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OSIG NEWS

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Inspector General Sees Sustained Uptick in State Fraud, Waste and Abuse Hotline Calls

Coinciding with National Whistleblower Day (July 30), the Virginia Office of the State Inspector General (OSIG) noted a sustained increase in the number of fraud, waste and abuse hotline calls during the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2017, maintaining a 140 percent boost in calls since January.

OSIG again reached its highest level of hotline calls in the fourth quarter at 462, matching the number of calls in the third quarter and sustaining the dramatic jump from 193 calls in the second. Resulting investigations also rose from 118 in the second quarter to 208 in the third, with a slight drop to 188 in the fourth. Year over year, investigations soared 32 percent, from 494 to 645.

“We continue to see a surge in activity on the [State Fraud, Waste and Abuse Hotline](#),” said Acting State Inspector General Michael Westfall. “We’re specifically noticing growth in cases submitted through our Web form. In the last quarter, 46 percent of all hotline “calls” were reported through our [online form](#).”

Over the last three months, the top-five allegations of wrongdoing included: leave abuse; waste of state funds; noncompliance with internal policies; improper hiring; and employee misconduct.

In addition to the hotline, OSIG administers the [Fraud and Abuse Whistle Blower Reward Fund](#), a fund dedicated to those who disclose information of wrongdoing or abuse that results in a recovery of at least \$5,000. The amount of the reward is up to 10 percent of the sum recovered by the commonwealth. Since its founding, OSIG has had very few “whistle blower” claims and has yet to reward a sum of money to a complainant.

“We encourage those who witness fraud, waste or corruption in state government to contact us,” said Westfall. “As stewards of taxpayer money, our goal is to root out improper spending and abuse and instill accountability and trust in government agencies and programs,” he added.

Citizens can file complaints by calling 800-723-1615, emailing covhotline@osig.virginia.gov, faxing a tip to 804-371-0165 or using the online Web form at www.osig.virginia.gov.

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Established in 2012 to investigate fraud, waste, abuse and corruption in executive branch state government, the Virginia Office of the State Inspector General (OSIG) celebrated its fifth anniversary July 1. The agency manages the State Fraud, Waste and Abuse Hotline; conducts investigations and performance reviews of state agencies; provides training and standards for the commonwealth’s internal audit divisions; and conducts inspections and reviews of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services facilities and programs. Additional information is available at www.osig.virginia.gov.