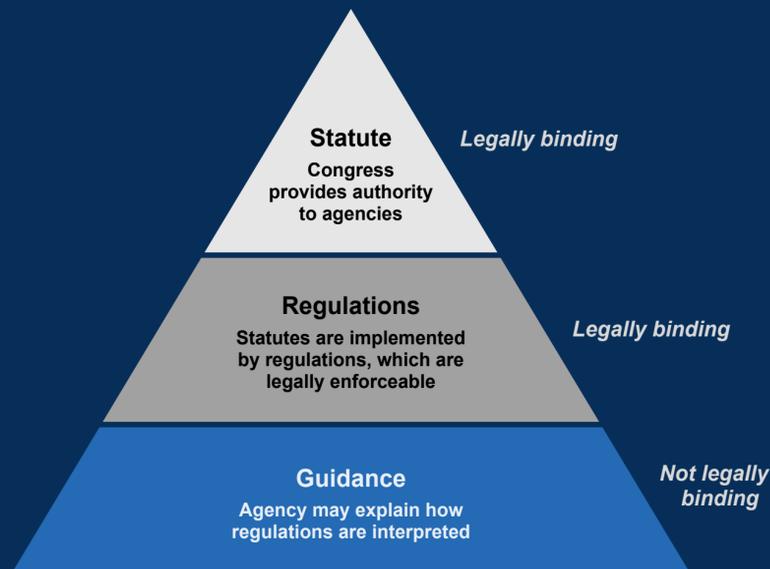


Guidance Documents from Federal Agencies

How agencies clarify legal information, respond to questions, and inform the public

HIGHLIGHTS FROM GAO-15-368

Where Does Guidance Fit In?



Why Do Agencies Use Guidance Documents?



Guidance documents can prompt changes in behavior of regulated parties and the general public.

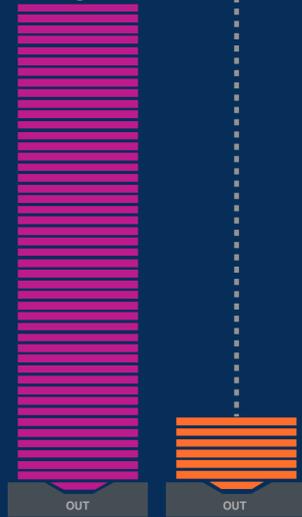
Types of Guidance Documents



Include interpretive memos, policy statements, circulars, memoranda, bulletins, and advisories.

Non-significant Guidance Documents

- Agencies consider most guidance documents "non-significant"
- Not subject to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requirements
- Currently no specific government-wide policies for production



Significant Guidance Documents

- Agencies consider guidance documents with broad or substantial effects "significant"
- Subject to requirements in OMB's *Final Bulletin for Agency Good Guidance Practices* and some are reviewed by OMB before issuance
- Agencies must have written procedures for internal approval
- Must be listed on a departmental website



GAO examined guidance processes at the departments of Agriculture, Education, Health and Human Services, Labor, and selected subagencies within these departments.

How Did Selected Agencies Disseminate their Guidance?



Agencies issue anywhere from about ten to over a hundred guidance documents each year.

How Can Internal Controls be Applied to Guidance Processes?

