

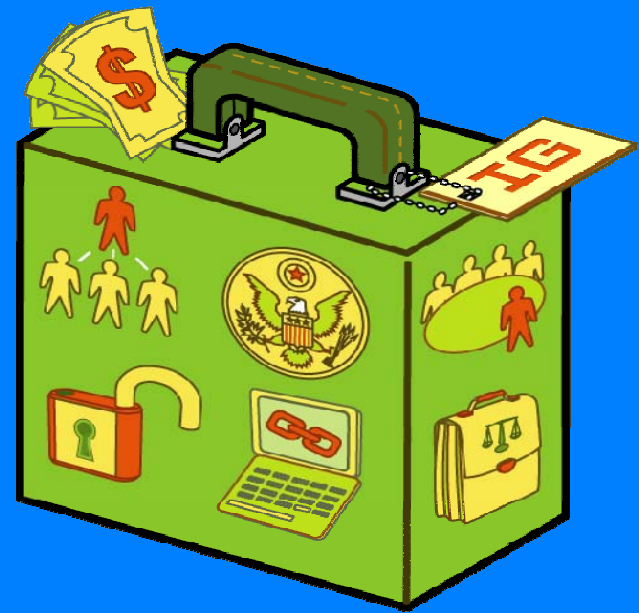
Overview of U.S. Federal Inspector General System

Produced by
Project On Government Oversight

February 2008

Inspectors General

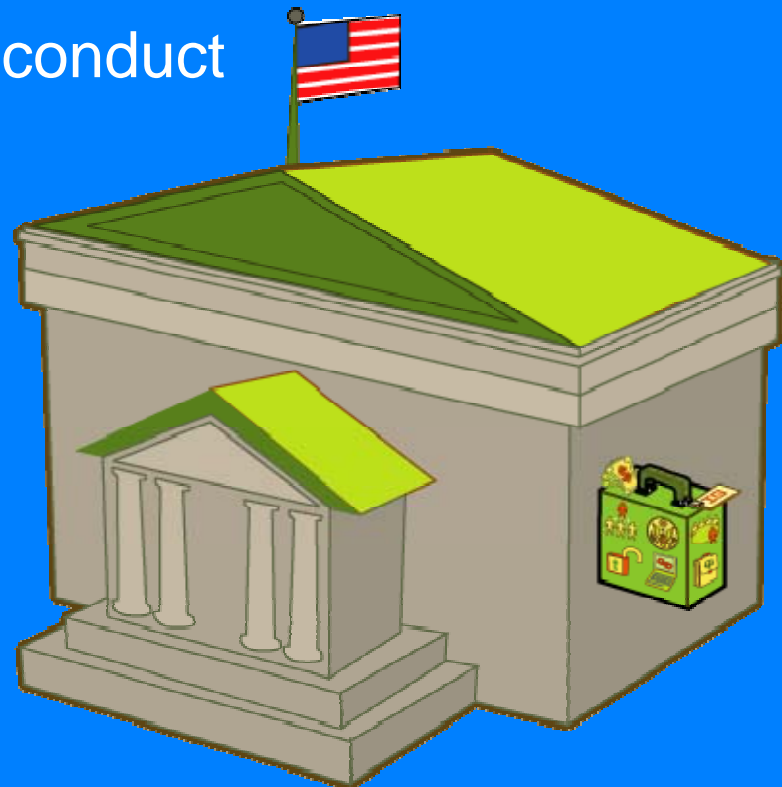
An Inspector General (IG)'s mission is to root out corruption and make government agencies more efficient, honest, and accountable.



Under the Inspector General Law of 1978, IG offices were created as independent units inside major federal agencies.

To fulfill his/her mission, the IG:

- Conducts audits & investigations
- Promotes economy & efficiency
- Prevents fraud, abuse & misconduct
- Reports both to agency head and to Congress



Elements that help an IG be effective and independent:



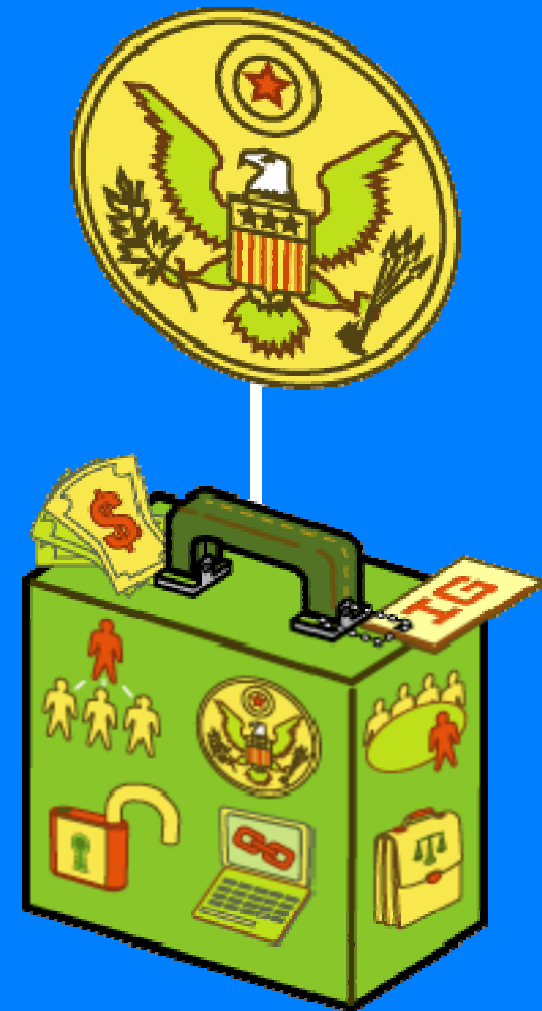
1. Appointment of Qualified Candidates

IGs should:

- Be appointed without regard to political affiliation
- Have integrity and ability in accounting, auditing, law, management, or investigations

BUT:

- More than half of the 64 IGs are appointed by agency heads, with no Congressional scrutiny, and are not required to meet those qualifications



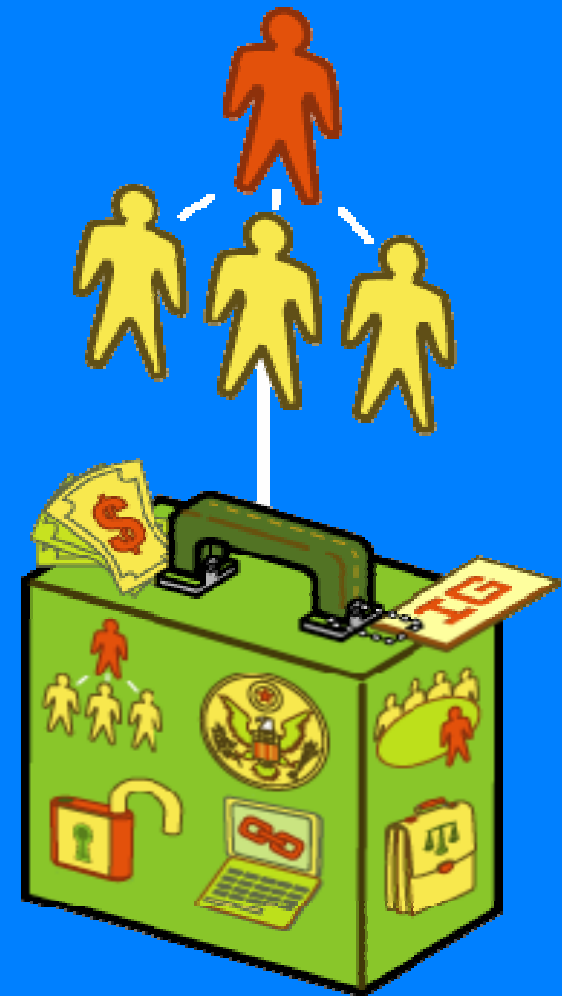
2. Adequate Staffing

With adequate staff, IGs can:

- Conduct inspections, audits & investigations
- Issue reports to agency and Congress
- Post information on web page

BUT:

- Some IGs, with fewer than six staffers, cannot perform mission
- Some IGs are unable to make their own hiring decisions



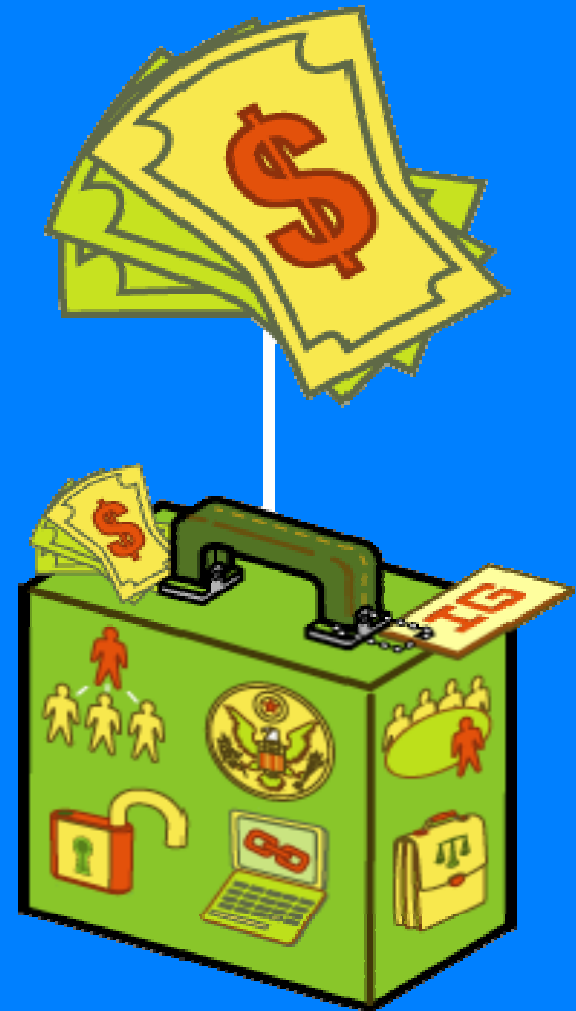
3. Budget Line Item

With a budget line authority that shows up on President's public request, an IG:

- May argue his case directly to White House, Office of Management and Budget, and Congress

BUT:

- Without line item authority, IG is at mercy of agency head for budget and staffing
- Some IGs have faced retaliation, including budget cuts, for unwelcome investigations

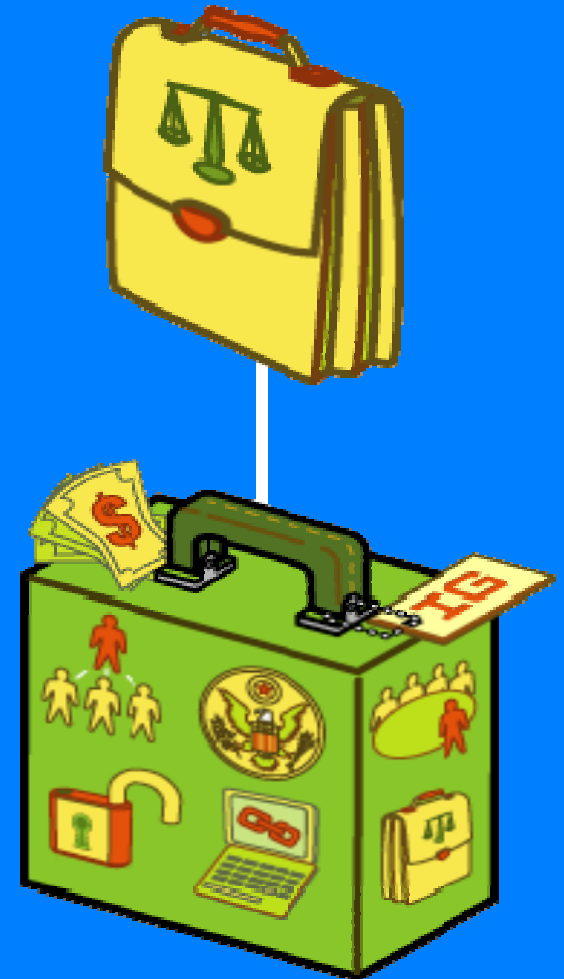


4. In-House Counsel

An IG with his/her own counsel is getting legal advice best suited to office and mission.

BUT:

- An IG without in-house counsel may have to use agency's general counsel, as does the Defense Department—a clear conflict of interest
- IGs may have to seek legal advice from other IGs who lack understanding of the IG's agency

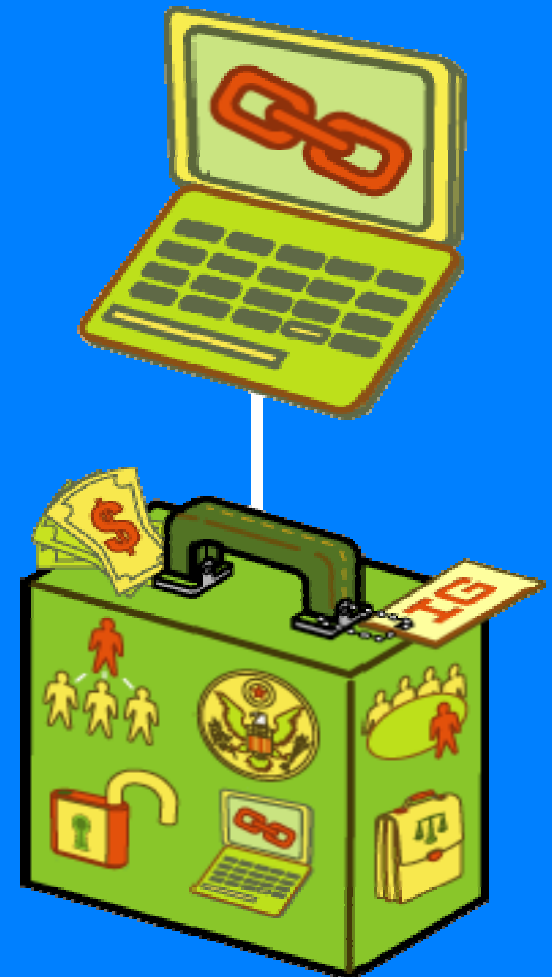


5. Easy Web Page Access

All agencies' websites have links to their IG's page.

BUT:

- It's not always a clear link, or easy to find
- Some IGs report they must seek agency approval to post to the IG page—a clear blow to independence

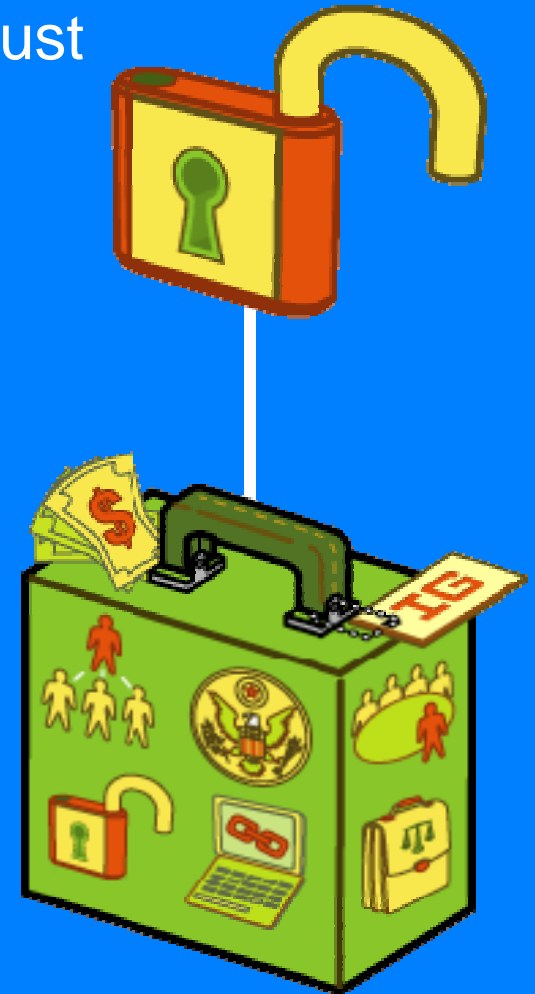


6. Unfettered Authority

To be effective and independent, IGs must be free to investigate all aspects of an agency's operations.

BUT:

- At Justice Department, the IG is not free to investigate attorney misconduct, including that of the Attorney General
- Instead, the Office of Professional Responsibility has that authority, but does not answer to Congress and its reports are not published



Most National Security IGs Lack Independence

- Only a few national security agencies are covered by the IG law – those at CIA, DOD, and for Iraq Reconstruction
- Not covered by the law are IGs at the military service agencies, such as the Army & Air Force
- Also not currently covered are intelligence agencies such as NSA, DIA & National Reconnaissance Office
- All those important agencies have entities called “IGs,” but they lack the elements necessary for independence

