



**U.S. Department of Justice
Office of the Inspector General**

**Top Management and
Performance Challenges Facing
the Department of Justice
2025**

U.S. Department of Justice | Office of the Inspector General Top Management and Performance Challenges Facing the Department of Justice 2025

CHALLENGE

Ongoing Challenges Facing the Federal Bureau of Prisons

The Department of Justice (Department or DOJ) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) [has long identified management issues affecting the federal corrections system](#) as a major challenge. The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) continues to face persistent challenges, most critically those presented by staffing shortages, deteriorating infrastructure, and the introduction of contraband.

In recent years, deficiencies in the [provision of healthcare to inmates](#) and [sexual abuse of inmates](#) by BOP staff have emerged as additional significant challenges. These issues detract from the BOP's mission to "foster a humane and secure environment and ensure public safety by preparing individuals for successful reentry into our communities," and they put inmates, employees, and the public at risk.

On July 4, 2025, [newly enacted legislation](#) provided \$5 billion in supplemental funding to the BOP through September 30, 2029, to address its significant staffing and infrastructure issues. Of this amount, Congress appropriated \$3 billion to hiring and training new employees, including correctional officers, medical professionals, facilities and maintenance employees, and support staff. It also provided additional funding for salaries and benefits for the current workforce. Strategic and optimal use of this supplemental funding will be central to the BOP's ability to address its staffing challenges.





Exterior of Federal Medical Center Devens.
(Devens, MA)

Source: DOJ OIG

While the \$2 billion supplemental appropriation for maintenance and repairs of facilities over the next 5 years is a positive development, the BOP has estimated that substantial additional funding will be needed for it to fully remedy the dire condition of its infrastructure system wide.

The OIG anticipates conducting oversight of the BOP's use of the supplemental \$5 billion funding and, consistent with the Federal Prison Oversight Act, continuing our unannounced inspections of BOP facilities and investigating allegations of staff involvement in contraband smuggling and sexual abuse of inmates.

Priority Recommendations

The OIG publicly identifies its three highest priority recommendations on its website, on [oversight.gov](https://www.oversight.gov), and in its Semiannual Reports. Currently, two of these priorities relate to the BOP:

- In a 2021 Management Advisory Memorandum, the OIG identified critical security lapses with the BOP's security camera system in relation to its coverage, functionality, and storage capabilities. The OIG recommended that the BOP develop a comprehensive strategic plan to address the concern.
- In a 2023 report, the OIG recommended that the BOP develop and implement a reliable method to calculate appropriate staffing levels and communicate its needs to executive and legislative branch stakeholders.

These priority recommendations remain open.

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CHALLENGE | Safeguarding National Security

The Department plays a critical role in safeguarding U.S. interests and citizens when it collects intelligence and investigates and prosecutes those seeking to undermine our national security. Events of the past year, including attacks in New Orleans and Boulder, which are being investigated as acts of terrorism, have again demonstrated the essential need for the Department to be vigilant in its efforts to deter and counter terrorism and violent extremism. The threat of targeted violence from U.S.-based extremists remains high, while foreign terrorist organizations continue to [pose a risk](#) to the homeland and to U.S. interests abroad.

To protect national security, the Department uses sensitive investigative authorities that implicate constitutional rights and civil liberties. For example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) use of certain authorities under the [Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act](#) (FISA) receives close scrutiny by the Department and policymakers to ensure that constitutional rights and privacy interests of Americans are not sacrificed in furtherance of foreign intelligence gathering. In April 2024, Congress passed the [Reforming Intelligence and Securing America Act](#) (RISAA), which both reauthorized certain FISA authorities for two years and tasked the OIG with reviewing the FBI's practices under FISA Section 702. In compliance with RISAA, the OIG submitted a report to Congress. The OIG found that the FBI implemented all reforms mandated by RISAA and that the FBI's compliance with the court-approved querying procedures has improved. However, rigorous internal and external oversight of the FBI's querying practices under Section 702 remain necessary. Next year, the Department and the FBI will face the challenge of securing renewal of this sensitive investigative authority.

The FBI has identified [Transnational organized crime](#), driven by illicit drug trafficking and other violent crimes, as a "significant and growing threat to national and international security with dire implications for public safety, public health, democratic institutions, and economic stability across the globe."





Exterior of the
J. Edgar Hoover
FBI Building
(Washington, D.C.)

Source: DOJ OIG

In a February 2025 [Attorney General Memorandum](#), the Department announced directives and initiatives to pursue the total elimination of Cartels and Transnational Criminal Organizations to curb the flow of deadly drugs into the country and eliminate the threats that these groups pose. Achieving this policy will require significant law enforcement and intelligence resources and enhanced collaboration with international, federal, state, and local law enforcement partners.

Cybersecurity presents another National Security issue for the Department. Specifically, the Department needs to respond effectively to threats to national security posed in this ever-evolving area. Inadequate data security, cyber intrusions by foreign actors, ransomware, and ubiquitous technical surveillance of law enforcement activities, among other issues, present potential threats to national security and to Department operations.

Emerging Technology:

Audit of the DEA's and FBI's Efforts to Integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Other Emerging Technology within the U.S. Intelligence Community (as required by the FY 2023 National Defense Authorization Act)

The OIG released a report on the DEA's and FBI's compliance with AI and other emerging technology requirements contained in the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2023. These requirements apply to U.S. Intelligence Community elements, including the entire FBI and the DEA's Office of National Security Intelligence. The OIG found both agencies are in the early stages of AI integration, with some progress made. The FBI published an AI policy, established an AI Ethics Council, and is conducting inventories of AI use. The DEA's Office of National Security Intelligence is leveraging a partner agency's AI tool. Barriers to these agencies' accelerated adoption of AI include funding constraints, difficulties hiring and retaining a technical workforce, and the need to modernize data architecture. Both agencies are still required to submit reports to Congress on their AI efforts.

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CHALLENGE

Maintaining Public Trust in the U.S. Department of Justice

Maintaining public trust remains the Department's core, enduring challenge. Indeed, in every Top Management and Performance Challenges Report since 2007, the OIG has identified the need for the Department to be attentive to the public's confidence and trust in it.

Most fundamentally, the Department maintains the public's trust by faithfully applying the law to the facts. Doing so is the foundation of our system of justice and is central to the Department's mission. It leads to enforcement actions being pursued with objectivity and protection of individual rights. Strict adherence to the law and proceedings based on facts enhances the likelihood that victims and witnesses will be willing to come forward in support of the Department's cases, and that jurors are receptive to the Department's evidence and arguments. The Department cannot succeed in its mission without the public's backing.

Criminal wrongdoing and administrative misconduct by Department employees undermine the public's trust in the Department. The Department can gain the public's confidence by supporting investigation of its personnel who engage in wrongdoing. Moreover, transparency enhances trust. Whistleblowers may provide information that identifies potential criminal wrongdoing and administrative misconduct by Department employees, which undermines trust in the Department. The Department can expand upon the public's confidence in it by ensuring that whistleblowers are protected from reprisal and supporting DOJ OIG's investigations of personnel who engage in criminal or administrative misconduct.

The DOJ OIG could be better positioned for this important function in two ways: testimonial subpoena authority and jurisdiction over all attorney misconduct. The Department's support for these reforms would further





**The Robert F. Kennedy
Department of Justice
Building**
(Washington, D.C.)

Source: DOJ OIG

improve the public's confidence in the Department by ensuring DOJ OIG's ability to compel testimony from non-DOJ employees, such as former employees, who often decline to speak with DOJ OIG about misconduct they committed or witnessed while employed by the Department.

The Department's Office of Professional Responsibility, not the OIG, has jurisdiction to review and investigate allegations of misconduct involving Department attorneys that relate to their authority to investigate, litigate, or provide legal advice. The DOJ OIG is alone among federal OIGs in its lack of authority to investigate allegations of misconduct by its agency's attorneys. Extending the OIG's jurisdiction to include allegations against attorneys relating to their authority to investigate, litigate, or provide legal advice would treat Department attorneys the same as attorneys at other federal agencies, and the same as Department law enforcement agents and other categories of Department employees in their accountability for misconduct.

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CHALLENGE

Law Enforcement and Protection of Individual Rights

The Department is the nation's principal law enforcement agency. Department personnel at its law enforcement components, prosecuting offices, and grantmaking components coordinate with and rely on federal, state, local, and Tribal agencies. Maintaining strong working relationships with these partners is critical to the Department's success in pursuing its law enforcement mission.

While specific law enforcement priorities shift over time, opioids, particularly fentanyl, have consistently presented significant law enforcement challenges for the Department and the nation in recent years. Congress's passage of the Halt Fentanyl Act in July 2025, which classified any substance that meets the definition of fentanyl related substance as Schedule I, was a big step forward; however, fentanyl precursors, pre-precursors, and pre-pre-precursors remain a challenge for the Department because they are used to manufacture fentanyl but are unregulated. Consequently, the Department must remain committed to seeking additional legislation on this issue and continue directing its resources to stemming the flow of opioids into the country to address the tragedies of the opioid epidemic through its Drug Enforcement Administration programs. Additionally, the Department needs to maintain its leadership role in combatting violent crime and child abuse and exploitation. The Department also faces a continued challenge in identifying and prosecuting fraud related to the \$5 trillion distributed through pandemic relief programs.



The Department has access to a wide range of authorities for addressing criminal activity and enterprises. In addition to traditional tools such as compulsory process and confidential informants, technology advances in artificial intelligence and facial recognition enhance investigative capabilities but also expand risks to civil liberties. The Department must adapt its guidance for use of all its authorities so it is appropriately sensitive to individual rights and separation of powers, as highlighted in the DOJ OIG's 2024 review of the Department's methods used to obtain record of members of Congress, Congressional Staffers, and members of the news media.

Law enforcement operations are dangerous, and officers encounter myriad difficulties in carrying out their essential duties under trying conditions. However, it is essential to maintaining the public's confidence in law enforcement and respect for the rule of law that law enforcement officers who exceed their legal authority be held accountable for their actions. The Department therefore faces the longstanding challenge of supporting law enforcement by providing it with the resources and authorities that it needs and holding accountable those who breach the public's trust.

Priority Recommendation

Currently, one of the OIG's priority recommendations relates to law enforcement and the protection of individual rights:

- In a 2021 report, the OIG recommended that the FBI reassess its policies to more precisely describe when FBI employees are required to promptly contact and coordinate with state and local law enforcement and social service agencies after receiving allegations of crimes against children that potentially fall under state jurisdiction.

This priority recommendation remains open.



The United States Capitol Building
(Washington, D.C.)

Source:
DOJ OIG

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CHALLENGE | Responsible Use of Taxpayer Funds

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, the Department awarded over \$5.6 billion in grants and over \$9.5 billion in contracts. The planning, administration, and oversight of contracts and grants continues to be a challenge for the Department as a responsible steward of taxpayer dollars.

Specifically, areas of concern for Department contracting include the execution of well-designed acquisition plans and government cost estimates, monitoring of contractors' performance, and ensuring acquisition personnel have and exercise the necessary skills and judgment throughout the procurement lifecycle. Strengthening the contract acquisition planning process by requiring contracting officials, program owners, and contractors to discuss, determine, and agree upon specific cost details and achievable outcomes will increase the likelihood of success of the Department's contracts and reduce unforeseen costs.

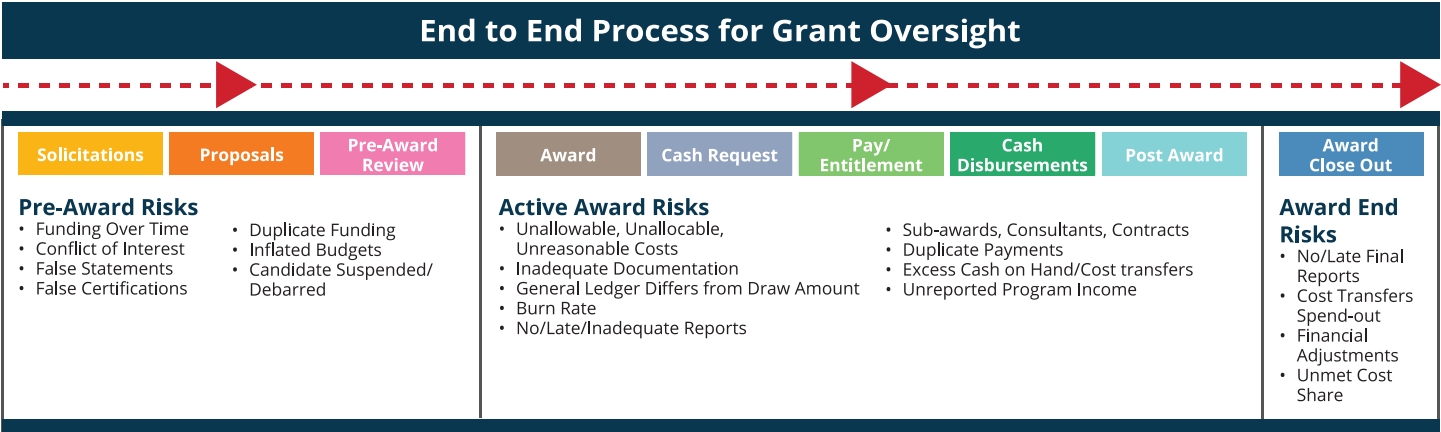
An additional challenge for the Department in contracting arises from proposed changes to the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), which establish uniform policies for executive agency acquisitions. The [Revolutionary FAR Overhaul initiative](#), launched in May 2025 in response to [Executive Order \(EO\) 14275, Restoring Common Sense to Federal Procurement](#), is intended to streamline and reduce barriers in the federal contracting process. As of September 2025, 33 parts of the FAR have been updated. The Department must be diligent and increase oversight of and train its contracting staff to ensure it complies with the new regulations and rapidly changing contracting guidance.



The Department’s grants play an important role in funding law enforcement and public safety activities, assisting victims of crime, and providing training and technical assistance. The OIG’s audits continue to identify challenges related to financial management, subrecipient monitoring, and performance reporting. In addition, our investigations highlight the continuing need to be vigilant for indications of fraud by recipients of the Department’s grant funds. Each of these areas of concern is directly related to preventing wasteful use of taxpayer dollars.

According to the Department’s FY 2026 budget request, the Department intends to focus its grant funding on priority programs directly linked to combatting violent crime, protecting American children, supporting American victims of trafficking and sexual assault, and better coordinating law enforcement efforts at all levels of government. [EO 14322, Improving Oversight of Federal Grantmaking](#), similarly states that government grants should improve American lives or advance American interests, and emphasizes the need to strengthen oversight and coordinate agency grantmaking to ensure efficacy and avoid duplication of efforts.

However, the Department has also proposed a reduction in the funding of state and local grant programs, which could adversely affect important programs, such as, for example, Emergency Federal Law Enforcement Assistance grants provided to state and local law enforcement to help mitigate costs during extraordinary emergencies. The Department’s budget proposal also plans to consolidate the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services and the Office on Violence Against Women into the Office of Justice Programs and cut 79 positions. While these proposed actions may result in cost efficiencies and streamline grants processes and programs, the Department must be attentive to potential pitfalls—such as the decrease in grant management personnel—that could result in less oversight and increase the risk of fraud and misuse of federal funds. The OIG’s audits of grant fund recipients have repeatedly demonstrated the need for the Department to carefully administer and monitor grantees.



Source:
CIGIE Report on Grant Oversight

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CHALLENGE | Managing Human Capital Issues

Department personnel carry out the mission to uphold the rule of law, keep our country safe, and protect our civil rights. Department employees work in a variety of components, including law enforcement agencies, litigating divisions and United States Attorneys' Offices, grantmaking offices, and management divisions. Although its headquarters are in Washington, D.C., nearly 80 percent of the Department's employees are located elsewhere throughout the country and internationally. The Department has a long tradition of hiring the best and the brightest, whether as prosecutors, investigators, or the myriad other disciplines represented in the workforce. These dedicated employees are the Department's greatest asset.

Facing a range of management challenges driven by fiscal constraints, changing demographics, a wave of federal retirements, and the evolving role of the public sector, human capital management remains a challenge for the Department. Areas of key concern include maintaining the capability to continue important work in the face of significant reductions in staffing levels, recruiting and retaining highly qualified and high performing personnel to effectively perform the Department's broad and varied mission, and preserving the knowledge base to enable effective continuity of operations.

On May 29, 2025, as directed by [EO 14170, Reforming the Federal Hiring Process and Restoring Merit to Government Service](#), the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) published a [memo](#) outlining the process, available technology, and policy tools to improve federal recruitment and hiring. The memo reemphasizes that hiring, promotion, and advancement decisions are based solely on merit, qualifications, and job-related criteria. The compelling nature of the Department's mission has long been a key element in its ability to recruit and retain highly capable personnel. However, the market for such employees traditionally has been extremely competitive. The Department should carefully track



hiring and retention metrics to assess regularly its ability to attract and retain talented professionals to carry out the DOJ's essential mission and functions.

For example, concerns about the Department's ability to recruit and retain highly qualified personnel are especially critical for the Department's information technology (IT) professionals. Among other reasons, IT personnel are important to maintaining the security of IT systems, which process sensitive law enforcement and national security information. These systems are constantly subject to attack by adversaries. According to the Department's [IT Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2025-2027](#), the Department has current staff openings, and IT staffing levels are below the desired threshold. The strategic plan states that various factors contribute to the Department's challenge in recruiting and retaining IT staff.

While there are limits to the Department's ability to compete with private sector salaries for IT and various other professional disciplines, the Department should periodically assess what competitive advantages it can leverage to recruit the talent it needs, including appropriate workplace flexibilities and mission-related professional development opportunities.

Workplace harassment, a significant issue the Department has faced over the past decade, persists as a challenge for the Department. The OIG continues to receive complaints from DOJ employees of sexual harassment in the workplace. Department leadership has continued to pledge its commitment to providing a workplace free from sexual harassment and misconduct. Most recently, on June 27, 2025, the Deputy Attorney General issued [DOJ Order 1207, Reporting and Responding to Sexual Misconduct](#). The order defines sexual misconduct, outlines ongoing measures to actively promote a respectful, safe workplace, and establishes a uniform framework for reporting and responding to complaints of sexual misconduct in the workplace.

APPENDIX 1: The Department's Response to the Draft Report

Department of Justice's Response to the Office of the Inspector General's Report on the Top Management and Performance Challenges

The mission of the Department of Justice (Department or DOJ) is to uphold the rule of law, keep our country safe, and protect civil rights. The Department is currently revising its Fiscal Year (FY) 2026–2030 Strategic Plan and associated strategic goals to carry out this mission, consistent with the priorities of the President and the Attorney General. The Strategic Plan will establish objectives and performance measures enabling the Department to assess its progress.

The Department is committed to addressing and collaborating on the top management challenges that the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) identified.

The OIG plays an important role in ensuring that the Department accomplishes its mission effectively and efficiently. The OIG holds Department personnel accountable for misconduct; protects whistleblowers from reprisal; and detects and deters government waste, fraud, and abuse. As part of this work, and as required by statute, OIG annually identifies what it considers to be the top management and performance challenges facing the Department. This year, OIG identified six challenges it believes represent the most pressing concerns for the Department:

- I. Ongoing Challenges Facing the Federal Bureau of Prisons
- II. Safeguarding National Security
- III. Maintaining Public Trust in the U.S. Department of Justice
- IV. Law Enforcement and Protection of Individual Rights
- V. Responsible Use of Taxpayer Funds
- VI. Managing Human Capital Issues

I. Ongoing Challenges Facing the Federal Bureau of Prisons

The Department's OIG identified management issues affecting the federal corrections system such as staffing shortages, deteriorating infrastructure, and the introduction of contraband. The BOP is responding to these challenges and, as such, is pursuing the following actions and initiatives.

Staffing

Addressing staffing challenges and securing resources to fulfill the BOP mission are top priorities for BOP leadership. To that end, the BOP has worked closely with DOJ leadership and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to offer more competitive salaries—e.g., a special salary rate (SSR)—for a wide number of the BOP's General Schedule employees in corrections facilities. Specifically, the BOP is collaborating with the DOJ's Justice Management Division (JMD), Human Capital Office, to accelerate the request for nationwide SSRs.

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (Public Law 119-21) supplemental appropriation provides resources for the BOP to address critical staffing shortages and restore incentives aimed at recruiting and retaining institution staff in the near term. However, addressing critical staffing shortages over the long-term will require additional appropriations from Congress in the outyears.

Additionally, the BOP relaxed age requirements for new correctional officers by extending the waiver of the Maximum Entry Age for Non-Preference Eligibles applying to the Correctional Officer (Senior Officer Specialist) position until December 31, 2026, or until 4,501 appointments are made, whichever comes first.

On July 28, 2025, the BOP received approval from OPM to continue appointments under Direct Hire Authority for an additional 2,000 correctional officer positions based on the BOP's critical hiring need.

For health services positions, the BOP continues to offer various types of incentive packages, coupled with special statutory pay authority for BOP-eligible clinicians, including physicians, dentists, and psychiatrists. The BOP will use a series of measurable data points, such as turnover data and retention rates, to evaluate the effectiveness of the incentive programs on medical hiring and retention.

Calculating Staffing Levels

The BOP has addressed the priority recommendation regarding “a reliable method to calculate appropriate staffing levels” by developing and implementing the BOP's Automated Staffing Tool (AST). The AST is applicable to all employee disciplines, and it calculates staffing levels for every kind of staff member at each institution based on its unique mission and BOP staffing guidelines.

The AST has been live since October 1, 2024, and is updated quarterly to address programmatic and discipline-specific position changes identified and approved by BOP leadership. While this tool will not solve the staffing crisis and the inability to fill existing positions, the BOP is already using its data to improve staffing across its facilities and to inform recruitment and retention efforts. This data has also helped the BOP justify budget requests and communicate funding needs to Executive and Legislative Branch stakeholders.

Infrastructure

The BOP continues to take significant steps to address its deteriorating infrastructure. In July 2025, the BOP completed a project through an expert consultant, to develop a long-term strategy and plan to align infrastructure decisions with the BOP's mission, including methodologies for allocating resources for capital projects and updates using short, medium, and long-range planning goals.

Contraband

BOP is vigilant in investigating and interdicting attempts to smuggle contraband into its institutions and is continually testing and evaluating innovative drug and other contraband-detection technologies. Expanding on the current efforts to combat contraband smuggling, the BOP is in

discussions with another federal agency to secure their assistance in the forensic exploitation of drones captured on BOP property.

Healthcare

The BOP continues to improve inmate healthcare provisioning. The BOP is reenvisioning how it provides medical and mental health treatment while managing overall costs.

To manage costs for medication and supplies, the BOP developed a predictive medication cost dashboard, implemented formulary changes for long acting injectables and insulin, and, in June 2025, began developing a standardized medical supply formulary designed to maximize cost savings through strategic purchasing. To monitor outside hospitalizations, the BOP began implementing an additional layer of Utilization Review (UR), which evaluates and approves healthcare services against clinical need, cost, and established care guidelines. The expanded UR process ensures hospital stays are closely monitored for medical necessity, with the goal of minimizing costs while maintaining the quality of care.

Additionally, the BOP continues to advance its telehealth initiative. Subcontracts are being developed between the Comprehensive Medical Services (CMS) contractors and subcontractors to provide Telespecialty (access to specialist providers such as cardiologists, dermatologists, etc.) and Telerriage (access to emergency medicine physicians).

The BOP routinely analyzes findings from site visits, suicide reconstructions, and reviews of data in the electronic medical record to identify emergency health trends that require additional field guidance, policy updates, and training needs. As one example, a trend analysis on the common findings during suicide reconstruction from 2020 through 2025 has been used to train clinicians and BOP front line staff. Additionally, the BOP used this data to inform updates to its Mental Health Care Level Guidance documentation, which led to tracking the frequency of Suicide Risk Assessments, resulting in increased treatment to address suicide risk.

Sexual Abuse of Inmates

The BOP is committed to preventing staff sexual abuse of inmates and ensuring accountability. The BOP has taken the following actions to address employee misconduct and prioritize responsiveness.

Beginning in August 2023, the BOP's Office of General Counsel (OGC) expanded its Office of Internal Affairs (OIA) by adding 32 Special Investigative Agents, 12 Special Agents, 8 Supervisory Special Agents, and 1 Senior Investigative Support Specialist. In addition, in January 2024, the BOP's OGC completed a reorganization of its Employment Law Branch. The Branch added 14 new positions, including 9 Attorneys, to handle disciplinary recommendations once OIA completes its investigations.

Furthermore, the BOP moved oversight of the Special Investigative Agents from reporting locally to Wardens, to instead reporting centrally to BOP Headquarters. This restructuring produces substantial results by creating greater transparency and enabling Headquarters leadership to focus efforts toward addressing employee misconduct investigations, including those involving sexual abuse of inmates by

BOP staff, and ensuring staff are held accountable for their actions. Despite OIA receiving record high numbers of misconduct referrals in both 2024 and 2025, the backlog of misconduct cases has been reduced by 65 percent and counting. With enhanced reporting, a focus on investigative training, and support specific to sexual misconduct allegations, OIA is better equipped to appropriately handle allegations as they arise and, when sustained, moved them into the disciplinary process.

Security Camera System

The BOP is addressing the priority recommendation regarding “critical security lapses with the BOP’s security camera system” by modernizing and standardizing camera systems Bureau-wide and updating its Facilities Manual to categorize camera system repairs and outages as mission-critical security work. In parallel, the BOP is transitioning legacy analog camera systems to digital platforms. The BOP is continually working to identify coverage gaps and installing new cameras with standardized recording hardware to ensure uniform and reliable recording capability across systems.

The BOP has obligated \$175 million towards video surveillance system upgrades, including installation of a single mode fiber optic backbone and more than 27,000 cameras across its facilities. As of September 2025, the BOP has installed fiber at 109 of its 121 facilities, and 90 percent of those facilities are currently upgrading from analog to digital cameras. The BOP anticipates that all fiber optic and digital camera upgrades will be completed by FY 2027.

II. Safeguarding National Security

The OIG emphasized DOJ’s critical role in safeguarding U.S. interests and citizens when collecting intelligence, investigating, and prosecuting those undermining national security. The OIG’s report cites recent U.S. terror attacks and past struggles with the use of sensitive investigative authorities as examples for the Department’s need to vigilantly deter and counter terrorism and violent extremism while weighing the rights and privacy of Americans. The following outlines some of the actions the Department is pursuing to address these challenges.

Transnational Organized Crime

In support of the President’s commitment to Make America Safe Again, the Department is focused on implementing programs to advance the President’s vision for a safe and secure homeland. Efforts such as identifying, investigating, disrupting, and dismantling major drug trafficking organizations are a primary focus.

Importantly, the Attorney General issued a memorandum, in February 2025, implementing the President’s directive to pursue total elimination of cartels and Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs). The memo emphasizes coordination throughout the DOJ and with other law enforcement partners.

In concert with the direction set forth in the memorandum, the Department also realigned organizations to better meet priorities. For example, the Department utilized existing resources to establish Homeland Security Task Forces (HSTFs) in coordination with the Department of Homeland

Security. HSTFs aim to end the presence of criminal cartels, foreign gangs, TCOs, and human smuggling and trafficking organizations across the Nation. These task forces bolster interagency law enforcement efforts to combat violent crime and transnational criminal organizations. Similarly, realignment of INTERPOL Washington into the U.S. Marshals Service allows INTERPOL Washington to benefit from being part of a larger law enforcement organization and provide increased opportunity for INTERPOL to deploy the resources needed for its information technology (IT) needs. In addition, the Criminal Division merged two sections, the Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Section and the Narcotic and Dangerous Drug Section, to form the Money Laundering, Narcotics and Forfeiture Section (MNF). The creation of the MNF is critical to the Department's effort to address cartels and TCOs and the worldwide structures that support them. The MNF will target typical criminal offenses as well as other potential threats, including criminal and civil forfeiture actions, financial institution officers/employees who engage in money laundering, international money laundering schemes and complex international forfeitures, and the top command and control elements of cartels and international drug trafficking organizations.

Cybersecurity

The Department understands that managing cyber-related threats and emerging technologies is a growing challenge as cybercrime—from both nation-states and cybercriminals—continues to evolve. To fulfill its mission, the Department is prioritizing building and maintaining robust cybersecurity defenses, progressing in mitigating cyber supply chain risks, modernizing, and refreshing its technology ecosystem, and harnessing emerging technologies.

In this complex landscape, the Department has maintained its strong security posture in FY 2025. The Department currently has the highest total score among Chief Financial Officer Act agencies based on the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's (CISA) cybersecurity metrics.¹

The Department has made significant progress in mitigating supply chain risks by increasing its supply chain threat assessments for Department software and hardware in FY 2025. Additionally, the Department continues to update existing guidance and processes to secure procurement, deployment, and implementation of IT software, hardware, and services. The Department must maintain a steady pace of technology refresh and modernization to stay ahead of the dynamic threat landscape.

III. Maintaining Public Trust in the U.S. Department of Justice

The OIG has identified the need for the Department to be attentive to the public's confidence and trust by faithfully applying the law to the facts. The OIG highlighted the need for supporting investigations of personnel engaging in wrongdoing, as well as protecting whistleblowers from reprisal when providing information of criminal wrongdoing and administrative misconduct, in support of OIG investigations.

¹ Known otherwise as the Federal Information Security Modernization Act scores.

Employee Misconduct

The Department continues to support and encourage independent and robust oversight of its attorneys to foster accountability and public trust. That oversight, however, is best accomplished through the work of the Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR), which has a long-standing history of conducting unbiased investigations of professional misconduct allegations against Department attorneys.

Both the Department and Congress have recognized over many decades that applying the complex legal and ethical standards applicable to Department attorneys conducting investigations, litigating cases, and providing legal advice should be the responsibility of OPR. OPR's primary mission is to review attorney professional misconduct allegations, and OPR's 50-year institutional expertise in such matters is unmatched. Because OPR is independent of the prosecutors and criminal investigative methods and techniques that it reviews, the public is assured that OPR's investigations are not influenced by relationships with prosecutorial offices or its own criminal investigative interests. A single office focused on attorney professional misconduct complaints avoids wasteful duplication of resources, inefficient delays, and inconsistent results.

The OIG does not assert that extending its jurisdiction will lead to more accurate determinations or an improved disciplinary system. The OIG's suggestion that its authority should be the same as other OIGs and that its oversight of attorney professional misconduct should be the same as its oversight of other Department employees does not warrant changing the Department's attorney disciplinary system. The Department's process for reviewing attorney professional misconduct allegations differs from that of other Departments because the DOJ attorney workforce is unlike other federal agencies, in both number of attorneys and work performed. Furthermore, most OIGs do not investigate attorney professional misconduct, due to limitations imposed through regulation, formal agreements, or agency practice.

IV. Law Enforcement and Protection of Individual Rights

The Department supports its law enforcement personnel, as well as its federal, State, local and Tribal agency partners, while also holding officers accountable when there is a breach of the public's trust.

Addressing Opioids

The HALT Fentanyl Act represents a significant advancement in DEA's ability to combat synthetic drugs by permanently scheduling fentanyl related substances as a class, thus closing loopholes that traffickers have historically exploited. This new authority allows DEA to more effectively leverage existing programs and to develop new enforcement strategies to combat opioid proliferation, while maintaining appropriate legal and scientific oversight. Additionally, DEA continues to work on tightening regulations regarding the distribution and sale of tableting and encapsulating machines, both domestically and internationally, to help curtail the illicit pressing of poisonous counterfeit pills.

Combating Violent Crime and Child Abuse and Exploitation

The FBI is working to improve communication and collaboration between its employees and state and local agencies to combat crimes against children. Specifically, the FBI is updating internal guidance to describe when FBI employees are required to contact and coordinate with state and local law enforcement and social service agencies after receiving allegations of crimes against children that potentially fall under state jurisdiction. The FBI anticipates implementation of these policy changes occurring during the second quarter of FY 2026.

Balancing Law Enforcement Authorities and Individual Rights

At the President's direction, the Department took a leading role surging law enforcement resources to address crime across the country. This new directive includes hiring more than 1,200 agents to target violent crime, gun crime, and threats to national security, in addition to hiring 175 attorneys to prosecute violent crimes and advocate in court on the Administration's behalf. Current surges will be maintained in cities with high violent crime rates that are still recovering from the prior Administration's efforts to defund and disarm the police.

V. Responsible Use of Taxpayer Funds

The OIG highlighted the Department's management of grant and contracting activities that have costs that total billions of taxpayer dollars. The OIG is concerned about the lack of well-designed acquisition plans and government cost estimates, monitoring of contractor performance, and ensuring personnel have and exercise the necessary skills and judgment through the procurement lifecycle. The Department is addressing this challenge by increasing accountability in contract management, as well as with grant management. The sections below provide additional information on these two areas.

Accountability in Contract Management

The JMD's Office of Acquisition Management's (OAM) supports the Department's acquisition executives. OAM is responsible for the Department's implementation of the Revolutionary Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Overhaul (RFO) initiative, which supports the Department's acquisition workforce transition to the new RFO framework and principles. The initiative not only deregulates federal acquisitions; it also increases innovation, best practices, and technology, by realigning departmentwide policy, providing access to necessary training, and monitoring compliance.

All Department contracting officers and contracting officer representatives are required to have Federal Acquisition Certification (FAC) Contracting Officer (CO) or Contracting Officer Representative (COR) status, which requires mandatory training and continuing education units to maintain a valid FAC certification. Contracting personnel/acquisition staff also register for General Services Administration (GSA) training opportunities to fulfill the continuing education requirements for FAC-CO and FAC-COR. OAM plans to deploy Departmental training for any deviations in early FY 2026 to maintain RFO goals.

OAM will utilize existing Departmental guidance as a strong foundation to support the new direction of the RFO by revising the Justice Acquisition Regulation (JAR), developing the Justice Acquisition Manual, and issuing and maintaining Acquisition Policy Notices or Acquisition Guides to inform and address the acquisition planning process and acquisition lifecycle. While the JAR revisions are subject to the standard regulatory rulemaking process, OAM plans to complete their work by the end of the third quarter in FY 2026. Subsequent revisions of DOJ guidance depend on other factors, such as revisions to the FAR itself; however, OAM will use internal guidance mechanisms to ensure Department-wide compliance with executive policy.

Another tool that OAM uses are Compliance Advisory Memorandums (CAMs) that are issued as needed to inform the acquisition community of current contract compliance related matters based on oversight reviews, Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports, and OIG audit findings. CAMs provide mitigating solutions for the improvement of existing and future procurement activities throughout the procurement lifecycle. In FY 2026, OAM plans to further implement oversight reviews of select contracting activities to comply with new regulations and the changing contracting guidance.

Accountability in Grant Management

The Department's grantmaking components—the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)—view their fiduciary responsibility to effectively administer grants as a top priority. All three grantmaking components work to continuously improve and strengthen their policies and procedures, risk management strategies, oversight, and monitoring efforts.

OJP distributes most of the grant funding for the Department and puts processes in place to strengthen grant management. The Department also plans to consolidate COPS, OJP, and OVW into one grant component in FY 2026 with consistent grant management processes.

Examples of steps grantmaking components have taken to strengthen grants management include:

- Completed in-depth programmatic monitoring of 996 grants totaling \$3 billion – this is approximately twice the amount required by law.
- Carried out financial monitoring for 656 grants totaling \$2.48 billion of OJP and COPS Office's active grant funding.
- Conduct pre- and post-award risk assessments designed to identify and mitigate risk of mismanagement, waste, fraud, or abuse by funding recipients.
- Oversee financial and programmatic monitoring of all its state administering agencies on a risk-informed four-year rotation. The in-depth monitoring checklists include a significant number of questions focused on monitoring a prime recipient's management of subrecipient awards.
- Utilize data analytics at the grant, grantee, and program level allowing for more effective oversight as well to inform training and technical assistance efforts for internal staff and/or funding recipients.

- Offer training opportunities to ensure that award recipients understand the administrative, financial, and programmatic requirements of their awards, including grant misuse and fraud awareness.
- Provide technical assistance to its recipients to help address audit issues and establish adequate policies and procedures, particularly to small non-profit organizations and local and Tribal agencies that may have limited administrative capacity.

VI. Managing Human Capital Issues

The OIG's areas of key concern for managing human capital include maintaining the capability to continue important work in the face of reductions in staffing levels, recruiting, and retaining qualified and high performing personnel to perform the Department's mission, and preserving the knowledge base to ensure continuity of operations.

Consolidating all agencies' core human capital management functions onto a single streamlined system is a key priority for the Administration. The Department has worked closely with the OMB and OPM to ensure a successful transition onto a single system. This initiative will create efficiencies in federal human capital management and facilitate more effective management of the Department's workforce as a unified entity.

The Department has also implemented changes to comply with the January 20, 2025, Executive Order 14170, "Reforming the Federal Hiring Process and Restoring Merit to Government Service" ("Restoring Merit") to support more efficient recruiting and hiring processes that are based on merit, practical skill, and dedication to our Constitution. These changes will ensure that the Federal workforce is prepared to help achieve American greatness and attract the talent necessary to serve our citizens. The Department also developed responses to additional Executive Orders, including but not limited to the following: authoring and codifying of required DOJ human resources delegations; strengthening the Department's oversight and compliance responsibilities (to include leading a DOJ-wide human resources functional program audit) and updating multiple human resources policies; developing the Department-wide staffing plan; and addressing new Administration priorities, to include new and revised Performance Management Systems.

During FY 2025, recruitment and outreach were limited due to the Department's budget and the government-wide hiring freeze. However, early career appointments have always been a priority for the Department, and the Department utilizes the Pathways Program to target early career talent for eventual civil service careers. The Department also uses OPM's Talent Portal that allows Department HR Specialists and hiring managers to search for active resumes on USAJobs and filter candidates who are eligible for non-competitive hiring, such as veterans. In FY 2025, for example, over 50 percent of the Criminal Division's non-attorney hiring was made through early career programs such as Pathways, other early career internship programs, or non-competitive authorities.

Staffing Information Technology Professionals

The Department agrees with OIG's assessment that qualified IT and cybersecurity workforces, both leadership and staff, are essential to the security of the Department's mission-enabling technology. There is a critical need to recruit and retain IT and cybersecurity professionals who are responsible for overseeing and operating the information systems that underpin the Department's mission. As a critical tool in recruiting and retaining IT staff, the Department has maintained its merit and performance-aligned IT and Cybersecurity Retention Incentive program based on specialized knowledge, skills, and abilities compliant with 5 CFR § 575 Subpart C.

In addition, the Department's reorganization plan integrates component IT functions and staff under the Department's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), located within the JMD. The plan aligns with the President's Management Agenda to improve efficiencies by eliminating duplicative and decentralized roles. Transitioning these IT and cybersecurity professionals into a unified enterprise structure will streamline service delivery, accelerate implementation of critical cybersecurity capabilities, strengthen cyber defense coordination, and reduce redundancies in systems administration, security operation, network management, and engineering support. This consolidation will also enable OCIO to leverage shared skill sets across similar positions, facilitating more balanced workload distribution and improved alignment of technical expertise with enterprise priorities.

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The Department appreciates the OIG's work in helping to improve our transparency, productivity, and effectiveness. Components across the Department continue to address OIG's findings and conclusions, and implement recommended actions, including those highlighted in this report. The Department looks forward to cooperating with the Inspector General on these matters and on future audits, investigations, and reviews.



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