



CHAMPIONING BETTER GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

OSIG NEWS

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State Fraud, Waste and Abuse Hotline Rings in 25th Anniversary with More Than 16,000 Cases

The State Fraud, Waste and Abuse Hotline is ringing in its 25th anniversary this October, with more than 16,000 cases of reported wrongdoing in state government.

The first hotline call rang on Oct. 9, 1992, with an allegation of employee misconduct. Since then, the hotline has provided an outlet for Virginia state employees and citizens to anonymously report incidents of fraud, waste, abuse, policy violations and other ethical issues in the state workplace.

Of the 16,194 identified cases over the last two and a half decades, approximately 20 percent were substantiated and 33 percent resulted in recommendations for tighter controls, new policies and other improvements at state agencies.

“The hotline is an important tool for citizens to freely report issues in state government without fear of retaliation,” said Acting State Inspector General Michael Westfall. “We encourage those who know about a problem to come forward, as the sooner an agency is aware of a concern, the sooner it can be addressed.”

Over the last 25 years, the top five allegations of wrongdoing include: 1) leave abuse; 2) state vehicle misuse; 3) violation of state hiring policy; 4) misuse of state equipment and resources; and 5) non-compliance with agency policies.

Established in 1992 under the Department of the State Internal Auditor, the hotline’s history includes a 2002 transition to the Department of Accounts, followed by former Gov. McDonnell’s 2012 Executive Order Number 52, which directed the Office of the State Inspector General (OSIG) to absorb the hotline and expand its availability from state employees to all Virginia citizens. Since then, OSIG has managed more than 3,000 hotline cases.

In fiscal year 2017, the hotline heated up with more than 1,400 calls and 645 cases referred for formal investigation, a 32 percent spike over the previous year. The uptick is attributed to increased awareness of the hotline, as well as OSIG’s new online complaint form, which has accounted for 44 percent of all hotline “calls” since its implementation in December 2016.

To reach the hotline, visit www.osig.virginia.gov, email covhotline@osig.virginia.gov, call 800-723-1615, or fax a tip to 804-371-0165.

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Additional information is available at www.osig.virginia.gov.