

Social Security Administration
Office of the Inspector General



Strategic Plan

Fiscal Years 2006 – 2010

4th Edition

A MESSAGE FROM THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF SOCIAL SECURITY

4th Edition Strategic Plan



During Fiscal Year (FY) 2008, we continued the process initiated by a focus group in FY 2007 to ensure the viability of our Strategic Plan for FY 2006 – 2010. As a result of these efforts, we made changes to 7 performance measures in the Strategic Plan for FY 2009. We also updated the organizational information to reflect a new Office of the Inspector General (OIG) component, the Office of External Relations (OER). OER has assumed responsibility for the OIG's external and public affairs programs which will include Congressional and interagency relations. These changes provide assurance that the Plan continues to be an accurate tool for gauging our success in fulfilling our mission.

The Plan continues to reflect our vision, values, goals, objectives and responsibilities. We track progress with 14 self-measuring goals. These measures were developed in light of our commitment to addressing critical issues such as maintaining the integrity of the Social Security number, preventing improper payments and protecting the Social Security Administration's (SSA) critical infrastructure.

The successful execution of our Plan will be a measure of the achievements of this Office to accomplish our overall mission: inspiring public confidence by detecting and preventing fraud, waste and abuse in SSA's programs and operations.

Our commitment to achieving excellence is echoed in our teamwork and quality-of-life work environment. We believe that with this commitment we will attain our Strategic Plan's goals.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick P. O'Carroll, Jr.' The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Patrick P. O'Carroll, Jr.
Inspector General

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Executive Summary

Our Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years (FY) 2006 through 2010 conforms to the statutory responsibilities of the *Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA)* and the *Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended (IG Act)*. These Acts set the course for our Plan. Three general goals serve as the Plan's overall framework.

The first goal focuses on the **impact** we have on SSA's programs and operations. All components within the OIG are committed to improving SSA's effectiveness and efficiency through our investigations, audits and legal activities.

The second goal reflects the **value** we provide to SSA, Congress and to the public by delivering timely and reliable products and services. It is imperative that we deliver products and services that effectively meet the needs of our stakeholders. Therefore, we must integrate best practice strategies and cutting-edge technology to maximize efficiency while producing a positive return on investment to the public we serve.

The third goal includes strategies and self-measuring goals to enhance the work experience of our **people**, who are the foundation of the OIG organization. A well-trained and motivated workforce is crucial to our success. We believe our commitment to professional development and skills enhancement while sustaining a quality-of-life work environment will return rewards of superior work efficiency and effectiveness.

To achieve these goals across the OIG organization, our Plan directs and targets crosscutting efforts. For example, the Plan recognizes that data on potential SSA systems vulnerabilities maintained by the Office of Investigations will also have value to the Office of Audit's planning and analysis functions. In an environment of limited resources, this integration of efforts is essential.

This Plan includes assessment tools that will gauge customer and employee satisfaction. The OIG's Office of Quality Assurance and Professional Responsibility will administer a tool that assesses the level of internal and external user satisfaction with OIG products and services. In addition, our Organizational Health Committee will implement an annual employee job-satisfaction survey to gather the views and opinions of our employees on a variety of factors relating to the overall OIG work experience.

The goals, objectives and performance targets under our Plan are designed to improve OIG and, by extension, will assist SSA in attaining its own desired performance levels.

Mission Statement

By conducting independent and objective audits, evaluations and investigations, we inspire public confidence in the integrity and security of SSA's programs and operations and protect them against fraud, waste and abuse. We provide timely, useful and reliable information and advice to Administration officials, Congress and the public.

Vision and Values

We strive for continual improvement in SSA’s programs, operations and management by proactively seeking new ways to prevent and deter fraud, waste and abuse. We commit to integrity and excellence by supporting an environment that provides a valuable public service while encouraging employee development and retention and fostering diversity and innovation.

General Goals

The FY 2006 – 2010 Strategic Plan includes three general goals, each containing a series of crosscutting strategies. We used these strategies to develop our 14 self-measuring goals. For the general goals in the following chart, the strategies and associated self-measuring goals are described in the Goals, Strategies and Measures section beginning on page 8.

General Goals	
Impact	Enhance the integrity, efficiency and effectiveness of SSA programs and operations.
Value	Provide quality products and services of value in a timely manner to Congress, SSA and other key decision-makers while sustaining a positive return for each tax dollar invested in OIG activities.
People	Promote a skilled, motivated, diverse workforce in a positive and rewarding work environment.

We accomplish these goals by:

- Investigating complaints from any person or entity, including Congress, while protecting the identity of whistleblowers.
- Reviewing existing and proposed legislation and regulations.
- Conducting audits and investigations of SSA programs and operations.

We communicate the results of our efforts by:

- Reporting violations of law to Offices of the U.S. Attorney and State and local prosecutors.
- Informing Congress and the Commissioner of our findings and recommending corrective action when problems are identified.
- Submitting semiannual reports to Congress and the Commissioner.

Statutory Responsibilities

On March 31, 1995, the SSA OIG was established pursuant to Public Law 103-296 known as the *Social Security Independence and Program Improvements Act of 1994*. General OIG authority is established under the *IG Act*, which provides statutory responsibility to protect the integrity of SSA programs and operations. We are an independent and objective organization within SSA dedicated to preventing and detecting fraud, waste and abuse in SSA's programs and operations. We are guided by various statutory laws and implementing regulations, as well as various policies and guidance regarding federal law enforcement and government auditing. The following chart describes some of the statutory laws which impact the environment in which OIG carries forth its mission

LEGISLATION	PROVISIONS IMPACTING OIG
<i>The Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982</i>	Requires Federal managers to identify weaknesses in programs and operations and take corresponding corrective actions and report annually on management controls.
<i>The Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990</i>	Requires assessments of SSA's internal control environment to assure the issuance of reliable financial information and to deter fraud, waste and abuse of SSA resources.
<i>The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993</i>	Requires the assessment of the internal control environment over SSA's performance measures.
<i>The Government Management Reform Act of 1994</i>	Requires an assessment of the reliability of SSA's performance data and evaluates the extent to which SSA's performance plan describes its planned and actual performance meaningfully.
<i>The Welfare Reform Act of 1996</i>	Denies Supplemental Security Income payments for fugitives, probation and parole violators. Requires that we manage the partnership between SSA and local law enforcement to identify and apprehend these individuals.
<i>The Federal Financial Management Improvement Act of 1996</i>	Requires Office of Management and Budget compliant financial management systems.
<i>The Reports Consolidation Act of 2000</i>	Requires Inspectors General to provide a summary and assessment of the most serious management and performance challenges facing Federal agencies and their progress in addressing them.
<i>The Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002</i>	Requires that OIG evaluate SSA's overall information security program and practices.
<i>Improper Payments Act of 2002</i>	Requires annual reviews by OIG or SSA of programs to identify those susceptible to significant improper payments.
<i>The Social Security Protection Act of 2004</i>	Denies Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance benefits and representative payee status to persons fleeing prosecution, custody or confinement after conviction and to persons violating probation or parole. Requires that we manage the partnership between SSA and local law enforcement to identify and apprehend these individuals.

OIG Organization

OIG is comprised of six components: The Immediate Office of the Inspector General (IO), Office of Audit (OA), Office of the Counsel to the Inspector General (OCIG), Office of Technology and Resource Management (OTRM) Office of Investigations (OI), and the Office of External Relations (OER).

Immediate Office of the Inspector General

IO provides the Inspector General and Deputy Inspector General with staff assistance on the full range of their responsibilities. The IO also administers a comprehensive Professional Responsibility and Quality Assurance as well as Quality Control programs that ensure the adequacy of OIG compliance with its policies and procedures, internal controls and professional standards. In addition, the IO oversees the Organizational Health Committee (OHC). The purpose of the OHC is to be an agent of positive change by discussing, evaluating, and presenting to senior management employee issues and proposed solutions that affect the operations, administration, and efficiency of OIG. In doing this, the committee acts as a representative of all OIG employees.

Office of Audit

OA conducts and/or supervises comprehensive financial and performance audits of SSA's programs and operations and makes recommendations to ensure that program objectives and operational functions are achieved effectively and efficiently. Financial audits, required by the *Chief Financial Officers' Act of 1990*, assess whether SSA's financial statements fairly present the Agency's financial position, results of operations, and cash flow. Performance audits review the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of SSA's programs and operations. OA also conducts short-term management and program evaluations focused on issues of concern to SSA, the Congress, and the general public. Evaluations often focus on identifying and recommending ways to prevent and minimize program and operational fraud, waste, and abuse, as well as inefficiency and ineffectiveness.

Office of the Counsel to the Inspector General

OCIG provides independent authoritative legal advice, guidance and counsel to the IG and senior staff on legal issues; regulatory strategy; legislative proposals; and integration and interpretation of new and emerging authorities and Agency responsibilities under anticipated and current regulatory authorities. OCIG also provides advice to the OIG on the legal issues being deliberated concerning relevant regulatory and procedural information and reviews documents and other materials to ensure sufficiency and compliance with regulatory requirements. OCIG is responsible for the implementation of the Civil Monetary Penalty (CMP) program, including imposition of penalties and assessments and the settlement and litigation of CMP cases.

Office of Technology and Resource Management

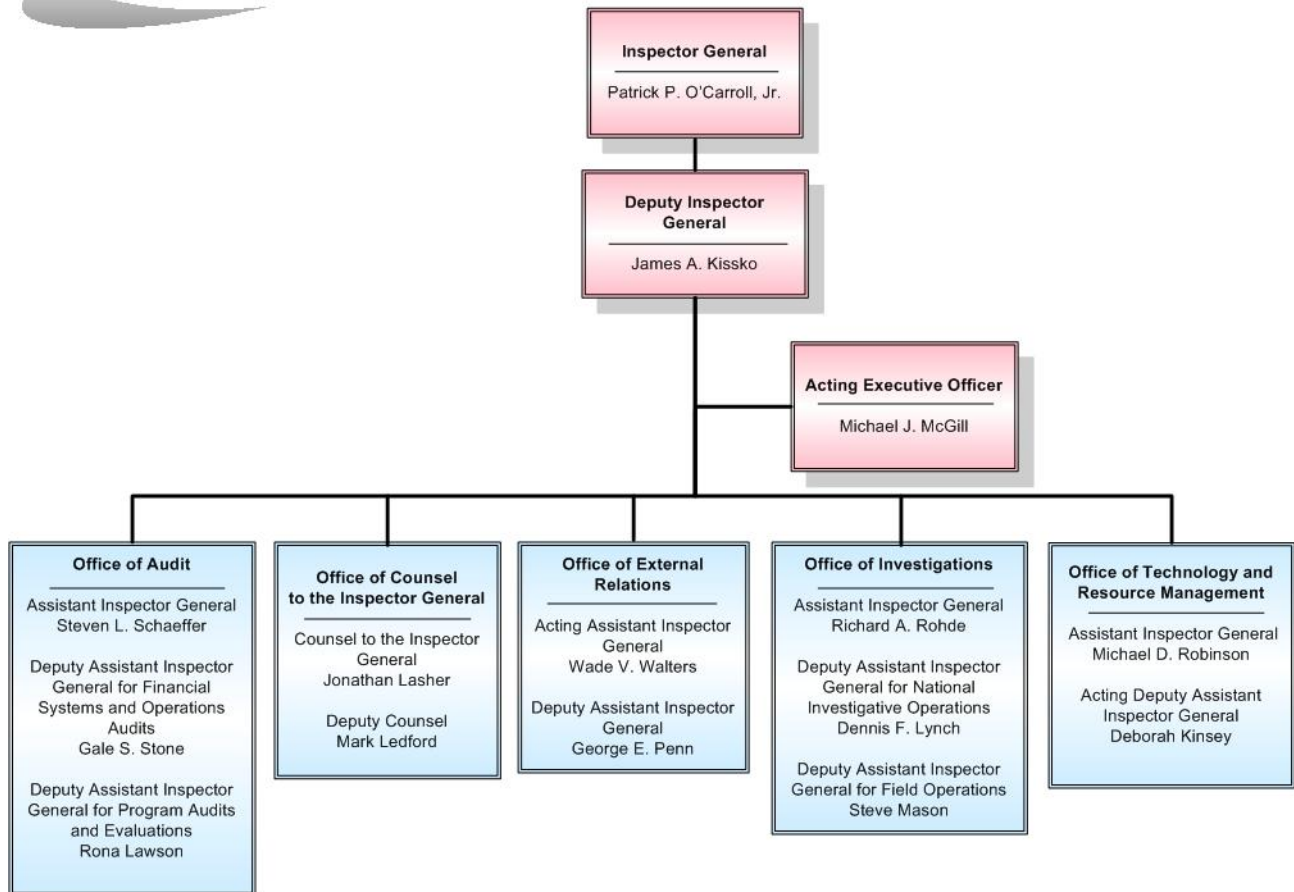
OTRM provides administrative and management support to the OIG by providing information resource management; systems security and software development; and the coordination of budget, procurement, telecommunications, facilities, equipment, and human resources activities. OTRM also administers the Fugitive Felon Program and the OIG Fraud Hotline, and manages the Electronic Crimes program. In addition, OTRM is responsible for strategic planning, organizational performance management and reporting.

Office of Investigations

OI conducts and coordinates investigative activity related to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement in SSA programs and operations including wrongdoing by individuals such as applicants, grantees, or contractors perpetrating criminal activity against SSA programs and operations. OI also investigates allegations of employee misconduct in the performance of their official duties. This office serves as the OIG liaison to the Department of Justice on all matters relating to investigations of SSA programs and personnel. OI works with other investigative agencies and organizations on special projects and assignments.

Office of External Relations

OER manages OIG's external and public affairs programs by planning, directing and coordinating the dissemination of news releases and public information from OIG to the various news gathering and news reporting services of the nation. OER prepares OIG publications, including the Semiannual Report to Congress, as well as speeches and presentations to internal and external organizations and coordinates the OIG presence at SSA and other Federal events. In addition, OER serves as the primary liaison with Congress, Federal agencies and other public and private interest groups.



Strategic Planning Process

GPRA requires Federal agencies to develop goals, strategies and performance indicators for gauging progress. A Strategic Planning Team comprised of OIG headquarters and field personnel was established to develop this Plan. The Team was chartered to develop a Plan that would be useful in every component throughout the organization. The Team:

- Examined the prior Strategic Plan.
- Reviewed the *IG Act*, GPRA and other relevant laws and regulations.
- Analyzed SSA's Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Reports.
- Evaluated other Federal OIG goals and indicators.
- Developed crosscutting strategies.
- Suggested new goals, indicators, and target levels of performance.

Stakeholder Feedback

Our stakeholders include: Congress; congressional staff; SSA's Commissioner; SSA managers and staff; PCIE and the IG community at large; all OIG employees; Government Accountability Office; the Office of Special Counsel; the Office of Government Ethics; Department of Justice; other Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies; other outside groups both public and private; the general public; and other parties interested in improving the efficiency, effectiveness and integrity of SSA programs and operations. We meet periodically with stakeholders, particularly SSA management officials, U.S. Attorneys, and congressional representatives and staff to obtain feedback on our work.

Internal Factors Affecting the Achievement of Strategic Goals

For the Strategic Plan to succeed as a management tool, all OIG employees must embrace and commit to this Plan. Major internal challenges include:

- Implementing unified leadership, commitment, and involvement to ensure effective execution of the Plan.
- Designing and implementing processes and technology needed to enhance information sharing.
- Adjusting to changing workload requirements and resource constraints.

External Factors Affecting the Achievement of Strategic Goals

External factors such as budget constraints, SSA's ability to implement recommendations, congressional and SSA priorities and political mandates can affect the achievement of OIG strategic goals. Additional factors include:

- Redirecting resources to address national security and public safety issues.
- Contracting for outside services with regard to the integrity and reliability of external auditors and consultants.
- Preventing fraud, waste and abuse stemming from vulnerabilities in SSA's online services.
- Competing with other organizations for skilled staff.

Summary of Program Evaluations

GPRA requires agencies to describe the program evaluations used to establish or revise general goals and objectives. Although there were no formal internal or external program evaluations of OIG to consider in developing this Plan, the Team evaluated several other sources of information to include:

- OIG Semiannual Reports
- OIG Congressional Budget Justifications
- PCIE Annual Reports
- Office of Audit PCIE Peer Review
- Results of Quality Assurance Reviews
- Management information systems of individual OIG components
- SSA's Strategic Plan

Goals, Strategies and Measures

Goal 1: Impact

Enhance the integrity, efficiency and effectiveness of SSA programs and operations.

STRATEGIES

1. Promote an OIG-wide process for cross-component communications on potential programmatic and operational vulnerabilities.
2. Communicate with the Agency to identify mission-critical issues and operations that would benefit from OIG audit and investigation services and develop practical solutions to address identified weaknesses or deficiencies.
3. Prioritize investigations, audits and counsel actions to effect more efficient and effective SSA programs and operations.

Performance Measure 1.1

Maintain an annual acceptance rate of at least 85 % for all recommendations.

Definition: The number of legislative, policy, and regulatory recommendations accepted by SSA and/or Congress (included in proposed legislation) during the FY divided by the total number of recommendations with a management decision and legislative proposals made during the FY.

Demonstrates: OIG's ability to produce improvement ideas valued by SSA and Congress. Recommendations are contained in OIG Audit, Evaluation, Management Advisory, legislative proposals, and Regulatory Commentary Reports.

Source: OA's management information system

Revised Performance Measure 1.2 (effective FY 2009)

Achieve a 5-year average implementation rate of 85% for accepted recommendations aimed at improving the integrity, efficiency and effectiveness of SSA.

Definition: The total number of accepted recommendations implemented by SSA during the **past** 5 FYs divided by the total number of recommendations SSA agreed to implement during the past 5 FYs.

Demonstrates: The impact of OIG recommendations on the integrity, efficiency, and **effectiveness** of SSA programs and operations.

Source: OA's management information system

Revised Performance Measure 1.3 (effective FY 2009)

Achieve a positive action on at least 75 % of all cases closed during the FY.

Definition: The total closed cases that resulted in a positive action during the FY divided by the total cases closed during the FY. The following circumstances constitute positive actions: subject enters into a pre-trial diversion program or receives probation before judgment; subject is convicted or pleads guilty or is sentenced; a civil judgment against the subject is rendered; OCIG accepts a CMP referral resulting from OI casework; recoveries (scheduled or actual) - including both reclamations and repayment agreements, are perfected based upon evidence obtained through an OIG investigation; SSA takes administrative action based upon a referral from the OIG – limited to benefit cessation, denial, or reduction; and an OIG investigation results in disciplinary action against an SSA employee.

Demonstrates: OIG productivity in reducing fraud, waste, and abuse.

Source: National Investigative Case Management System (NICMS)

Goal 2: Value

Provide quality products and services of value in a timely manner to Congress, SSA and other key decision-makers while sustaining a positive return for each tax dollar invested in OIG activities.

STRATEGIES

1. Maintain a “positive-return” culture within OIG.
2. Ensure continual improvement of OIG products by using a product and service quality assessment instrument to measure internal and external user satisfaction.
3. Implement best practices to ensure quality and timeliness of OIG products and services.
4. Utilize information technology investments to enhance OIG work products and service delivery.

Revised Performance Measure 2.1 (effective FY 2008)

Generate a positive return of \$6 for every tax dollar invested in OIG activities.

Definition: The total amount of all OIG savings identified during the FY divided by the total **amount** of appropriated funds during the same period.

Demonstrates: The dollar value returned for each tax dollar invested in SSA OIG.

Source: Division of Budget and Logistics files, OA’s management information system, **and** NICMS.

Revised Performance Measure 2.2 (effective FY 2009)

Evaluate and respond to 90 % of all allegations received within 45 days.

Definition: The total number of allegations closed or referred within 45 days during the FY **divided** by the total number of allegations closed or referred during the FY.

Demonstrates: OIG’s ability to initiate timely action on allegations received.

Source: NICMS

Performance Measure 2.3

Complete investigative fieldwork on 75 % of all cases within 180 days.

Definition: The total number of investigations closed **or** referred for prosecution, CMP, SSA or other State or Federal agency action within 180 days during the FY divided by the total investigations closed or referred during the FY.

Demonstrates: The ability to conduct investigations in an efficient, timely manner.

Source: NICMS

Performance Measure 2.4

Respond to 90 % of congressional requests within 21 days.

Definition: The total congressional requests responded **to** within 21 days during the FY divided by the total number of congressional requests responded to during the FY. Processing days are the days elapsed from receipt of a congressional request to the date of a response.

Demonstrates: OIG's ability to provide a rapid response to congressional decision-makers.

Source: OIG Control System

Revised Performance Measure 2.5 (effective FY 2009)

Take action on 90 % of CMP subjects within 30 days of receipt.

Definition: The total number of CMP subjects against whom initial action was taken within 30 days of receipt during the FY divided by the total number of CMP subjects where action was taken during the FY.

Initial action is defined as sending a letter to the subject either:

- (1) Stating an intention to pursue a Civil Monetary Penalty, or
- (2) Indicating that a CMP will not be proposed at this time, and directing the subject to SSA to make arrangements for repayment. (In cases in which there is no overpayment, the case will simply be declined and either referred for administrative sanctions or closed, either of which also constitutes an initial action.)

Demonstrates: The ability to identify and take timely action on CMP cases.

Source: NICMS

Revised Performance Measure 2.6 (effective FY 2009)

Achieve a positive external user assessment rating of 85 % for product-service quality.

Definition: This measure uses a 5-tier rating scale measuring the degree of satisfaction with **OIG** products and services by recipients and users, including SSA and other government entities, such as Congress, Offices of U.S. Attorney, and external law enforcement agencies. The numeric response is translated into a percentage with 85 % indicating satisfaction.

Demonstrates: The overall quality of **OIG** products and services as seen by their users.

Source: Quality Assurance Review Assessment Questionnaire

Revised Performance Measure 2.7 (effective FY 2008)

Issue 78 % of final audit reports within 1 year of the entrance conference with SSA.

Definition: The total number of audit reports issued during the FY within 1 year of the **entrance** conference divided by the total number of audit reports issued during the FY.

Demonstrates: **OIG**'s ability to efficiently focus, plan, conduct and report timely audit information.

Source: **OA**'s management information system

Revised Performance Measure 2.8 (effective FY 2008)

Complete 85 % of requests for legal advice and review within 30 days.

Definition: The total number of legal opinions, subpoenas and audit reviews completed by **OCIG** within 30 days of receipt during the FY divided by the total number of requests for legal opinions, subpoenas and audit reviews completed during the FY.

Demonstrates: The ability to complete timely legal analysis of **OIG** products and to issue **prompt** legal guidance and support.

Source: **OIG** Control System

Goal 3: People

Promote a skilled, motivated, diverse workforce in a positive and rewarding work environment.

STRATEGIES

1. Identify assignment interests and developmental needs of all employees.
2. Provide OIG components with training and tools necessary to ensure professional development and skills enhancement.
3. Maintain a proactive approach in recruiting and hiring candidates to meet different needs.

Revised Performance Measure 3.1 (effective FY 2009)

Achieve an annual attrition rate of 5% or less.

Revised Definition: The total number of employees separated (excluding retirements and deaths) during the FY divided by the Average OIG Workforce for the FY.

Demonstrates: OIG's ability to provide a quality work experience that encourages staff to **pursue** their career goals within the SSA OIG.

Revised Source (effective FY 2007): OIG Staffing Data

Revised Performance Measure 3.2 (effective FY 2009)

Conduct an annual employee job-satisfaction survey and implement corrective action plans to identify areas where improvements are needed

Revised Definition (effective FY 2009): Conduct an annual employee survey to gauge the health of the OIG. The survey will show that for an average of all 12 areas included that at least 75% of employees responding strongly agreed or agreed with measures of satisfaction gauged by the survey. For purposes of this survey, very satisfied and satisfied along with very good or good will be used interchangeably with strongly agreed or agreed for different questions. The survey was first administered in FY 2006 and shall be re-administered annually to measure compliance with the overall goal of 75%.

Demonstrates: That OIG's quality work environment is attentive to the people, technology, communications, and other human capital factors influencing the job performance of its employees.

Source: Annual employee job-satisfaction tool

Performance Measure 3.3

Ensure that 90 % of OIG staff receives 40 or more hours of appropriate developmental and skill-enhancement training annually.

Definition: The total number of OIG staff on board for the entire FY receiving at least 40 hours of training during the FY divided by the total number of OIG staff on board for the entire FY.

Demonstrates: OIG's commitment to continual staff development and skill enhancement.

Revised Source (effective FY 2007): OIG Training Database