2022 Fraud Hotline Annual Report

Report

The Auditor's Office Fraud Hotline provides City employees and members of the public a way to confidentially report suspected fraud, waste, and abuse of position by or against the City.

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In 2022 we received 74 tips and opened 13 investigations.

Two investigations carried over from the previous year.

- Three cases were substantiated
- Four were investigated but not substantiated
- Six were declined because they lacked specificity or did not meet investigation criteria
- Eight were related to activities of an elected official. City Charter does not allow us to investigate activities of an elected official.
- 18 were not related to the City
- 21 were service complaints about the City but not related to fraud, waste, or abuse of position
- 14 were either undergoing initial review or under investigation at the end of the year.

Contact

Fraud Hotline

☏ 866-342-4148
Call for free 24 hours a day, seven days a week

KC Jones
Audit Services Director
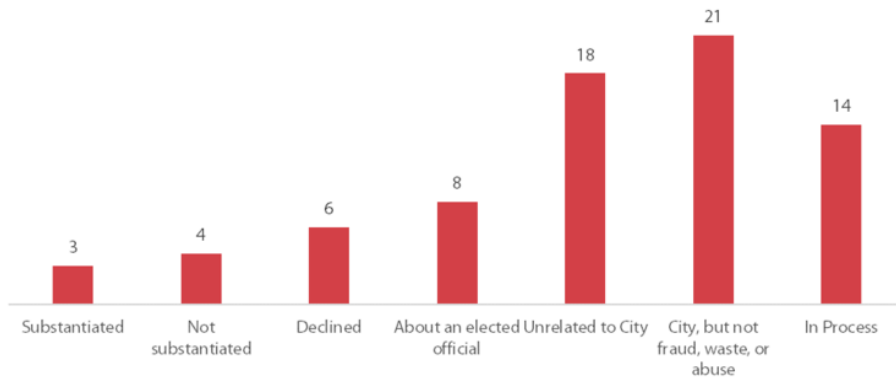
✉ kenneth.c.jones@portlandoregon.g

☏ 503-823-3544

Related

Fraud Hotline

Frequently asked questions about the Fraud Hotline

Reportable Incidents and Examples

Topics

Community education and outreach

Of the tips that we declined:

- Four did not include enough information to investigate
- One was referred to the Joint Office of Homeless Services
- One was added to our Audit Schedule as an audit of Portland Bureau of Transportation Inspections. We expect to publish this audit in the Spring of 2023.

We received 21 tips that were related to the City but not fraud, waste, or abuse. We encourage people to submit any tip related to the City of Portland even if they're not quite sure it's fraud, waste, or abuse. We think of it as part of our job to figure that out. Even when we can't turn a tip into a hotline case, we refer it to the [Ombudsman](#) or the relevant program manager for resolution.

A list of all cases we received in 2022 is available [here](#).

Three substantiated tips

Two substantiated tips were related to the Fire Bureau. We published a [report](#) about a firefighter using City water to wash a personal vehicle. We also substantiated a tip about Fire employees using City parking to avoid airport parking fees. We did not publish a report on this tip because the underlying issues were substantially similar to the first report, but we did notify the Commissioner in charge and City Council.

The other substantiated tip was related to the Joint Office of Homeless Services. We published a [report](#) about funds wasted at a property used to house formerly homeless veterans. We found that the Joint Office spent more than $850,000 to house needy veterans but allowed the property to deteriorate into unsafe, unsanitary conditions leaving the office scrambling to find new shelter. Without adequate oversight, the office risks wasting money intended to aid Portlanders without housing.
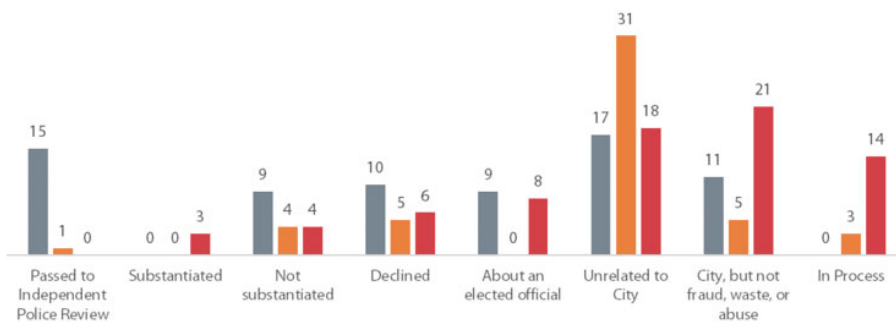
More and better tips

In the past year we renewed and expanded outreach activities and improved our website to make it clearer that we only investigate tips related to the City of Portland. As a result, the number of tips increased, and more tips were related to City services.

Tips Received by Year

71 — 2020
49 — 2021
74 — 2022

We did receive more tips in 2022 that were related to the City but not fraud, waste, or abuse. We're unable to investigate tips about such things as someone's general dissatisfaction with City decisions or promotional efforts that do not constitute fraud, waste, or abuse.

We are no longer tracking tips referred to the Independent Police Review. In July 2022, management of the Independent Police Review's operations was transferred from the Auditor's Office to the Chief Administrator's Office. When the City Auditor oversaw Independent Police Review, we referred tips to staff in that division. Now we treat police misconduct complaints as we would any other tip related to City staff. Most of the tips we received in 2020 were related to the overall approach to policing protests and not specific allegations of misconduct.

Case Dispositions in 2020, 2021, and 2022

Category	2020	2021	2022
Passed to Independent Police Review	15	1	0
Substantiated	0	0	3
Not substantiated	9	4	4
Declined	10	5	6
About an elected official	9	8	0
Unrelated to City	17	31	18
City, but not fraud, waste, or abuse	11	5	21
In Process	0	3	14

Send us more tips

If you think something is amiss in how Portland City government is operating, please contact us. The Fraud Hotline receives reports of suspected fraud, waste, or abuse of position by City employees, contractors, board members, or anyone representing the City. Anyone can file a report, and you can choose to be anonymous. We'll investigate tips within the purview of the hotline and report results back to you.

Hotline reports go to an outside vendor to ensure security and confidentiality. If you wish to remain anonymous and not provide contact information, please note the Report Key number that is provided once you've filled out the report form or completed a call to the hotline. If we have follow-up questions, we can communicate them to that number through the vendor's online portal and exchange documents without ever knowing your name or contact information.

The more details you can provide, the more effectively we can investigate.

Provide as much detail as possible:

- Who, what, when, where, and how;
- Include dates, names, locations, amounts, and witnesses;
- Upload any documents and pictures through the outside vendor's portal.

Fraud is an intentional deception that could result in a benefit for which a person or entity is not entitled.

Waste involves the needless, careless, or extravagant expenditure of City funds, or the misuse or mismanagement of City resources or property. Waste does not have to involve a private use or personal gain and can be intentional or unintentional.

Inefficiency involves an inability to do something in a well-organized or competent way, or the failure to implement processes as intended with minimal wasted time or resources. "Inefficiency" may also occur when the design of a program or policy fails to produce desired outcomes, despite the resources invested.

Abuse of position involves the improper use of a City position to obtain a benefit or advantage. Abuse may also involve the improper use or destruction of City records or other resources.