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OSIG NEWS

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Cybersecurity Audit Reveals Lack of Compliance with Security Standards

The Virginia Office of the State Inspector General (OSIG) has released its audit report of the Commonwealth of Virginia's cybersecurity program, highlighting five findings and recommendations for tightened security of electronic information among Virginia's executive branch agencies and public colleges and universities.

OSIG contracted with Cotton & Company LLP of Alexandria, Va., to conduct the audit, with clear objectives of determining if executive branch agencies comply with security audit standards and have identified all sensitive information systems.

Findings revealed that 11 of the 18 state agencies evaluated had not performed required sensitive system security audits over the last three fiscal years (2015-2017). Agencies not adhering to standards pointed to a range of factors for the lapse, from lack of cybersecurity awareness, to insufficient funding and personnel to conduct audits, to conscious decisions by leadership to channel funding toward known security risks rather than audits.

"Protection of citizen information is a primary responsibility of state agencies," said State Inspector General Michael Westfall. "While we found the commonwealth is taking cybersecurity seriously, more can be done to ensure sensitive systems are properly safeguarded," he said.

OSIG's recommendations to lessen risk and increase information security include reassessing some systems not currently classified as sensitive to be certain all commonwealth sensitive systems are identified. OSIG also encourages continued expansion of VITA's Centralized Security Audit Services to assist executive branch agencies with audit needs, as well as a revamp of VITA's security standards to provide a more efficient and effective audit process for agencies.

OSIG's full report is available at <https://bit.ly/2KQ54HF>. Additional information is available at www.osig.virginia.gov.

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Established in 2012, the Virginia Office of the State Inspector General (OSIG) manages the State Fraud, Waste and Abuse Hotline; conducts investigations and performance audits 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-run facilities and programs.