



Open Government at ACUS

The Administrative Conference of the United States (ACUS) is an independent federal agency that is committed to open government and is dedicated to achieving the goals of openness, transparency and accountability to the American public. Recognizing that experts don't have all the answers, ACUS uses the latest Web 2.0 technologies to share data and solicit input from the public. ACUS works collaboratively with its public-private partnership of subject matter experts to streamline and enhance government processes at little cost to the taxpayer. The agency has hosted public meetings using various teleconferencing technologies to engage stakeholders and involve them as ACUS committees develop recommendations and, in the words of President Obama, "make the government work better."

Since the agency's reestablishment in April 2010, ACUS has been exploring and promoting the most efficient means of sharing information and responsibility among the federal government, state and local governments, businesses and citizens. In the [Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government](#), issued on January 21, 2009, President Obama instructed the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to issue an [Open Government Directive](#). The Open Government Directive directs executive departments and agencies to take specific actions to implement the principles of transparency, participation, and collaboration set forth in the President's Memorandum.

Open Government Plan

The Administrative Conference's mission is to improve the ways that federal agencies interact with citizens and businesses in carrying out regulatory, adjudicatory, and other programmatic functions. ACUS has a long history of saving the government and taxpayers money. Since 1968, ACUS has made over 200 recommendations for improved agency decision-making, judicial oversight of the administrative process and innovative statutory proposals. In order for ACUS to continue to make a significant impact, we need public participation and an effective means of sharing our good work with our stakeholders. Openness, transparency and ease of finding information are paramount to our mission and goals.

The Administrative Conference of the United States is an independent federal agency dedicated to improving the administrative process through consensus-driven applied research, providing nonpartisan expert advice and recommendations for improvement of federal agency procedures. Its membership is composed of innovative federal officials and experts with diverse views and backgrounds from the private sector including academia and the practicing bar.

From its reestablishment in 2010, ACUS has served as a flagship of transparency, openness and accountability for federal agencies and the private sector, and these objectives have guided each step of designing and re-creating the agency, including the hiring of staff members with appropriate skills. Our electronic communications infrastructure enables us to meet and collaborate with experts in remote locations. Our website (acus.gov) has been designed to make available to interested persons complete information about both current and historical ACUS projects. Documentation of our research program is readily available, including live and archived webcasts of the meetings of the Conference and its working committees. The agency's congressional budget requests, audit reports, and various required reports on agency activity may also be found on the ACUS website. The entire body of over 200 recommendations is



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posted online, in full-text, searchable form, as are the supporting reports since 2010. Supporting reports for the historic recommendations (1968-95) will be linked as they become available. The website structure is reviewed periodically and updated, as appropriate, to incorporate improvements in technology.

Under the guidance of the agency's Communications Director, interested persons are able to communicate with our staff through a variety of new media. We engage the public and our stakeholders through live webcasts, blogs, and third-party social media tools. We now have an opportunity to reach across agencies, to reach out to Congress, and to build stronger relationships with our critical stakeholders, our constituents – our customers – and help make government work better.

We invite both inquiries and comments on our program and ideas on good government from state and local elected officials, federal employees, and the general public, who have suggestions of topics or questions they want addressed. We can be contacted at info@acus.gov or by telephone at 202-480-2080.

Areas of Responsibility

The agency's staff is composed of a dynamic, driven and interdisciplinary team of individuals with a variety of strengths and backgrounds, who share a dedication to public service. The Chairman, who is appointed by the President and confirmed by the senate, is the official spokesman for the Conference and has overall responsibility for the affairs of the agency. Congressional affairs, including requests for information, are handled by the Executive Director. The Executive Director also coordinates the agency's responses to congressional committee oversight requests and other inquiries from individual Members and congressional staff. The General Counsel is responsible for our Freedom of Information Act compliance program. The Research Director is in charge of the research program, which is designed to develop recommendations for improving federal administrative procedures. The Communications Director manages media relationships.

Meetings and Events

The Administrative Conference's events are generally open to the public, and input from the government, the general public, academia, the bar, and the business community are welcome. The Conference welcomes written feedback and solicits comments on its studies and projects, before or after our public meetings, addressed to comments@acus.gov.

Members of the media seeking answers to questions concerning research projects, studies, recommendations or any other topics concerning the agency should contact Megan Kindelan, Communications Director, at 202-480-2091 or via email at mkindelan@acus.gov. Administrative Conference transcripts, archival photographs, film or audio clips are available on the Administrative Conference website.

Committee Meetings. Members of the media wishing to attend public meetings are asked to RSVP via comments@acus.gov and cc the Communications Director at mkindelan@acus.gov. Advance notice is appreciated due to space limitations.

Plenary Sessions, Symposia and Other Events. Because the location of these sessions is variable, members of the media seeking to attend should contact the Communications Director for complete details.



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Interview Requests. Media requests for interviews with ACUS officials should be made through the Communications Director.

Freedom of Information Act

Generally speaking, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) provides that any person has the right to obtain access to federal agency records except to the extent that those records are protected from disclosure under FOIA or by some other statute. At the core of ACUS's FOIA program is the "presumption of openness" articulated in the Attorney General's 2009 Memorandum on FOIA. ACUS FOIA responses are timely, with most requesters receiving a response within one or two days for simple requests. The agency's website contains a wealth of information about the agency's current activities, and also contains a great deal of historical information, which has been scanned and placed on our website for the benefit of the public. Members of the public who are seeking information from ACUS are encouraged to contact the agency first to avoid having to submit a formal request. In many cases, we are able to point to information already located on our website, or locate and send the agency records requested.

Plain Language

The Plain Writing Act of 2010 requires federal agencies to write "clear Government communication that the public can understand and use." President Obama also emphasized the importance of establishing "a system of transparency, public participation, and collaboration" in his January 21, 2009 [Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government](#).

ACUS is committed to writing new documents in plain language, using the Federal Plain Language Guidelines. We will use plain language in any document that:

- is necessary for obtaining any federal government benefit or service;
- provides information about any federal government benefit or service; or
- explains to the public how to comply with a requirement that the federal government administers or enforces.

Have you found a document that is hard to understand on our website? Please send the title of the page and the exact URL to info@acus.gov.

Transparency

The Administrative Conference of the United States is committed to achieving the President's goal of making this the most transparent Administration in history. By working collaboratively with a talented network of nonpartisan experts inside and outside of government (the bar, public interest groups, and the academic community), by seeking out new ideas from federal agency employees, and by tapping those who have institutional Conference knowledge, we hope to resolve issues that will have a lasting, positive impact on the government landscape and on the interactions between the American people and their national government.