



U.S. Department of Justice
Executive Office for Immigration Review
Office of the Director
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FACT SHEET

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OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

The Office of the General Counsel (OGC) provides legal advice on a wide variety of matters involving the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR). The OGC staff coordinates the development of agency regulations, reviews and comments on proposed legislation, and responds to all Freedom of Information and Privacy Act requests. In addition, OGC is the designated point of contact regarding Standards of Conduct and other ethics guidance for all EOIR employees. The Employee/Labor Relations Unit of OGC advises agency managers on personnel issues, defends Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) actions filed against the agency, monitors investigations conducted by the Office of Professional Responsibility in the Department of Justice (DOJ), and defends against unfair labor practices charges. OGC also administers EOIR's EEO Program, the Attorney Discipline Program, the Fraud Program, and supervises the Certification Unit. OGC also serves as the principal point of contact for U.S. Attorney offices, other DOJ offices, and government agencies on all legal matters.

◆ Biographical Information

John N. Blum, Acting General Counsel

John Blum was appointed as Acting General Counsel on March 10, 2008. He received a master of public affairs degree in 1987 from the University of Texas, Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs; a master of arts degree in 1987 from the University of Texas, Institute for Latin American Studies; and a juris doctorate in 1992 from Baylor University School of Law. From 2000 to March 2008, Mr. Blum served as an attorney advisor and supervisory attorney with the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) at EOIR. From 1994 to 2000, he served as assistant district counsel with the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Mr. Blum is a member of the Texas Bar.

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Scott Anderson, Associate General Counsel

Scott Anderson joined OGC in October 2007. He received bachelor of arts degree in 1993 and juris doctorate degree in 1997, both from the College of William and Mary. From 1999 until 2007, Mr. Anderson was an attorney with the Social Security Administration. He joined the Social Security Administration in 1997 through the Presidential Management Fellows Program, where he completed five rotational assignments with Social Security offices located in New York, Maryland, and Virginia. Mr. Anderson is a member of the District of Columbia Bar.

Jennifer J. Barnes, Associate General Counsel

Jennifer Barnes joined OGC in April 1995. She received a bachelor of arts degree in 1976 from Miami University, a master of social work degree in 1979 from Ohio State University, and a juris doctorate in 1988 from the University of San Diego School of Law. From 1994 until April 1995, Ms. Barnes served as appellate counsel for the former INS. From 1990 until 1994, she worked in the Office of the General Counsel for INS as an assistant general counsel and then as an associate general counsel. Ms. Barnes joined DOJ through the Attorney General's Honors Program in 1988 where she served as an INS trial attorney in San Francisco. Ms. Barnes is a member of the California and District of Columbia bars.

Heidi Brissette, Associate General Counsel

Heidi Brissette joined OGC in January 2007. She received a bachelor of arts degree in 1992 from the University of Melbourne in Australia and a juris doctorate in 1997 from the University of Denver. From 2004 to 2007, Ms. Brissette worked as an associate legal advisor, Office of the Principal Legal Advisor, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security (DHS). From 2003 to 2004, Ms. Brissette worked as an asylum officer with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, DHS. From 1999 to 2002, she served as a deputy state's attorney in Vermont prosecuting domestic violence offenders. Ms. Brissette is a member of the Vermont and Colorado bars.

Lisa Ann Compagno, Associate General Counsel

Lisa Ann Compagno joined OGC in March 2006. She received a bachelor of arts degree in 1999 from Florida Atlantic University and a juris doctorate in 2002 from New York Law School. From 2002 to 2006, Ms. Compagno served at the BIA as an attorney advisor. During this time, from October 2004 to September 2005, she was detailed to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Tucson, Ariz., where she worked as a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney. Ms. Compagno is a member of the New York State Bar.

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Cecelia M. Espenoza, Senior Associate General Counsel

Cecelia Espenoza joined OGC in May 2003. She received a bachelor of arts degree in 1979 and a juris doctorate in 1982, both from the University of Utah, Salt Lake City. From 2000 to May 2003, Ms. Espenoza served as a board member at the BIA. From 1997 to 2000, she served as an associate professor of law at St. Mary's University School of Law in San Antonio. From 1990 to 1997, Ms. Espenoza was an assistant professor of law at the University of Denver College of Law. From 1986 to 1990 Ms. Espenoza worked as a city prosecutor and a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney in Salt Lake City, and from 1984 to 1986, as a city prosecutor in Sandy City, Utah. From 1982 to 1984, she was director of the migrant unit and bilingual attorney for the Utah Legal Services, Inc. Ms. Espenoza is a member of the Utah, Colorado, and Texas bars.

JuanCarlos M. Hunt, Associate General Counsel

JuanCarlos M. Hunt joined OGC in February 2007. He received a bachelor of arts degree in 1994 from Cornell University and a juris doctorate in 1997 from Case Western Reserve School of Law. From 2004 to February 2007, Mr. Hunt served as an attorney advisor for the Office of Justice Programs, Office for Civil Rights, DOJ, in Washington, DC. From 2001 to 2004, he served as a trial attorney with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Washington, DC. Mr. Hunt was in private practice from 1998 to 2001. He served as a law clerk to Chief Judge Thomas Vanaskie, U.S. District Court, Middle District of Pennsylvania, from 1997 to 1998. Mr. Hunt is a member of the Ohio Bar.

Liane M. Jarvis, Associate General Counsel

Liane M. Jarvis joined OGC in December 2008. She received a bachelor of arts degree in 1998 from Occidental College and a juris doctorate in 2001 from the University of Michigan Law School. From 2004 to December 2008, Ms. Jarvis was in private practice. From 2003 to 2004, she served as an asylum officer in San Francisco. From 2001 to 2002, Ms. Jarvis served in the Los Angeles Immigration Court after joining the DOJ through the Attorney General's Honors Program in September 2001. She is a member of the California State Bar.

Barbara Joan Leen, Associate General Counsel

Barbara Joan Leen joined OGC in October 2006. She received a bachelor of arts degree in 2000 from George Washington University and a juris doctorate in 2005 from the University of Connecticut School of Law. From 2005 to October 2006, Ms. Leen served in the Philadelphia and Atlanta Immigration Courts after joining DOJ through the Attorney General's Honors Program in October 2005. She is a member of the New York State Bar.

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Sharon J. Pomeranz, Associate General Counsel

Sharon J. Pomeranz joined OGC in March 2003. She received a bachelor of arts degree in 1986 from San Diego State University and a juris doctorate in 1991 from Southwestern University. From 1991 to March 2003, Ms. Pomeranz served as senior assistant general counsel, U.S. General Services Administration, Washington, DC. She is a member of the California Bar.

Sandy Reinfurt, Associate General Counsel

Sandy Reinfurt joined OGC in April 2007. She received a bachelor of arts degree in 1989 from the University of Richmond, and a juris doctorate in 1992 from the American University. From 2006 to April 2007, Ms. Reinfurt served as an attorney-advisor with the Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command in Alexandria, Va. From 2003 to 2006, she served as a labor and employment attorney with the Department of the Army, XVIII Airborne Corps at Fort Bragg, N.C. From February 2003 to August 2003, Ms. Reinfurt served as a labor and employment attorney for Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC. From 1993 to 1998, she served on active duty in the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps. Ms. Reinfurt is a member of the District of Columbia Bar.

Marta Rothwarf, Associate General Counsel

Marta Rothwarf joined OGC in June 2003. She received a bachelor of arts degree in 1979 from Douglass College, Rutgers; a diploma in 1984 from the Textile Conservation Centre, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London; and a juris doctorate in 1990 from Temple School of Law. From 1994 to 2003, Ms. Rothwarf served as an asylum officer for the DHS and the former INS. From 1990 to 1994, Ms. Rothwarf was in private practice. She is a member of the Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and District of Columbia bars.

Sue B. Sheehan, Associate General Counsel

Sue B. Sheehan joined OGC in January 2007. She received a juris doctorate in 1989 and a master of laws degree in 1992, both from Georgetown University Law Center. From 1991 to 2002, Ms. Sheehan was in private practice. From 1989 to 1991, she served as a law clerk for the Honorable Laurence J. Whalen, United States Tax Court. Ms. Sheehan is a member of the District of Columbia and Pennsylvania bars.

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Charles F. Smith, Associate General Counsel

Charles Smith joined OGC in January 1999. He received a bachelor of arts degree in 1989 from the University of Massachusetts and a juris doctorate in 1996 from the District of Columbia School of Law. From May 1998 to December 1998, Mr. Smith worked as a law clerk at the District of Columbia Office of Bar Counsel in Washington, DC. From August 1997 to May 1998, he served as a staff counsel for the Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia. From 1995 to 1997, Mr. Smith worked as a law clerk at the District of Columbia Office of Bar Counsel. Mr. Smith is a member of the Massachusetts, Maryland, and District of Columbia bars.

Gustavo D. Villageliu, Senior Associate General Counsel

Gustavo D. Villageliu joined OGC in May 2003. He received a bachelor of arts degree in 1973 and a juris doctorate in 1977, both from the University of Iowa. From 1995 until May 2003, Mr. Villageliu served as a Board Member at the BIA. From 1989 until 1995, Mr. Villageliu served as an immigration judge in Miami. Prior to that, he served as an attorney advisor at the BIA. Mr. Villageliu is a member of the Florida and District of Columbia bars.

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