



Department of Veterans Affairs Office of General Counsel

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of General Counsel

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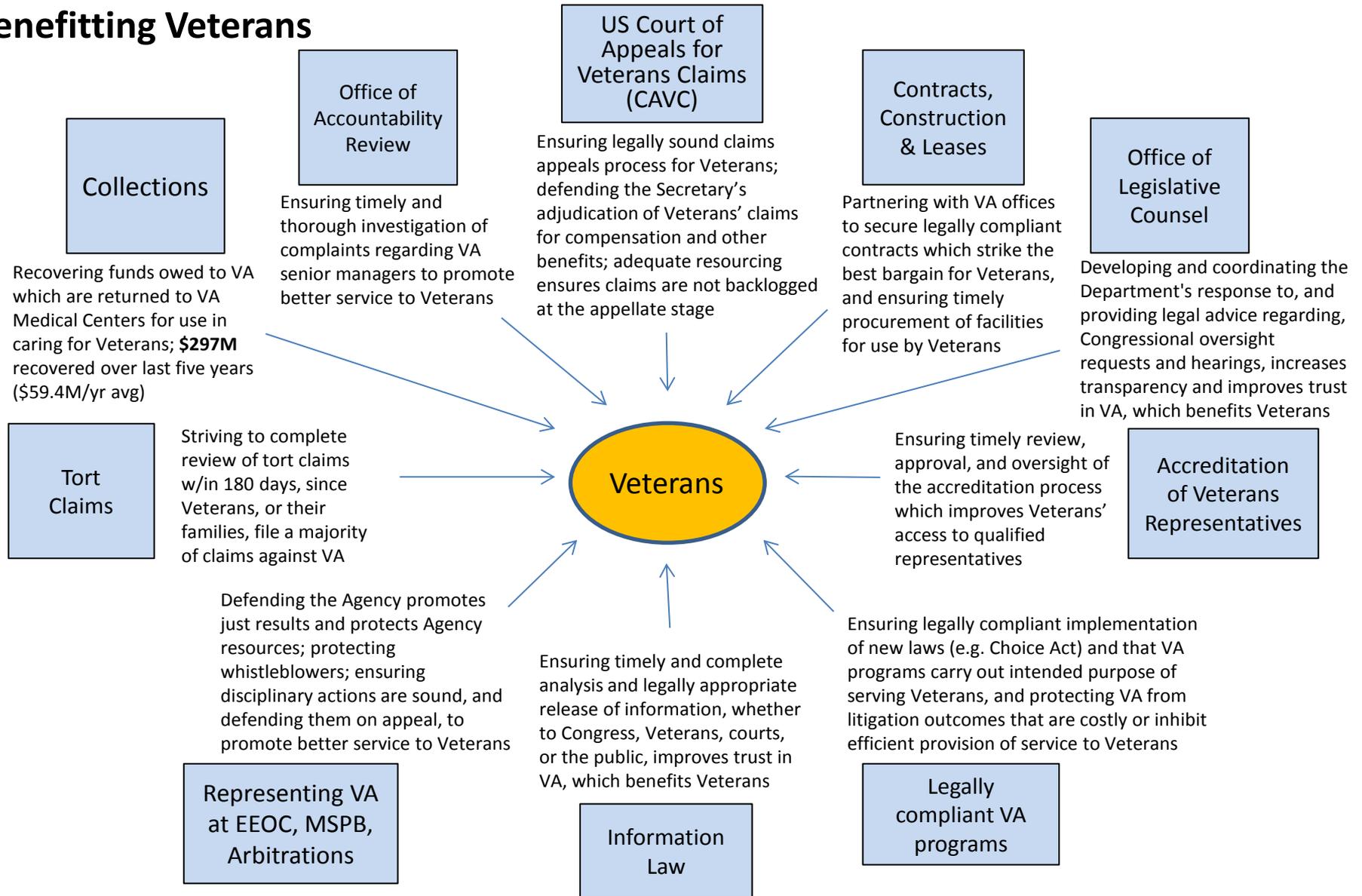
OVERVIEW

The General Counsel provides legal advice and services to the Secretary (SECVA) and all organizational components of the Department. The General Counsel is, by statute, the Department's Chief Legal Officer.

OGC's Mission

- The Office of General Counsel serves as VA's in-house counsel and is committed to ensuring that every member of our organization has a Veteran focus and an understanding and commitment to the business priorities of our VA clients.
- OGC's attorneys act as business partners, providing sound legal expertise, and as needed, critical problem-solving skills and risk-management advice.
- OGC strives to provide real-time legal advice. Our goal is to be involved with Department decision-makers (our clients) during the initial phases of decisions and actions, rather than focusing only on defending actions after the decisions have been made. This proactive, preventive approach promotes better outcomes and reduces risk.

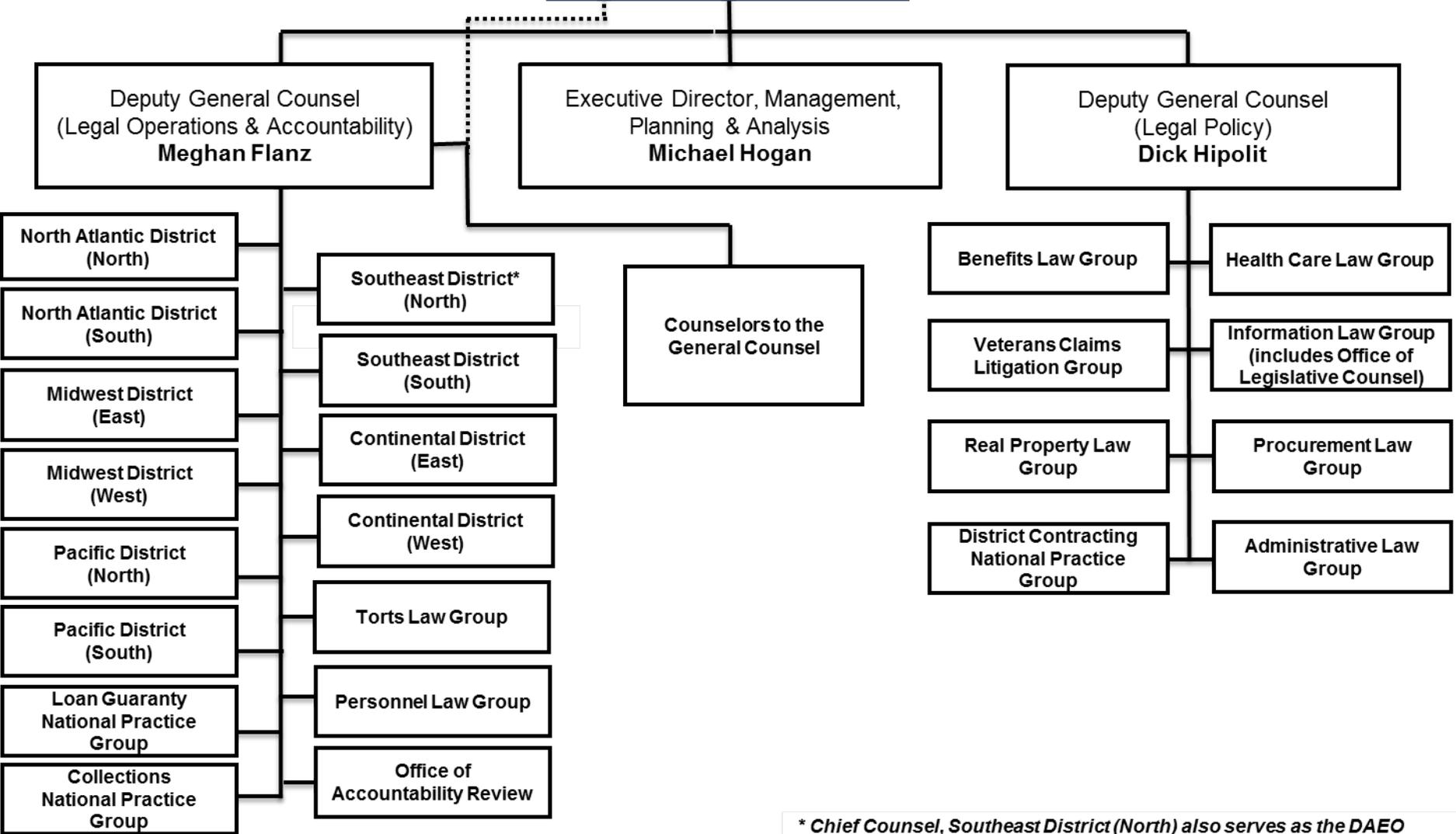
OGC focuses its operations on benefitting Veterans



OGC's Structure

- The General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel for Legal Policy, and Deputy General Counsel for Legal Operations & Accountability advise the SECVA, Deputy Secretary (DEPSECVA), VA Chief of Staff (COSVA), and other senior Department officials regarding all laws, regulations, Executive Orders, and judicial precedents pertaining to the Department.
- OGC provides a full range of legal and litigation services, as well as support for legislative and regulatory activities through our Chief Counsels who lead eight VA Central Office (VACO)-based Law Groups, three National Practice Groups (NPGs), ten Offices of Chief Counsel in the Districts, the Ethics Specialty Team (EST), and the Office of Accountability Review (OAR).
- The Counselors to the General Counsel focus on implementing Agency priorities within OGC.

General Counsel



* Chief Counsel, Southeast District (North) also serves as the DAEO

Office of General Counsel

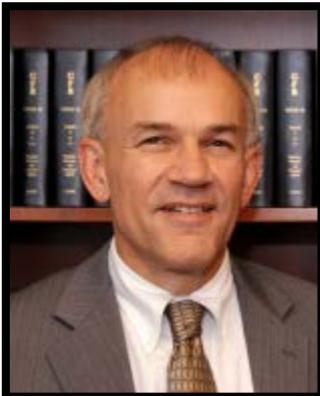
LEADERSHIP

General Counsel
Leigh A. Bradley



Deputy General Counsel
Legal Operations & Accountability

Meghan Flanz



Deputy General Counsel
Legal Policy

Richard Hipolit



Executive Director
Management Planning & Analysis

Michael R. Hogan

OGC Leadership and Law Groups are located in VA Central Office.

810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington DC 20420

OGC's internal administrative functions are led by the Executive Director, Management, Planning & Analysis (MPA).

Office of General Counsel

LAW GROUPS

Law Groups

OGC's Law Groups are based in VA Central Office. Each Law Group is led by a senior executive Chief Counsel. Law Group attorneys typically possess expertise in specific subject-matter areas and provide specific legal advice to program officials, review proposed regulations and directives, and handle litigation involving VA programs.

- **Benefits Law Group** - All VBA Benefits, including Education & Vocational Rehabilitation, NCA Issues (except Real Property), Accreditation/Representation, and Benefits Litigation at the US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.
- **US Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC) Litigation Group** - CAVC Litigation.
- **Health Care Law Group** - Health Care Administration and Operations, including Eligibility for Care, Homeless Programs, Veteran Canteen Service, Patents, Medical Research, Non-Profit Research Corporations.

Law Groups

- **Information Law Group** - Information Disclosure (Freedom of Information Act, Privacy Act, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Title 38), eDiscovery, Touhy, Information Management, Information Security & Technology, Federal Advisory Committee Act (closed meeting issues), Copyright & Trademarks, and Legislative Counsel.
- **Personnel Law Group** - Human Resources (Title 5 & 38), Labor Relations, Equal Employment Opportunity, Merit Systems Protection Board, Office of Special Counsel (Whistleblower retaliation), and Immigration Law.
- **Procurement Law Group** - Government Supply and Service Contracts, Sharing Agreements (38 USC 8153), Energy Law, Bid Protest Litigation, Information Technology Contracts, and Debarment and Suspension.
- **Real Property Law Group** - Real Property Acquisitions and Disposals, Leases, Construction, Environmental Law, and Enhanced Use Leases.
- **Torts and Administrative Law Group** - Torts, Bankruptcy, VA Rulemaking, Policy & Management, FACA, Appropriations, Personal Immunity & DOJ Representation, Law Enforcement, and Gifts to VA.

Office of General Counsel

OFFICES OF CHIEF COUNSEL IN THE DISTRICTS

Offices of Chief Counsel in the Districts

There are two Chief Counsel offices in each VA District, each office is led by a senior executive Chief Counsel. Each Chief Counsel is responsible for providing legal advice and assistance to Directors and other officials of all designated VA facilities within a District. The Chief Counsels fulfill these functions by performing the following tasks:

- Advise and represent management of VA facilities on issues relating to personnel and labor law.
- Perform legal review of administrative tort claims and provide legal support to the local U.S. Attorneys' Offices in tort litigation.
- Provide other legal services and consultation as needed.

Office of General Counsel

NATIONAL PRACTICE GROUPS

National Practice Groups

OGC's National Practice Groups (NPGs) provide consolidated legal services to clients in a specific practice area. Clients with needs in these areas contact the applicable NPG directly for legal services.

- **District Contracting National Practice Group** – Provide legal advice, reviews, and litigation representation and support on matters pertaining to VA contracts, sharing agreements, and leases arising outside of VACO.
- **Collections National Practice Group** - Recovers funds owed to the United States by various legal-collection remedies, to include litigation in Federal and State courts.
- **Loan Guaranty National Practice Group** - Provide necessary legal services in connection with the activities of VBA's Loan Guaranty Program.

Office of General Counsel

ETHICS SPECIALTY TEAM (EST)

Ethics Specialty Team

OGC's Ethics Specialty Team (EST) manages the Department's Ethics Program. A District Chief Counsel serves as VA's Designated Agency Ethics Official (DAEO). Clients contact the EST directly for advice on ethics issues.

Office of General Counsel

OFFICE OF ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW (OAR)

Office of Accountability Review

OAR was chartered to expedite the Department's leadership accountability reset. In addition to addressing senior leader accountability for scheduling and access improprieties, OAR reviews and investigates allegations of misconduct and lack of oversight by senior leaders throughout the Department and further ensures leadership accountability actions are applied consistently across the Department.

Office of General Counsel

COUNSELORS TO THE GENERAL COUNSEL

Counselors to the General Counsel

OGC's Counselors to the General Counsel (CGC) serve as senior legal advisors to the General Counsel (GC) on any and all matters directed to them for consideration and/or action. In light of OGC's recent re-organization in accordance with the Secretary's MyVA initiative, the CGC have an important role in facilitating the smooth and seamless transition to OGC's new organization model. In addition, the CGCs have also been tasked to address and focus their expertise and years of experience on one or more of the 5 major tenets of MyVA (improving the veterans experience, improving the employee experience, achieving support services excellence, establishing a culture of continuous performance improvement, and enhancing strategic partnerships).

Interested?

Office of General Counsel

Questions about externships or
employment opportunities,

Email:

OGCMPAKM@va.gov