



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Office of Management and Administration

Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2026



Office of Inspector General

Mission

As provided in the *Inspector General Act of 1978*, as amended, and other laws, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) is authorized to conduct and supervise audits, inspections, evaluations, reviews, and investigations, and make recommendations to promote the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of VA operations. The OIG is also authorized to inquire into all VA programs and activities, including healthcare and benefits delivery and cemetery services as well as the offices and personnel that support them. As VA is the second largest federal agency and operates the nation's largest integrated public healthcare system, the OIG is committed to objective and meaningful oversight. The OIG is required to report to Congress on activities and outcomes every six months. These [semiannual reports \(SARs\)](#) keep stakeholders informed about the challenges facing VA and promote transparency of the OIG's oversight work and recommended corrective actions. Under the leadership of the Inspector General (IG) and Deputy IG, the OIG's work focuses on higher-risk, impactful programs and issues throughout VA that affect veterans, their families, and caregivers, while making the most efficient and effectual use of taxpayer dollars.¹ For additional information, see the OIG's [Mission, Vision, and Values](#).

OIG Offices

The OIG is headquartered in Washington, DC, and at the end of 2024 had 1,180 staff positions embedded in VA locations and other offices as needed throughout the country. OIG personnel conduct oversight of VA's programs and operations and the activities of its approximately 400,000 personnel.² The OIG has been organized into the seven offices described below, though some consolidation and restructuring efforts are underway. The focus and fundamental functions of these offices, however, continue. The map below demonstrates how OIG staff are placed outside of DC to take advantage of VA space and to closely serve areas across the nation.

¹ As of February 2025, the Deputy Inspector General has assumed the role of Acting Inspector General and continues to carry out the mission of the office.

² VA, *FY 2025 VA Budget Submission: Budget in Brief*, March 2024, <https://department.va.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/fy-2025-va-budget-in-brief.pdf>.

Immediate Office of the Inspector General. The IG and Deputy IG positions provide leadership and set the OIG's strategic direction. The office includes congressional relations and public affairs staff who ensure that accurate information is promptly released and that requests from legislators and reporters are appropriately addressed. This office also includes staff responsible for electronic report distribution and follow-up on recommendations made to VA. Its Office of Data Analytics specializes in advanced analytics, information integration, and data visualization to inform enterprise-wide oversight on emerging issues and to help detect fraud and waste.

Office of Counselor to the Inspector General. The counselor's office provides legal support for investigations, audits, reviews, and inspections; works with in-house investigators in developing qui tam and False Claims Act matters; provides counsel to managers on legal and administrative matters; represents the OIG in employment litigation and personnel matters; performs OIG employee relations and reasonable accommodation functions; and informs legislative proposals and congressional briefings. This office also reviews the release of information outside the agency to ensure compliance with privacy laws and other mandates.

Office of Audits and Evaluations. Personnel assess VA's compliance with laws, regulations, and other governing requirements for areas of concern to the veteran community and taxpayers such as healthcare delivery, financial efficiencies, the administration of benefits, cemetery services, resource utilization, acquisitions, contracting, construction, and information technology deployment and security. Additionally, this office oversees hundreds of anticipated oversight reports and at least 15 congressionally mandated reports due in 2026 (and some annually thereafter) that include a focus on veterans' access to community care, several topics related to compliance with healthcare services requirements, information technology and security, disability medical questionnaires, and VA's financial management and controls.

Office of Healthcare Inspections. This office focuses on VA's efforts to achieve timely and high-quality health care for its patients. Staff conduct inspections prompted by OIG complaints to its hotline, congressional requests, and other leads, as well as proactive recurring inspections of Veterans Health Administration (VHA) facilities, healthcare systems, regional networks, and vet centers, and national reviews of critical issues. This work generates hundreds of reports annually as well, with recommendations for corrective action that apply to facilities nationwide. Staff also provide consultations to criminal investigators and audit staff and conduct an annual survey of occupational staffing shortages across the VHA, as required by the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014.

Office of Investigations. This office is staffed by special agents with full law enforcement authority, forensic accountants, and other professionals. Staff use data analytics, cyber tools, covert operations, and other strategies to detect and address conduct that poses a threat to or has harmed veterans or other beneficiaries and VA personnel, operations, and property. It investigates possible crimes and civil violations of law involving VA programs and operations. Staff focus on a wide range of matters including fraud in the areas of healthcare, procurement, benefits, construction,

and veteran-targeted scams; cybercrime and identity theft; bribery and embezzlement; drug offenses; violent crimes; and threats against VA employees, patients, facilities, and computer systems.

Office of Management and Administration. Skilled and experienced personnel provide comprehensive support to the OIG, including financial, personnel, budget, information technology, space and facilities, and procurement. The office also oversees the OIG hotline, which receives about 35,000 complaints annually, screens them, and refers allegations and complaints to OIG directorates and other entities for additional action as appropriate.

Office of Special Reviews. Staff within this office evaluate allegations of misconduct, gross mismanagement, or egregious waste of funds, that implicate senior VA officials or significantly affect VA programs and offices. They also complete legislatively mandated investigations involving allegations of whistleblower reprisal made by employees of VA contractors or grantees. Personnel are positioned to increase the OIG's flexibility and capacity to conduct prompt reviews of significant events (such as past attempts to award millions of dollars improperly to senior VA officials as critical skills incentives) and emergent issues not squarely within the focus of other OIG offices. This office undertakes projects in response to referrals from VA employees, the OIG hotline, Congress, the Office of Special Counsel, veterans and their service organizations, and other sources. Staff work collaboratively with other OIG directorates to review topics of interest that span multiple disciplines.

Strategic Plan and Goals

The OIG's Strategic Plan for 2022-2026 outlines the goals and objectives in promoting the efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity of VA's programs and operations to better serve the needs of veterans, their families, survivors, and caregivers. It also frames OIG strategies for deterring and addressing criminal activity, waste, and abuse while promoting innovation throughout VA. It builds on observed and ongoing major management challenges. Funding for 2026 would be used to advance new work related to these goals while having the resources to pivot as needed to respond to veterans' and VA employees' allegations of wrongdoing or emerging problems, congressional concerns, other stakeholder feedback (discussed more fully below), and red flags raised by data analytics.

GOAL 1

Help ensure veterans receive prompt access to exemplary health care by identifying opportunities to improve the quality, management, efficiency, and delivery of patient-centered care in VA facilities and in the community.

GOAL 2

Make recommendations to facilitate the swift delivery of benefits and superior services to eligible veterans, their families, and caregivers by addressing barriers to expeditious and accurate VA decision-making and processes.

GOAL 3

Identify and implement procedures and strategies for making the most responsible use of VA's appropriated funds, including sound procurement policies, closely monitored spending, and financial practices that reduce the risk of fraud, waste, and misuse of resources.

GOAL 4

Address failures in governance and leadership—including lack of accountability, splintered and ineffective management, staffing deficits, and misconduct by individuals in positions of trust—that contribute to emergent, pervasive, and persistent problems within VA.

GOAL 5

Encourage innovation and recommend enhancements to VA's infrastructure and systems through findings and report recommendations that address information technology, data security, predictive tools, and financial management systems.

Stakeholders and Partners

The OIG's oversight work encompasses all VA programs, operations, and funding. Consequently, its stakeholders include veterans, the VA Secretary and senior leaders, managers and other personnel, members of Congress and their staff, veterans service organizations (VSOs), beneficiaries, taxpayers, affiliated healthcare and educational institutions, contractors, other federal agencies, law enforcement organizations, and other OIGs. Much of the OIG's work depends on the cooperation of and coordination with these stakeholders who are critical to improvement and oversight efforts. Therefore, the IG and Deputy IG engage OIG senior leaders when convening recurring meetings with stakeholders, particularly VSOs, senior VA executives and program managers, and members of Congress and their staff.

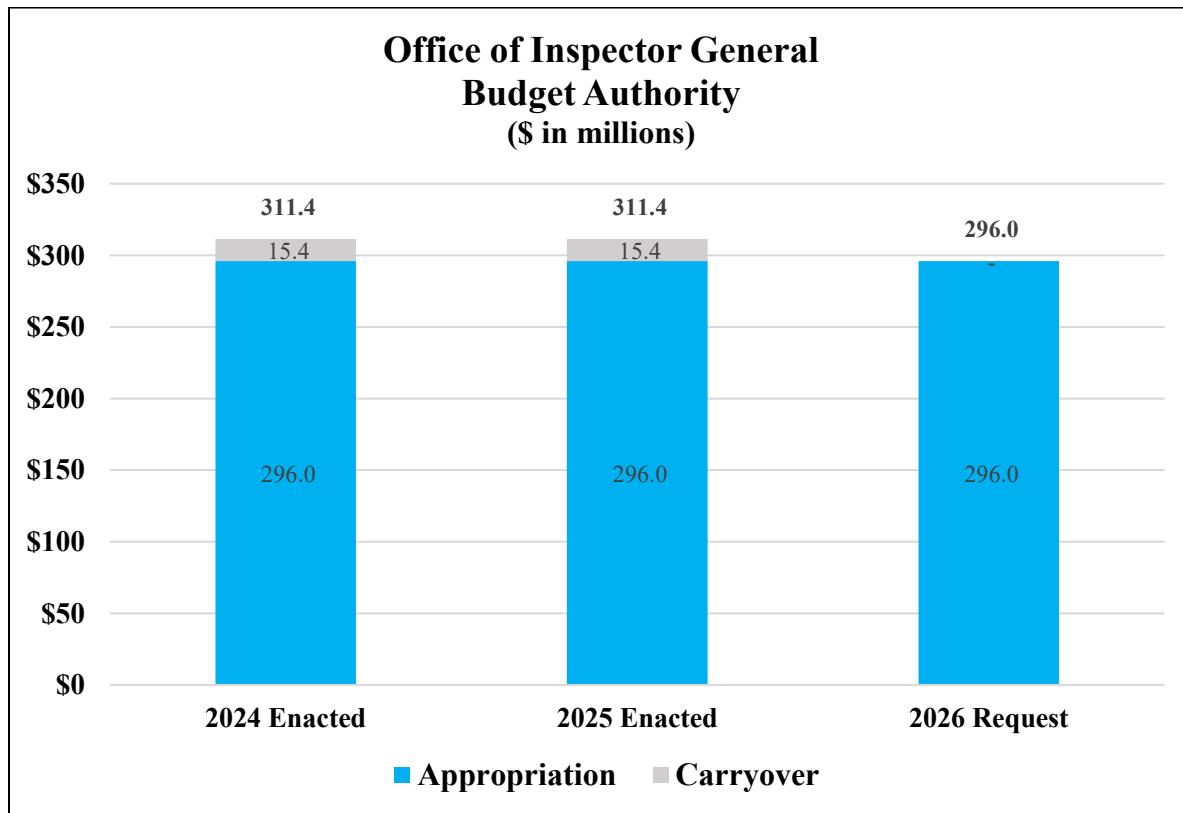
Appropriation Language

For necessary expenses of the Office of Inspector General, to include information technology, in carrying out the provisions of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended (5 U.S.C. § 401, et seq.), [\$296,000,000] \$296,000,000 of which not to exceed 10 percent shall remain available until September 30, [2026] 2027.

Summary of Budget Request

The 2026 budget request of \$296.0 million is needed to sustain the reduced level of 1,070 FTE, mandatory pay increases, and non-pay expenses, including inflationary increases. This level of funding equates to an effective loss of approximately \$15.4 million, and a decrease of 100 FTE.

| | 2024 Enacted | 2025 Request | 2025 Enacted | 2026 Request |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Office of Inspector General | | | | |
| Annual Appropriation | 296.0 | 296.0 | 296.0 | 296.0 |
| Net Carryover | 15.4 | 15.4 | 15.4 | 0 |
| Total Budgetary Resources | 311.4 | 311.4 | 311.4 | 296.0 |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| Total FTE | 1,155 | 1,155 | 1,170 | 1,070 |



The following tables present analyses of OIG employment levels and projected staffing reductions by grade, as well as the anticipated geographical distribution of FTE.

| Office of Inspector General | | | | |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Employment Summary FTE by Grade | | | | |
| Grade | 2024 Enacted | 2025 Enacted | 2026 Request | Decrease |
| IG/SES | 22 | 22 | 23 | 1 |
| Senior Level (SL) | 18 | 18 | 15 | -3 |
| GS-15 | 132 | 133 | 123 | -10 |
| GS-14 | 308 | 313 | 287 | -26 |
| GS-13 | 587 | 595 | 538 | -57 |
| GS-12 | 60 | 61 | 55 | -6 |
| GS-11 | 11 | 11 | 13 | 2 |
| GS-9 | 14 | 14 | 13 | -1 |
| GS-7 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Total FTE | 1155 | 1170 | 1070 | -100 |

| Office of Inspector General | | |
|--|----------------------|-------------------|
| 2026 Anticipated FTE Distribution | | |
| Grade | Washington DC | Rest of US |
| IG/SES | 18 | 5 |
| Senior Level (SL) | 9 | 6 |
| GS-15 | 54 | 69 |
| GS-14 | 61 | 226 |
| GS-13 | 94 | 444 |
| GS-12 | 10 | 45 |
| GS-11 | 6 | 7 |
| GS-9 | 2 | 11 |
| GS-7 | 2 | 1 |
| Total FTE | 256 | 814 |

Office of the Inspector General
Summary of Employment & Obligations - Total Budgetary Resources
(FTE, \$s in thousands)

| Budgetary Resources | 2024 Enacted | 2025 Request | 2025 Enacted | 2026 Request | 2026 Request vs 2025 Enacted | |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|----------------|
| | | | | | \$ | % |
| Average Employment: | | | | | | |
| Headquarters Functions | 276 | 265 | 280 | 256 | -24 | -8.6% |
| Operations Functions | 879 | 890 | 890 | 814 | -76 | -8.5% |
| Total Employment | 1,155 | 1,155 | 1,170 | 1,070 | -100 | -8.5% |
| Obligations | | | | | | |
| Personnel Compensation | 171,830 | 177,275 | 179,077 | 169,863 | -9,214 | -5.1% |
| Personnel Benefits | 74,365 | 76,722 | 77,218 | 73,137 | -4,081 | -5.3% |
| Travel | 7,410 | 8,744 | 8,744 | 6,216 | -2,528 | -28.9% |
| Transportation Of Things | 65 | 66 | 66 | 67 | 1 | 1.5% |
| Rents, Comm. & Utilities | 13,343 | 9,541 | 9,042 | 9,117 | 75 | 0.8% |
| Printing | 38 | 36 | 36 | 16 | -20 | -55.6% |
| Other Services | 26,118 | 31,906 | 30,406 | 32,429 | 2,023 | 6.7% |
| Supplies & Materials | 933 | 815 | 815 | 499 | -316 | -38.8% |
| Equipment | 1,616 | 6,443 | 6,143 | 4,844 | -1,299 | -21.1% |
| Grants, subsidies, & contributions | 381 | 102 | 102 | 62 | -40 | -39.2% |
| Total obligations | 296,100 | 311,650 | 311,650 | 296,250 | -15,400 | -4.9% |
| Budgetary resources | | | | | | |
| Unobligated balance: | | | | | | |
| Unobligated balance brought forward, Oct 1 | | 15,400 | 15,400 | | - | |
| Unobligated balance transfers between expired and unexpired accounts | 15,400 | - | - | - | - | |
| Subtotal, unobligated balance | 15,400 | 15,400 | 15,400 | 0 | -15,400 | -100.0% |
| Budget authority: | | | | | | |
| Appropriations, discretionary | | | | | | |
| Appropriation | 296,000 | 296,000 | 296,000 | 296,000 | - | 0.0% |
| Subtotal, appropriations | 296,000 | 296,000 | 296,000 | 296,000 | - | 0.0% |
| Offsetting collections | 100 | 250 | 250 | 250 | - | 0.0% |
| Subtotal, budget authority | 296,100 | 296,250 | 296,250 | 296,250 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Total budgetary resources | 311,500 | 311,650 | 311,650 | 296,250 | -15,400 | -4.9% |
| Unobligated balance expiring | (15,400) | 0 | (0) | 0 | 0 | |

Net Change
Office of Inspector General
2026 Summary of Resource Requirements
(dollars in thousands)

| | <u>BA</u> | <u>FTE</u> |
|--|------------------|--------------|
| 2025 Enacted | \$296,000 | 1,170 |
| 2026 Current Services: | | |
| Salaries and Benefits (3%), Non pay Inflation (2.1%) | \$7,398 | |
| Net Pay and Non Pay Reduction | -\$7,398 | -100 |
| Subtotal | <u>\$0</u> | <u>-100</u> |
| 2026 Total Budget Request: | \$296,000 | 1,070 |
| % Change over 2025 Enacted | 0.0% | -8.5% |

Physician's Comparability Allowance (PCA)

The Office of Management and Budget directed that the following information on the OIG's use of PCA be included in this budget submission.

1) Department and component:

VA Office of Inspector General

2) Explain the recruitment and retention problem(s) justifying the need for the PCA pay authority.

(Please include any staffing data to support your explanation, such as number and duration of unfilled positions and number of accessions and separations per fiscal year.)

The OIG utilizes PCA because its physician-employees are covered by Title 5, U.S. Code. This is different from the rest of VA, which employs physicians under Title 38. The difference in pay rates between Title 5 and Title 38 physicians can be substantial and Title 38 physicians receive significantly higher salaries than Title 5 physicians, even when PCA and performance bonuses are considered.

3-4) Please complete the table below with details of the PCA agreement for the following years:

| | PY 2023 (Actual) | CY 2024 (Estimates) | BY* 2025 (Estimates) |
|--|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 3a) Number of Physicians Receiving PCAs | 19 | 19 | 19 |
| 3b) Number of Physicians with One-Year PCA Agreements | | | |
| 3c) Number of Physicians with Multi-Year PCA Agreements | 19 | 19 | 19 |
| 4a) Average Annual PCA Physician Pay (without PCA payment) | \$185,825 | \$200,452 | \$200,452 |
| 4b) Average Annual PCA Payment | \$25,500 | \$29,600 | \$29,600 |

*Budget Year (BY) data will be approved during the BY Budget cycle. Please ensure each column is completed.

5) Explain the degree to which recruitment and retention problems were alleviated in your agency through the use of PCAs in the prior fiscal year.

PCA has proven to be a valuable incentive for recruiting and retaining board-certified physicians, who often incur a significant reduction in pay when entering government service or transferring from a Title 38 position at VA to a Title 5 position at the OIG. Currently there are 18 physicians receiving PCA's in 2025. In the most recent three fiscal years, OHI was able to recruit specialty-level physicians who are board-certified in surgery and anesthesia. Although these doctors still experience a significant pay cut, the PCA was an effective tool in mitigating the negative financial impact on them, as well as for retaining the current talent required to conduct the OIG's independent oversight work with 2 retirements in 2024.

6) Provide any additional information that may be useful in planning PCA staffing levels and amounts in your agency.

Physicians make up 6% of the Office of Healthcare Inspections (OHI) 279 FTE personnel for oversight playing a critical role in providing needed expertise. While not providing direct clinical care, they serve as subject matter experts for every published oversight report and continue to be licensed and board-certified medical providers. These physicians lead the design of methodologies for each project, analyze and translate complex clinical data into clear and understandable findings, and present these findings to senior leaders at VA and Congress. Their efforts improve patient safety, quality of healthcare for veterans, and assess complaints to the OIG hotline. VA OIG physicians are not entitled to the pay benefits offered under Title 38, like their VHA counterparts. The OIG competes with both VHA and the private sector for qualified physicians in a wide range of specialty areas to provide essential oversight of the integrated healthcare system serving millions of veterans each year.