

The Government Evaluation Act

Purpose

The enacting of legislation, review of agency rules, and the appropriation of funds by the Legislature are some of the ways that the Legislature directs and provides oversight of executive branch functions. The Government Evaluation Act (GEA) is another process that establishes a method specifically structured to assist the Legislature with its duty to serve as a check and balance on those who administer the laws of the State. The Act (3 MRSA chapter 35) provides for regular, periodic legislative review of the efficacy and performance of state government agencies and applies to all agencies and governmental entities that receive General Fund money or that are established by statute.

Process

GEA review is conducted by the joint standing committee of jurisdiction. The Act specifies a schedule for the review of agencies, but the reviewing committee may modify the schedule by 2/3 vote.

Once a GEA review is initiated by a committee and the committee notifies the agency it intends to go forward with the review (see timeline below), the agency must compile and submit a “program evaluation report,” which must include certain items specified in law (3 MRSA §956); the committee may direct that other information be provided. After the committee completes its review, it submits its findings and recommendations to the Legislature; the report may include legislation necessary to implement recommendations.

Important Dates: First Regular Session¹

By May 1st

Committee must notify the agency of its intent to review the agency during the 2nd Regular Session.

By November 1st

Agency must submit the Program Evaluation Report to the committee.

Important Dates: Second Regular Session

By February 1st

Committee must begin its review of agencies subject to review.

By March 15th

Committee must submit to the full Legislature its findings, recommendations and any legislation required to implement its recommendations. Committee may establish a follow-up review procedure for the agency.

¹ The law also provides that if a committee requests by March 1st in the First Regular Session a list of units and programs of an agency subject to review, the agency must supply that list by April 1st.

Review Schedule in Current Law for the 129th Legislature by Committee Jurisdiction

Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Matters

- Board of Pesticides Control
- Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine

Business and Economic Development Matters

- Board of Dental Practice
- Board of Osteopathic Licensure
- Board of Licensure in Medicine
- State Board of Nursing
- State Board of Optometry
- State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers

Criminal Justice and Public Safety Matters

- Department of Corrections

Education and Cultural Affairs Matters

- Maine Health and Higher Educational Facilities Authority

Health and Human Services Matters

- Board of the Maine Children's Trust Incorporated
- Maine Developmental Disabilities Council

Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Matters

- No reviews scheduled in law

Insurance and Financial Services Matters

- No reviews scheduled in law

Judiciary Matters

- Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission
- Department of the Attorney General

Labor Matters

- No reviews scheduled in law

Legal and Veterans Affairs Matters

- Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management (except for Maine Emergency Management Agency)

Marine Resource Matters

- No reviews scheduled in law

Natural Resource Matters

- Board of Underground Oil Tank Installers

Retirement Matters

- No reviews scheduled in law

State and Local Government Matters

- Capitol Planning Commission
- Department of Administrative and Financial Services (except for the Bureau of Revenue Services)
- Department of the Secretary of State (except for the Bureau of Motor Vehicles)

Taxation Matters

- State Board of Property Tax Review
- Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of Revenue Services

Transportation Matters

- No reviews scheduled in law

Utilities and Energy Matters

- Public Advocate