



# Office of the County Auditor

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MARYLAND

## FWA HOTLINE INTRODUCTION AND FAQ

The Office of the County Auditor (OCA) holds investigative responsibility for Fraud, Waste, and Abuse complaints pursuant to Anne Arundel County Charter, Article III, Section § 311(b) – Duties of the County Auditor. All County employees are expected to adhere to certain standards of conduct, which, if violated, could reflect poorly on their department and on Anne Arundel County, Maryland. OCA seeks to promote accountability, efficiency, and integrity in County government by identifying fraud, waste, and abuse, and recommending action, as appropriate. This, in turn, promotes public trust. The Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Hotline offers multiple ways for people to report concerns to OCA, including a dedicated tip line and an option for submitting anonymous complaints. The determination of whether an act is fraud, waste, or abuse depends on the facts and circumstances of each situation, including the severity of the issue and intent for financial and/or personal gain.



**Toll-Free Number**  
844-853-4229

**Fraud:** Any intentional act of deception, misrepresentation, or concealment for personal gain designed to deprive the County of its resources or assets to which the individual is not entitled. Fraud can occur through the spoken word or by an individual's conduct and actions.

### *Falsifying Records or Documents / Payroll Fraud / Theft*

**Waste:** Overuse, misuse, mismanagement or thoughtless expenditure of County funds or resources that results in unnecessary costs or a lack of reasonable value for money from inefficient or ineffective practices, systems, internal controls or inadequate oversight.

### *Unjustified Expenses / Mismanagement of Resources / Inefficient use of Resources*

**Abuse:** The improper use of County resources in a manner contrary to law, policy or rules for personal gain. It also includes the improper use of one's position/authority for personal gain or advantage for another.

### *Misuse of Authority / Abuse of Resources contrary to Policy / Bribes*





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## **What should not be reported through the Hotline:**

- Issues normally handled by the personnel grievance process.
- EEO complaints.
- Day-to-day management issues.
- Employee compensation and benefits questions.
- Issues that are the responsibilities of other governments.

## **Why should I report fraud, waste, and abuse?**

Working together, we will ensure that we continue to have a positive and productive environment that protects our County's resources and maintains our highest standards of integrity and service to our fellow employees and the residents of Anne Arundel County, Maryland. If you are aware of illegal or improper activity, do not ignore it. Report it immediately.

## **What happens after I make a report?**

OCA evaluates all reports received to determine the best course of action. All credible allegations of fraud, waste, or abuse are investigated. The time needed to complete an investigation can vary from a couple of weeks to several months depending on the complexity of the issues being investigated. OCA applies the preponderance of the evidence standard in determining whether fraud, waste, and abuse has been committed.

## **Do I have to leave my name?**

You **are not required** to leave your name; you may remain anonymous. However, this may limit our ability to follow up with you on your concerns. Providing your name and contact information assists investigators in completing a more thorough investigation. When reporting a concern, include as much detailed information as possible, such as the name of the involved County department, individuals involved, and the specifics that lead you to believe that fraud, waste, and abuse is occurring, along with any supporting evidence.

## **Will my identity remain Confidential?**

Information provided to the Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Hotline may be the sole basis for an investigation. Over the course of the investigation, it is possible that your identity may become known. OCA will confidentially maintain your identity unless disclosure is deemed unavoidable (e.g., administrative hearing, court subpoena, mandatory disclosures, etc.).

## **Are fraud, waste, and abuse investigations publicly posted?**

OCA posts public summaries of its Fraud, Waste, and Abuse investigations. However, summaries are only a part of a more comprehensive report of investigation submitted to the appropriate County management official(s). OCA routinely posts public press releases and other reports on our website. Specific investigative reports or reviews will not be published or will be posted in a limited redacted fashion if they contain privileged, confidential, or legally protected information.