the CAA, as amended by the Reform Act, through trusted relationships with congressional stakeholders.

Action Items:

1. Serve as a resource to oversight committees and lawmakers on the Board's Section 102(b) recommendations to Congress.
2. Promote adherence to Section 102(b)(3) of the CAA that requires certain reports describe how provisions of the proposed workplace and public accessibility laws may apply to the legislative branch.
3. Meet regularly with relevant committee staff and serve as a primary resource for information on the CAA and its application in the legislative branch.
4. Enhance relationships with congressional affairs staff of the instrumentalities and key stakeholders to share information and strategies to best effectuate the OCWR's mission.
5. Develop on-going relationships with staff organizations, unions, and employee representatives to fully understand the needs of employees and ensure full application of the CAA to the covered community.
6. Work closely with ADA organizations and advocates to ensure appropriate public access to congressional spaces.
7. Serve as a trusted resource for information on the application of the CAA to the covered community.



In the Section 102(b) Report, the OCWR Board makes recommendations on how workplace and public accessibility laws should apply to the legislative branch.

Initiative C—Provide comprehensive recommendations to Congress regarding substantive changes to the CAA and pursue congressional adoption of the Board's regulations.

Action Items:

1. Monitor legislative activity involving workplace rights issues and research questions raised by proposed legislation.
2. Review laws and regulations that may guide the implementation of the CAA and the OCWR Procedural Rules.
3. Provide each Congress a thorough, well-reasoned report recommending provisions of federal law relating to employment and access to public services and accommodations to be made applicable to the legislative branch.
4. Develop, adopt, and submit for congressional approval substantive regulations needed to implement the CAA and any amendments.
5. Fully implement the CAA, and amend the OCWR Procedural Rules to be in conformance with substantive changes.

Initiative D—Ensure full funding for OCWR operations.

Action Items:

1. Maintain and enhance working relationships with House and Senate appropriators. Meet regularly with appropriations staff to inform them of OCWR’s accomplishments and promote ongoing support for OCWR funding necessary to fulfill its mission.
2. Be a resource for information on the OCWR’s use of appropriated funds in the implementation of the CAA. Outline fiscal needs in a detailed budget plan that informs the appropriators of the OCWR’s proper use of funds to administer the CAA.

 **MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING GOAL I**

- a. OCWR implements revisions to the CAA set forth in the Reform Act in a timely manner.
- b. Congress implements the recommendations of the OCWR Board of Directors outlined in its Section 102(b) Report.
- c. Committee reports accompanying a bill or joint resolution relating to terms and conditions of employment, or access to public services or accommodations, describe the manner in which provisions apply to the legislative branch, or explain why provisions do not apply.
- d. Congressional oversight committees expand consultation with the OCWR on matters concerning the CAA; the OCWR meets regularly with relevant committee staff to discuss matters related to the administration of the CAA.
- e. The OCWR is recognized as the primary resource on the application of the CAA to the covered community and is regularly consulted by all stakeholders, including congressional instrumentalities and labor organizations.



GOAL II

Provide an efficient and effective Administrative Dispute Resolution program.

HOW WE ACHIEVE GOAL II:

The OCWR will effectively administer the Administrative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program in accordance with the requirements established by the CAA for the resolution of workplace claims.

Initiative A—Ensure that ADR processes meet statutory and regulatory mandates, including mandates for maintaining confidentiality.

Action Items:

1. Develop and implement a 5-year internal plan to access the effectiveness of the ADR program.
2. Develop and implement procedures for maintaining confidentiality and security of physical and electronic files and documents (also see initiative F).
3. Identify modifications and additions to physical office space needed to assure confidentiality and to maintain security of physical and electronic files and documents.
4. Establish and maintain a program for the permanent retention of OCWR records.

Initiative B—Monitor ADR processing timeframes to meet statutory and regulatory requirements, ensure case inventories are maintained at a manageable level, and provide accurate ADR reporting mechanisms.

Action Items:

1. Develop and implement a fully electronic filing system for claims filed with the ADR program.
2. Ensure that the Case Management System (CMS) properly maintains, correctly tracks, and accurately retrieves all case data and files electronically.

3. Conduct periodic quality control assessments to ensure the smooth and accurate processing of claims in the ADR program.
4. Use the newly-implemented electronic CMS to process and track ADR case activity, and retrieve case data to identify trends.

Initiative C—Ensure that stakeholders have access to appropriate ADR processes and records.

Action Items:

1. Consult with stakeholders to identify and eliminate obstacles impeding access to ADR procedures.
2. Provide high-level administrative support for all ADR proceedings.

Initiative D—Empower stakeholders to effectively resolve their workplace disputes without having to engage in protracted dispute resolution proceedings.

Action Items:

1. Develop and deliver education and outreach materials to promote the early resolution of disputes during all stages of the ADR process.
2. Educate employees on the new procedures under the Reform Act, including the opportunity to consult with a confidential advisor.
3. Provide professional services that enable stakeholders to understand their workplace rights and recognize appropriate solutions to workplace claims.

Initiative E—Conduct OCWR proceedings proficiently and competently, ensuring that matters are settled in accordance with the CAA and the Rules, and that decisions issued to resolve disputes are legally sound and well supported by case law and precedent.

Action Items:

1. Conduct periodic Hearing Officer and Mediator Summits to ensure that Hearing Officers and Mediators are up to date on substantive and procedural developments under the CAA, as amended by the Reform Act.
2. Increase the pool of highly qualified Hearing Officers and Mediators.
3. Support the Board’s deliberative process, and effectively defend its decisions appealed to the federal circuit.

Initiative F—Establish a highly functional IT governance, risk management, and cybersecurity program.

Action Items:

1. Respond to recommendations of the Comptroller General of the United States contained in its audit of OCWR cybersecurity systems.

L All OCWR proceedings are conducted with the highest level of professionalism to ensure that cases settled by the parties are resolved appropriately and in a timely manner.

2. Develop and conduct an IT security self-assessment.
3. Develop and execute information categorization and risk assessment.
4. Document and rank risk and develop appropriate plans and controls.
5. Monitor and report progress on plans of action, identify and escalate any overdue plans.
6. Develop and maintain IT and cybersecurity risk and associated governance policies, processes, procedures, and records.
7. Implement best-in-class methods for secure document scanning and maintenance.
8. Ensure IT compliance with applicable IT and cybersecurity standards and monitor system.
9. Refine IT processes and infrastructure as necessary to ensure the ADR process meets statutory and regulatory requirements.
10. Assess stakeholder access needs for e-filing and apply best practices to ensure system security.
11. Optimize the IT end-user experience by streamlining IT services to meet the specific needs of authorized users.

MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING GOAL II

- a. Successfully implement strategic and operational measures to ensure ADR processes meet statutory and regulatory mandates.
- b. Accurately track the number and percent reduction or increase in case inventory and administrative complaint processing time, and increase the use of quality control assessments.
- c. Increase stakeholder access to OCWR staff and claims processing systems to ensure that needed information and decision-making tools are readily accessible.
- d. Track the rate of cases resolved by negotiated settlements—both formal and informal—at all stages of the ADR process. Increase periodic review of quality controls, assess stakeholder responses, and track affirmance rates on appeal.
- e. Apply periodic quality control assessments and increase the rate of stakeholder satisfaction with the ADR process; maintain 100% affirmance rate on appeal.
- f. Analyze the IT security self-assessment, and perform regular system-monitoring of results. Improve stakeholder survey responses, perform periodic quality control assessments, and implement recommendations resulting from the GAO cybersecurity audit.

The new law reflects the first set of comprehensive reforms [to the CAA] . . . and focuses on protecting victims, strengthening transparency, holding violators accountable for their personal conduct, and improving the adjudication process.



GOAL III

Promote safe and healthful workplaces in the legislative branch and fully accessible facilities for congressional constituents and visitors.

HOW 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 occupational safety & health and public accessibility standards.

Initiative A—Identify and develop relationships with stakeholders.

Action Items:

1. Conduct ADA and OSH inspections of all member offices on Capitol Hill, expand the self-inspection program for state and district offices, and promote the Safety Recognition Award and Safety Advocate Award programs.
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.
4. Identify and work with national disability advocacy groups to increase awareness of our ADA work and make it easier for members of the public to advise us of accessibility issues and concerns.



Initiative B—Provide educational and training opportunities for stakeholders.

Action Items:

1. Provide educational materials using multiple formats, including social media.
2. Conduct interactive educational seminars and provide informal and formal training sessions for stakeholders, with an emphasis on outreach to new Members.
3. Provide OCWR 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 and conduct targeted inspections designed to limit or minimize these higher risks.
2. Emphasize compliance with written health and safety programs.
3. Identify the most severe barriers to access and provide efficient barrier removal solutions.
4. Timely process all OSH and ADA requests for inspection and provide accurate compliance assessments and sound advice concerning best practices.
5. Develop SOPs for investigating OSH and ADA requests for inspection.
6. Provide pre-construction assessments and advice to prevent the creation of hazards and barriers to access.
7. Provide OCWR staff with equipment and training sufficient to conduct accurate assessments.
8. Improve quality and security of databases.



9. Assess and improve the accessibility of the [ocwr.gov](https://www.ocwr.gov) website for users with vision or hearing impairments, conduct similar assessments of other legislative branch websites, and promote similar website accessibility improvements throughout the legislative branch.
10. Explore options for inspecting state and district offices.

Initiative D—Increase enforcement and education efforts with respect to repeat findings.

Action Items:

1. Identify patterns of repeat findings for employing offices.
2. Conduct targeted outreach to employing offices to facilitate development of processes and programs to address repeat findings.

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. The number of identified higher hazards and repeat findings decreases.
- d. Fewer ADA barriers and hazards are found during assessments, and fewer barriers are found in new construction and alterations.
- e. The number of accessibility and OSH complaints concerning state and district offices decreases.
- f. Hazard abatement and barrier removal activity increases.
- g. The number of Safety Recognition Awards increases.
- h. The OCWR website and other legislative branch websites meet or exceed the existing standards for accessibility by individuals with vision or hearing impairments.

GOAL IV

Educate the legislative branch community on their rights and responsibilities under the Congressional Accountability Act, as amended by the Reform Act, and promote courtesy and respect in the congressional workplace.

HOW WE ACHIEVE GOAL IV:

The OCWR is charged with carrying out a program of education for Members of Congress and other employing authorities of the legislative branch respecting the laws made applicable under the CAA, and to inform individuals of their rights under the laws applied. To this end, the OCWR will educate the covered community on all topics related to the CAA, including workplace civility.

Initiative A—Foster compliance with the CAA through a program to educate the covered community and promote respect in the congressional workplace.

Action Items:

1. Review annually all OCWR training materials to ensure that they contain accurate and up-to-date information on the CAA, as amended by the Reform Act.
2. Develop, promote, and implement positive change in the congressional workplace by expanding the OCWR's library of educational materials to include a "civility" training module promoting respect in the workforce.
3. Partner with legislative branch employing offices to develop training curricula focused on eliminating discrimination and harassment in the congressional workplace and tailored to the unique needs of each workforce.
4. Develop a regional outreach program for state and district office staff.
5. Catalog all training materials to ensure that relevant materials are readily accessible to the covered community.
6. Produce online modules covering emerging workplace rights topics, as needed.



Partner with legislative branch employing offices to develop training curricula focused on eliminating discrimination and harassment in the congressional workplace and tailored to the unique needs of each workforce.

7. Develop and disseminate statutorily required reports on the use of the OCWR, safety awareness, and public access for people with disabilities, among other key topics.
8. Promote optimization of ADR mechanisms by educating stakeholders on the effective use of mediation.
9. Acknowledge noteworthy dates to promote adherence to the CAA and OCWR programs and goals.

Initiative B—Create opportunities to engage with employing offices, staff associations, and other legislative branch organizations to effectuate the mission of the OCWR.

Action Items:

1. At the onset of each new Congress, deliver OCWR workplace rights posters to all House and Senate offices to ensure that leaders and their staffs are aware of the rights and responsibilities under the CAA, as amended by the Reform Act.
2. Sponsor group events, including ADR conferences, Safe Office Awards, union conferences, and OGC brown bag sessions to directly engage stakeholders and develop channels of communication.

3. Attend relevant legislative branch gatherings such as CRS briefings, safety fairs, employee informational sessions, and other scheduled events to provide information directly to covered employees.
4. Maintain a list of key contacts throughout the legislative branch, including human resource offices, unions, issue-specific groups, staff associations, and other stakeholders to distribute information regarding OCWR training developments and focus outreach events.

Initiative C—Maintain a dynamic web and social media presence to effectively distribute information on the OCWR and CAA.

Action Items:

1. Maintain a rigorous online presence to ensure that all covered employees and employing offices, no



matter where they are located, have immediate and convenient access to OCWR resource materials.

2. Publish “Frequently Asked Questions” on the OCWR website to answer common questions individuals have about relevant laws and procedures under the CAA.
3. Regularly review and update content and design for the OCWR website to ensure it remains a useful resource for the congressional community.
4. Utilize social media to distribute website information, education and training opportunities, latest news for the safety and health community, and relevant information from legislative and executive branch agencies.
5. Formalize a strategic press plan to ensure thorough and consistent messaging.
6. Publicize historic/interesting accomplishments of OCWR programs, including ADA and OSHA compliant accomplishments of legislative branch offices.
7. Adhere to all OCWR IT procedures and physical security protocols to maintain confidentiality, as required by the CAA.
8. Analyze website data to understand the areas of greatest interest for the covered community, and utilize that information to guide our outreach strategy.

✓ MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING GOAL IV

- a. Annually increase the use of OCWR training resources on the OCWR Learning Management System, website and social media platforms, and in-person training events.
- b. Expand and enhance connections throughout the covered community to ensure the successful implementation of OCWR programs and initiatives.
- c. Collaborate with key stakeholders to enhance, customize, and disseminate educational services.



GOAL V

Foster excellent labor-management relations in the legislative branch.

HOW WE ACHIEVE GOAL V:

Administer the CAA's labor-management provisions in the legislative branch by applying the Federal Labor Management Relations Statute consistent with the CAA and applicable law. Foster labor-management relationships based on mutual respect and cooperation with an aim toward resolving disputes when possible through mutual agreement at the lowest level and in the least confrontational manner.

Initiative A—Encourage and facilitate cooperative relationships between labor and management by developing and implementing effective ways to engage them in voluntary dispute resolution based on common interests.

Action Items:

1. Work with all parties in representation cases to resolve bargaining unit definition and eligibility questions through stipulated factual findings and reach election agreements when possible.
2. Work with all parties in negotiability cases to resolve disputed issues through mutual agreement.
3. Work with all parties in impasse cases to resolve collective bargaining disputes through mutual agreement.
4. Work with all parties in arbitration exception cases to resolve disputed issues through mutual agreement.
5. Work with all parties in unfair labor practice cases to resolve disputes by mutual agreement when possible throughout the investigative process, and in complaint cases, throughout the litigation process.

Initiative B—Process representation, negotiability, impasse, arbitration exception and unfair labor practice cases in a fair, impartial, and timely manner.

Action Items:

1. Develop and implement standard operating procedures (SOPs) that promote fair, impartial and timely resolution of issues in representation cases, including bargaining unit appropriateness, election procedures, and bargaining unit certifications.
2. Develop and implement SOPs that provide for fair, impartial and timely resolution of negotiability issues using either mediated settlement or Board of Directors' decision, if necessary.
3. Develop and implement SOPs that provide for fair, impartial and timely resolution of impasse issues using either mediated settlement or Board of Directors' decision, if necessary.
4. Develop and implement SOPs that resolve exceptions to arbitrator awards in a fair, impartial and timely manner using either a mediated settlement or decision of the Board, if necessary.
5. Develop and implement SOPs that provide for fair, impartial, and timely investigation of allegations of unfair labor practices and prosecution and in situations warranting a complaint, using either mediated settlement or the decision of a Hearing Officer or Board, if necessary.



Initiative C—Offer periodic education and training to labor and management representatives regarding employee, union, and employing office rights and responsibilities under the CAA.

Action Items:

1. Promote and encourage labor and management participation in OCWR education and training sessions.
2. Develop and maintain web-based information resources to assist parties in understanding employee, union and management rights under the CAA, and OCWR labor-management dispute resolution processes.
3. Develop and make publicly available SOPs that promote fair, impartial, and timely labor-management relations case processing and encourage prompt resolution of labor-management disputes.

 **MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING GOAL V**

- a. Establish reasonable internal time targets for processing representation, negotiability, impasse, arbitration exception, and unfair labor practice cases, from filing to merit determination, and track the rate at which these targets are met.



Foster labor-management relationships based on mutual respect and cooperation with an aim toward resolving disputes when possible through mutual agreement at the lowest level and in the least confrontational manner.

- b. Explore potential mutually agreed resolution of all cases at appropriate times throughout the investigative and merit determination processes and track the rate at which these dispute resolution efforts result in a mutually agreed settlement.
- c. Develop stipulated material facts to the greatest extent possible in all cases.
- d. Develop and implement a labor mediation option to offer parties in all cases.
- e. Sustain and enhance outreach and education efforts, including:
 - i. Holding quarterly union representative meetings.
 - ii. Developing a contact list of employing office labor relations representatives and holding summits to introduce these representatives to the OCWR.
 - iii. Holding labor-management relations summits, including both labor and management representatives.



GOAL VI

Develop and retain a highly motivated, talented, and satisfied workforce.

↘ HOW WE ACHIEVE GOAL VI:

Provide development and training opportunities for staff while improving office operations through consistent and policy-oriented procedures and fostering mutual respect for all staff members and their job functions.

Initiative A—Identify and make improvements to increase employee satisfaction and overall agency collaborative efforts and achieve a high-level retention rate.

Action Items:

1. Review and update Human Capital Plan.
2. Assess benefits package with every strategic planning cycle to ensure it is competitive with peers and responsive to employee needs.
3. In conjunction with managers and office leadership, each employee will identify training opportunities that will enhance workplace skills and improve performance, with the goal of greater employee retention and skill development.
4. Focus managers' efforts on cross-training OCWR staff and encourage collaborative efforts among the various programs within OCWR, including inspections, ADR, communications, and operations.
5. Twice a year offer a brown bag lunch that informs staff and provides more details about some of the benefits available to them.

Initiative B—Identify needed office upgrades that will improve efficiency while enhancing confidentiality and security.



Provide development and training opportunities for staff.

Action Items:

1. Maintain an updated personnel manual and create an operations manual with standard procedures that are readily accessible to employees.
2. Eliminate the need for external support for OCWR's internal personnel, budget, and human resources functions.
3. Implement mandatory staff training to be completed every Congress or every year as mandated, to include anti-harassment, anti-discrimination, and anti-retaliation training.
4. Streamline administrative functions into a cohesive operations unit.
5. Upgrade current IT structure with cybersecurity features while enhancing the physical security of the office to take into account strict confidentiality protocols.
6. Integrate current IT system into a new and secure hosted environment for the case management system and facilities management system.

✓ MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING GOAL VI

- a. All employees receive a professional development plan, a rating-based annual evaluation, and an informal mid-term review, except new employees will receive a formal 6-month review.
- b. Employees will annually recommend training opportunities for themselves, and as the budget and needs of the office allow, requests will be granted.
- c. Semiannual all-staff meetings are held to update employees on the agency's current issues and activities.
- d. At least twice a year the office should conduct/ sponsor an office-wide team building exercise/event.
- e. Utilize external activities, such as safety awards or OCWR anniversary functions, as opportunities for all staff to work together outside of traditional work roles.

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