

OPLA MISSION STATEMENT

To protect the homeland from national security and public safety threats, uphold the rule of law, and promote public confidence by providing exceptional legal services and zealously representing the agency, including in proceedings before the Executive Office for Immigration Review, by advocating for just and fair results while adhering to the highest standards of integrity and professional conduct and optimizing resources to advance DHS and ICE missions.

OPLA VISION STATEMENT

To operate as a premier, inclusive, and nimble legal program composed of collaborative legal experts who will ensure that OPLA conducts its missions with integrity, fairness, and in the pursuit of justice.



OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL LEGAL ADVISOR

500 12th Street, SW
Mail Stop 5900
Washington, D.C. 20536
Phone: 202-732-5000



ICE

Report Suspicious Activity:

1-866-DHS-2-ICE
1-866-347-2434

ice.gov
visit us on social media



1/2022



U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Office of the Principal Legal Advisor

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2026



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

The Office of the Principal Legal Advisor (OPLA) is the largest legal program in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) with over 1,300 attorneys. Pursuant to statute, OPLA serves as the exclusive representative of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in removal proceedings before the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR), litigating cases involving criminals, terrorists, human rights abusers, and other priority noncitizens.



OPLA delivers a full range of legal services to all ICE programs and offices. OPLA provides legal advice and prudential counsel to ICE personnel on their law enforcement authorities, legal liability under the Federal Tort Claims Act and *Bivens v. Six Unknown Named Agents*, 403 U.S. 388 (1971), the Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act, ethics, and administrative law issues, such as contract, fiscal, and employment law. OPLA represents the agency before the Merit Systems Protection Board, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Contract Board of Appeals. OPLA attorneys support the Department of Justice in the prosecution of ICE cases and in the defense of civil cases against ICE.

In addition to its headquarters in Washington, D.C., OPLA has 25 field locations with presence in more than 60 cities throughout the United States.

Office of the Principal Legal Advisor | 2022–2026 Strategic Plan

GOAL

1 PROACTIVELY DELIVER STRATEGIC, ACCURATE, AND TIMELY LEGAL ADVICE AND PRUDENTIAL COUNSEL TO DHS AND ICE LEADERSHIP, OPERATIONAL, AND POLICY CLIENTS

1.1 Provide Timely and High-Quality Legal Advice

1.1.1 Actively engage with clients to identify viable operational and policy options, associated risks, and recommendations to facilitate informed decision-making

1.1.2 Proactively counsel clients regarding new statutory, regulatory, and case law developments

1.2 Optimize Client Partnerships

1.2.1 Continue to develop and leverage specialized subject matter expertise to meet client needs

1.2.2 Cultivate collaborative client relationships

1.2.3 Develop proficiency regarding the operations and resources of operational clients to better tailor legal advice

1.3 Conduct Timely and Targeted Legal Training for Clients

1.3.1 Partner with clients to identify training needs and regularly develop and deploy training to address those needs

1.3.2 Leverage annual Voice of the Client Survey to assess and meet client needs, including legal training

GOAL

2 COMPLETE LITIGATION ACTIVITIES EFFICIENTLY AND IN THE PURSUIT OF JUSTICE

2.1 Optimize Litigation Efforts and Resources

2.1.1 Align trial and appellate litigation resources with agency policies and priorities

2.1.2 Uphold the rule of law by ensuring that the interests of justice and fairness are prioritized in litigation decision-making

2.1.3 Utilize and advocate for expanded use of technology to promote efficient litigation

2.2 Coordinate Subject Matter Expertise

2.2.1 Promote regular and timely dissemination of guidance within OPLA on emerging legal trends and developments, including new statutory, regulatory, and case law authority

2.2.2 Employ virtual libraries and team collaboration tools to promote knowledge management

2.2.3 Build and sustain effective inter- and intra-agency litigating partnerships

2.3 Expand Training Initiatives

2.3.1 Enhance and further develop general written and oral advocacy skills

2.3.2 Amplify subject matter-specific training opportunities, in collaboration with other legal and operational experts

2.3.3 Enhance training opportunities for legal support professionals

GOAL

3 PROMOTE A CULTURE OF INTEGRITY AND INNOVATION

3.1 Promote Integrity and Professionalism Among OPLA's Employees

3.1.1 Continue and strengthen OPLA's commitment to integrity, professional responsibility, and ethical behavior

3.1.2 Enhance OPLA performance management practices through supervisory training and refinement of forms and processes

3.1.3 Develop and implement an orientation program for all OPLA employees to establish a culture of integrity and professionalism and facilitate integration of new employees into the OPLA workforce

3.2 Leverage Technology to Promote Efficiency and Accountability

3.2.1 Utilize technology to modernize and improve the work experience of OPLA personnel, with a view to optimizing program resources

3.2.2 Expand interoperability and automation capabilities of OPLA technology systems, in partnership with inter- and intra-agency partners and stakeholders, including the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR)

3.3 Promote Efficiency and Accountability with Fiscal Resources

3.3.1 Focus resources through training and implementation of enforcement priorities and prudent exercise of prosecutorial discretion

3.3.2 Standardize OPLA procedures to increase efficiency, transparency, and consistency in the onboarding process

3.3.3 Identify and leverage workforce creativity and the Workplace Transformation Initiative to realize OPLA real estate cost savings, while meeting immigration court and other mission requirements

GOAL

4 FOSTER AN ENGAGED AND STELLAR WORKFORCE

4.1 Strengthen and Publicize OPLA's Commitment to being an Employer that Values and is Committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

4.1.1 Appropriately incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion principles, including in recruitment, hiring, mentoring, training, and retention efforts

4.1.2 Expand OPLA's recruitment of veterans and other special emphasis populations

4.1.3 Expand law school internship and externship outreach and promotion of the Honors Attorney and OPLA Student to Attorney Recruitment (STAR) Programs

4.2 Develop and Retain an Engaged Workforce

4.2.1 Formalize and grow developmental detail opportunities available to OPLA personnel

4.2.2 Identify, develop, and implement pathways to leadership

4.2.3 Transform the workplace to maximize mobility, flexibility, and efficiency, consistent with mission needs

4.2.4 Continue to deploy employee recognition programs OPLA-wide and promote OPLA employee recognition across the Department

4.3 Develop a Culture of Collaboration and Trust

4.3.1 Foster a unified "One OPLA" culture through national engagements, robust peer interaction, and sharing of best practices among program sub-components

4.3.2 Increase opportunities for employees to speak to and be heard by their leaders, including on matters of employee safety and well-being

4.3.3 Enhance engagement with members of the public and stakeholders at the local and national level

4.3.4 Engage proactively and collaboratively with OPLA's collective bargaining units