

Agency Priority Goals (APGs)

Best Practices and Success Factors



Agency Priority Goals (APGs) were created by OMB in Memorandum M-10-24 and later codified in statute by the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA). The intent of APGs is to provide agencies a mechanism to focus leadership priorities, set outcomes, and measure results. APGs bring focus to mission areas where agencies need to drive significant progress and change, and move the needle on results. Setting APGs also provides an opportunity for agencies to communicate the impacts being achieved to the American public and to show stewardship of taxpayer dollars. Additionally, APGs highlight the use of strategic management (e.g. Performance management) to deliver efficient mission outcomes.

After four cycles of APGs and review, there are some clear principles that may enable greater chance for mission success through APGs. These are provided for consideration with the recognition that no one principle is correct for every agency. These should be considered in regard to the culture, structure and business practices of an agency.

Successful APGs have:

- ❖ **Leadership:** Senior leadership commitment and engagement in processes
- ❖ **Clarity:** Well-designed, clearly articulated goal, measures, targets, and strategies
- ❖ **Ownership:** Agency and goal team ownership of the APG, validation provided by senior agency leaders/WH/OMB
- ❖ **Routines:** Adherence to routines to provide consistent, continuous focus including regular, in-person data-driven reviews chaired by the Agency Deputy Secretary
- ❖ **Data:** Use of data to assess progress and inform decision-making and enable organizational learning

Consider APGs that:

- ❖ Encourage work across organizational units within an Agency (i.e. bureaus, subcomponents, offices)
- ❖ Scale up activities that have previously been found to be successful
- ❖ Elevate and accelerate activities that are losing momentum and need encouragement
- ❖ Align with key mission areas allowing program and line staff see their role and empower accountability
- ❖ Have robust data available

Strengthen your APGs by:

- ❖ Establishing a formal governance structure
- ❖ Developing a model/map which explicitly outlines the connection between your APG and the supporting indicators/programs/projects through your implemented strategies (e.g., logic model, goal map, theory of change)
- ❖ Embedding APG indicators in goal/program leadership performance plans
- ❖ Ensuring a dedicated goal leader whose time is spent entirely focusing on the success of this goal
- ❖ Seeking input from peer agencies with similar mission types, as well as stakeholder groups and Congress
- ❖ Goal coordination that aligns with Agency Strategic Plan and contributes to accomplishment of Strategic Objectives

The following examples illustrate how agencies have previously used APGs to drive progress on mission priorities and communicate outcomes through many of the principles listed.

Department of Energy: Nuclear nonproliferation - By the end of FY 2015, DOE/NNSA removed or confirmed the disposition of enough material to make over 200 nuclear weapons.

DOE/NNSA surpassed its cumulative target of removing or disposing 5,332 kilograms of vulnerable nuclear material (HEU and plutonium) by the end of FY 2015. Since the program's inception, as of the end of FY 2015 DOE/NNSA removed or confirmed the disposition of 5,376 kilograms of HEU and plutonium, enough material for over 200 nuclear weapons and removed all HEU from 28 countries plus Taiwan.

Department of the Interior: Renewable Energy - Since 2009, the Department of the Interior has approved the development of 16,000 megawatts of capacity for power generation or transmission using renewable energy resources; enough to potentially power approximately 5 million homes.

Prior to 2010, DOI had approved only 2,500 megawatts of wind and geothermal energy projects, but no solar energy projects. Since 2009, DOI has approved over 60 renewable energy projects including 25 solar facilities, 10 wind projects, 11 geothermal projects, and 20 transmission or connected action projects that help connect to the power grid. When built, these projects will provide more than 16,000 megawatts of power, or enough electricity to power approximately 5 million homes, produced from renewable energy resources, while providing over 24,000 construction and operations jobs.

Department of Housing and Urban Development: Ending Veterans Homelessness - Veteran Homelessness Reduced 47% Over 6 Years.

Since 2010, total homelessness among veterans has fallen from over 74,000 to under 40,000 – a 47% improvement. Moreover, the number of homeless veterans who are living on the streets has fallen by 57%. In addition, a growing list of communities, including the entire states of Connecticut, Delaware, and Virginia, have proven that ending veteran homelessness is possible and sustainable. As documented through the federal Criteria and Benchmarks, they have driven down the number of veterans experiencing homelessness to as close to zero as possible, while also building and sustaining systems that can effectively and efficiently address veterans' housing crises in the future.

Department of the Treasury: Going paperless - Hundreds of Millions of dollars saved by "going paperless."

Treasury saved the American people approximately \$500 million; paper benefit payments dropped from 131 million in 2010 to 39 million in 2013 (more than 70 percent). Treasury has continued to track this as an Annual Performance Report metric to ensure continued progress after the APG sunset: in FY 2016, paper benefits continued to decrease to fewer than 18 million.

Small Business Administration: Disaster Assistance - Electronic Disaster Assistance Loan Processing Saves Time and Money: 93% percent of Disaster Assistance loans are now processed electronically.

Electronic Loan Application (ELA) system has been described as a "game changer" at the SBA. Because disaster survivors can now apply for loans sooner and faster, they can receive their initial disbursement in days, not weeks, allowing them to stay afloat and turn their energy and attention toward rebuilding. Survivors have adopted ELA as their preferred loan application method, with more than 93% of all disaster loan applications in FY 2016 being processed electronically.

Contact the Performance Improvement Council staff for help with APG goal development or implementation support. We can help you:

- + Gain cross-federal insight
- + Build, revise, and sustain stat/DDR systems

- + Facilitate difficult conversations
- + Build capacity on a variety of performance and implementation topics