



Checklist of Places to Turn to During an Investigation

- Go beyond the agency Congressional liaison, which is likely to mean meeting people out of the office.
- Review public comments on regulatory activities.
- Check to see if there is a whistleblower who can help direct you to documents or other witnesses—if there is, try to corroborate the whistleblower’s story.
- Check with your district offices. They get a lot of case work and will have good on-the-ground knowledge. And constituents can be a great source of information.
- Do a Lexis-Nexis search to see what information is already available/known.
- Talk to reporters who have written about the issue—tell the reporter to tell their sources you want to talk.
- Get a briefing from CRS.
- Get a briefing from GAO, and make sure to talk to GAO auditors to find out what is in their work papers that didn’t make it into the report. (You can find the name and phone number of the auditors on the last page of a GAO report on your subject or a related subject if they have not issued one on your topic yet.)
- Consider consulting the GAO Forensic Audit and Special Investigations Unit (FSI), which can actually do undercover work.
- Talk to the agency’s Inspector General. Ask the IG to investigate or keep an eye on an ongoing investigation; you can get access to IG records after an investigation is done.
- Check in with the OMB budget examiner who handles the area you’re looking into—they have fantastic insights into weaknesses of programs.
- Talk to other Congressional committees and Members with overlapping jurisdiction/interest for information or contacts.
- Attend outside events (leave the office!), and identify yourself by name and office at those events. This will help get information outside the normal channels.
- Check with Non-Governmental Organizations (e.g. unions, trade associations, public interest groups such as POGO, other advocates) that may have worked in this field.
- Find and talk to former agency officials, technical staff, and program managers for background information and for tips about possible current government officials who could give you valuable insights.
- Find and talk to former contractor and subcontractor employees to get background information and for possible tips about sources who are still at the contractor.
- Talk to competing contractor representatives.
- Talk to lobbyists familiar with this program/contractor.
- Get a copy of the contract, contract file, and bidding information.

- If documents are classified, and you don't have proper clearance, see if someone on the Committee that does have clearance can brief you on the unclassified portions of the report, or ask GAO to negotiate with the agency so they can provide an unclassified version of document, briefing, or report.
- Go to the company's publicly available information such as newsletters, speeches, etc.
- Look at SEC 10-K filings of publicly traded companies. Filings will indicate if company is under investigation, has pending litigation against it, or is in danger of overrunning on government contract affecting their financial statement if government doesn't bail them out.
- Remember that unless statutes specifically prohibit Congressional access to information, Congress is entitled to the information, including "Proprietary" information.
- Consult the blogosphere. It can be especially helpful for "big brother" issues.

If dealing with weapons or other defense-related issues:

- Get Pentagon Office of Operational Test and Evaluation briefing and annual reports.
- Look at dtic.mil (The Defense Technical Information Center), which has a great search engine, especially good for descriptions of programs.
- Check out Select Acquisition Reports (SARs).
- Read the trade press.
- The GAO puts out an excellent annual report on major weapons systems. CRS and CBO prepare reports on weapons on a recurring basis. Staffers for all of these organizations are excellent resources themselves.
- Very useful sites are the DoD's Defense Manpower Data Center
https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/stats_reports.jsp and the DoD Comptroller's site
<http://comptroller.defense.gov/>

If dealing with homeland security or any other matter that involves agents on the ground:

- Go to location where there are agents on the ground and talk to them.
- Establish contact with reporters covering the issue—both national and local reporters.
- Go to prison/local law enforcement agencies and associations to talk to people who might know people involved.
- Contact unions representing agents.
- Contact former agents and ask how supervisors and others should work so you can find any irregularities in their behavior.
- Consult with local community groups affected by or monitoring the problem.