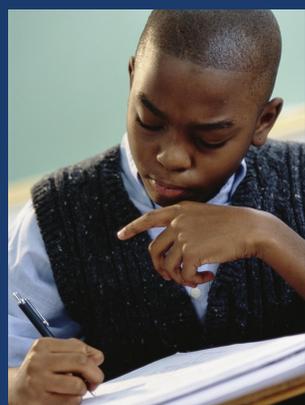




U.S. Department of Education
Office of Inspector General

Five-Year Strategic Plan

Fiscal Years 2014–2018



*Promoting the efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity of the
Department's programs and operations*

Office of Inspector General

Kathleen S. Tighe

Inspector General

March 2014

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The Inspector General's Five-Year Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2014–2018 is available on the ED OIG Web site at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oig/reports.html>.

Message from the Inspector General



In accordance with the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 and the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2013, I am pleased to provide the U.S. Department of Education (Department) Office of Inspector General (OIG) Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2014 through 2018. This plan describes the focus and direction of OIG's operations over the next 5 years, establishes our organizational goals, and outlines the strategies we will employ to reach those goals and the measures we will use to evaluate our performance.

Our mission is to promote the efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity of the Department's programs and operations. To achieve this mission, we conduct audits and investigations and provide other assistance to help ensure integrity in the Department's operations and programs and identify opportunities for improvement. The information we provide to Department managers and the U.S. Congress can result in changes to legislation, regulations, policies, and practices. These changes are designed to continually improve the operations of the Department and its programs so they best serve America's taxpayers and students.

The experience and expertise of our employees is critical to the successful achievement of our mission. We have consistently delivered results by identifying and responding to emerging threats to Federal education programs and operations. This requires a highly skilled workforce, and we will continue to focus on enhancing and expanding the skills and expertise of our staff so we can effectively address the challenges that lie ahead.

This plan was developed in consideration of the Department's mission, strategic plan, and management challenges; major educational program development and initiatives; and OIG's statutory responsibilities. While our Strategic Plan provides the roadmap to accomplish our mission over the next five years, we will periodically consult with the Department, Congress, and other stakeholders and use the feedback we receive to revise this plan as necessary. This will allow us to consistently improve our products and services. We will also continue to assess the impact of our work in order to maximize the effectiveness of our efforts and resources. In closing, I would like to thank OIG staff for their tireless efforts on behalf of America's taxpayers and students, as well as the Department, Congress, and all of our stakeholders for their support. I look forward to continuing to work with you in meeting our goals and fulfilling our mission.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathleen S. Tighe'.

Kathleen S. Tighe
Inspector General

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Office of Inspector General Roles and Responsibilities

The Inspector General Act established Offices of Inspector General (OIG) as independent and objective organizations within Federal departments and agencies. The Inspector General Act authorizes each OIG to

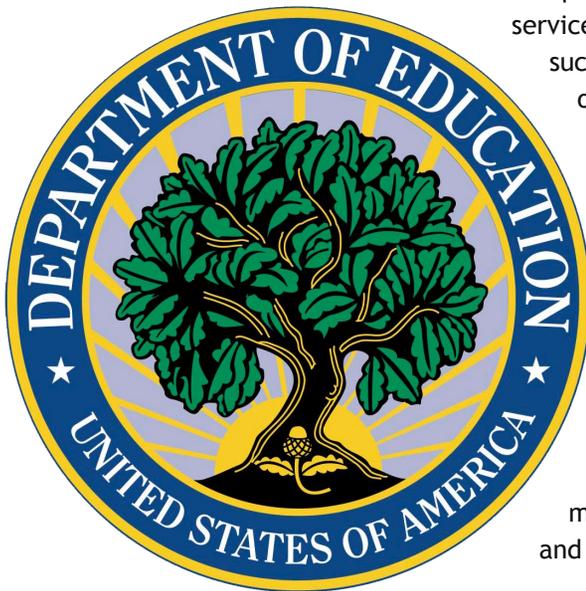
- conduct and supervise audits and investigations relating to its agency's programs and operations;
- provide leadership, coordinate, and recommend policies for activities designed to promote effectiveness and to prevent and detect fraud and abuse in the agency's programs and operations; and
- keep its agency head and the U.S. Congress fully and currently informed of problems and deficiencies in the agency's programs and operations and on the status of corrective actions.

When the Inspector General Act was passed in 1978, OIGs were established in 12 agencies. At that time, the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare was responsible for administering Federal education programs. In 1979, the Department of Education Act created an independent U.S. Department of Education (Department), which began operation in 1980.

The Department of Education Act also established the Education OIG. This year, 2014, marks our 34th year of service to the Department, Congress, and the American people. Throughout our existence, we have successfully promoted the efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity of the Department's programs and operations. We have consistently conducted independent and objective audits and investigations and provided other value-added services such as outreach and fraud deterrence efforts.

We provide oversight of the Department's performance and report to Congress and to the Secretary on opportunities for improvement and recommendations to address any problems or deficiencies we find. Our work consistently identifies methods to use Federal education funds more effectively, and we have worked with the Department to prevent fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement. We also investigate fraud, leading to the prosecution of those who try to obtain Federal education funds illegally.

Our Strategic Plan provides a roadmap to continue our history of providing effective and objective oversight of the Department's programs and operations. This Strategic Plan sets forth our vision, mission, and goals for the next five years and assists in ensuring that our efforts are responsive to needs and interests of our customers and stakeholders.



Overview of Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2014–2018

Vision

We deliver valuable products to encourage fiscal integrity and continuing improvement in program delivery and effectiveness, while also maximizing our efforts to prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse in the Department's programs and operations.

Mission

We conduct independent and objective audits, investigations, and other activities to promote the efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity of the Department's programs and operations.

Core Values

Our core values are excellence, accountability, and integrity.

Goal 1

Improve the Department's ability to effectively and efficiently implement its programs.

Goal 2

Strengthen the Department's efforts to improve the delivery of student financial assistance.

Goal 3

Protect the integrity of the Department's programs and operations.

Goal 4

Contribute to improvements in the Department's business operations.

Goal 5

Strive for a diverse and skilled workforce that is provided with the means necessary to achieve OIG's mission.

Strategies

- Provide value-added audit, investigative, and other services.
- Allocate resources based on risk assessments.
- Use proactive analytical tools.
- Conduct effective outreach.

Strategies

- Cultivate workforce excellence.
- Provide necessary resources.
- Promote an inclusive workplace environment.



Our vision statement is the framework for our strategic planning.
It answers the question,
“Where do we want to go?”



Our mission statement defines our core purpose and focus.
It answers the question,
“What do we do to achieve our vision?”



Our core values guide our professional actions and decisions.
They answer the question,
“What do we stand for?”



Our goals are the ends toward which our efforts and actions are directed. They answer the question,
“What outcomes do we want to achieve?”

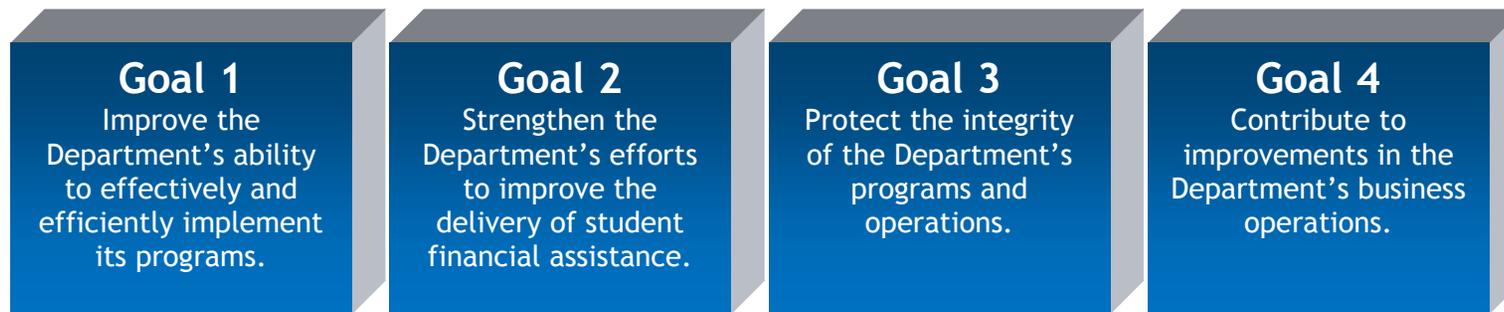


Our strategies are a framework for the actions and activities that we perform to deliver value. They answer the question,
“How will we achieve our goals?”

Strategies and Performance Measures

Our strategies provide a framework for the activities that we perform to achieve our goals and deliver value. Our performance measures are quantifiable indicators used to assess how well we are achieving our desired objectives. They include the type or level of activities conducted, products and services delivered, and results of those products and services.

Our strategies and performance measures are divided into those relating to our first four goals and those relating to our fifth goal.



Strategy 1: Provide Value-Added Audit, Investigative, and Other Services.

We seek to enhance performance and improve efficiency, integrity, and accountability across the Department's activities by conducting audits, investigations, and other work that provide stakeholders with accurate and actionable information that is meaningful, relevant, and timely. Where our activities identify problems, deficiencies, or opportunities for improvement, we communicate the results to the people who need the information and who will monitor corrective actions to ensure issues are addressed.

Performance Measures:

- Audits and investigations that meet established deadlines. Deadlines may be established by external requirements, by internal policies, or by agreements with stakeholders.
- Recommendations accepted by the Department.
- Closed investigations that resulted in a criminal, civil or administrative action, or monetary result.
- Comments from our reviews of legislation, regulations, and policies that result in changes.

Strategy 2: Allocate Resources Based on Risk Assessments.

We assess risk to concentrate OIG resources and efforts on issues that have the greatest impact and usefulness to the Department, Congress, and taxpayers.

Performance Measures:

- Audits and investigations initiated that focus on areas of high risk or significant importance.

Strategy 3: Use Proactive Analytical Tools.

We develop and use analytical and other tools that help us proactively identify vulnerabilities, propose protective actions, and measure the effectiveness of such actions.

Performance Measures:

- Achievement of milestones for proactive analytical projects to identify adverse trends and possible fraud, waste, and abuse in Department programs or operations.

Strategy 4: Conduct Effective Outreach.

We provide outreach to increase awareness of the role of the OIG and educate Department employees, grant recipients, and Student Financial Assistance program participants on how to recognize fraud, waste, and abuse, and the mechanisms available for reporting concerns.

Performance Measures:

- Achievement of targets for activities that provide information to raise awareness of fraud, waste, and abuse indicators and prevention techniques.

Goal 5

Strive for a diverse and skilled workforce that is provided with the means necessary to achieve OIG's mission.

Strategy 1: Cultivate Workforce Excellence.

Hire, develop, and retain a highly qualified, diverse workforce with the skills to meet current and emerging challenges.

Strategy 2: Provide Necessary Resources.

Provide employees with the physical work space, technology, equipment, and other resources necessary to support accomplishment of the goals of the OIG.

Strategy 3: Promote an Inclusive Workplace Environment.

Foster an environment of open communication, respect for ideas, and understanding of the value of each individual's contribution to promote employee satisfaction and motivation.

Strategies 1 through 3 Performance Measures:

- Satisfaction rates reported in OIG staff surveys and other feedback mechanisms.
- Timeliness of tasks completed by OIG management, legal, and quality assurance offices.
- Customer feedback on operational performance assessed through surveys or other methods.

Strategy 4: Effective Quality Assurance

Support the integrity of OIG operations by maintaining an effective quality assurance and internal review program.

Performance Measure:

- Quality assurance review and internal control review recommendations accepted by OIG.

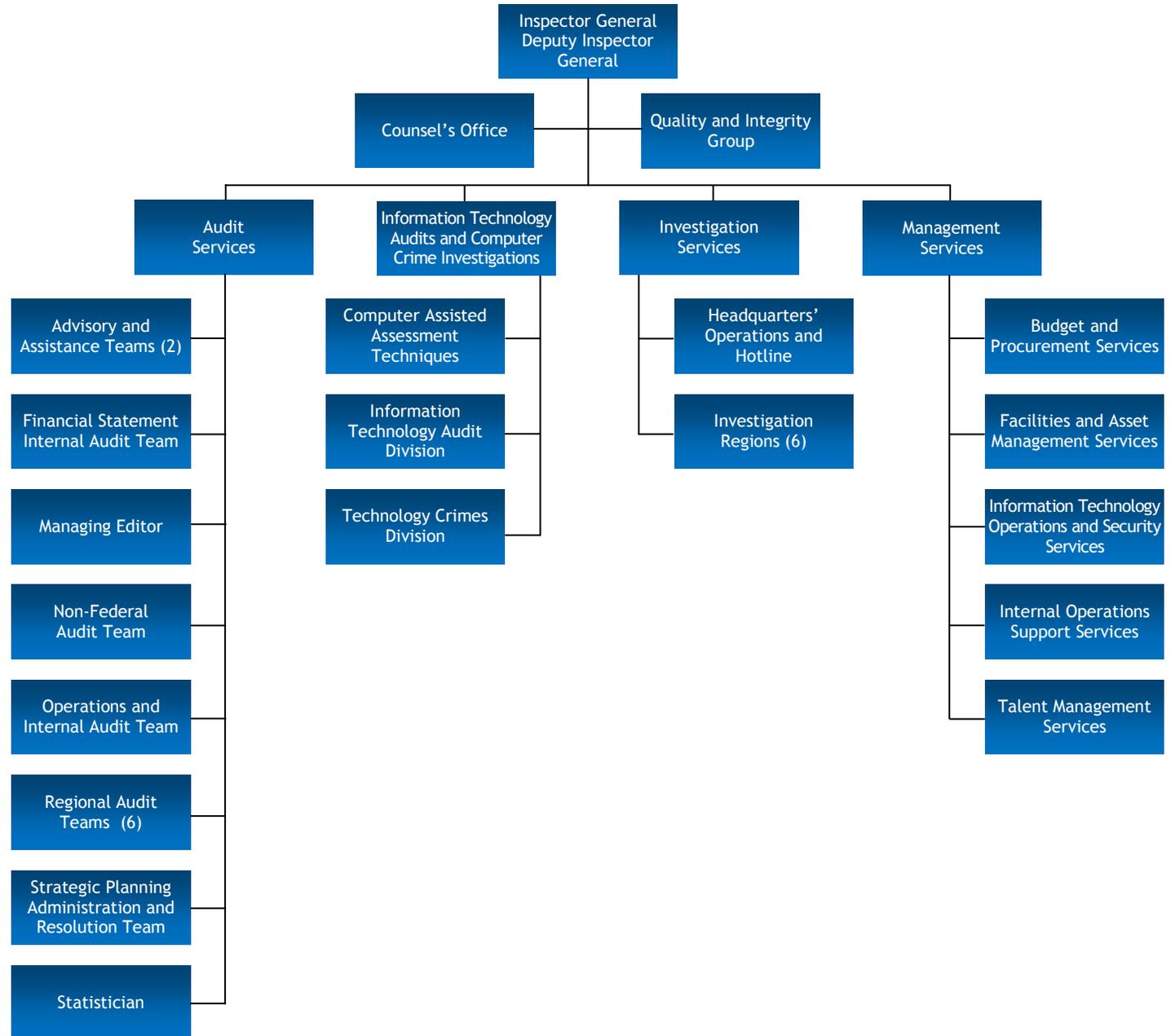
Excellence.
Accountability.
Integrity.



Office of Inspector General Areas of Responsibility



Education OIG is headed by an Inspector General, who is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. We operate with a staff of about 250 employees that include auditors, investigators, financial analysts, program analysts, and attorneys, as well as specialists in information technology, budget, personnel, statistics, and writing. The OIG comprises multiple components that collectively work to fulfill our statutory requirements and achieve our mission. The OIG is headquartered in Washington, DC, and maintains several other offices for audit services and investigation services across the United States.





Audit Services

Audit Services is responsible for all audit and inspection activities relating to improving the Department's programs and operations. Audit Services conducts, coordinates, and oversees audits and other activities and makes recommendations to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in the administration of programs and operations administered by the Department. Audit Services formulates, recommends, and executes audit policy consistent with the overall policy guidance of the Inspector General, and ensures that all audits of Departmental organizations, programs, activities, and functions are conducted in accordance with the standards established by the Comptroller General of the United States.



Investigation Services

Investigation Services is responsible for all criminal and civil investigative activities relating to the Department's programs and operations. Investigation Services operates with full law enforcement authority to make arrests and seek and execute search warrants. Investigation Services also conducts fraud awareness training and outreach activities with entities and organizations that receive Department funding, that represent the education community, or that have oversight responsibilities for education programs. Investigation Services also operates the OIG Hotline, which allows anyone suspecting fraud, waste, or abuse involving Department funds or programs to provide their concerns to us. Investigation Services also investigates allegations of misconduct by Department employees. Investigation Services ensures that all investigations are conducted in accordance with standards established by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE).



Information Technology Audits and Computer Crime Investigations

Information Technology Audits and Computer Crime Investigations (ITACCI) uses advanced techniques, along with traditional audit and investigative skills, to carry out the OIG's mission in the area of the Department's information technology systems and efforts. ITACCI produces information technology audit reports, security reviews, and other products to help the Department identify risks and offer recommendations to improve management of its systems. The team also investigates criminal information technology activity, such as network intrusions, identity theft, fraud, and virtually every other type of criminal activity associated with computers. We operate a computer laboratory that enables OIG staff to conduct and coordinate a myriad of forensic analyses and related activities, performed in accordance with standards established by CIGIE. ITACCI staff provides data analysis in support of ongoing audits and investigations and also works to develop analytical and risk model systems to identify adverse trends and possible fraud, waste, and abuse in the Department's programs and operations.



Management Services

Management Services ensures the continuity and effectiveness of OIG business operations, including human resources, budget formulation and management, payroll and benefits, leave, accounting, procurement, information technology systems support, organizational records management, staff training and development, and asset and facilities management.



Counsel's Office

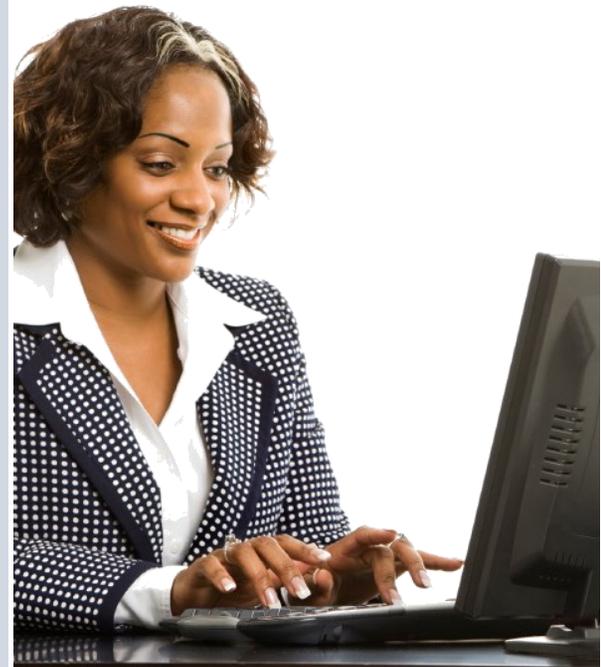
The Counsel's Office provides legal advice and assistance to our staff on a variety of subject areas, including Federal education law; administrative, criminal, and civil law and procedure; and the False Claims Act. Counsel staff reviews audit and other reports and related products and reviews and approves subpoenas. Together with other OIG components, Counsel's Office makes recommendations to existing and proposed legislation and regulations to clarify requirements, improve program performance and operations, and to prevent and detect fraud and abuse in Federal education programs and operations. Counsel's Office also manages OIG's Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act programs. Our congressional and media relations efforts are also coordinated through this office, which include responding to congressional inquiries, tracking legislation, producing our Semiannual Report to Congress, and responding to media inquiries. Counsel's Office also supports our operations by advising on personnel and ethics issues.



Quality and Integrity Group

The Quality and Integrity Group administers the internal quality assurance program in coordination with the individual OIG components. The Quality and Integrity Group provides independent and objective evaluations of our compliance with applicable statutes, regulations, professional standards, and the policies and procedures of the Department and the OIG. The program provides us with constructive and timely evaluations of activities and creates opportunities to identify and share best practices. The Quality and Integrity Group also investigates allegations of misconduct by OIG employees.

Efficiency.
Effectiveness.
Independence.



Key External Factors That May Affect Achievement of Our Goals

This plan was developed with consideration of external factors that are ultimately subject to change. Major changes to one or more of these factors could impact our resource allocation, ability to achieve the goals within this plan, and ultimately the goals and strategies themselves. These factors include, but are not limited to the following.

Strategic Direction of Education Legislation, Policy, and Programs

Any significant changes in the Administration, Department, or congressional priorities could affect our goals and related strategies. Major programmatic changes were brought about by recent legislation, including the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the Education Jobs Fund of 2010, and the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010. This resulted in the Department of Education administering more programs with greater funding than ever before.



As this document was being prepared, several key elements of Federal legislation, including the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and Higher Education Act, are subject to reauthorization. In the event of revisions to education legislation, policy, or programs, we must assess related risks and adapt our activities accordingly.

Funding and Statutory Requirements

We must oversee billions of dollars of Federal funds and fulfill many statutory requirements with a limited budget. We devote significant resources to statutory work that includes annual audits relating to the Department's financial statements, the Federal Information Security Management Act, and the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act. We then use a risk-based approach to allocate our remaining limited resources, selecting the most important areas from multiple, diverse, and evolving programs on which to focus resources and provide results with the highest level of impact. Any significant reduction to our budget or additions to our statutory requirements could impact our ability to complete the work necessary to achieve the mission and goals of this plan.

Unanticipated Resource Demands

The OIG may undertake tasks from external sources such as congressional inquiries and requests, Department requests, and Government-wide reviews. These tasks are usually nondiscretionary and unplanned but require resources to complete. Significant levels of such unplanned activities may impact our ability to fully address work planned to achieve the goals of this plan.

Responsiveness to OIG Activities

Timely and meaningful responses to the results of OIG activities are vital to the successful achievement of our mission and goals. Our ability to promote the efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity of the Department's programs and operations is only as effective as management's willingness and ability to implement corrective action in response to our recommendations.

Human Capital

Our success depends on the ability to cultivate a work force of skilled and dedicated professionals. We must hire, train, and retain a skilled and diverse employee base and continually develop future leaders to achieve our goals. We must routinely compete with other organizations for highly qualified staff, and any inability to keep high-performing employees would negatively impact our effectiveness.

Relationship of OIG’s Strategic Plan to Government-Wide and Department Goals and Objectives

Our strategic plan is intended to be responsive to far-reaching Government-wide areas of focus for performance improvement and Department goals and objectives. Performance.gov provides information on the ongoing effort to create a Government that is more effective, efficient, innovative, and responsive. As of February 2014, it identified eight primary areas of focus for Government-wide performance improvement: acquisition, financial management, human resources, technology, performance improvement, open government, sustainability, and customer service. As shown in the table below, the goals within our strategic plan support many of these areas of focus.

OIG Goal	Government-Wide Areas of Focus for Performance Improvement
Goal 1: Improve the Department’s ability to effectively and efficiently implement its programs to promote educational excellence and opportunity for all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition • Financial Management • Performance Improvement • Customer Service
Goal 2: Strengthen the Department’s efforts to improve the delivery of student financial assistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition • Financial Management • Technology • Performance Improvement • Customer Service
Goal 3: Protect the integrity of the Department’s programs and operations by detecting and preventing vulnerabilities to fraud, waste, and abuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition • Financial Management • Performance Improvement
Goal 4: Contribute to improvements in the Department’s business operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition • Financial Management • Human Resources • Technology • Performance Improvement • Customer Service
Goal 5: Strive for a diverse and skilled workforce that is provided with the means and assistance necessary to achieve OIG’s mission with excellence, accountability, and integrity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources

At the time this plan was developed, the Department had not finalized its strategic plan for fiscal years 2014–2018. However, we used a draft of its plan to ensure the goals and strategies of our strategic plan are linked to the Department’s proposed mission and objectives. The mission of the Department is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access. The OIG’s support in the achievement of the Department’s mission is fundamentally rooted in our mission to promote the efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity of the Department’s programs and operations.

The Department identified a number of priority and strategic goals in response to its mission. The table below reflects the ways in which our strategic goals support those of the Department.

OIG Goal	Department’s Priority or Strategic Goal
<p>Goal 1: Improve the Department’s ability to effectively and efficiently implement its programs to promote educational excellence and opportunity for all students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary and secondary education • Early learning • Continuous improvement of the U.S. education system
<p>Goal 2: Strengthen the Department’s efforts to improve the delivery of student financial assistance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postsecondary education, career and technical education, and adult education
<p>Goal 3: Protect the integrity of the Department’s programs and operations by detecting and preventing vulnerabilities to fraud, waste, and abuse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary and secondary education • Early learning • Continuous improvement of the U.S. education system • Postsecondary education, career and technical education, and adult education
<p>Goal 4: Contribute to improvements in the Department’s business operations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Department of Education capacity
<p>Goal 5: Strive for a diverse and skilled workforce that is provided with the means and assistance necessary to achieve OIG’s mission with excellence, accountability, and integrity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Department of Education capacity

Program Evaluation

The OIG does not operate or oversee programs in the traditional sense. However, our audit and investigative components are subject to objective reviews that assess the manner and extent to which they adhere to applicable professional standards.

- Generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS) require audit organizations performing activities in accordance with GAGAS to undergo an external peer review of their related practice at least once every three years by reviewers who are independent of the audit organization being reviewed. The external peer review determines whether the reviewed audit organization's internal quality control system was adequate and whether staff were complying with quality control policies and procedures to provide reasonable assurance of conformance with professional standards.

The most recent peer review of OIG's Audit Services and Information Technology Audit Division was performed by the Department of Treasury OIG for the year that ended March 31, 2012. The peer review concluded that our audit organization's system of quality control was suitably designed and complied with to provide OIG with reasonable assurance of performing and reporting in conformity with applicable professional standards in all material respects.

- The Inspector General Act and the "Attorney General Guidelines for Offices of Inspector General with Statutory Law Enforcement Authority" require covered OIGs to undergo periodic review by another OIG or by a committee of OIGs. The purpose of this review is to ascertain whether adequate internal safeguards and management procedures exist to ensure that the law enforcement powers are properly exercised. Such reviews should occur no less than once every three years.

The most recent peer review of OIG's Investigation Services and Technology Crimes Division was conducted by the Department of the Interior (DOI) OIG for the period ending December 2010. DOI OIG concluded that the OIG's system of internal safeguards and management procedures for the investigative function was in compliance with the Quality Standards for Investigations as established by the CIGIE and the Attorney General guidelines.

- The OIG's Quality and Integrity Group reviews internal operations to ensure compliance with OIG policy and applicable standards and regulations.

Since 1980, the OIG has supported the Department's mission to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.





Anyone knowing of fraud, waste, or abuse involving U.S. Department of Education funds or programs should contact the Office of Inspector General Hotline:

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oig/hotline.html>

We encourage you to use the automated complaint form on our Web site; however, you may call or write the Office of Inspector General.

Inspector General Hotline
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Inspector General
400 Maryland Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202

Call Toll-Free:
Inspector General Hotline
1-800-MISUSED
(1-800-647-8733)

Your report may be made anonymously.

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

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