

# **Strategic Plan 2024-2027**



**Office of  
Administrative Law  
State of California**

**A Tradition of Service for  
Over 45 Years**



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## **About Us**

Established on July 1, 1980, the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) was created to provide an important function to the public and the State of California by protecting the public's rights under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) and by reducing the State's exposure to potential litigation resulting from state agencies enforcing illegal rules. OAL was also charged with improving the quality of regulations adopted by state agencies. (Gov. Code, sec. 11340.1, subd. (a), added by Stats. 1979, c. 567, sec. 1.)

## **Mission**

OAL is the oversight agency responsible for the review of administrative regulations proposed by over 200 executive branch state agencies for compliance with the substantive standards and procedural requirements articulated in the APA, for transmitting regulations to the Secretary of State, and for publishing regulations in the California Code of Regulations (CCR).

OAL is responsible for publication and weekly updates of all titles within the CCR, except for title 24, which is published by the Building Standards Commission. OAL is also responsible for weekly publication of the California Regulatory Notice Register.

OAL reviews petitions challenging alleged underground regulations, which are rules issued by state agencies that meet the APA's definition of a "regulation" in Government Code section 11342.600 but were not adopted pursuant to the APA and are not expressly exempt from the APA.

OAL offers a variety of training opportunities, including a three-day training course for state agency staff regarding the requirements of the APA, a half-day training course regarding how to identify and avoid underground regulations, and a public information session that addresses the basic principles of the APA, with an emphasis on how the public can meaningfully participate in the rulemaking process. OAL also holds specialized trainings for state agencies, the Legislature, and educational institutions.

OAL provides advice, by way of a dedicated, rotating Reference Attorney, to field inquiries from state agencies and the public regarding state regulatory matters and to advise state agency staff concerning the requirements of the APA.

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# **Vision**

With its small staff of 26 employees, OAL reviews state agency regulations to ensure that the regulations are clear, necessary, legally valid, and available to the public. OAL seeks to advance awareness of and compliance with the APA, while actively engaging the public in the rulemaking process.

## **Core Values**

### **INTEGRITY**

- ✓ We preserve the rule of law by ensuring that California's regulations are adopted within the parameters set by the Legislature.
- ✓ We ensure that the public is provided with the opportunity to meaningfully participate in state agency rulemaking.

### **TRUST**

- ✓ We increase transparency of government and accountability to the public throughout the rulemaking process.
- ✓ We are a reliable and knowledgeable resource for executive branch state agencies, the Legislature, and the public.

### **TEAMWORK**

- ✓ We foster a supportive work environment that optimizes team building and productivity.
- ✓ We promote respect for and open communication with executive branch state agencies to encourage collegial and creative problem solving.

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# **Goals and Objectives**

## **Goal #1:**

**Increase access to resources to promote public participation in the regulatory process**

## **Objectives:**

OAL continuously strives to enhance training opportunities and resources available not only to state agency staff, but to all Californians. To this end, OAL recently premiered the first of many instructional videos. These videos address some of the most frequent inquiries received regarding participation in the regulatory process and accessing regulatory law. Expanded access to these resources is anticipated to result in more robust public participation in the actions of government and makes government regulatory activity more accessible to all Californians.

OAL also seeks to expand the training offerings available to members of the public by holding additional information sessions on the rulemaking process under the APA. This in-demand training directly engages the public in an effort to demystify the rulemaking process and encourage public participation.

## **Goal #2:**

**Innovative updates to the regulatory process**

## **Objectives:**

OAL continues to prioritize updates to existing rulemaking requirements in an effort to streamline processes, maximize state resources, increase public involvement, and be responsive to state agency needs. For example, in July 2020, OAL adopted emergency regulations to address the need for state agencies to submit regulatory actions electronically. These emergency regulations reflected improvements in

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technology and the need to make submittal of regulatory actions safer and easier for state agencies. Since the initial adoption of those emergency regulations, OAL has continued to develop and enhance the electronic submissions process. This innovation saves considerable state resources, maximizes state personnel efficiency, reduces waste, benefits the state's environment, and minimizes risks of adverse health consequences.

OAL is dedicated to the continuous evaluation and improvement of existing APA requirements in an effort to encourage increased engagement by the public in the rulemaking process, promote good and efficient government, and instill public confidence in the rulemaking process.

### **Goal #3:**

**Increased training opportunities and collaboration between OAL, executive branch state agencies, and the Legislature**

### **Objectives:**

OAL continues to develop additional training opportunities for executive branch and legislative branch staff on a variety of APA-related topics, such as general and special exemptions to the APA, emergency rulemaking authority, and underground regulations.

OAL is in a unique position to provide valuable feedback, training, and advisory services regarding APA-related legislation. As the state agency tasked with ensuring compliance with the APA, OAL reviews the statutes that provide rulemaking authority to state agencies and that state agencies are required to implement, interpret, and make specific in their regulatory actions. These trainings are beneficial to legislative branch staff when drafting statutory language but are also beneficial to the rulemaking agencies subject to these statutes.