



Government Oversight Committee
and the
Office of Program Evaluation and
Government Accountability

Chairs and Leads Orientation
January 9, 2017



GOC's Mission

To oversee program evaluation and government accountability matters in State government. The Committee seeks to ensure that public funds are expended for intended purposes, and that programs and activities are effectively, efficiently and economically managed. The Committee accomplishes this mission by conducting public inquiries and directing OPEGA to conduct independent, objective reviews.



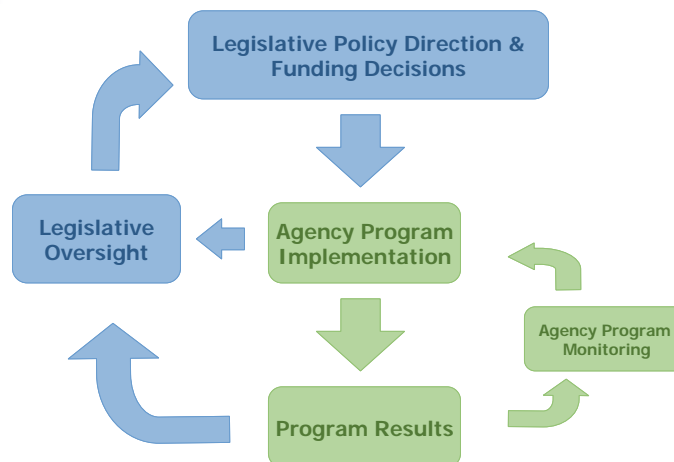
OPEGA's Mission

To support the Legislature in monitoring and improving the performance of State government by conducting independent, objective reviews of State programs and activities with a focus on effectiveness, efficiency and economical use of resources.

3



How OPEGA Supports Oversight



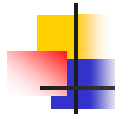
4



OPEGA's Focus

- **Effective** - producing a decided, decisive, or desired effect
- **Efficient** - acting or producing effectively with a minimum of waste, expense, or unnecessary effort
- **Economical** - thrifty in management; not wasteful or extravagant
- **Cost-effective** - economical in terms of tangible benefits produced by money spent, OR productive or effective in relation to its cost
- **Transparent** - free from pretense or deceit; easily detected or seen through; readily understood; and/or characterized by visibility or accessibility of information especially concerning business practices
- **Accountable** - subject to giving an account (answerable) and/or capable of being accounted for (explainable)

5



Role of the Government Oversight Committee

- Oversees OPEGA's activities and performance
- Selects topics and approves scopes for OPEGA reviews to ensure OPEGA's resources are appropriately focused
- Facilitates, if necessary, OPEGA's access to information needed in conducting reviews
- Promotes necessary and appropriate action to address OPEGA's results
- Conducts public inquiries when necessary to bring public transparency and accountability to particular situations

6



GOC and OPEGA supplement policy committee oversight through:

- Unique organizational arrangement
- Access to detailed information and confidential records
- Adherence to professional standards
- Ability to examine activities that cut across State government

7



Available OPEGA Reports May be Helpful to Policy Committees for:

- Providing background on government programs, processes and expenditures
- Formulating questions to ask of agencies
- Understanding foundation for proposed legislation
- Overseeing action on issues and opportunities

8



Coordinating Oversight Activities

- GOC/OPEGA solicit and policy committees provide:
 - input to selection of topics for OPEGA reviews
 - input in refining scope for planned reviews
 - information and context during a review
- Policy committees receive and consider OPEGA's results
- Policy committees assist in monitoring agency actions in addressing identified concerns
- Policy committees consider legislation introduced by the GOC and take other action to implement OPEGA recommendations when appropriate
- Policy committees provide feedback on OPEGA's reports, activities and value

9



Policy Committee Oversight of Quasi-independent State Entities

- 5 MRSA, Sections 12021 – 12023 establish expectations for quasi-independent state entities with regard to: procurement practices; payments for membership dues and fees, gifts, donations and sponsorships; and travel, meal and entertainment expenses.
- These entities are required to have written policies and procedures specifying acceptable practices in these areas. 24 specific entities are also required to submit reports on certain expenditures to the Legislature annually by February 1st.
- 5 MRSA, Section 12023, sub-section 3 requires the policy committees of jurisdiction to review these reports, as well as the entities' overall compliance with 5 MRSA Sections 12021 – 12023, by March 1st of each Second Regular Session of the Legislature. Statute calls for the policy committee to then report the results of its review to the GOC.

10



Policy Committee Oversight of Quasi-independent State Entities

- The requirement for policy committee review was to begin in 2016 but it does not appear committees were aware of this responsibility. Though the quasi's have been submitting annual reports since 2014, there has been little detailed review of them to date.
- The policy committees with jurisdiction over the 24 reporting quasi's are:
 - EDUC (6)
 - EUT (4)
 - LCRED (9)
 - I&FS (1)
 - JUD (1)
 - AFA (1)
 - TRANS (2)

11



How Policy Committees Can Request OPEGA Reviews

- GOC/OPEGA have an established policy and process
- Requests must be in writing, and initiated or sponsored by a legislator
- Policy committees can send a letter to GOC with a request – specify questions or concerns

Be aware that any written documents and notes, including emails, held by legislators are discoverable under Freedom of Access laws

12



For more information and
OPEGA publications, visit:

<http://legislature.maine.gov/opega>
OR
Room 107, Cross Office Bldg.
287-1901



Questions???
