



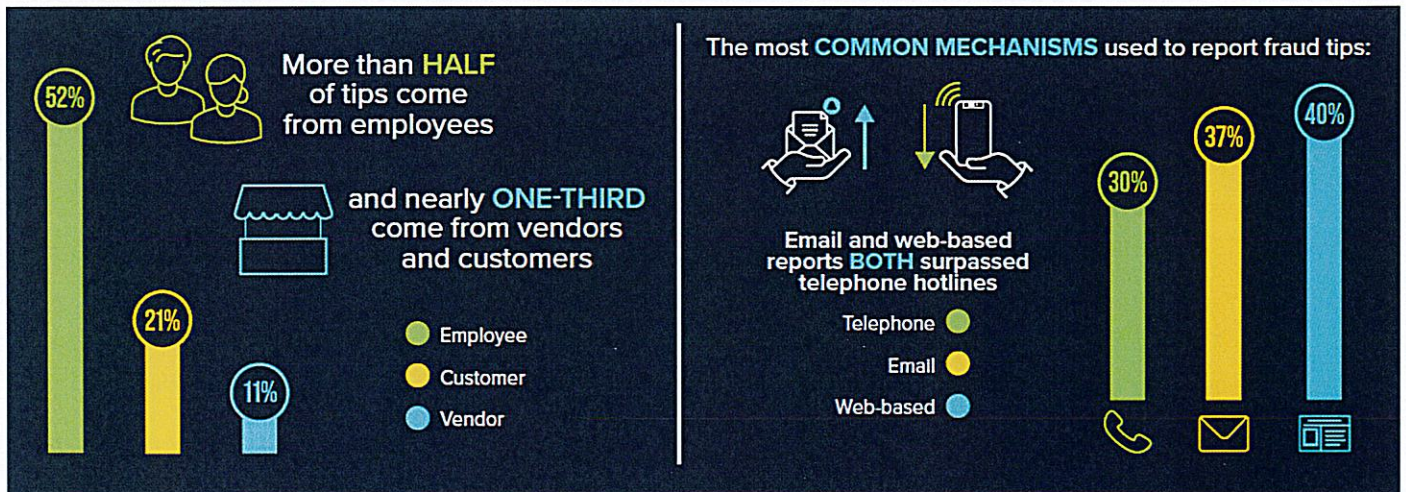
TO: Final Report Distribution
FROM: Mark Pinsley, County Controller
DATE: January 8, 2025
RE: Ethics Hotline Activity - 2024



We have compiled a listing of ethics hotline activity for calendar year 2024 in compliance with Lehigh County Administrative Code Section 502(d). The code directs the Office of the Controller to operate an ethics hotline for the reporting of suspected fraud and theft, and conduct confidential investigations into all meritorious reports received. Our report number 25-01 is attached.

The ethics hotline continues to be a valuable tool for employees and the public to report suspected improprieties. According to an Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE) study, organizations with hotlines were nearly twice as likely to detect fraud via tip as organizations without hotlines, illustrating the crucial role hotlines play in a comprehensive fraud detection program.¹

The ACFE study again identified tips as the most common way frauds came to light, with 43% of cases being uncovered due to a tip from a whistleblower. This is more than three times as many cases as any other detection mechanism. In addition, the report indicates that the majority of tips come from employees through online or email mechanisms.

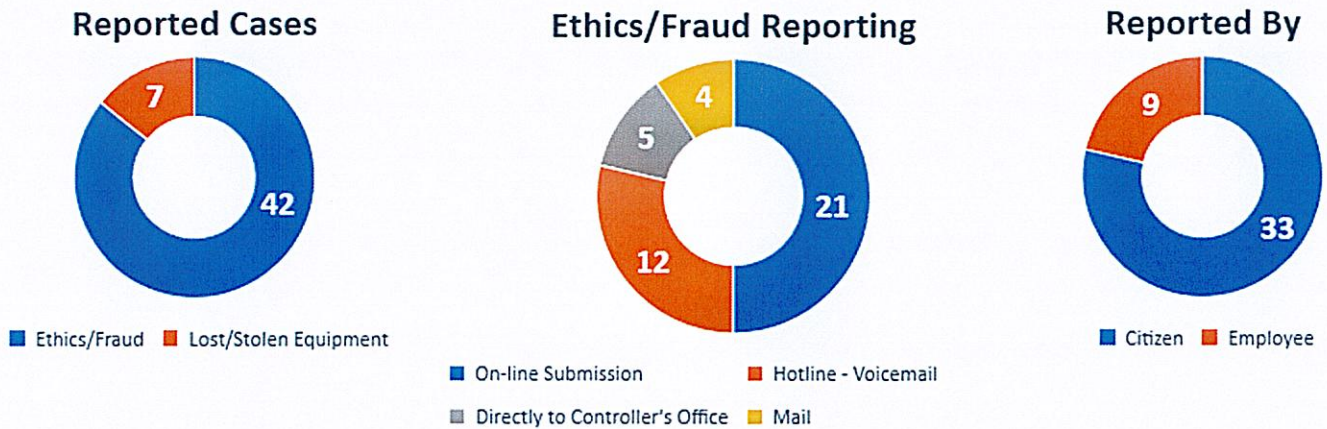


¹ See ACFE Occupational Fraud 2024: A Report to the Nations (ACFE.com/RTTN).

The Controller's Office has created four mechanisms for the submission of ethics/fraud related reporting:

1. Online Submission form – accessed from the Controller's website
2. Ethics Hotline – voicemail
3. Email
4. Printable form that can be completed and mailed to the Controller's Office – accessed from the Controller's website

During 2024, the Controller's Office pursued 49 total submissions, which includes lost/stolen equipment, spending a total of 113 hours.



Regardless of how they are received, all submissions are investigated by our offices, or directed to the appropriate party for final disposition.

COUNTY OF LEHIGH, PENNSYLVANIA

OFFICE OF THE CONTROLLER

*Ethics Hotline Activity
for the Calendar Year Ended December 31, 2024*

REPORT NO. 25-01

COUNTY OF LEHIGH, PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE CONTROLLER

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Lehigh County Pennsylvania

OFFICE OF THE CONTROLLER

Mark Pinsley, MBA Nanton John, CFE
COUNTY CONTROLLER DEPUTY CONTROLLER

Geoff Brace, Chair
Lehigh County Board of Commissioners
Lehigh County Government Center
17 South Seventh Street
Allentown, PA 18101-2400

In accordance with Ordinance 1993-130, the County of Lehigh established a hotline (610-782-3999), online reporting form, email account, and printable form for the reporting of suspected theft, fraud, and abuse of county resources and/or assets.

The reporting mechanisms are based in the Controller’s Office and are available for use by both county employees and the public 24 hours a day. Individuals can report anonymously any situation that appears improper. All submissions are investigated by the Controller’s Office or are directed to the proper authority (if not under county jurisdiction).

The administrative code section 502(d), as amended by Ordinance 1993-130, requires periodic reporting to the Board of Commissioners. Attached please find a summary account of “Ethics Hotline” submissions received during 2024.

MARK PINSLEY
County Controller

Allentown, Pennsylvania
Attachment

- xc: Kay Achenbach, Director, Human Serv.
- Phillips Armstrong, County Executive
- David Backenstoe, Solicitor, Dept. of Law
- David Barilla, Clerk to Board of Comm.
- Timothy Benyo, Chief of Elections
- Board of Commissioners
- Daniel Buglio, Coroner
- Scott Clark, Risk Manager
- Jason Cumello, Director, Cedarbrook
- Janine Donate, Director, Corrections
- Michelle Graupner, Clerk of Jud. Records

- Joseph Hanna, Sheriff
- Gavin Holihan, District Attorney
- Edward Hozza Jr., County Administrator
- The Honorable J. Brian Johnson, Pres. Judge
- Frank Kane, Director, Comm. & Econ. Dev.
- Kimberly Makoul, Chief Public Defender
- Keisha McCollin-Bulluck, Chief HR Officer
- Michael Millan, Cty. Det, Dist. Atty’s Office
- Richard Molchany, Director, General Services
- Timothy Reeves, Chief Fiscal Officer
- Kerry Turtzo, Court Administrator

ETHICS HOTLINE*
SUMMARY OF 2024 ACTIVITY

Description of Ethics Case Statuses

| <u>Status #</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Status #</u> | <u>Description</u> |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| 1 | No Merit, No Action Taken | 5 | Investigated, No Actionable Findings |
| 2 | Referred to Non-County Authority | 6 | Investigated, Corrective Action Recommended |
| 3 | Referred to County Dept. Mgmt. | 7 | Investigated, Report Issued |
| 4 | Referred to County Admin/HR | 8 | Open File as of 12/31/2024 |

| <u>FILE REF</u> | <u>DATE</u> | <u>DEPT.</u> | <u>DESCRIPTION</u> | <u>STATUS</u> |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------------------|--|---------------|
| E24-01 | 1/2/2024 | Human Services | Employee Complaint – Various Department Concerns | 4 |
| E24-02 | 1/10/2024 | Children & Youth | Lost/Stolen Property – Cell Phone | 3 |
| E24-03 | 1/11/2024 | Children & Youth | Lost/Stolen Property – Cell Phone | 3 |
| E24-04 | 1/18/2024 | Children & Youth | Lost/Stolen Property - Cell Phone | 3 |
| E24-05 | 1/19/2024 | Judicial Records - Civil | Employee Complaint - Investigation | 3 |
| E24-06 | 1/24/2024 | Citizen Complaint | District Attorney / Jail – Unlawful Treatment in Recent Arrest | 2 |
| E24-07 | 2/6/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Sheriff – Fraudulent Phone Calls | 3 |
| E24-08 | 2/22/2024 | Citizen Complaint | School Curriculum | 2 |
| E24-09 | 2/28/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Fiscal – Illegal Games of Chance | 3 |
| E24-10 | 3/10/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Hazardous Waste | 2 |
| E24-11 | 3/15/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Community & Economic Development – Misuse of Covid-19 Grant Funds | 3 |
| E24-12 | 3/22/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Community & Economic Development – Nonpayment of Grant Awarded Contract Services | 3 |
| E24-13 | 3/22/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Aging – Caseworker Follow-up | 3 |

| <u>FILE REF</u> | <u>DATE</u> | <u>DEPT.</u> | <u>DESCRIPTION</u> | <u>STATUS</u> |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------------------|--|---------------|
| E24-14 | 3/25/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Business Fraud | 2 |
| E24-15 | 3/25/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Assessments – Homestead Application | 3 |
| E24-16 | 3/26/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Welfare Fraud | 2 |
| E24-17 | 3/27/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Allentown Police Pension Board | 2 |
| E24-18 | 3/27/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Human Services – Haven House | 3 |
| E24-19 | 3/29/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Business Fraud | 2 |
| E24-20 | 4/19/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Jail – PrimeCare Medical Treatment | 3 |
| E24-21 | 4/24/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Mental Health – Conference of Churches Rental Assistance Program | 3 |
| E24-22 | 5/1/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Phone Scam | 2 |
| E24-23 | 5/6/2024 | Judicial Records - Deeds | Employee Complaint – Wrongful Termination | 4 |
| E24-24 | 5/14/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Wellcare | 2 |
| E24-25 | 5/15/2024 | Citizen Complaint | COJR Criminal – Defendant not Released After Bail Posted | 3 |
| E24-26 | 5/17/2024 | Fiscal | Pension Beneficiary | 3 |
| E24-27 | 5/21/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Child Custody (Northampton) | 2 |
| E24-28 | 5/22/2024 | Human Resources | Employee Complaint – Working from Home | 4 |
| E24-29 | 5/24/2024 | Human Resources | Employee Complaint – Vacation Time Accrual | 5 |
| E24-30 | 6/2/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Domestic Relations – Child Support | 3 |
| E24-31 | 6/10/2024 | Juvenile Probation | Employee Complaint – Last Day of Employment Inquiry | 5 |
| E24-32 | 6/16/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Housing Assistance & Welfare | 2 |

| <u>FILE REF</u> | <u>DATE</u> | <u>DEPT.</u> | <u>DESCRIPTION</u> | <u>STATUS</u> |
|---------------------|-------------|----------------------|--|---------------|
| E24-33 | 6/28/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Collections – Employee Behavior | 5 |
| E24-34 | 7/11/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Collections – Employee Behavior | 6 |
| E24-35 | 7/18/2024 | Citizen Complaint | On-line Fraud (Facebook) | 2 |
| E24-36 | 8/8/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Alleged Fraud by Lawyer | 2 |
| E24-37 | 8/15/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Alleged Fraud by Real Estate Agent | 2 |
| E24-38 | 8/22/2024 | Aging | Lost/Stolen Property - Tablet | 3 |
| E24-39 | 8/28/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Fiscal – Fraudulent Check | 3 |
| E24-40 | 10/2/2024 | Aging | Lost/Stolen Property - Tablet | 3 |
| E24-41 | 10/16/2024 | Citizen Complaint | EBT (SNAP) Fraud | 2 |
| E24-42 | 11/7/2024 | Judicial Records | Employee Complaint – Department Management Issues | 4 |
| E24-43 | 11/11/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Disability Fraud | 2 |
| E24-44 | 11/15/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Alleged Harassment | 2 |
| E24-45 | 11/19/2024 | General Services | Employee Complaint – Smoking Area Outside of Courthouse | 3 |
| E24-46 | 12/5/2024 | Mental Health | Lost/Stolen Property – Cell Phone | 3 |
| E24-47 | 12/6/2024 | Adult Probation | Lost/Stolen Property – Computer and Cell Phone | 3 |
| E24-48 | 12/6/2024 | Citizen Complaint | On-line Fraud | 2 |
| E24-49 | 12/13/2024 | Citizen Complaint | Allentown Hosing Authority | 2 |

All reported issues are received and reviewed by the Office of the Controller. Allegations are either investigated by the Controller’s Office or directed to the appropriate party for disposition. Although many county ethics/fraud submissions prove to be without merit, organizations with hotlines detect fraud more quickly and have lower losses than organizations without hotlines (Association of Certified Fraud Examiners – Occupational Fraud 2024: Report to the Nations). If allegations are deemed meritorious, a separate report is issued subject to the confidentiality requirements of the Government Auditing Standards.

*Includes reports received per Administrative Notice 2001-4, “Supervisor’s Report of Lost or Missing Property”.