Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of General Counsel

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- Offices of Chief Counsel in the Districts
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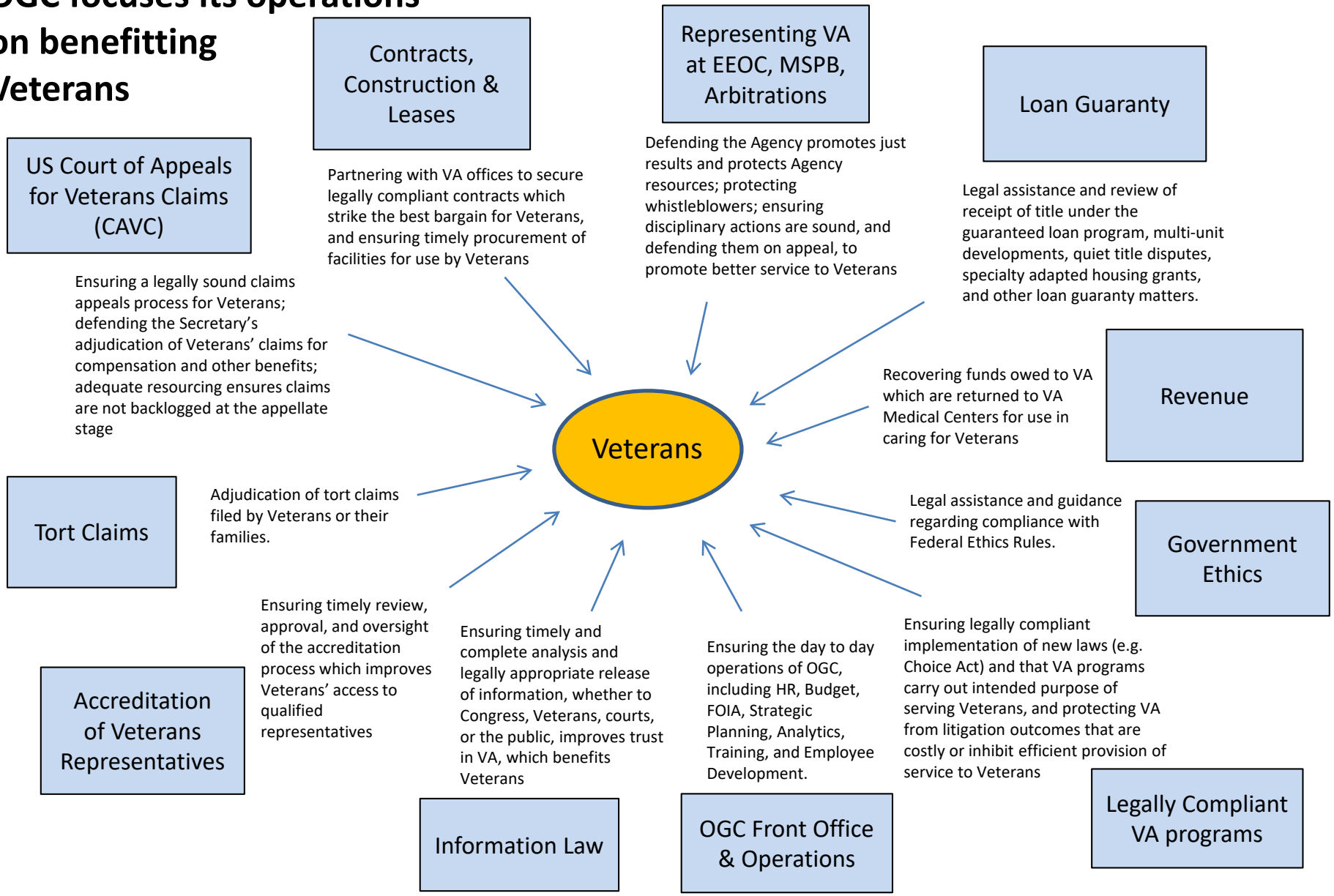
OVERVIEW

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

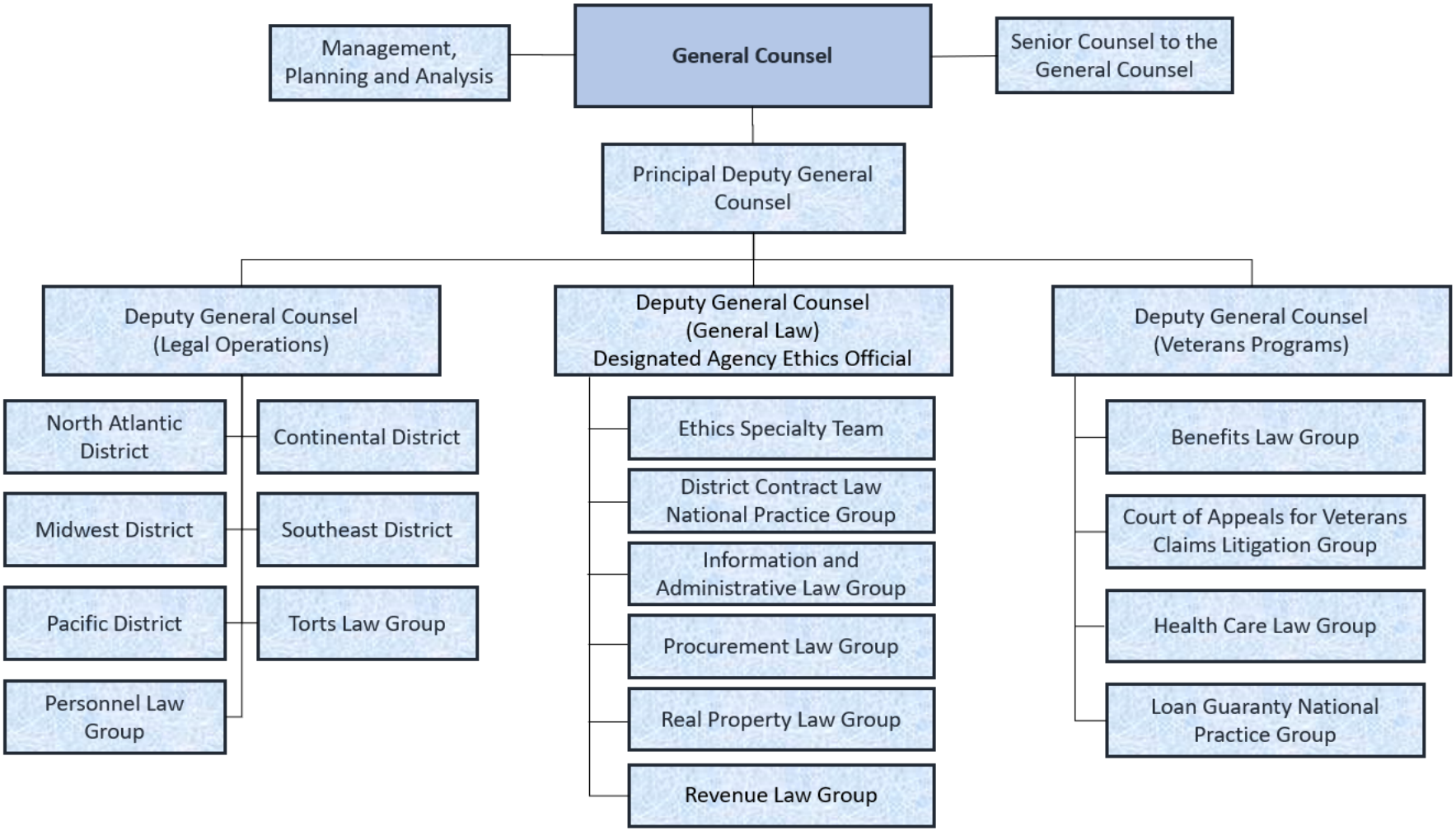
- The Office of General Counsel (OGC) serves as VA's in-house counsel and is committed to ensuring that every member of our organization has a Veteran focus and an understanding and commitment to the business priorities of our VA clients.
- OGC's attorneys act as business partners, providing sound legal 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, Principal Deputy General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel Legal Operations, Deputy General Counsel General Law, Deputy General Counsel Veterans Programs, and Senior Counsel to the General Counsel 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, two National Practice Groups (NPGs), five Offices of Chief Counsel in the Districts, the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims Litigation Group, and the Ethics Specialty Team (EST).


General Counsel
Management, Planning and Analysis
Senior Counsel to the General Counsel
Principal Deputy General Counsel
Deputy General Counsel (Legal Operations)
North Atlantic District
Continental District
Midwest District
Southeast District
Pacific District
Torts Law Group
Personnel Law Group
Deputy General Counsel (General Law) Designated Agency Ethics Official
Ethics Specialty Team
District Contract Law National Practice Group
Information and Administrative Law Group
Procurement Law Group
Real Property Law Group
Revenue Law Group
Deputy General Counsel (Veterans Programs)
Benefits Law Group
Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims Litigation Group
Health Care Law Group
Loan Guaranty National Practice Group

Office of General Counsel

LEADERSHIP

Acting General Counsel

William A. Hudson, Jr.

Principal Deputy General Counsel

William A. Hudson, Jr.

Senior Counsel to the General Counsel

Catherine Mitrano

Deputy General Counsel
General Law

Michael R. Hogan

Deputy General Counsel
Legal Operations

Brent Pope

Deputy General Counsel
Veterans Programs

Richard J. Hipolit

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 Director, Management, Planning & Analysis (MPA).

Office of General Counsel

LAW GROUPS

Office Name

- Significant Litigation
- Matters of Congressional/Press Interest
- Efforts in Support of the Secretary's Priorities

Law Groups

(Veterans Programs)

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

Law Groups

(General Law)

- **Information and Administrative 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, Appropriations, Law Enforcement, and Legislative Counsel.
- **Revenue Law Group** - Recovers funds owed to the United States by various legal-collection remedies, to include litigation in Federal and State courts.
- **Procurement Law Group** - Government Supply and Service Contracts, Sharing Agreements (38 USC 8153), Bid Protest Litigation, Information Technology Contracts, and Debarment and Suspension.
- **Real Property Law Group** - Real Property Acquisitions and Disposals, Leases, Construction, Energy Law, Environmental Law, and Enhanced Use Leases.

Law Groups

(Legal Operations)

- **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.
- **Torts Law Group** - Torts, Personal Immunity and DOJ Representation.

Office of General Counsel

U.S. COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS (CAVC) LITIGATION GROUP

U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims Litigation Group

The U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims Litigation Group represents the SECVA in all litigation brought before the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC).

Office of General Counsel

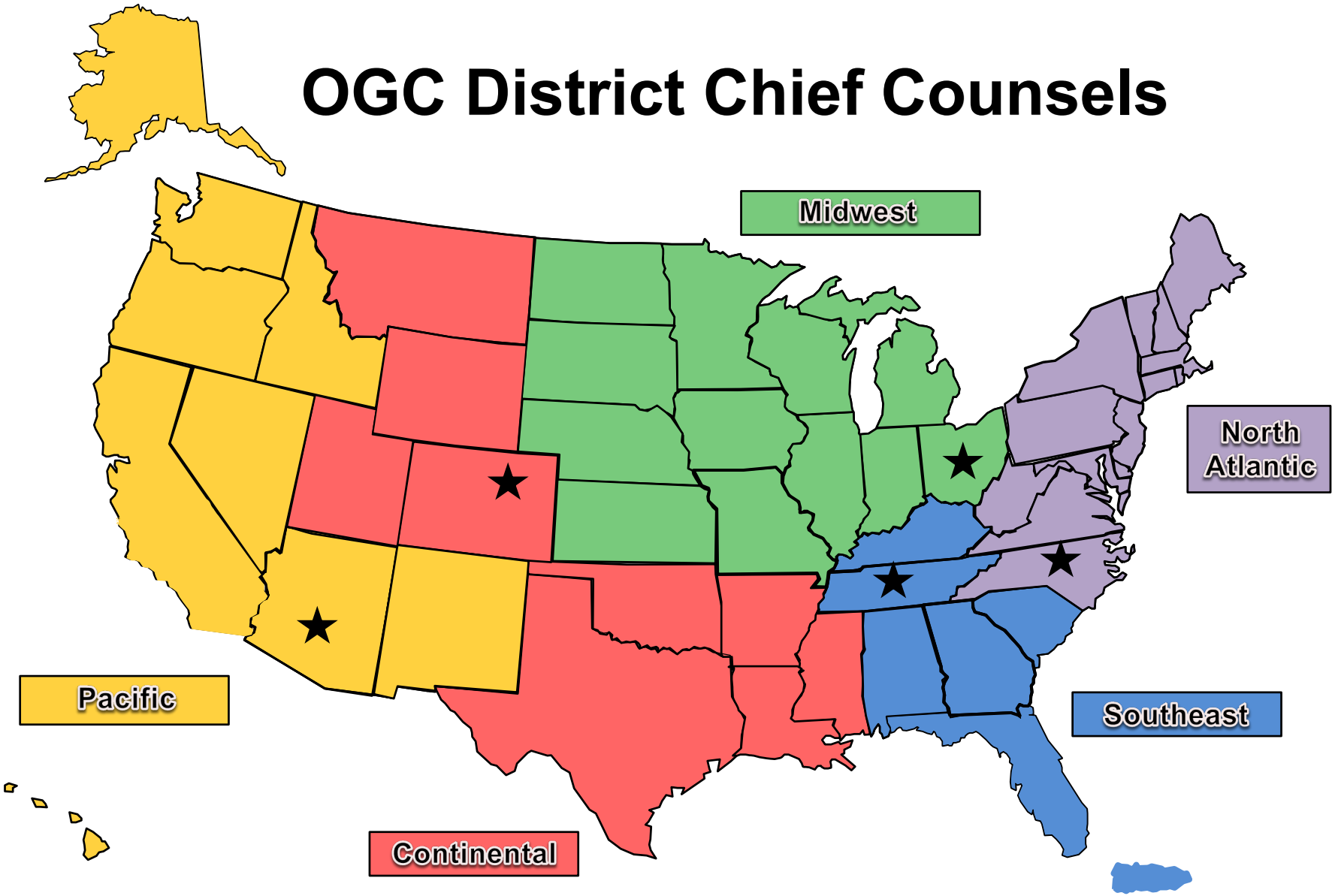
OFFICES OF CHIEF COUNSEL IN THE DISTRICTS

Offices of Chief Counsel in the Districts

There is one Chief Counsel office 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.
- Provide other legal services and consultation as needed.

OGC District Chief Counsels



★ = Physical Location of Sitting Chief Counsel

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 Contract Law National Practice Group (General Law)**- Provide legal advice, reviews, and litigation representation and support on matters pertaining to VA contracts, sharing agreements, and leases arising outside of VACO.
- **Loan Guaranty National Practice Group (Veterans Programs)** - 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. The Senior Counsel to the General Counsel will serve as VA's Designated Agency Ethics Official (DAEO). Clients contact the EST directly for advice on ethics issues.