



ANNUAL REPORT 2025

OFFICE OF THE
OHIO INSPECTOR GENERAL
RANDALL J. MEYER

Inspector General Randall J. Meyer

Randall J. Meyer was appointed as Ohio Inspector General in January 2011, and reappointed by the governor of Ohio and confirmed by the Ohio Senate in 2015, 2021, and 2025. While serving as the inspector general, Meyer has released 811 reports of investigation, issued 1,628 recommendations to agencies, and identified over \$1/4 billion lost to the State of Ohio. Meyer has been active on the board of directors of the National White Collar Crime Center since 2008, and in 2020 was elected as an officer to the board. In addition, from 2013 through 2023, Meyer served on the board of directors of the Association of Inspectors General.

Inspector General Meyer has dedicated his career to public service for more than 35 years. After completing four years of honorable military service in the United States Navy, Meyer began work as a police officer in 1990, serving as a deputy in the San Francisco Bay area. In 1992, Meyer returned to Ohio, working first as a police officer, and then as a detective for the City of Wilmington Police Department. In 1999, Meyer was recruited to serve as a criminal investigator for the Ohio Attorney General, and was eventually promoted as director of the Ohio Attorney General's Anti-Gang Unit. During this time, Meyer developed and established G.U.A.R.D., a statewide security threat group database which singularly integrated the various data collection systems used by different investigative entities. In 2003, Meyer joined the Ohio Auditor of State's Public Corruption Unit as senior investigator and, in 2007, was promoted to chief of Special Investigations, managing the unit's responsibility of identifying misappropriated or illegally expended public funds, and instituting a statewide fraud prevention training program.

Meyer earned a bachelor's degree in Public Safety Management from Franklin University. He is certified as a fraud examiner with the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, holds a certification as an economic crime forensic examiner with the National White Collar Crime Center, and is a certified inspector general with the Association of Inspectors General.

Message from the Inspector General

I am pleased to present the Office of the Ohio Inspector General's 2025 Annual Report. This report is submitted to the governor and members of the 136th Ohio General Assembly in accordance with Ohio Revised Code §121.48. This report outlines the mission and responsibilities of the Inspector General's Office; examines the office's complaint and investigative processes and related statistics; and cites summaries of several investigations the office released from January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025.



Randall J. Meyer
Inspector General

During the last five years, our office's resources have been focused on investigating fraud, waste, and abuse of tax-payer dollars involving the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) and the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits program. The PUA program was established to provide unemployment benefits to Ohioans who lost their jobs due to the COVID pandemic. Because of the large number of unemployment claims submitted and loosened eligibility requirements, opportunities for fraud were blatantly exploited. After disbursing approximately \$7.6 billion in pandemic-related unemployment benefits in Ohio during fiscal year 2021 alone, ODJFS later identified over one billion dollars of the disbursements as fraudulent.

Between 2021 and 2025, our office opened 28 investigations involving ODJFS and the PUA program. Significant staff resources were assigned to these cases to perform various investigative actions including issuing subpoenas for records, completing forensic analysis, conducting interviews, assisting in search warrants, administering prolonged surveillance of targeted individuals, and collaborating with state and federal partners and local prosecutors. The investigations conducted by our office uncovered egregious levels of fraud by individuals involving millions of taxpayer dollars. In a noteworthy investigation completed in 2025, investigators discovered a subject who had spent hundreds of thousands of fraudulently obtained tax-payer dollars on various luxury items including a diamond encrusted Cartier watch, a Lamborghini Urus, and a Mercedes Benz, as well as a 40th birthday celebration for herself on a chartered yacht in Miami, Florida. To date, the Inspector General's Office has completed and released 20 reports of investigation related to benefits fraud involving the PUA program, identifying \$30,576,553.89 lost to the State of Ohio and resulting in 166 criminal charges and 30 convictions.

As Ohio's Inspector General, my office continues to find new techniques to combat malfeasance, innovative methods to increase the public's trust, and meaningful recommendations to improve and expand current best practices and processes.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randall J. Meyer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Table of Contents

Mission and Responsibilities.....	1
Conducting an Investigation.....	2
Filing a Complaint.....	3
Types of Allegations.....	4
2025 Statistical Summary.....	6
Report from the Inspector General for the General Area.....	8
A Focus on Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Investigations.....	9
Summaries of PUA Cases	11
Summaries of Selected Cases - General.....	27
Report from the Inspector General for the Ohio Department of Transportation.....	34
Summary of Selected Cases	35
Report from the Inspector General for the Ohio Bureau of Workers’ Compensation and Industrial Commission	41
Summary of Selected Case	43
2025 Community Outreach.....	46
APPENDICES.....	47
Appendix 1: Statutory References.....	47
Appendix 2: Table of Organization.....	57
CONTACT INFORMATION	58

Mission and Responsibilities

Safeguarding Integrity in State Government

The Office of the Ohio Inspector General was established in 1988 by an Executive Order of the Governor. Through this executive order, the inspector general was charged with the authority to, “... examine, investigate, and make recommendations with respect to the prevention and detection of wrongful acts and omissions in the Governor’s Office and the agencies of state government... .” In 1990, the legislature passed Amended Substitute House Bill 588, which permanently established the position and the Office of the Ohio Inspector General.



The jurisdiction of the Inspector General’s Office is limited to the executive branch of state government and to any person and/or vendors who do business with the state. The inspector general is authorized by law to investigate alleged wrongful acts or omissions committed by state officers or employees. It extends to the governor, the governor’s cabinet and staff, state agencies (as defined in Ohio Revised Code (ORC) §1.60), departments, authorities, and boards and commissions. The inspector general’s jurisdiction includes state universities and state medical colleges, but does not include community colleges. The courts, the General Assembly, and the offices of the Secretary of State, the Auditor of State, the Treasurer of State, and the Attorney General, and their respective state officers or employees are statutorily excluded from the jurisdiction of the Inspector General’s Office. Likewise, the office has no authority to investigate allegations concerning any federal, county, municipal or other local officials, agencies, or governing bodies.

The inspector general’s authority extends to:

- Addressing complaints received by the office alleging that wrongful acts or omissions have been committed or are being committed by a state officer or employee; or any person or vendor who does business with the state.
- Investigating the management and operation of state agencies on the inspector general’s initiative to determine whether wrongful acts and omissions have been committed or are being committed by state officers and employees.

The Inspector General’s Office does not become involved in private disputes, labor/management issues, or litigation. The office does not review or override the decisions of a court or the findings of any administrative body.

The Inspector General’s Office is not an advocate for either the state agency or the complainant in any particular case. The office’s obligation is to ensure that the investigative process is conducted fully, fairly, and impartially. As independent fact finders, wrongdoing may or may not be found as the result of an investigation.

Conducting an Investigation

Complaint Process and Reports of Investigation

Anyone may file a complaint with the Inspector General's Office. At times, complaints are forwarded by other agencies or officials. Complaint forms can be downloaded from the inspector general's website or are provided upon request. Complaints can be made anonymously. However, without the ability to follow up and ask questions of the complainant, anonymous complaints are often more difficult to investigate and verify.

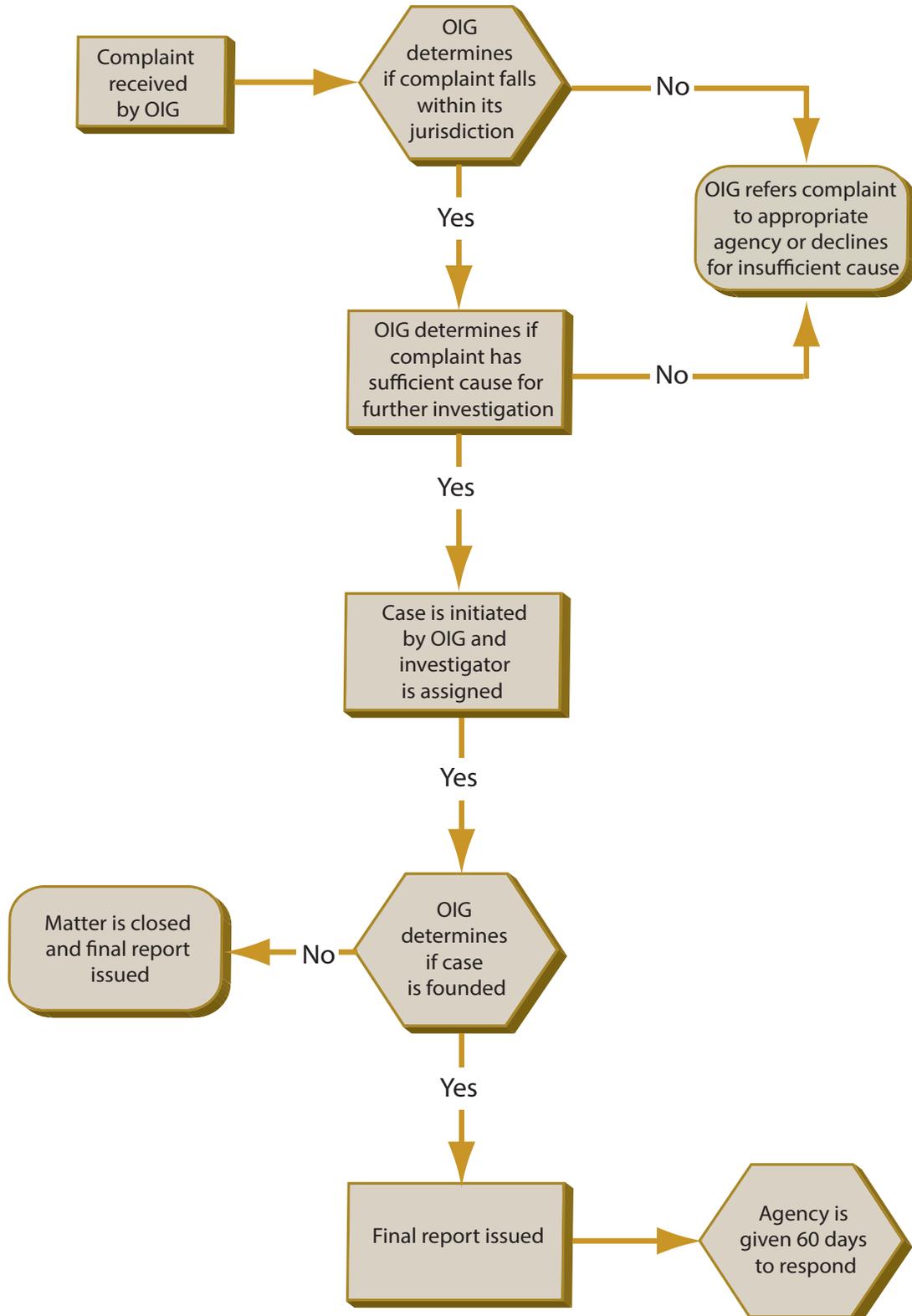
The inspector general may grant complainants or witnesses confidentiality. When appropriate, information received from complainants and witnesses may also be deemed "confidential." Confidentiality is appropriate when it is necessary to protect a witness. It is also appropriate in cases where the information and documentation provided during the course of an investigation would, if disclosed, compromise the integrity of the investigation or when considered confidential by operation of law.

The Inspector General's Office does not offer legal advice or opinions to complainants. In instances where it appears that a complainant is seeking legal assistance, or where it appears that another agency is better suited to address a complainant's issues, the office will advise the complainant to consult with private legal counsel or a more appropriate agency, organization, or resource.

Complaints received are reviewed by the intake committee. This committee consists of the inspector general, chief legal counsel, and case manager. A complaint offering credible allegations of wrongful acts or omissions that fall within the inspector general's jurisdiction is assigned to a deputy inspector general for investigation. Opened and ongoing investigations are generally not subject to public disclosure in order to safeguard the integrity of the investigative process.

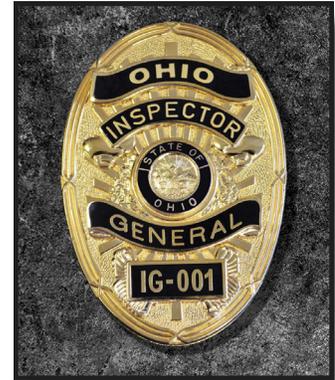
At the conclusion of an investigation by the Inspector General's Office, a report of investigation is completed and provided to the governor and the agency subject to investigation. The report may include recommendations for the agency to consider in addressing and avoiding the recurrence of fraud, waste, abuse, or corruption uncovered by the investigation. For each report where the inspector general concludes there is reasonable cause to believe wrongful acts or omissions have occurred, the agency subject to the investigation is asked to respond back to the inspector general within 60 days of the issuance of the report, detailing how the report's recommendations will be implemented. Although there is no enforcement mechanism to ensure items are addressed, the inspector general exercises his due diligence and follows up with the agency. When appropriate, a report of investigation may also be forwarded to a prosecuting authority for review to determine whether the underlying facts give rise to a criminal prosecution. Selected issued reports of investigation are posted on the inspector general's website and all issued reports of investigation are available to the public upon request, unless otherwise noted by law.

Filing a Complaint



Types of Allegations

Complaints submitted to the Inspector General’s Office may include a wide range of wrongdoing and may include allegations of more than one type of misconduct committed by an entity or individual. As investigations proceed, new allegations of wrongdoing may be discovered and other individuals or entities may become part of the investigation. Five types of wrongdoing that fall under the inspector general’s jurisdiction are:



1 Fraud

An act, intentional or reckless, designed to mislead or deceive.

Examples:

- Fraudulent travel reimbursement
- Falsifying financial records to cover up a theft
- Intentionally misrepresenting the cost of goods or services
- Falsifying payroll information or other government records

2 Waste

A reckless or grossly negligent act that causes state funds to be spent in a manner that was not authorized or which represents significant inefficiency and needless expense.

Examples:

- Purchase of unneeded supplies or equipment
- Purchase of goods at inflated prices
- Failure to reuse major resources or reduce waste generation

3 Abuse

The intentional, wrongful, or improper use or destruction of state resources, or a seriously improper practice that does not involve prosecutable fraud.

Examples:

- Failure to report damage to state equipment or property
- Improper hiring practices
- Significant unauthorized time away from work
- Misuse of overtime or compensatory time
- Misuse of state money, equipment, or supplies

4 Corruption

An intentional act of fraud, waste, or abuse, or the use of public office for personal, pecuniary gain for oneself or another.

Examples:

- Accepting kickbacks or other gifts or gratuities
- Bid rigging
- Contract steering

5 Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is a situation in which a person is in a position to exploit his/her professional capacity in some way for personal benefit.

Examples:

- Purchasing state goods from vendors who employ or are controlled by the purchaser's relatives
- Outside employment with vendors
- Using confidential information for personal profit or to assist outside organizations

2025 Statistical Summary

The Inspector General’s Office received a total of 368 complaints in 2025. From 2011 through 2025, more than 5,100 complaints have been reviewed.

2025 Complaint Status				
	<u>GENERAL</u>	<u>ODOT</u> ¹	<u>OBWC/OIC</u> ²	<u>ALL</u>
Cases Opened	17	4	3	24
No Jurisdiction	176	0	0	176
Insufficient Cause	63	8	6	77
Referred	75	2	0	77
Pending ³	13	1	0	14
Complaint Totals	344	15	9	368

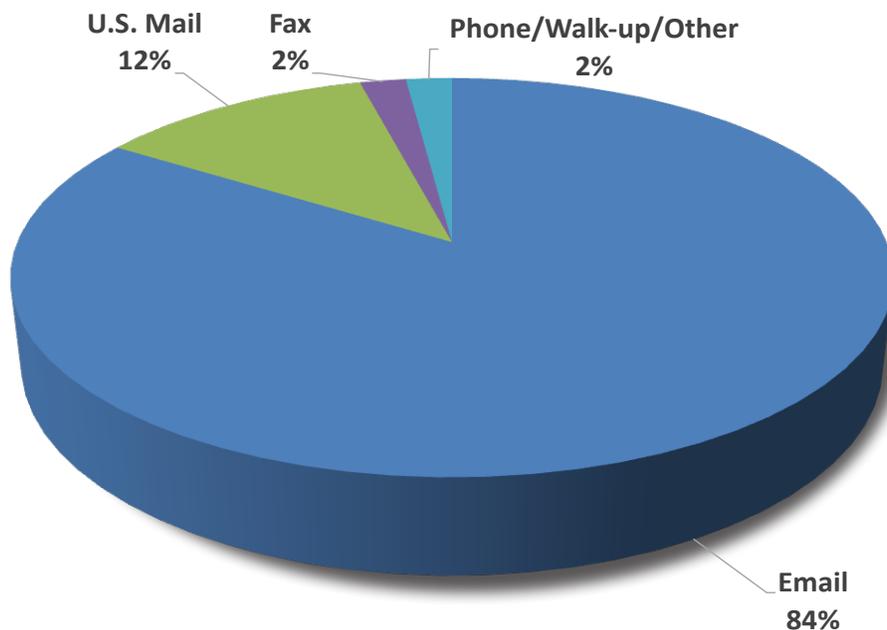
¹ ODOT = Ohio Department of Transportation.

² OBWC/OIC = Ohio Bureau of Workers’ Compensation/Ohio Industrial Commission.

³ “Pending” are those complaints that require additional information before a determination can be made.

The following chart highlights the various methods in which complaints were received by the Inspector General’s Office:

Methods in which Complaints were Received in 2025

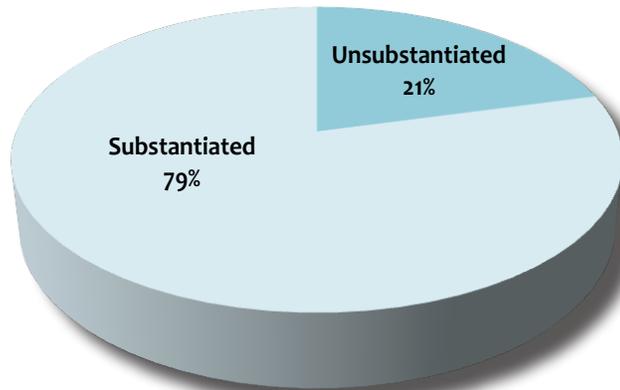


The Inspector General’s Office closed 19 cases in 2025. The number of cases closed may reflect cases that were opened in previous years. The following chart summarizes the outcome of the cases closed during the period covered by the 2025 Annual Report:

Results of Cases Closed in 2025	
Total Recommendations Made to Agencies	14 in 7 cases
Total Referrals	19 in 11 cases
Total Criminal Charges	61 in 5 cases
Identified Monetary Loss	\$10,166,219.34 in 10 cases

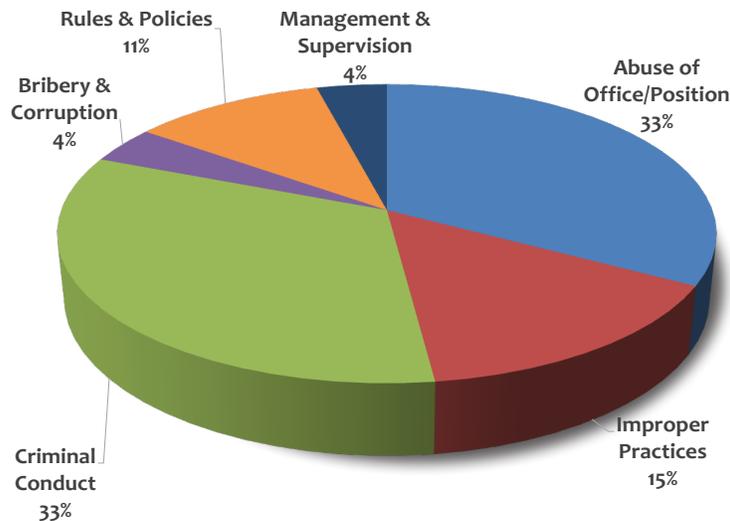
Of the 19 cases closed in 2025, the following chart illustrates the percentage of allegations in closed cases that were found to be substantiated versus those allegations that were found to be unsubstantiated.

Findings of Allegations for Cases Closed in 2025



The following chart shows the types of alleged wrongdoing substantiated in cases closed in 2025. Cases investigated for criminal conduct (33%) and abuse of office/position (33%) led the categories in the cases closed for 2025.

Substantiated Allegations by Type in 2025



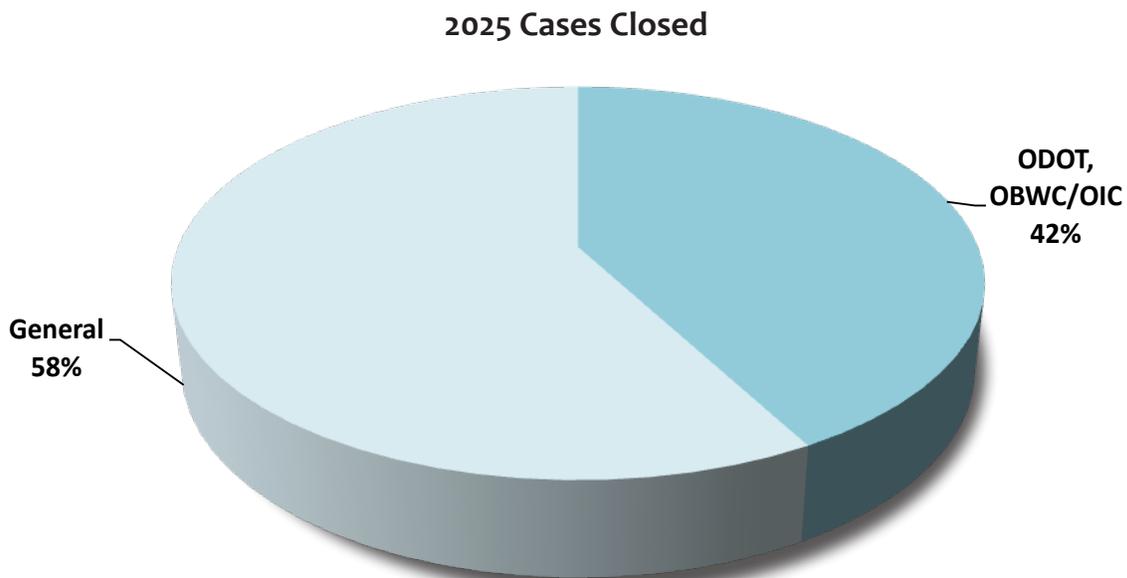
General Area

2025 Report

In order to efficiently investigate matters delegated to this office by statute, the Inspector General’s Office divides its investigatory casework between three separate areas. Two of these areas, the Ohio Bureau of Workers’ Compensation/Ohio Industrial Commission (OBWC/OIC), and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), have assigned deputy inspectors general. These designated positions were created by specific statutes in the Ohio Revised Code.

The third area, the General Area, is broad in scope and encompasses all the remaining State of Ohio departments and agencies under the purview of the Governor’s Office. Deputy inspectors general who are assigned casework in the General Area are responsible for investigating matters within many entities of Ohio government, including the departments of Job and Family Services, Natural Resources, Public Safety, and Rehabilitation and Correction, to name a few. Because of the extensive nature of the casework performed in the General Area, this area generates and reflects the largest amount of cases completed, or closed, by the office.

In 2025, there were 17 cases opened and 11 cases closed in the General Area of the Inspector General’s Office. As part of the lifespan of a case, the number of cases closed may reflect cases that were opened in previous years.



GENERAL AREA

A FOCUS ON PANDEMIC UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE INVESTIGATIONS

In 2020, because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the increased unemployment of millions of Americans, Congress passed various programs to address the crisis. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act was a \$2.2 trillion economic stimulus bill passed by the 116th U.S. Congress and was signed into law on March 27, 2020. The CARES Act included provisions for the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program. The PUA program provided temporary benefits and support to self-employed individuals, independent contractors, and others who did not qualify for traditional unemployment benefits and had lost work due to COVID-19 related reasons. Additionally, the PUA program provided temporary benefits and support to workers whose earnings averaged less than \$280 per week in their former jobs and permitted qualified applicants to receive these benefits for up to 39 weeks. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) Office of Unemployment Insurance Operations (ODJFS OUI) was responsible for the distribution of PUA benefits to qualified individuals in Ohio.



The CARES Act stipulated that the distribution of PUA benefits to individuals was to end on December 31, 2020. However, on December 27, 2020, the Consolidated Appropriations Act was signed into law and extended the expiration date set by the CARES Act for the payment of PUA benefits to qualified applicants from December 31, 2020, to March 14, 2021. The Act further extended the number of weeks an eligible applicant could receive these benefits from 39 weeks to 50 weeks. On March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act was signed into law and extended the payment of PUA benefits to qualified individuals from March 14, 2021, to September 6, 2021, and extended the maximum weeks an eligible applicant could receive these benefits from 50 weeks to 70 weeks. The State of Ohio ended the PUA program on September 4, 2021.

Because the PUA program expanded and loosened eligibility to obtain unemployment benefits for recipients, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) received an unprecedented number of unemployment compensation claims. This increase in claims necessitated ODJFS to hire intermittent and temporary contracted workers to process the claims. In fiscal year 2021, ODJFS disbursed approximately \$7.6 billion in pandemic unemployment benefits and later, ODJFS identified millions of dollars of the disbursements as fraudulent. To address the rampant fraud connected to the PUA program, an investigative group (PUA Investigative Group) was established in Ohio

Because the PUA program expanded and loosened eligibility to obtain unemployment benefits for recipients, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) received an unprecedented number of unemployment compensation claims. This increase in claims necessitated ODJFS to hire intermittent and temporary contracted workers to process the claims. In fiscal year 2021, ODJFS disbursed approximately \$7.6 billion in pandemic unemployment benefits and later, ODJFS identified millions of dollars of the disbursements as fraudulent. To address the rampant fraud connected to the PUA program, an investigative group (PUA Investigative Group) was established in Ohio

that consisted of the Office of the Ohio Inspector General; Ohio State Highway Patrol; U.S. Department of Labor - Office of Inspector General; and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

Overview of PUA Eligibility, Claim Processing, and Benefit Payments

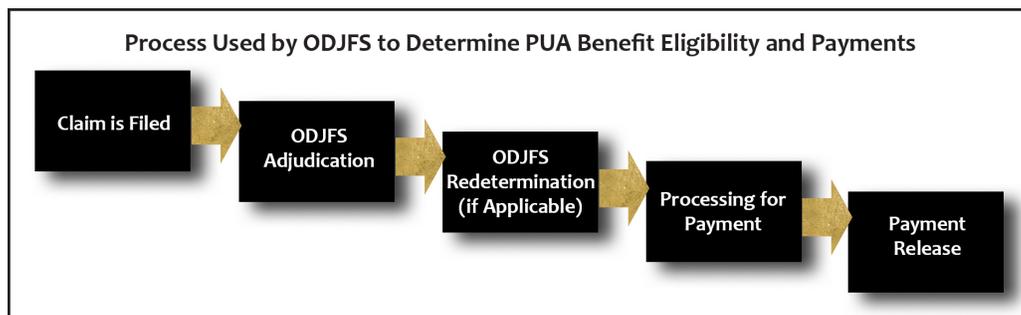
During the period when PUA benefits were available for distribution, ODJFS posted on their website the requirement for PUA applicants to self-certify their COVID-19 eligibility to receive benefits. The U.S. Department of Labor issued guidance and defined PUA eligibility for three groups of people:

- Those previously receiving traditional unemployment benefits who refused to return to work or refused an offer of work because the workplace was not in compliance with local, state, or national health and safety standards directly related to COVID-19.
- Those who provided services to an educational institution or educational service agency and were fully or partially unemployed due to COVID-19 related reasons.
- Those who were laid-off or had their work hours reduced due to COVID-19 reasons.

Also, to ensure applicants met the criteria of eligibility and to strengthen the integrity of the PUA program, the Consolidated Appropriations Act amended the CARES Act by:

- Requiring states to verify the identity of applicants.
- Requiring applicants to substantiate employment or self-employment, and wages earned or paid, to confirm eligibility for pandemic unemployment assistance no later than 90 days from the date of application.

To determine PUA benefit eligibility and the proper release of payments , ODJFS used the following process:



1. The Claimant Applied for Benefits: This was the initial step in the PUA claims process and required the claimant to:
 - a. Complete a claim application questionnaire;
 - b. Enter their personal, demographic, and work history information;
 - c. Adjust the start date of the claim to the last date the claimant worked/ onset of COVID-19 date. This action was referred to as “backdating;”

- d. Upload all ODJFS-required documentation into the claims system; and
- e. Submit the claim.
2. ODJFS Adjudication: After the claimant submitted the claim to ODJFS, the adjudication step was the initial determination made by ODJFS on the claim based on the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the claimant’s application and uploaded documents.
3. ODJFS Redetermination (if applicable): This was a claimant appeal process that occurred when a claim initially adjudicated as “Ineligible” was appealed by the claimant. The claim was either sent to the appeals team or to the redetermination team for further review.
4. Processing for Payment: Once the claimant was found to be eligible for benefits, ODJFS performed steps to release benefit payments to the claimant by either direct deposit or by “ReliaCard®,” which is Ohio’s unemployment-specific debit card.
5. Payment Release: The claimant received their benefit payment by direct deposit, or the funds were loaded onto their ReliaCard® for immediate use.

Once ODJFS contacted US Bank, a ReliaCard® debit card with the approved benefit amount was mailed to the claimant.

Claimants could make purchases with the US Bank ReliaCard® anywhere Visa® and Mastercard® debit cards were accepted, or could withdraw their PUA funds in the form of cash from bank ATMs. The US Bank ReliaCard® does not require a personal identification number or PIN for signature-based purchases should the claimant choose credit when making the purchase. However, a PIN is needed for debit card purchases and cash withdrawals from ATMs. The four-digit PIN is created by the cardholder when activating the card.

Summaries of PUA Cases

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES

FILE ID NO: 2022-CA00003

UPDATE Released on October 30, 2025

Preliminary Report of Investigation was Issued on August 31, 2023.

On February 15, 2022, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) referred an allegation of wrongdoing by former employee and intermittent Customer Service Representative (CSR) Alana Hamilton to the PUA Investigative Group. As a CSR, Hamilton was responsible for reviewing PUA claims to assure claimants submitted the required and proper identity verification and employment verification documents. Investigators examined Hamilton’s actions at ODJFS and determined Hamilton had accessed unassigned claims with no legitimate work-related purpose and redetermined the identity/employment verification and program eligibility issues to eligible without the required documentation, releasing fraudulent PUA monies on the claims. From evidence collected and interviews conducted by the Ohio Inspector General’s Office,

investigators discovered Hamilton had an accomplice, Lasheta McClellan, who owned two daycares in the greater Columbus area.

Investigators obtained and reviewed records that showed the two women had frequent communications together about various PUA claims and indicated collaborative activities and payments exchanged between the two parties. Investigators determined the two women were working in concert with one another in a scheme to commit fraud in the State of Ohio.

Hamilton admitted to investigators during an interview that she was working with McClellan, stating that McClellan would charge claimants a fee to assist them in receiving fraudulent PUA monies. McClellan, in turn, paid fees to Hamilton for releasing PUA benefits to ineligible claimants. In total, Hamilton received \$59,850 from Lasheta McClellan or the businesses McClellan controlled. Hamilton's unauthorized accesses to the claims and improper clearing of issues resulted in the fraudulent release of PUA benefit funds.

In addition, investigators discovered numerous claims that contained information directly or indirectly associated with McClellan and did not involve actions involving Hamilton. Investigators found Hamilton and McClellan had engaged in activities independent of one another that resulted in the fraudulent release of PUA benefits.

Investigators obtained physical search warrants to access McClellan's home and her two daycares. From the search warrants conducted at these three locations, investigators recovered:

- \$907,206 in cash.
- 16 ReliaCards® in other claimants' names.
- Electronic devices (iPhones, laptops, etc.)
- Various documents in claimants' names including "Notice of Determination" letters to claimants from ODJFS, photocopies of claimants' state-issued identification cards, and loose papers containing handwritten lists of names with Social Security numbers.

Also, from the search warrant executed at McClellan's home, investigators found multiple notebooks containing various handwritten lists and notes including names, Social Security numbers, and other personal identifying information. Investigators reviewed these notebooks, and obtained and analyzed records from Facebook messenger, iCloud, and McClellan's iPhone, and conducted interviews with various claimants. From their evaluation of these records and interviews conducted, investigators identified 86 claimants McClellan improperly assisted in manipulating their PUA claims that resulted in the fraudulent release of PUA benefit funds.

During the same period McClellan was collecting fraudulently obtained PUA monies, investigators discovered and reviewed a large volume of photographic and written social media records detailing McClellan's ostentatious lifestyle, noting very large

purchases she made during the pandemic. From their review of these records, investigators discovered that on October 23, 2021, McClellan had hosted and paid for a celebration weekend for her 40th birthday in Miami, Florida, on the chartered yacht, “South Beach Lady.” The event included a photo shoot at the Villa Casa Casuarina (the former Versace Mansion). Investigators found various transactions associated with McClellan’s 40th birthday celebration including \$25,421.35 paid to the CEO of the South Beach Lady Yacht Charters; \$7,670 to a photographer; \$35,363.50 to a “Florist;” and \$7,956.38 to an event planner.

Additionally, investigators obtained and reviewed records that indicated \$48,000.00 was paid on February 13, 2021, to Johnny Dang & Co., a custom jewelry designer and luxury jewelry retail store. Facebook messages posted by McClellan on February 14, 2021, showed McClellan sharing a photo with one of her friends (pictured below on the left) of Cartier jewelry she had purchased. The same jewelry was located and documented (pictured below on the right) during the executed search warrant at McClellan’s home.

Investigators also learned McClellan had purchased on August 28, 2021, a Lamborghini Urus (pictured below) for

\$290,113.76. According to the loan documents obtained via subpoena, McClellan put a down payment of \$103,927.00 in cash on the vehicle at the time of purchase.



Through evidence obtained and evaluated by search warrants and subpoenas conducted by the PUA Investigative Group, investigators determined and concluded Hamilton and McClellan worked either together or individually to fraudulently release PUA benefit funds for 230 claims, totaling \$5,906,667.50.

	Number of Fraudulent Claims	Dollar Amount of Fraudulent Claims
Hamilton/McClellan	40	\$1,171,561.00
Hamilton Only	104	\$2,395,594.50
McClellan Only	86	\$2,339,512.00
Totals	230	\$5,906,667.50

Lasheta McClellan was sentenced on September 22, 2025, and received a prison sentence of four years and 11 months and paid \$1.5 million in restitution.

On October 30, 2025, Alana Hamilton, who previously pled guilty to Engaging in a Pattern of Corrupt Activity; Theft; and Filing Incomplete, False and Fraudulent Returns, received a prison sentence of four years and 11 months and was ordered to pay \$1,171,561 in restitution to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES

FILE ID NO: 2022-CA00007

On February 15, 2022, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) referred an allegation of wrongdoing by former Intermittent Customer Service Assistant 2 (CSA2) Kyara Cauthon to the PUA Investigative Group. Kyara Cauthon was employed by ODJFS as an intermittent customer service assistant 2 (CSA2) from August 2, 2021, through November 15, 2021. Cauthon was assigned to the call center to answer phone calls and help claimants with general inquiries about their PUA claim, submitting internal forms for appeals, and redetermining Identity Verification Issues (IDV) to “eligible” for claimants who uploaded all of their required identity verification documents.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services made the referral to the PUA Investigative Group due to their review of Cauthon’s activities in the ODJFS Unemployment Framework for Automated Claim and Tax Services (uFACTS). The uFACTS system maintains an audit trail for ODJFS claim files and tracks every instance of access to a claim file, when claim information is added or altered, and identifies the individual performing the actions. The system also tracks every instance when an individual’s claim is searched for by claim number, by the claimant’s name, or by the claimant’s Social Security number.

ODJFS alleged that Cauthon accessed several Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) claims and improperly inflated claimant incomes without obtaining from the claimants the documentation required to support the reported increases of their

incomes. Her actions resulted in the fraudulent release of PUA benefits to claimants for more than they were entitled to receive. According to ODJFS, Cauthon's actions resulted in a total of \$311,943 in PUA benefits improperly paid to claimants.

Investigators examined the claims identified by ODJFS for any personal and financial connections between Cauthon and the PUA benefit recipients in question. Investigators found that Cauthon violated the ODJFS Internal Policy and Procedure Manual IPP 0003 Standards of Employee Conduct after discovering two of the claimants were her relatives and a third was Cauthon's boyfriend with whom she has children. ODJFS Internal Policy and Procedure Manual IPP 0003 states in part:

... Employees will not authorize or use their authority or influence of their position to secure the authorization of employment or benefit (including a promotion or preferential treatment) for a person closely related by blood, marriage or other significant relationship including business association.

Investigators subpoenaed Cauthon's bank records and discovered several monetary transfers were made from PUA claimants to Cauthon through electronic payment platforms such as Cash App. Investigators also obtained and reviewed records indicating that several claimants' ReliaCards® were mailed directly to Cauthon's home address. Additionally, investigators discovered records showing Cauthon had made online purchases with the claimants' ReliaCards® and had the items shipped directly to her residence. These purchases included high-end luxury footwear, clothing, and accessories, and totaled over \$6,000.

ODJFS Internal Policy and Procedure Manual IPP 0003

"... Employees will not authorize or use their authority or influence of their position to secure the authorization of employment or benefit ... for a person closely related by blood, marriage or other significant relationship including business association."

During this investigation, it was revealed that Cauthon had worked in conjunction with ODJFS Intermittent Customer Service Representative Alana Hamilton (aka Alana Davis) to improperly access, change, and redetermine PUA claims, resulting in the fraudulent release of PUA benefit funds. Investigators found records indicating Cauthon paid Hamilton for these services. Alana Hamilton was employed by ODJFS as an intermittent customer service representative (CSR) from December 21, 2020, to October 8, 2021. Hamilton is the subject of another Ohio Inspector General Report of Investigation (2022-CA00003 discussed previously) for her actions in the fraudulent release of PUA benefits to ineligible claimants.

The investigation also revealed a relationship between Cauthon and Columbus, Ohio, resident Jasmine Shows (aka Jada Shows/Jada Carter). Investigators found that Cauthon paid Shows to produce fraudulent documents for her (Cauthon) to upload to PUA claims to meet the document requirements needed to release payments (i.e., proof of employment, income, residency, and disability due to COVID-19). The fraudulent documents included fake pay stubs, fake utility bills, fake tax documents (i.e., W-2s, Form 1040s, and Schedule Cs), fake medical documents (COVID-19 tests), and a fake ODJFS letter.

Investigators also discovered Cauthon, during the time she was employed by ODJFS, had improperly filed her own personal PUA claim for unemployment benefits and fraudulently received a total of \$6,291. Cauthon was ineligible for these benefits because she had resigned from her previous job for personal reasons and was not unemployed due to COVID-19. Investigators found a fake medical COVID-19 letter created by Shows indicating a positive COVID test that Cauthon had uploaded to her PUA claim.

Investigators further discovered several PUA claims not previously identified by ODJFS as possibly fraudulent that Cauthon created and submitted. Investigators determined a total of \$56,724 in additional PUA funds that were fraudulently paid on these claims.

With the assistance of the U.S. Department of Labor – Office of Inspector General, investigators were informed that Cauthon filed for and received PUA benefit funds through Colorado’s Department of Labor and Employment in the name of her boyfriend with whom she has children. Colorado released a total of \$1,762 in fraudulent PUA benefit funds to a bank card mailed directly to Cauthon’s residence in Ohio. Colorado’s Department of Labor and Employment also provided what was determined to be a fraudulent document created by Shows which was used by Cauthon to apply for the Colorado PUA claim.

The Inspector General’s Office sent the report of investigation to the Franklin County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office for consideration, resulting in the indictments by a Franklin County Grand Jury of both Kyara Cauthon and Jasmine Shows on charges of Engaging in Corrupt Activity, Theft, Telecommunications Fraud, Tampering with Records, Forgery, and Money Laundering. The Inspector General’s Office also sent the report of investigation to the Ohio Auditor of State for consideration.

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES

FILE ID NO: 2021-CA00018

On August 19, 2021, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) referred an allegation of wrongdoing to the PUA Investigative Group. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services reported that they had conducted a review of former intermittent Customer Service Representative (CSR) Renita Carr’s activities in the ODJFS Unemployment Framework for Automated Claim and Tax Services (uFACTS) system. As an ODJFS CSR, Carr used the uFACTS system to conduct her assigned duties and was responsible for reviewing PUA claims to assure claimants submitted the required and proper identity and employment verification documents. As explained previously, the uFACTS system maintains an audit trail for ODJFS claim files, and tracks every instance of access to a claim file, times when claim information is added or altered, and identifies the individual performing the actions. The system also tracks every instance when an individual’s claim is searched for by claim number, by the claimant’s name, or by the claimant’s Social Security number. From their review of Carr’s activities in the uFACTS system, ODJFS discovered Carr had improperly accessed a relative’s Pandemic

Unemployment Assistance (PUA) claim when she had no business reason to do so. ODJFS also discovered Carr had improperly searched for specific PUA claimants and accessed their claims, improperly voided fraud and eligibility issues, and removed fact finding information which Carr was not authorized to perform.

Renita Carr was employed by ODJFS as an intermittent customer service representative from May 27, 2021, through August 6, 2021. According to ODJFS, Carr was initially assigned to verify the accuracy and completeness of PUA claimants' submitted identification information. Two weeks later, Carr received training and was assigned to review claimants' employment information (W-2s and tax forms) and their program eligibility. Prior to working for ODJFS, Carr was employed as an ODJFS subcontractor for Insight Global, LLC, in the capacity of a tier-two customer service representative in the call center from January 19, 2021, through May 21, 2021. At Insight Global, LLC, Carr was responsible for responding to calls from claimants regarding their PUA applications/claims and for answering PUA claimants' questions, reviewing correspondence received related to the individual's claim, administering PIN resets for PUA claimants as needed, assisting PUA claimants in resolving hold payment issues on their claims, and correcting a PUA claimant's application information as needed.

ODJFS provided to investigators all the PUA claims Carr accessed. ODJFS also identified to investigators 28 PUA claims in which Carr performed improper actions allowing PUA benefit funds to be released. Carr's actions included but were not limited to:

- Voiding fraud issues.
- Voiding program eligibility (PE) issues.
- Voiding identity verification (IDV) issues.
- Detaching fact finding information from fraud issues.
- Voiding employment verification/employment evidence requirement (EMER) issues.



Investigators analyzed the 28 claims and confirmed Carr had improperly searched for specific PUA claimants and accessed their claims, improperly voided fraud and eligibility issues, and improperly removed fact finding information which Carr was not authorized to perform. The Inspector General's Office concluded Carr's improper actions resulted in the fraudulent release of a total of \$565,949 in PUA benefit funds to 28 claimants.

After receiving the referral from ODJFS, the Inspector General's Office obtained and evaluated Renita Carr's Cash App and Green Dot® account records, bank account records, cellular telephone records, and Insight Global and ODJFS employment records. Investigators also evaluated social media posts, bank records, and telephone records to ascertain any connections between Carr and the PUA claimants whose claims she accessed in the uFACTS system. From their analysis of these records, investigators determined Carr improperly accessed and modified five PUA claims for claimants who were a relative or an acquaintance. Two of the five of these claimants received PUA

benefit funds and were included in the list of 28 PUA claims identified by ODJFS as fraudulent and provided to investigators. Specifically, investigators determined Carr's improper actions led to the fraudulent release of a total of \$20,028 in PUA benefit funds to Claimant 2 and a total of \$31,830 in PUA benefit funds to Claimant 3.

The ODJFS Internal Policy and Procedure Manual IPP 0003 - *Standards of Employee Conduct: Section VI. Procedures; B. General Standards of Conduct under Nepotism*, states in part:

... Employees will not authorize or use their authority or influence of their position to secure the authorization of employment or benefit (including a promotion or preferential treatment) for a person closely related by blood, marriage or other significant relationship including business association.

Investigators attempted multiple times to contact Renita Carr by telephone and by email but received no response. The Inspector General's Office referred this report of investigation to the Franklin County Prosecuting Attorney's Office and the Ohio Auditor of State for consideration. On January 28, 2026, Renita Carr was indicted by a Franklin County Grand Jury on charges of Theft in Office, Telecommunications Fraud, Aggravated Theft, and Tampering with Records.

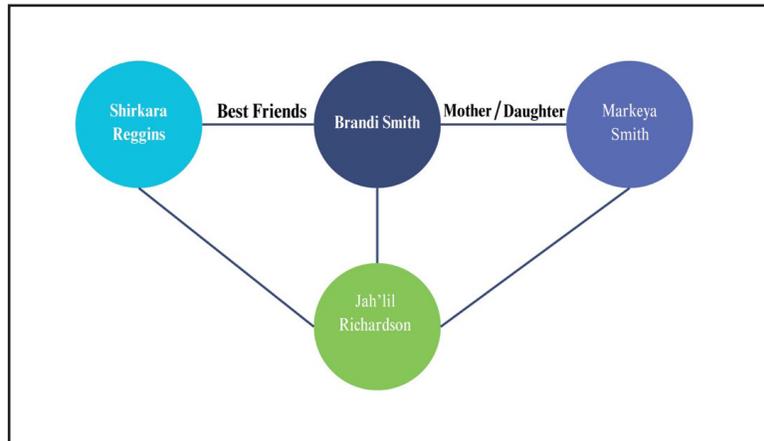
OHIO DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES

FILE ID NO: 2022-CA00002, 00024, 00025 - PRELIMINARY

In October of 2022, ODJFS referred an allegation of wrongdoing to the Inspector General's Office concerning Customer Service Representative (CSR) Markeya Smith, who worked for Randstad as an ODJFS contractor assigned to the Ohio PUA program. ODJFS alleged Markeya Smith improperly cleared issues and inflated claimant incomes on PUA claims to fraudulently increase the weekly benefit amounts paid to the claimants. Also in October of 2022, ODJFS referred an allegation of wrongdoing concerning former intermittent ODJFS CSR Brandi Smith. ODJFS alleged Brandi Smith improperly accessed and/or authorized payments on PUA claims.

From their review of ODJFS records, investigators found a significant overlap on PUA claims accessed by the two women. Investigators also learned that Brandi and Markeya Smith were mother and daughter, and were both acquaintances with Insight Global subcontracted employee CSR "Cherita" Reggins, who also improperly accessed and authorized payments on PUA claims to which the claimants were not entitled. Investigators determined that "Cherita" Reggins was actually Shircara Reggins who was using her mother's name ("Cherita") for her employment at Insight Global and later at ODJFS. In exchange for releasing improper PUA benefit funds, investigators determined the trio received cash or electronic payments from the claimants. The investigation also found that the trio frequently used multiple recruiters to find additional PUA claimants who desired to have issues removed from their claims and/or have their claims improperly inflated. Investigators specifically examined the actions of one particular recruiter, Jah'lil Suber-Richardson. Suber-Richardson acted as a middleman and would

charge a PUA claimant a fee for his services and then split that fee with the inside connection (those who had access to the ODJFS uFACTS system) for manipulating the claim. Investigators established connections between the four people from their analysis of Facebook records, bank records, phone information, and IP address records.



Investigators linked Suber-Richardson to 151 PUA claims that fraudulently released, in total, \$2,509,434 in PUA funds to ineligible claimants.

Investigators also discovered Markeya Smith had filed her own PUA claim to receive benefits in May 2020 shortly before her employment with Randstad. Markeya Smith had uploaded to her claim a picture of her photo ID, birth certificates, and Social Security cards for herself and two dependents. No proof of income was uploaded to her claim as required. Investigators discovered Markeya Smith had improperly accessed her own PUA claim in uFACTS and voided fraud holds. Investigators also discovered Brandi Smith had accessed her daughter Markeya's claim in uFACTS and improperly voided an employment issue. This fraudulent action released additional ineligible PUA funds to Markeya Smith. Investigators determined Markeya Smith had fraudulently received, in total, \$29,151 in ineligible PUA funds on her own claim.

Investigators discovered Brandi Smith had also filed a personal PUA claim for which she was not eligible. Brandi Smith filed the claim on June 11, 2020, and due to confidentiality, the name is referred to as "Relative A." Relative A is closely related to Brandi Smith and though Relative A's name was used to file the claim, Brandi Smith's iCloud email address and phone number (the same email and phone number she used to secure employment with ODJFS) were both listed for Relative A on the claim. The address used on the claim was the address where Brandi Smith was living at the time and where the claimant's ReliaCard® was mailed. Investigators determined the IP address of the computer used to access Relative A's claim on multiple occasions was the same IP address Brandi Smith used to eSign employment documents for ODJFS.

Investigators obtained and reviewed the transaction records for the ReliaCard® and two other bank accounts associated with Relative A's claim (one bank account in the name of Brandi Smith and one account in the name of Relative A), all of which were used for deposits and expenditures of Relative A's PUA benefit funds. Both bank accounts had similar spending transaction locations and activity as the ReliaCard® transactions. Investigators discovered a portion of the PUA funds from Relative A's claim were used

in the Houston, Texas, area. Investigators also discovered Brandi Smith moved to the Houston area in early July 2021, and also at that time, debit card transactions were made in the Houston, Texas, area. A bank account in Relative A's name was created online on July 22, 2021, using a Houston IP address, Brandi Smith's telephone number, and an address she frequently used.

Investigators interviewed Relative A on September 20, 2024. Relative A told investigators that he did not file a PUA claim and did not receive any PUA benefit payments. Brandi Smith's phone number, email address, and mailing address were used to file the claim, and Relative A surmised to investigators that Brandi Smith had to have filed the PUA claim using his name to fraudulently receive PUA funds. Relative A told investigators that the tax forms filed with the claim were not legitimate.

During her interview, Brandi Smith initially insisted to investigators that the PUA funds resulting from Relative A's claim were used by Relative A. However, Smith later admitted that Relative A did not move to Texas and if the PUA funds were used in Texas, it was she who must have spent it.

Investigators concluded Markeya Smith, Shirkara Reggins, and Brandi Smith, while each of them worked as a subcontracted employee and/or ODJFS intermittent employee, had worked together to fraudulently release, in total, \$64,614 in ineligible PUA funds on Relative A's PUA claim.

Investigators also discovered Brandi Smith, while living and working in Ohio, had filed for PUA benefits in three other states – Arizona, California, and Pennsylvania. These three claims were filed over a period of 25 days in August and September of 2020. Smith fraudulently collected \$808 in PUA funds from only one of the three states – California.

Investigators discovered that Markeya Smith had access to the ODJFS benefits system after being terminated by Randstad and released nearly \$3 million in improper PUA benefit payments after her termination, but before her access was revoked. Investigators concluded that Markeya and Brandi Smith, and Shirkara Reggins, had together performed unauthorized actions in the ODJFS benefit system that resulted in the fraudulent release of over \$7 million in improper PUA benefit payments.

... Markeya and Brandi Smith, and Shirkara Reggins, had together performed unauthorized actions in the ODJFS benefit system that resulted in the fraudulent release of over \$7 million in improper PUA benefit payments.

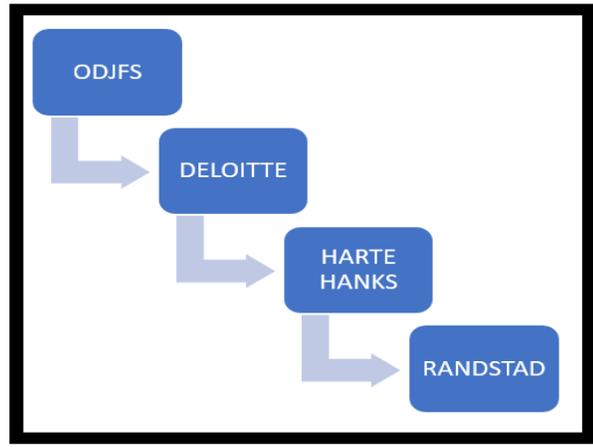
On August 19, 2025, the Franklin County Grand Jury returned an indictment against Markeya Smith, Brandi Smith, Shirkara Reggins, recruiter Jah'lil Suber-Richardson and other co-conspirators for various criminal offenses related to fraudulent claims involving the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program. These counts included

Engaging in a Pattern of Corrupt Activity, Aggravated Theft, Tampering with Records, Telecommunications Fraud, and Money Laundering.

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES

FILE ID NO: 2022-CA00005

On February 15, 2022, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, referred an allegation of wrongdoing by subcontracted (Randstad) Customer Service Assistant 2 (CSA) Sandra Schnieders to the PUA Investigative Group. Schnieders was employed by ODJFS as a subcontracted customer service representative with Randstad from September 17, 2020, through March 24, 2021. According to ODJFS, Schnieders was responsible for answering calls from claimants regarding their PUA applications/ claims, reviewing correspondence received related to an individual's claim, assisting PUA claimants in resolving hold payment issues on their claims, and reviewing PUA claims to assure claimants submitted the required and proper identity and employment verification documents.



ODJFS reported that they had conducted a review of Schnieders' activities in the ODJFS uFACTS system. As a subcontractor of ODJFS, Schnieders used the uFACTS system to perform her assigned duties. The uFACTS system maintains an audit trail for ODJFS PUA-specific claim files. As discussed previously, the uFACTS system tracks every instance of access to a claim file, times when claim information is added or altered, and identifies the individual performing the actions. The system also tracks every instance when an individual's claim is searched for by claim number, by the claimant's name, or by the claimant's Social Security number.

ODJFS reviewed the 903 claims accessed by Schnieders. From their review of Schnieders' activities in the uFACTS system, ODJFS discovered that after Schnieders was hired by ODJFS subcontractor Randstad on September 17, 2020, she failed to update her employment status on her own PUA claim and continued to re-certify weekly that she was unemployed to continue receiving PUA payments between September 19, 2020, through May 29, 2021. ODJFS determined Schnieders was not entitled to receive a total of \$18,870 in PUA payments because of her improper actions.

ODJFS also discovered Schnieders had improperly searched for and accessed 20 PUA claims, performing various improper actions including voiding eligibility issues and

removing fact-finding information which Schnieders was not authorized to perform. Investigators identified eight additional claims that Schnieders improperly accessed and manipulated in order to release PUA benefits. Schnieders' improper actions included but were not limited to:

- Monetary Redetermination, also known as Wage Update.
- Backdating Claims.
- Adjudicating Identity Verification (IDV) issues.
- Filing Continued Claims.
- Detaching Fact Finding Information from Fraud Issues.

As a result of her activities in the uFACTS system, ODJFS determined Schnieders improperly released a total of \$112,240 in PUA funds for eight of the 20 claims identified as fraudulent.

After receiving the referral from ODJFS, the Inspector General's Office reviewed the claims identified by ODJFS that Schnieders accessed through uFACTS, to determine if there were any connections between Schnieders and the PUA claimants whose claims she accessed. As a result of their analysis of these records, investigators determined Schnieders improperly accessed and modified three PUA claims of individuals who were a relative or an acquaintance of hers. Two of the three of these claimants received PUA benefit funds and were included in the list of 20 PUA claims identified by ODJFS as fraudulent and provided to investigators. Specifically, investigators learned from a social media post, that one claimant (Claimant 7) identified herself as Schnieders' aunt, and that Schnieders released \$6,072 on Claimant 7's claim.



The second claimant (Claimant 6) was an acquaintance of Schnieders', and Schnieders released PUA benefit funds in the amount of \$16,725.

Investigators concluded Schnieders violated the ODJFS Internal Policy and Procedure Manual IPP 0003 – *Standards of Employee Conduct: Section VI. Procedures; B. General Standards of Conduct* under Nepotism, which states in part:

... Employees will not authorize or use their authority or influence of their position to secure the authorization of employment or benefit (including a promotion or preferential treatment) for a person closely related by blood, marriage or other significant relationship including business association.

Additionally, investigators concluded Schnieders violated the ODJFS Internal Policy and Procedure Manual IPP 0005 – *Processing of ODJFS Work Actions, Section VI, titled Policy*, which states in part:

... ODJFS employees shall not, on a normal basis, process any ODJFS work actions for themselves, relatives, co-workers, or friends.

Investigators attempted multiple times to contact ODJFS former subcontracted Customer Service Representative Sandra Schnieders by telephone and by email but received no response.

The Ohio Inspector General referred this report of investigation to the Franklin County Prosecuting Attorney's Office and the Ohio Auditor of State for consideration. On January 28, 2026, Sandra Schneiders was indicted by a Franklin County Grand Jury on charges of Theft in Office, Telecommunications Fraud, Tampering with Records, and Grand Theft.

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES

FILE ID NO: 2022-CA00023

On September 2, 2022, the Inspector General's Office received a referral from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) Chief Inspectors Office reporting Intermittent Customer Service Representative (CSR) Francesca Figueroa-Rivera accessed, manipulated, and improperly redetermined numerous ineligible PUA claims to eligible by voiding employment verification, identity verification, and/or program eligibility issues without obtaining the required documentation. Her improper actions during her employment with ODJFS released previously denied PUA benefits to otherwise ineligible claimants.

Investigators from the Inspector General's Office obtained and analyzed Figueroa-Rivera's bank records, Verizon phone records, and her assigned State of Ohio email box to determine whether there were any connections between Figueroa-Rivera and the claimants for whom she improperly released previously denied PUA benefits. From their analysis of these records and open-source social media records, investigators discovered Figueroa-Rivera had accessed, manipulated, and released PUA benefits, sometimes for a fee, for relatives, friends, and friends of relatives.

Figueroa-Rivera Fraudulent Claims – Known Personal Connections

During Figueroa-Rivera's tenure as an intermittent CSR with ODJFS, investigators identified 21 ineligible PUA claims Figueroa-Rivera alone (independent of any co-conspirators) improperly accessed, redetermined, and/or manipulated to eligible for claimants she knew. The total amount fraudulently released by Figueroa-Rivera in benefit funds for these 21 ineligible PUA claims was \$519,897.

Figueroa-Rivera Fraudulent Claims – No Known Personal Connections

Also during Figueroa-Rivera's tenure as an intermittent CSR with ODJFS, investigators identified 57 ineligible PUA claims Figueroa-Rivera improperly accessed, redetermined, and/or manipulated to eligible and found no personal connection between Figueroa-

Rivera and the claimants. The total amount fraudulently released by Figueroa-Rivera in benefit funds for these 57 ineligible PUA claims was \$868,267.18.

Figueroa-Rivera and a PUA Claimant Working Together

After reviewing and analyzing Figueroa-Rivera's bank records, Verizon phone records, and her assigned State of Ohio email box, investigators discovered Figueroa-Rivera had sent and received numerous phone calls and electronic payments from a PUA claimant named Claudine Stavole. Investigators obtained and reviewed Stavole's bank records and discovered activity indicating a relationship between Figueroa-Rivera and Stavole. Investigators also discovered Claudine Stavole's PUA claim was accessed numerous times by Figueroa-Rivera. Investigators found phone call activity between Figueroa-Rivera and Stavole that corresponded directly to Figueroa-Rivera's access to Stavole's claim. Investigators also discovered Stavole was diverting claimants' PUA benefits into her own personal bank account. Investigators concluded Figueroa-Rivera and Stavole worked in concert to release previously denied PUA benefits to four claimants and to Stavole, herself. A review of Stavole's bank records also revealed the four claimants had paid or attempted to pay Stavole a fee via Cash App. The fraudulent collaboration between Figueroa-Rivera and Stavole (for four claimants plus Stavole's claim) resulted in the improper release in total, of \$113,139 in PUA benefits.

Claudine Stavole and a Co-conspirator Conducting Fraud Independent of Figueroa-Rivera

Through a review of Stavole's personal bank account and Verizon phone records, investigators discovered additional PUA benefits were deposited into her bank account that were not related to her PUA claim. Records maintained by ODJFS confirmed that Stavole's personal bank account was listed as a direct deposit account for two PUA claimants (Claimant A and Claimant B) whose claims Figueroa-Rivera did not access, indicating that Stavole was conducting PUA fraud independent of Figueroa-Rivera. Specifically, investigators discovered Stavole's personal bank account was linked as a direct deposit account for both claims from September to October 2020. During this period, investigators found \$2,745 in PUA benefits for Claimant A was deposited in Stavole's personal bank account. Upon further review, investigators discovered \$2,934 of Claimant B's benefits were deposited into another personal bank account owned by co-conspirator Richard Bencina.

In addition, investigators identified seven PUA claims listing Bencina's personal bank account at one time as the direct deposit account for the claims. Investigators verified Figueroa-Rivera did not access these seven claims, indicating that Stavole and Bencina were conducting PUA fraud independent of Figueroa-Rivera on the seven claims. Investigators determined that \$27,828 in PUA benefits from six of the seven claims were deposited into Bencina's personal bank account.

Investigators contacted three of the seven claimants who stated in their own words that they were unaware that all or part of their PUA benefits were being diverted into another person's bank account. Some claimants stated that they were unaware

they even had a PUA claim. Most of the claimants reported that they had a personal relationship with at least one of the co-conspirators. Investigators concluded that Stavole and Bencina were complicit in the fraudulent release in total, of \$103,344 in PUA benefits to otherwise ineligible claimants.

Claudine Stavole, Richard Bencina and Francesca Figueroa-Rivera Conducting Fraud Together

Upon further review of ODJFS records, investigators identified two additional PUA claims (Claimant C and Claimant G) indicating Stavole, Bencina, and Figueroa-Rivera had collaborated to fraudulently release PUA benefits. Investigators contacted Claimants C and G. During their interviews, Claimant C told investigators that they were unaware that all or part of their PUA benefits were being diverted into another person's bank account and Claimant G attested that they were unaware that they even had a PUA claim. Claimant C also told investigators that Bencina helped them set-up their PUA claim and upload the required documents to prove eligibility. Investigators found a note entered by Figueroa-Rivera in the ODJFS uFACTS system stating, "employment evidence provided;" however, according to ODJFS, the handwritten proof of employment document uploaded to the claim was insufficient. Claimant C also told investigators that Stavole used to "hang out" at Bencina's house and that Stavole claimed she had a friend who could help them get their money faster if they would pay her a fee. Investigators discovered Claimant C's PUA benefits were deposited into Bencina's personal bank account. Investigators also found that Bencina's IP address accessed Claimant C's claim multiple times from August 2020 to January 2021. Later, from October 29 to November 5, 2021, Figueroa-Rivera accessed Claimant C's claim five times and redetermined the employment verification and program eligibility issues in the claim, releasing and validating previously denied PUA benefits. Investigators concluded that Stavole, Bencina, and Figueroa-Rivera collaborated in the fraudulent release in total, of \$52,902 in PUA benefits to otherwise ineligible claimants.

Total PUA Fraud Determined During Investigation

In summary, the fraud identified from the analysis of records and information obtained from interviews, investigators from the Inspector General's Office concluded the following individuals conducted improper and fraudulent actions on 92 PUA claims:

- Figueroa-Rivera working alone (with known connection with claimants) on 21 fraudulent PUA claims, resulting in the release of \$519,897 in ineligible PUA benefits.
- Figueroa-Rivera working alone (with no known connection with claimants) on 57 fraudulent PUA claims, resulting in the release of \$868,267.18 in ineligible PUA benefits.
- Figueroa-Rivera and Claudine Stavole working together as co-conspirators on five fraudulent PUA claims, resulting in the release of \$113,139 in ineligible PUA benefits.
- Stavole and Richard Bencina working together as co-conspirators independent of Figueroa-Rivera on seven fraudulent PUA claims, resulting in the release of

\$103,344 in ineligible PUA benefits.

- Figueroa-Rivera, Stavole, and Bencina working together as co-conspirators on two fraudulent PUA claims, resulting in the release of \$52,902 in ineligible PUA benefits.

In total, 92 PUA claims were determined by investigators as fraudulent, totaling \$1,657,549.18 in ineligible PUA benefits.

	Number of Fraudulent Claims	Dollar Amount of Fraudulent Claims
Figueroa-Rivera (Fraudulent - Known Connection)	21	\$519,897.00
Figueroa-Rivera (Fraudulent - No Known Connection)	57	\$868,267.18
Figueroa-Rivera/Stavole	5	\$113,139.00
Stavole/Bencina	7	\$103,344.00
Figueroa-Rivera/Stavole/Bencina	2	\$52,902.00
TOTAL	92	\$1,657,549.18

The Ohio Inspector General referred this report of investigation to the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office and the Ohio Auditor of State for consideration. Prior to the release of this report of investigation, Richard Bencina passed away in May of 2022. On September 9, 2025, the Cuyahoga County Grand Jury returned an indictment against Francesca Figueroa-Rivera and Claudine Stavole for various criminal offenses related to fraudulent claims involving the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program. These counts include Engaging in a Pattern of Corrupt Activity, Conspiracy, Theft, Telecommunications Fraud, Tampering with Government Records, Bribery, and Theft in Office.

Summaries of Selected Cases - General

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

FILE ID NO: 2024-CA00013

On June 12, 2024, the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) notified the Inspector General's Office and the Ohio Ethics Commission of suspected improper activity involving Ohio Department of Natural Resources Deputy Legal Counsel Matthew Westerman. Prior to being hired by ODNR, Westerman was employed by OFCC as an attorney within their Legal Division. OFCC representatives expressed concerns that Westerman was using his state-issued email address to send an email to OFCC requesting information about an Ohio Attorney General's Office project. OFCC informed investigators that Westerman was, "... reportedly employed on a part-time basis by MCS Consultants." Additionally, OFCC reported that MCS was serving as the owner's agent representing the Ohio Attorney General on the project.



The Inspector General's Office received and reviewed and/or analyzed the following records obtained from ODNR:

- ODNR policies.
- Westerman's personnel file and payroll records.
- Westerman's policy acknowledgements and training history.
- Files stored by Westerman on his ODNR state-issued laptop and ODNR-assigned OneDrive.
- Westerman's ODNR state-issued email account.
- Westerman's ODNR-assigned phone records.

In addition, the Inspector General's Office issued subpoenas to cell phone providers to obtain Westerman's personal call history information and subscriber information for identified phone numbers. Lastly, investigators sent investigative inquiries to representatives from OFCC and ODNR and conducted interviews with Westerman and current and former ODNR or OFCC employees.

Westerman's Outside Employment

Investigators interviewed Westerman about his outside employment with MCS & Associates (MCS). Westerman said MCS approached him with a part-time employment opportunity. After receiving this opportunity, Westerman stated that he contacted ODNR Chief Legal and Ethics Officer Damian Sikora to discuss the opportunity. Investigators learned through interviews and examining records that Westerman had:

- Sought guidance via email from the Ohio Ethics Commission about the opportunity but did not request an advisory opinion.

- Submitted the required Outside Employment Application to Sikora and ODNR Assistant Chief Legal Counsel Nicole Koppitch on March 29, 2022. This application was subsequently approved by both Sikora and Koppitch on July 21, 2022.
- Started work with MCS after his outside employment request was approved by ODNR.
- Failed to notify Sikora when his duties at MCS expanded beyond assisting school districts, and when Westerman began providing services on behalf of MCS to the Ohio Attorney General’s Office for a renovation project.
- Failed to resubmit an annual Outside Employment Application for approval to Sikora and Koppitch for approval of his outside employment for calendar years 2023 and 2024 as required by policy.

On November 20, 2024, Westerman notified ODNR management that he had resigned his position with MCS effective November 19, 2024. On November 20, 2024, Westerman sent Sikora and Koppitch the email at right:

The Inspector
General’s Office
concluded
Westerman violated
ODNR Secondary

Damian and Nicole,

I did terminate my employment with my secondary employer last night. Is there anything additional that you need in addition to this email?

Thanks,

Matt

Employment/Volunteer Policy, *Section III(C) Prior Approval Required* which stated, “approved applications are valid for one year and must be renewed annually.”

Westerman’s Improper Use of Agency Facilities and State Time

During an interview, ODNR Chief Legal and Ethics Officer Damian Sikora told investigators that he had met with Westerman about his outside employment on June 16, 2022. During this meeting, Sikora stated that he told Westerman that he could not conduct activities for his outside employment on his State of Ohio work time or use state resources and that Westerman needed, “... to pull yourself away when you’re doing it. It needs to be separate.”

The ODNR Ethics Policy, effective January 27, 2020, *Section III (B) Misuse of Official Position* stated that, “DNR employees are prohibited from the following ... 6. Using DNR time, facilities, or resources for any purposes to promote or conduct activities related to outside employment ...”

The ODNR Secondary Employment/Volunteer Policy, effective January 27, 2020, *Section III (B) Standards* stated that,

... employees shall not use any state-owned or state leased vehicles or any other equipment while engaged in Secondary Employment or Volunteer activities. No employee shall perform any work related to the secondary employer while on state premises.

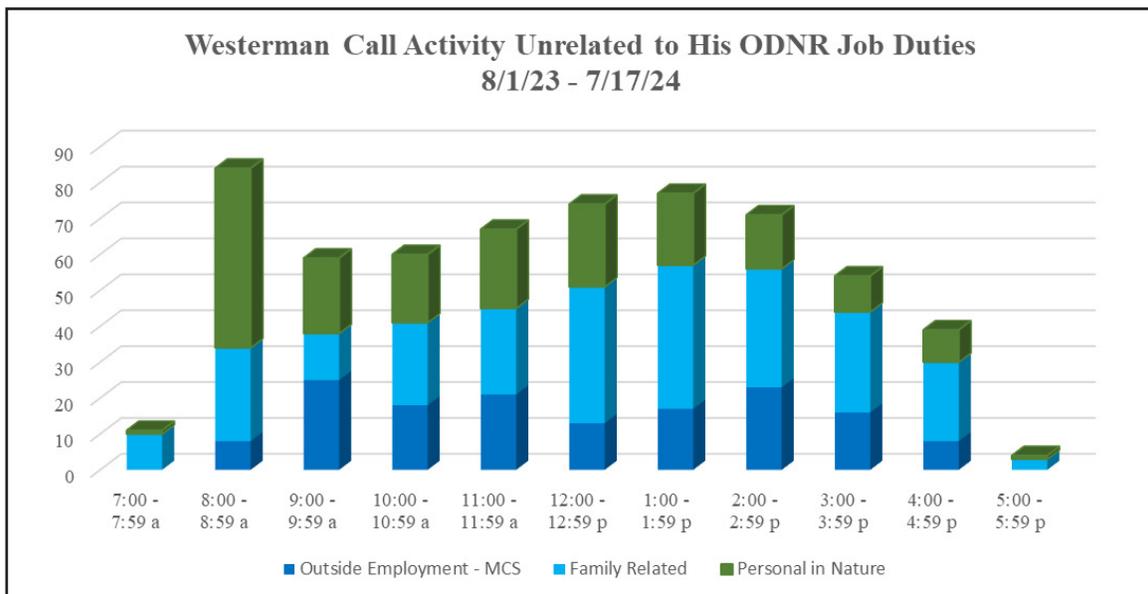
Furthermore, the Ohio Ethics Commission (OEC) issues advisory opinions which elaborate on the interpretation of the Ohio Revised Code. OEC Advisory Opinion 96-004, interpreting ORC §102.03(D), prohibits a public official or employee who engages in private outside employment or business activity from:

- (a) Using public time, facilities, personnel, or resources in conducting private business or while engaging in private outside employment including ...

During his interview, Westerman told investigators that he did not believe he conducted MCS business or made phone calls using his personal cell phone for MCS business during times he was working for and being compensated by ODNR for his work as deputy legal counsel. Westerman noted to investigators that he could only use his personal cell phone to make calls on his break or lunch, unless it was a necessity. Westerman further noted that he would “occasionally” use his personal cell phone in certain instances to make personal calls while he was being compensated by ODNR for his work time, but stated that these personal calls were, “business like and quick.”

Investigators obtained and examined Westerman’s personal cell phone records and conducted research or issued subpoenas to identify phone number subscribers’ information to determine whether Westerman made or received personal phone calls during his reported work times at ODNR. Investigators compared Westerman’s cell phone activity to records related to his reported ODNR workday start- and end-times from the Kronos payroll record software system maintained by ODNR. From this analysis, investigators determined Westerman made/received the following personal phone calls using his personal cell phone during his reported ODNR workdays:

- Westerman made/received 148 phone calls that were related to his MCS work.
- Westerman made/received 284 phone calls to/from his family members.
- Westerman made/received 191 phone calls which were deemed personal in nature.



According to the ODNR Time and Attendance Policy, effective January 5, 2024, Westerman, as an overtime exempt full-time employee was, "... expected to take a lunch break each workday, typically no less than fifteen (15) minutes" Investigators learned from ODNR representatives that when Westerman's Kronos records transferred to OAKS for payroll processing, the OAKS' computer system automatically deducted 30 minutes from the calculated work time for Westerman's lunch.

From their analysis of Westerman's personal phone call records, investigators determined Westerman made the calls related to MCS business throughout the workday and did not make these calls typically during his break or lunch. Furthermore, during his interview Westerman admitted that making calls using his personal cell phone for these types of calls was not allowable per ODNR policy, but reiterated that some of the MCS-related calls would have occurred while he was on break or at lunch. Investigators reminded Westerman that the ODNR Ethics policy stated he was not permitted to use a State of Ohio facility when conducting business involving his outside employment. Westerman commented, "I guess, I, I didn't take that into consideration, but I tried to do all of these calls on break time, or some would be shorter"

For the period from August 1, 2023, through July 17, 2024, investigators calculated the total time Westerman spent on the 148 phone calls using his personal cell phone that were related to his MCS activities and occurred concurrently during times he reported working for ODNR. For the 148 calls exchanged, investigators determined Westerman spent 26 hours, 48 minutes, 49 seconds of ODNR work time on these calls and was compensated by ODNR a total of \$2,182.66.

The Inspector General's Office concluded Westerman's conduct violated ODNR Ethics Policy, *Section III (B)(6)* and the ODNR Secondary Employment/Volunteer Policy, *Section III(B)*.

Improper Use of State Resources

Investigators obtained and examined Westerman's ODNR email box and a copy of files stored on his ODNR state-issued laptop and in his ODNR OneDrive (personal cloud storage). From their analysis of these records, investigators determined Westerman:

- Sent or received, using his ODNR email account, 70 emails associated with MCS business, two emails discussing private legal work, and 49 emails that were personal in nature.
- Stored 29 files associated with MCS business, nine files associated with a family member's business, one file associated with his private legal work, and 107 files determined to be personal in nature on either his state-issued laptop or ODNR assigned OneDrive.

In an interview with investigators, Westerman admitted that sending emails using his ODNR account and storing files that were related to MCS business, his private legal work, and personal activities were not permitted activities per ODNR policies.

The Inspector General’s Office concluded Westerman’s conduct violated ODNR Ethics Policy, *Section III (B)(6)*; the ODNR Secondary Employment/Volunteer Policy, *Section III (B)*; the ODNR Technology – Appropriate Use Policy, *Section III (B) (4) Privacy, (6) Prohibited Uses of IT Resources, and (11) Use of Cloud Storage*.

The Inspector General’s Office forwarded this report of investigation to the Columbus City Attorney’s Office, the Franklin County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office, the Ohio Auditor of State, and the Ohio Office of Disciplinary Counsel for consideration. ODNR reported to the Inspector General’s Office that effective March 21, 2025, Matthew Westerman resigned his position as ODNR deputy legal counsel. In addition, on December 3, 2025, the Ohio Ethics Commission’s Investigative Committee accepted the settlement agreement reached between Westerman, the Ohio Ethics Commission, and the Columbus City Attorney’s Office. As part of the agreement, Westerman paid \$2,182.66 in restitution to the State of Ohio.

ODNR AGENCY RESPONSE: Process Changes

On December 13, 2024, ODNR notified investigators of changes made to the application and approval processes for secondary employment. According to ODNR, the Legal Division staff began in 2022 working with the Human Resources and Information Technology divisions to, “... develop an online application process for submitting” the Secondary Employment applications. ODNR implemented a mobile and web-based application approximately a year later which routes the application to the applicable approvers and notifies the employee whether the application is approved or denied. Additionally, the “Secondary Employment Application database maintains the status of all submitted applications (which includes a note as to whether the application was approved, rejected, or pending) and is searchable.”

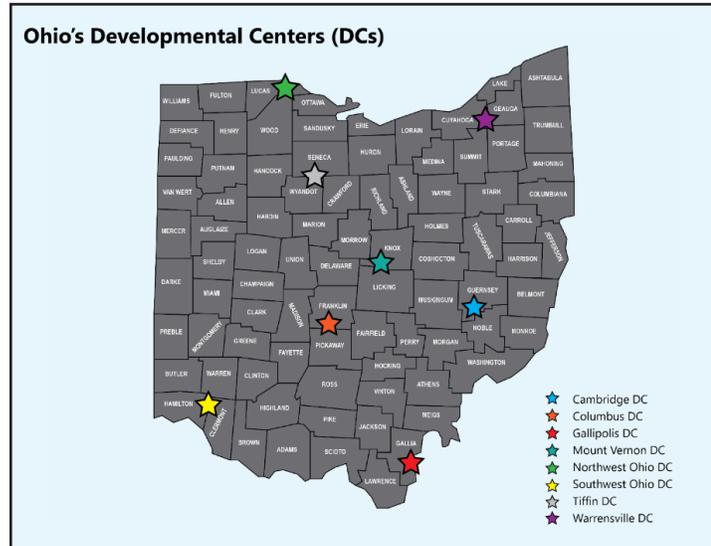
In addition, ODNR notified investigators of its “... plans to send a series of reminders to employees this January [2025] reminding them of their obligations to resubmit their secondary employment applications by January 30th.” ODNR stated the reminders would appear in at least three weekly newsletters sent by ODNR to its employees. Similar to past years, ODNR stated the agency division chiefs will be instructed to, “... raise the issue of secondary employment resubmittals with their staff.”

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

FILE ID NO: 2024-CA00015

On July 11, 2024, the Inspector General’s Office and the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) received a notification of suspected illegal activity from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (ODDD) involving Columbus Developmental Center (CDC) Residential Care Supervisor 1 John Flemon. During the week of July 1, 2024, an employee of the Human Resources (HR) department for the Columbus Developmental Center received a telephone call on behalf of a health services provider named ResCare, seeking employment verification for CDC employee John Flemon. During the phone call, the CDC HR employee was informed that Flemon had been working for ResCare in a full-time capacity for the

past several years. Following this phone call, the CDC HR employee reported this information to CDC management. CDC completed a comparison between Flemon's timekeeping records from CDC and timekeeping records provided by ResCare. From this comparison of timekeeping records for the previous three months, CDC discovered there was an overlap when Flemon appeared to be working concurrent times at both jobs.



A review of videos from CDC for several of the dates in question showed Flemon clocking in and out of the CDC facility numerous times and leaving the grounds of CDC. On July 11, 2024, the Inspector General's Office and the Ohio State Highway Patrol opened an investigation to jointly review the matter.

ResCare Community Living provides community-based health services for complex populations in need of specialized and/or chronic care. ResCare provides services to high-need patients and clients including supportive care, clinical and pharmacy solutions. These services include home health care, hospice and home care to seniors, long-term specialty care to behavioral and neuro rehabilitation populations, and pharmacy therapy management to patients across many settings.

John Flemon was employed by ResCare since June 13, 2019, and served as an area supervisor overseeing four supported living homes. Investigators learned that ResCare management's discovery of Flemon's secondary employment occurred on June 26, 2024, when ResCare received information from one of its employees that Flemon was working another job. ResCare management then conducted a social media search of John Flemon and found a result that identified Flemon as a 20-year employee of the State of Ohio. During the week of July 1, 2024, ResCare management contacted the Human Resources department at the Columbus Developmental Center to confirm Flemon's employment at CDC, and then proceeded to inform the CDC HR employee that Flemon had been working for ResCare in a full-time capacity for the past several years. ResCare requested Flemon's CDC timesheets going back to April 1, 2024. ResCare also sent to CDC, for their review, Flemon's ResCare timesheets. From this comparison of timekeeping records for a three-month period, CDC personnel discovered an overlap of approximately 176 hours and nine minutes when Flemon appeared to be working concurrent times at both jobs. Investigators learned the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (under whose jurisdiction the Columbus Developmental Center falls) did not have a secondary employment policy, which would require employees to notify ODDD and obtain authorization for secondary employment.

On July 1, 2024, after confirming that Flemon was working concurrent times for both CDC and ResCare, ResCare terminated Flemon for deliberate falsification of timesheets. ResCare reported to investigators that Flemon made no statements when questioned about his employment with CDC.

Investigators obtained and reviewed Flemon's personnel records from CDC and ResCare. Investigators learned that CDC listed Flemon as a residential care supervisor 1, who began his employment with the State of Ohio (CDC) on August 28, 2000. Flemon's CDC hourly rate (\$31.48) including state-paid fringe benefits was \$42.72 per hour. Flemon's CDC work hours varied, and the times recorded on his timesheets were generated by access card swipes, which recorded Flemon's in- and out-work times. Both CDC and ResCare use the Kronos timekeeping system, which enabled an analysis of both agencies' timesheets and a determination of the overlapping work hours claimed by Flemon. For the period from April 1, 2024, through June 25, 2024, investigators determined Flemon improperly reported and was improperly compensated for working concurrent times at ResCare and CDC which resulted in a loss to the State of Ohio of \$7,526.

For the period from April 1, 2024, through June 25, 2024, investigators determined Flemon improperly reported and was improperly compensated for working concurrent times at ResCare and CDC which resulted in a loss to the State of Ohio of \$7,526.

On August 29, 2024, investigators contacted the superintendent of CDC to verify that Flemon was scheduled to work at CDC on September 4, 2024, at 10 a.m. and would be available to be interviewed. On September 4, 2024, while on the way to CDC for the interview, investigators received a telephone call from CDC informing them that Flemon had just called and resigned from his employment. Also on September 4, 2024, an Ohio State Highway Patrol investigator attempted to contact Flemon by telephone to arrange an interview and left a voicemail requesting a return call. On September 5, 2024, an attorney for Flemon called the OSHP investigator, the case was briefly discussed, and the attorney told the investigator that he would contact the investigator if Flemon elected to provide a statement. No contact was made.

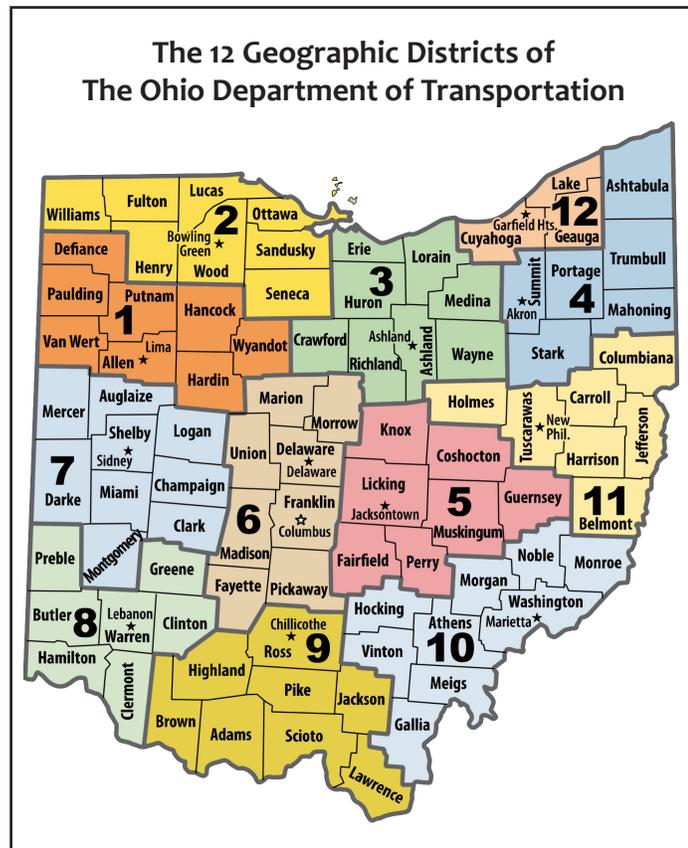
The Inspector General's Office referred this report of investigation to the Franklin County Prosecuting Attorney and the Ohio Auditor of State for consideration.

Ohio Department of Transportation

2025 Report

The responsibilities of the deputy inspector general for the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) were created in 2007 with the enactment of Ohio Revised Code §121.51. This section directs a deputy inspector general to investigate “... all wrongful acts and omissions that have been committed or are being committed by employees of the department.” In addition, the deputy inspector general is charged with conducting “... a program of random review of the processing of contracts associated with building and maintaining the state’s infrastructure.”

The vast majority of ODOT’s budget is supported by federal and state motor fuel tax revenues and bond proceeds appropriated in HB 23, the FY 2024 - FY 2025 transportation budget bill. ODOT appropriations under HB 23 total \$11.4 billion for the biennium. ODOT is one of the state’s largest agencies, with more than 5,000 staff members located in 12 districts throughout the state, and a headquarters in Columbus. Oversight is important to ensure that operations are conducted efficiently and effectively.



Source: www.transportation.ohio.gov

Since the role of the deputy inspector general for the Ohio Department of Transportation was created in August 2007, there has been a continued focus on safeguarding the proper use of state resources, as well as all aspects of contract processes and procedures, including the bidding process, purchasing of services, and cost overruns.

The cooperation and working relationship between the Inspector General’s Office, ODOT’s leadership team, and the agency’s internal investigators supports ODOT’s endeavor to serve Ohio’s transportation needs by responsibly managing the public’s money.

In 2025, there were four cases opened and six cases closed in the Transportation Area of the Inspector General’s Office. As part of the lifespan of a case, the number of cases closed may reflect cases that were opened in previous years.

Summary of Selected Cases - Transportation

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

FILE ID NO: 2024-CA00024

On October 23, 2024, the Inspector General’s Office received a referral from the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), reporting irregularities discovered from their inspection of an Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) contracted quality control (QC) lab at the Valley Asphalt plant in Xenia, Ohio. The referral stated that during an unannounced inspection of the QC lab conducted on October 21, 2024, representatives from the FHWA and ODOT arrived at the plant at approximately 2:15 p.m. and found the doors to the QC lab locked and no QC lab personnel present, even though asphalt was being produced for a Local Public Agency (LPA) project.



Investigators were informed that FHWA and ODOT representatives were able to enter the lab and retest samples that were left in the lab for the LPA project. From this retest of samples, the representatives discovered the results varied from what was reported on the Valley Asphalt Quality Control worksheets documenting the quality control testing results from that day (October 21). The representatives also tested the crucible that was used in the lab for ash testing and found that the ash remaining in the crucible matched the results from the morning testing. The representatives noted that this finding was an irregularity because the ash remaining in the crucible should have matched the samples from the afternoon test results since it was the only crucible found in the lab and the afternoon testing would have been the most recent use of that crucible.

Investigators obtained the following documents from Valley Asphalt for review during this investigation:

- Copies of TE-199 forms, which are “Contractors Quality Control Reports for Bituminous Concrete,” and were completed by QC testing technicians Jaide Hodgson and Chelsea Stewart on October 21, 2024.
- Copies of Valley Asphalt Quality Control lab worksheets completed by Hodgson and Stewart on October 21, 2024.
- Electronic access card data from Valley Asphalt’s main office in Cincinnati, OH, for Hodgson and Stewart.
- Valley Asphalt’s Quality Control Plan.
- Valley Asphalt’s truck load tickets from October 21, 2024.

Quality Control Testing

Investigators reviewed the Valley Asphalt QC lab documentation for October 21, 2024, and found that Valley Asphalt QC technicians Jaide Hodgson and Chelsea Stewart were listed as having conducted testing on that day. There were two separate worksheets prepared,

indicating that two sets of tests had been conducted – one set of morning tests and one set of afternoon tests. Investigators noted the test time listed on the morning worksheet was 8:09 a.m., and the test time listed on the afternoon worksheet was 12:02 p.m., which matched the times listed on the truck load tickets on samples that were collected.

From a review of the Valley Asphalt QC worksheets and the TE-199 form, investigators found testing data was reported for the following tests:

- Gradation
- MSG Test (maximum specific gravity)
- Ash Calculations
- Nuclear Gauge
- Bulk Specific Gravity
- Extraction Data Using the Solvent Method

Investigators interviewed Hodgson and Stewart who both explained that they had conducted the required QC testing on October 21, 2024, for the LPA project. Hodgson and Stewart both told investigators that Valley Asphalt QC technicians have a toolbox containing miscellaneous items used for testing that they bring with them to asphalt plants, and those items include a crucible used for ash testing. Hodgson and Stewart stated a crucible from the toolbox they carry was used in the afternoon for the second ash collection test conducted at the Xenia lab on October 21. Based on the information available for review, investigators were unable to conclusively establish that testing was not conducted.

Quality Control Testing Per ODOT Supplement Specifications

Investigators reviewed electronic card access records for Hodgson and Stewart and found that on October 21, 2024, both technicians used their electronic access card at 2:10 p.m. to access the Valley Asphalt main lab in Cincinnati, which is approximately 45 minutes from the Valley Asphalt Xenia lab. Based on this information, Hodgson and Stewart would have had to leave the Xenia lab by approximately 1:30 p.m. to arrive at the Cincinnati lab at 2:10 p.m., which would have allowed less than one hour and 30 minutes to conduct QC testing on the asphalt in Xenia, since the sample was collected from a truck that was loaded at 12:02 p.m.

Investigators reviewed ODOT Supplement 1043 – Calibration and Test Procedures for Use of Asphalt Content Nuclear Gauges and found that section 1043.10 Determining Moisture Content, states that QC testing technicians are required to place the filled asphalt sample pan in an oven for a minimum of two hours at which point they are to remove the pan from the oven, stir the contents, and place the pan back in the oven for fifteen minutes.

After an additional fifteen minutes they are to remove the pan from the oven and weigh the pan/contents. This process is to be repeated until a constant weight of the pan/contents is reached. If a technician follows the testing procedures outlined in ODOT Supplement 1043, the minimum amount of time required to conduct QC testing would be at least two hours and 15 minutes.



During interviews conducted with Hodgson and Stewart, the two technicians admitted that they did not follow ODOT Supplement 1043 testing procedures on the afternoon of October 21. Specifically, Hodgson and Stewart admitted to removing the pan with the asphalt sample out of the oven after approximately one hour and fifteen minutes in non-compliance to ODOT Supplement 1043 which requires the sample remain in the oven for at least two hours and fifteen minutes. Based on the information available for review, investigators were unable to verify that QC testing was not conducted, and noted that Hodgson and Stewart reported test results for all required QC testing on October 21. However, from interviews conducted and their review of documents, investigators concluded the QC testing performed by Hodgson and Stewart was not conducted in accordance with ODOT Supplement 1043. Investigators asked Stewart how often the time required for the asphalt sample to dry in the oven is reduced from the required time of two hours, and she said, “Never.” She told investigators that 90% of the time she has an ODOT employee present who monitors her procedures – so the sample always remains in the oven for two hours, or two hours and 15 minutes. When asked if the incident on October 21 was an anomaly, Stewart replied, “Correct.”

The Inspector General’s Office recommended that ODOT review this report of investigation and determine if any administrative action was necessary for Hodgson and Stewart pursuant to ODOT Supplement 1041– Asphalt Concrete Program Administration. It was also recommended that ODOT determine the impact of not following ODOT’s testing procedures and whether this failure on October 21, 2024, rose to the level of using non-specification material per ODOT rules/policies/specifications, etc.

ODOT AGENCY RESPONSE

In response to these recommendations, ODOT issued an agency response to the Inspector General’s Office on May 5, 2025, stating that ODOT placed Valley Asphalt operations on a restricted acceptance status. The ODOT agency response also reported that Quality Control Technical Manager Mike Leight and Asphalt Materials General Manager Jason Barber received written reprimands for the documented deficiencies. Chelsea Stewart and Jaide Hodgson, the asphalt level 2 technicians, had their Asphalt Level 2 approvals revoked and were not permitted to perform Department work for one year from the date of the notice.

Also, the ODOT response addressed the recommendation that ODOT determine the impact of Valley Asphalt not following ODOT’s testing procedures and whether this failure on October 21, 2024, rose to the level of using non-specification material per ODOT rules/policies/specifications, etc. ODOT’s response stated that, based on the department’s testing results from the area of the affected asphalt, the asphalt mix used satisfied the total asphalt content and gradation requirements in accordance with ODOT specifications.

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**FILE ID NO: 2024-CA00005**

On February 21, 2024, the Inspector General's Office received a complaint alleging that co-sponsors of a project to build a roundabout at the roadway intersection of State Route 162 and River Styx Road in Medina, County, OH, submitted a fraudulent application to obtain federal funding to cover project construction costs. In March 2019, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) District 3 and the Medina County Engineer's Office formed a partnership to convert the intersection into a roundabout. In March 2021, the Medina County Engineer agreed to submit a program application for federal funding under the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program. The CMAQ program provides funding for state and local governments to fund transportation projects to help meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. CMAQ funds support state and locally selected transportation projects that reduce vehicle emissions. These projects include roundabouts. The Medina County Engineer's Office submitted the CMAQ Application to the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) on May 25, 2021. According to one published ODOT estimate, construction of the joint project to convert the all-way-stop-controlled intersection into a single-lane roundabout was scheduled to begin in the Summer of 2026 and be completed in the Fall of 2026; and the estimated construction costs for the project were \$3,460,000.

The complainant alleged that the submitted application contained false information, including among other items, a false entry for a transportation system performance metric known as level of service (LOS) for the existing intersection. The Inspector General's Office opened an investigation to evaluate the actions taken by ODOT District 3 Planning Engineer Scott Ockunzzi in the CMAQ Application that was used to obtain federal funding for the roundabout project. The investigation focused only on the actions of Ockunzzi because the Ohio Inspector General's jurisdiction is limited to state employees and vendors who do business with the State of Ohio.



Photograph of State Route 162 and River Styx Road - Existing Intersection. Source: ODOT, District 3, 2019 Operational Study, Medina SR 162 SLM 20.04 River Styx Road, dated March 2019.

Investigators obtained and evaluated applicable records and related email exchanges and conducted interviews of relevant persons to evaluate the accuracy of the information submitted in the application for funding. Much of the investigation centered around documents and responses to questions in the CMAQ application pertaining to the LOS for the intersection; specifically, the response to Question 4 of the 2021 CMAQ Application which asked for information regarding existing levels of service (LOS) for the Medina County project. LOS is a metric for reporting transportation system performance and traffic flow. LOS uses an “A” through “F” scale with an “A” indicating the best LOS and an “F” indicating the worst LOS. CMAQ applications are scored on a 100-point scale. Investigators learned that existing LOS accounts for 15 of the 100 available points on the CMAQ Application and that NOACA does not allow the use of forecasted LOS metrics as a proper response to Question 4.

Investigators obtained and reviewed two operational studies of the intersection conducted by ODOT and authored by Ockunzzi. The first study occurred in March 2019, resulting in an existing LOS at the intersection of “D” in the morning and “C” in the evening. The 2019 study contained the last known existing LOS for this intersection. The second study was dated April 2021 and reported a forecasted LOS of “F” for both the morning and the evening at the intersection for the year 2046, 25 years in the future.

Before the final 2021 CMAQ Application was submitted to NOACA by Medina County Engineer Andrew Conrad, Ockunzzi edited the application on May 25, 2021. One of Ockunzzi’s edits was on Question 4 of the CMAQ Application, in which he selected a check box of LOS “F” under existing LOS at the intersection. Conrad confirmed in an interview with investigators that he received this edit from Ockunzzi and that this edit was included and submitted as the final 2021 CMAQ application. Ockunzzi was also interviewed about this edit. Ockunzzi confirmed to investigators that he made the edit and that it was a false entry on the application. Ockunzzi also told investigators that he knew the last known existing LOS in 2019 was a “D” in the morning and a “C” in the evening. According to Ockunzzi, he did not know why he selected the LOS “F” entry on the application. Ockunzzi told investigators that he remembered speaking to NOACA in advance of the application, but he could not recollect the person he spoke to, and that he vaguely remembered receiving advice to enter the LOS “F” on the CMAQ Application. Ockunzzi explained to investigators that he recalled discussing the application with three NOACA officials. Investigators interviewed the three current NOACA officials named by Ockunzzi, and one additional former NOACA official, who all confirmed that they did not tell Ockunzzi to make the incorrect entry edit of LOS “F” for existing LOS on the 2021 CMAQ Application.

On May 25, 2021, Medina County Engineer Andrew Conrad submitted via email the 2021 CMAQ Application to NOACA to obtain federal funding for the roundabout project. The submitted application included Ockunzzi’s incorrect entry of LOS “F” for existing LOS and a copy of ODOT’s 2021 operational study that supported the incorrect performance metric. On January 19, 2022, NOACA awarded \$2 million from the CMAQ program to pay for the construction costs of the roundabout project.

Investigators found reasonable cause to believe a wrongdoing occurred when Ockunzzi made the incorrect entry on the 2021 CMAQ Application for the Medina County project, violating ODOT Policy 17-015 (P) – *Work Rules and Discipline*, 4. *Failure of Good Behavior* and 5. *Dishonesty*. On October 9, 2025, ODOT submitted an agency response to the Inspector General’s Office stating that the Department had administered disciplinary action against Ockunzzi on September 25, 2025, for violation of ODOT policy.

From the investigation, the Inspector General’s Office determined the following regarding adherence to the NOACA CMAQ Application rules:

- The entity applicant on the submitted 2021 NOACA CMAQ Application was the Medina County Engineer. ODOT was not listed as an entity applicant on the submitted 2021 NOACA CMAQ Application.
- The 2021 NOACA CMAQ Application required a signature by an entity representative with execution authority. The submitted 2021 NOACA CMAQ Application bore an authorized signature in the name of Andrew Conrad, Medina County Engineer. Scott Ockunzzi was not listed as an authorized signatory on the submitted 2021 NOACA CMAQ Application.
- Authorized signatories on the 2021 NOACA CMAQ Application certified, among other things, that to the best of their knowledge and belief, all representations that were a part of this application were true and accurate. Scott Ockunzzi was neither an entity applicant nor an authorized signatory on the submitted 2021 NOACA CMAQ Application and therefore, made no certification as to application truth and accuracy.
- Based on the fact that ODOT was not the 2021 NOACA CMAQ entity applicant, and Scott Ockunzzi was not the authorized signatory on the application, the Inspector General’s Office was unable to conclude if Scott Ockunzzi violated the terms and conditions of the 2021 NOACA CMAQ Application when he made the incorrect entry edit of LOS F for existing LOS on the 2021 CMAQ Application for the Medina County project.

The Inspector General’s Office referred this report of investigation to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program for consideration.

Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation and Ohio Industrial Commission

2025 Report

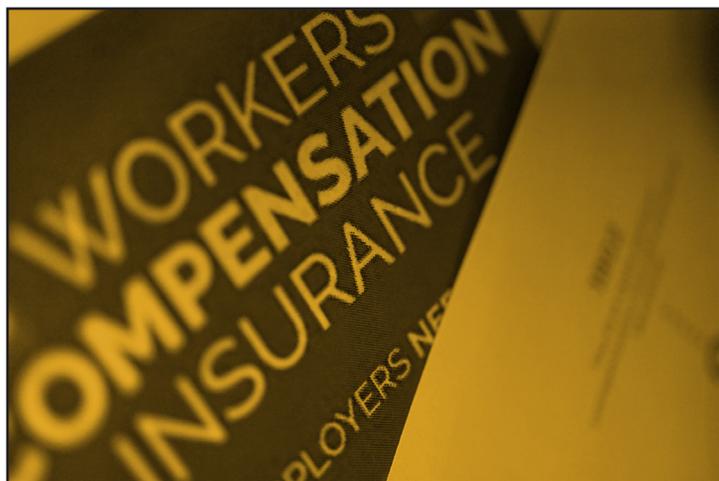
In July 2007, the Ohio General Assembly passed legislation that created the position of deputy inspector general for the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (OBWC) and the Ohio Industrial Commission (OIC) within the Inspector General's Office. This legislation stated that the inspector general shall appoint a deputy inspector general, and the deputy inspector general shall serve at the pleasure of the inspector general.

The deputy inspector general is responsible for investigating wrongful acts or omissions that have been committed or are being committed by officers or employees of the OBWC and the OIC. The deputy inspector general has the same powers and duties regarding matters concerning the bureau and the commission as those specified in Ohio Revised Code §§ 121.42, 121.43, and 121.45.

In 1912, Ohio law created an exclusive state fund to provide workers' compensation benefits to workers who were unable to work due to a work-related injury. In Ohio, all companies or employers must have coverage from either state funds or be self-insured. For those companies or employers with no employees who meet specific requirements, Ohio law makes workers' compensation coverage elective. According to the bureau's 2024 annual report, OBWC manages seven service offices, has approximately 1,600 employees, and approximately \$23.0 billion in assets. The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation system is one of the largest state-funded insurance systems in the nation, serving nearly 258,000 public and private employers.



*William Green Building
Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation
and Ohio Industrial Commission.
Source: <https://www.ic.ohio.gov/>*



Established in 1912, the OIC is a separate adjudicatory agency whose mission is to serve injured workers and Ohio employers through prompt and impartial resolution of issues arising from workers' compensation claims and through the establishment of an adjudication policy.



Hearings on disputed claims are conducted at three levels within the commission: the district level, staff level, and commission level. The governor appoints the three-member commission and the Ohio Senate confirms these appointments. By previous vocation, employment, or affiliation, one member must represent employees, one must represent employers, and one must represent the public.

The OIC has approximately 290 employees and operates five regional offices and seven district offices throughout the state. According to the commission's Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Report, the three commissioners and agency hearing officers collectively heard over 88,000 disputed claims.

... [the OIC] mission is to serve injured workers and Ohio employers through prompt and impartial resolution of issues arising from workers' compensation claims and through the establishment of an adjudication policy.

Also in 2025, the Inspector General's Office attended periodic roundtable meetings and worked jointly with various departments within OBWC, including Special Investigations, the Employee Safety & Integrity Unit, Human Resources, Employee/Labor Relations, and Legal. Additionally, the Inspector General's Office worked jointly with various departments within the OIC, including the Executive Director's Office, Hearing Services, Human Resources, and Legal. The Inspector General's Office provided the OBWC board of directors, administrator, and commissioners of the Industrial Commission with copies of the FY annual report containing overviews of noteworthy investigations.

In 2025, there were three cases opened and two cases closed in the OBWC/OIC area of the Inspector General's Office. As part of the lifespan of a case, the number of cases closed may reflect cases that were opened in previous years.

Summary of Selected Case - OBWC/OIC

OHIO BUREAU OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION

FILE ID NO: 2024-CA00007

On October 23, 2023, a managed care organization (MCO) notified Bryan Reddy, the owner and operator of BeeTrans transportation service, that he had been improperly billing OBWC for ambulance services his company was not providing. OBWC contractually partners with MCOs to handle reimbursements for injured worker claims. It was the MCO that notified Reddy that he was using incorrect billing codes to overbill OBWC for services. This notification from the MCO prompted Reddy to call OBWC Customer Service Manager Mary Ballard Truss to discuss the overbilling issue and to make a complaint that he had not been paid for an individual's transport. Truss reported Reddy's issues to her OBWC supervisor, Janeece Keys-Shanklin, who advised Truss that Reddy should file a grievance with the MCO and that going forward, Shanklin would handle all contacts with Reddy directly herself.

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation Special Investigations Division (OBWC SID) opened an investigation to evaluate the matter and concluded that BeeTrans had been overbilling OBWC. Reddy did not own or operate an ambulance, as an ambulance is specifically constructed and equipped to be used to provide basic, intermediate, and advanced life support, or as a mobile intensive care unit to be used to provide services and transportation of persons who are seriously ill. Investigators determined BeeTrans operated one vehicle and that the vehicle in operation met the definition of an ambulette. An ambulette is a vehicle specifically used for transportation of persons who require use of a wheelchair or other mobility aid. Reddy's BeeTrans vehicle was a white 2016 Dodge Grand Caravan with signage on the vehicle's sides, "BeeTRANS Wheelchair Accessible Supplemental Transportation" and on the vehicle's rear, "Ambulette."

OBWC SID determined Reddy had been submitting improper invoices using the billing codes for ambulance services rather than ambulette services. Payment rates differ greatly between what is paid for ambulance services and what is paid for ambulette services. The appropriate codes for the ambulette services provided by BeeTrans would have likely been *Code A0130 - Non-Emergency Transportation: Wheelchair Van* and *Code S0209 WC [Wheelchair] Van Mileage Per MI [Mile]*. These codes would apply to the type of transportation services provided by BeeTrans and are significantly lower reimbursement rates than what are paid for ambulance services. According to the most recent OBWC Fee Schedule (shown below), BeeTrans was reimbursed at \$377.60 per unit for submitting invoices using the billing code A0428 (ambulance) services rather than the appropriate rate of \$36.00 per unit for billing code A0130 (ambulette) services. As for mileage, investigators discovered BeeTrans was reimbursed \$15.84 per mile (Code A0425) for ambulance services as compared to the correct rate of \$8.33 per mile (Code S0209) for ambulette services. Additionally, investigators found BeeTrans had been reimbursed for units of wait time (Code A0420) that Reddy may not have been entitled to as a non-emergency wheelchair van provider.

Ambulette Code	Price	Ambulance Code	Price
A0130 - Transport	\$36	A0428 - Transport	\$377.60
S0209 - Mileage	\$8.33	A0425 - Mileage	\$15.84
Wait time	N/A	A0420 - Wait time	\$24.00

On or about January 26, 2024, OBWC SID concluded BeeTrans was overpaid \$116,000 for providing ambulette services when invoicing for ambulance services.

On February 28, 2024, OBWC officials reported this matter to the Inspector General's Office and the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP), and on May 29, 2024, presented to investigators allegations that the owner of BeeTrans had been improperly billing OBWC for transportation services and that OBWC Customer Service Manager Truss had improperly advised or authorized Reddy to use the ambulance reimbursement codes instead of the ambulette reimbursement codes.

From their review of OBWC phone records, investigators from the Inspector General's Office determined Reddy's first contact with Truss occurred on July 11, 2022. However, OBWC reported Reddy had been incorrectly billing for transportation services since the previous year, 2021, which preceded any contact Reddy had with Truss. Investigators also found that Reddy had received MCO notices regarding his overbilling (using the incorrect billing codes) on May 6, 2023, October 23, 2023, January 17, 2024, and September 18, 2024.

Investigators from the Inspector General's Office obtained and reviewed Truss' cellphone records to determine what contact was made between she and Reddy. In the review of those records, investigators found only one call between Truss and Reddy. Investigators also reviewed Truss' bank records and found no records that indicated a transfer of funds between Truss and Reddy.

Truss Interview

On November 19, 2024, investigators from the Inspector General's Office and the Ohio State Highway Patrol interviewed Mary Ballard Truss regarding her interaction with Bryan Reddy and his use of improper billing codes for transportation services provided by BeeTrans. Investigators asked Truss to explain the matter involving Reddy and the improper billing for transportation services. Truss stated that when Reddy initially contacted her through the customer service center, his complaint was about not being paid for an individual's transport. Truss said, "one of my primary responsibilities at that time was to make sure if a provider had any reimbursement issues." Therefore, she contacted the MCO directly on behalf of the claimant and resolved the issue which resulted in Reddy receiving his payment. Truss denied authorizing for use any billing codes to Reddy, denied knowing the difference between the two types of billing codes, and was not able to explain the difference between an "ambulance" and an "ambulette." Truss admitted to investigators that she had reviewed the codes BeeTrans had previously submitted and used to receive payments; however, she noted that she was not aware at that time the codes were incorrect.

Reddy Interview

On November 12, 2024, investigators interviewed BeeTrans owner Bryan Reddy regarding the matter of his improper billing for transportation services. Reddy claimed that Truss authorized him to use the billing codes for ambulance services. OBWC records showed that from January 6, 2020, to June 29, 2020, Reddy/BeeTrans submitted invoices using the correct ambulette billing codes for transportation and mileage. However, starting on December 8, 2021, BeeTrans began submitting service invoices using the incorrect ambulance billing codes for his transportation services. Investigators asked Reddy to explain why BeeTrans submitted invoices with the correct billing codes until December 8, 2021, and then began using the incorrect billing codes after that date. Reddy initially explained to investigators that prior to December 8, 2021, he had an employee who was processing his invoices and that when her employment ended, he began preparing and submitting the invoices directly himself using the codes he was given by OBWC (Truss).

Investigators asked Reddy to explain how Truss could authorize his use of improper billing codes starting in December 2021, when OBWC phone log records show that his first contact with Truss was later, occurring on July 11, 2022. Reddy said he had several different phone numbers that he could call from. Investigators then asked Reddy why he would change the billing codes that his previous employee had been properly submitting prior to his assuming control of the billing process. Reddy responded, “Well, again, I don’t know if the biller [his former employee] was doing it correctly.”

The following is a timeline of events and pattern of Bryan Reddy’s/BeeTrans correct and incorrect billings of OBWC services.

Timeline

- 09/17/2019 BeeTrans began operation.
- 01/06/2020 BeeTrans submitted billing invoices with correct billing codes.
- 12/08/2021 Reddy assumed control over billing invoices using incorrect billing codes.
- 10/23/2023 Reddy was notified a second time by the MCO of his use of incorrect billing codes.
- 01/17/2024 Reddy was notified of incorrect billing by OBWC’s Shanklin.

Investigators determined that Reddy’s claim that Truss authorized or directed him to submit invoices for BeeTrans using the incorrect billing codes was unfounded, because Reddy was using the incorrect billing codes prior to the time of his first contact with Truss. Investigators concluded Reddy took improper actions in overbilling OBWC in this matter; however, found no reasonable cause to believe a wrongful act or omission occurred on the part of OBWC Customer Service Manager Mary Ballard Truss.

2025 Community Outreach

Inspector General’s Office Participates in Buckeye Boys State Program

In June 2025, the Inspector General’s Office participated in the American Legion Buckeye Boys State (BBS). Founded in 1936, BBS is an eight-day hands-on experience, “... in the operation of the Democratic form of government, the organization of political parties, and the relationship of one to the other in shaping Ohio government.” BBS is the largest Boys State program in the nation with an attendance of over 1,200 young men annually, from nearly 600 Ohio high schools and the home-schooled community. Representing the Inspector General’s Office, Deputy Inspectors General Kerri Kellogg and Nancy Moore advised Tanner Altop, Jacob Cordle, Dante Lippi, and Ethan Thornton on how to establish a working inspector general’s office, define its duties, and conduct investigations. The Inspector General’s Office has been involved in this important program for 15 years.



Appendices

Appendix 1: Statutory References

OHIO REVISED CODE

The following are Ohio Revised Code sections relating to the powers and duties of the Ohio Inspector General:

- 121.41 Inspector General Definitions
- 121.42 Inspector General - Powers and duties
- 121.421 Investigation of casino control commission enforcement personnel
- 121.43 Subpoena power – contempt
- 121.44 Reports of investigation
- 121.45 Cooperating in investigations
- 121.46 Filing complaint - form
- 121.47 Confidential information
- 121.48 Appointment of Inspector General
- 121.481 Special investigations fund
- 121.482 Disposition of money received
- 121.483 Deputy inspector general as peace officer
- 121.49 Qualifications
- 121.50 Administrative rules
- 121.51 Deputy inspector general for transportation department
- 121.52 Deputy inspector general for workers' compensation

121.41 Inspector General Definitions

As used in sections 121.41 to 121.50 of the Revised Code:

- (A) “Appropriate ethics commission” has the same meaning as in section 102.01 of the Revised Code.
- (B) “Appropriate licensing agency” means a public or private entity that is responsible for licensing, certifying, or registering persons who are engaged in a particular vocation.
- (C) “Person” has the same meaning as in section 1.59 of the Revised Code and also includes any officer or employee of the state or any political subdivision of the state.
- (D) “State agency” has the same meaning as in section 1.60 of the Revised Code and includes the Ohio casino control commission, but does not include any of the following:
 - (1) The general assembly;
 - (2) Any court;
 - (3) The secretary of state, auditor of state, treasurer of state, or attorney general and their respective offices.

(E) “State employee” means any person who is an employee of a state agency, or any person who does business with the state including, only for the purposes of sections 121.41 to 121.50 of the Revised Code, the nonprofit corporation formed under section 187.01 of the Revised Code.

(F) “State officer” means any person who is elected or appointed to a public office in a state agency.

(G) “Wrongful act or omission” means an act or omission, committed in the course of office holding or employment, that is not in accordance with the requirements of law or such standards of proper governmental conduct as are commonly accepted in the community and thereby subverts, or tends to subvert, the process of government.

121.42 Inspector General - Powers and duties

The inspector general shall do all of the following:

(A) Investigate the management and operation of state agencies on his own initiative in order to determine whether wrongful acts and omissions have been committed or are being committed by state officers or state employees;

(B) Receive complaints under section 121.46 of the Revised Code alleging wrongful acts and omissions, determine whether the information contained in those complaints allege facts that give reasonable cause to investigate, and, if so, investigate to determine if there is reasonable cause to believe that the alleged wrongful act or omission has been committed or is being committed by a state officer or state employee;

(C) Except as otherwise provided in this division, contemporaneously report suspected crimes and wrongful acts or omissions that were or are being committed by state officers or state employees to the governor and to the appropriate state or federal prosecuting authority with jurisdiction over the matter if there is reasonable cause to believe that a crime has occurred or is occurring. In addition, the inspector general shall report the wrongful acts or omissions, as appropriate under the circumstances, to the appropriate ethics commission in accordance with section 102.06 of the Revised Code, the appropriate licensing agency for possible disciplinary action, or the state officer’s or state employee’s appointing authority for possible disciplinary action. The inspector general shall not report a wrongful act or omission to a person as required by this division if that person allegedly committed or is committing the wrongful act or omission.

(D) Except as otherwise provided in this division, contemporaneously report suspected crimes and wrongful acts or omissions that the inspector general becomes aware of in connection with an investigation of a state agency, state officer, or state employee, and that were or are being committed by persons who are not state officers or state employees to the governor and to the appropriate state or federal prosecuting authority with jurisdiction over the matter if there is reasonable cause to believe that a crime has occurred or is occurring. In addition, the inspector general shall report the wrongful acts or omissions, as appropriate under the circumstances, to the appropriate ethics commission in accordance with section 102.06 of the Revised Code, the appropriate licensing agency for possible disciplinary action, or the person’s public or private employer for possible disciplinary action. The inspector

general shall not report a wrongful act or omission to a person as required by this division if that person allegedly committed or is committing the wrongful act or omission.

(E) Prepare a detailed report of each investigation that states the basis for the investigation, the action taken in furtherance of the investigation, and whether the investigation revealed that there was reasonable cause to believe that a wrongful act or omission had occurred. If a wrongful act or omission was identified during the investigation, the report shall identify the person who committed the wrongful act or omission, describe the wrongful act or omission, explain how it was detected, indicate to whom it was reported, and describe what the state agency in which the wrongful act or omission was being committed is doing to change its policies or procedures to prevent recurrences of similar wrongful acts or omissions.

(F) Identify other state agencies that also are responsible for investigating, auditing, reviewing, or evaluating the management and operation of state agencies, and negotiate and enter into agreements with these agencies to share information and avoid duplication of effort;

(G) For his own guidance and the guidance of deputy inspectors general, develop and update in the light of experience, both of the following:

(1) Within the scope of the definition in division (G) of section 121.41 of the Revised Code, a working definition of “wrongful act or omission”;

(2) A manual of investigative techniques.

(H) Conduct studies of techniques of investigating and detecting, and of preventing or reducing the risk of, wrongful acts and omissions by state officers and state employees;

(I) Consult with state agencies and advise them in developing, implementing, and enforcing policies and procedures that will prevent or reduce the risk of wrongful acts and omissions by their state officers or state employees;

(J) After detecting a wrongful act or omission, review and evaluate the relevant policies and procedures of the state agency in which the wrongful act or omission occurred, and advise the state agency as to any changes that should be made in its policies and procedures so as to prevent recurrences of similar wrongful acts or omissions.

121.421 Investigation of casino control commission enforcement personnel

(A) Notwithstanding division (D)(3) of section 121.41 of the Revised Code, in order to determine whether wrongful acts or omissions have been committed or are being committed by present or former employees, the inspector general shall investigate employees of the office of the attorney general who are contractually vested with duties to enforce Chapter 3772. of the Revised Code, including any designated bureau of criminal identification and investigation support staff that are necessary to fulfill the investigatory and law enforcement functions of the Ohio casino control commission. The inspector general and any deputy inspector general may administer oaths, examine witnesses under oath, and issue subpoenas and subpoenas duces tecum to employees of the office of the attorney general to compel the attendance

of witnesses and the production of all kinds of books, records, papers, and tangible things deemed necessary in the course of any such investigation.

(B) The inspector general may enter into any contracts that are necessary to complete an investigation. The contracts may include contracts for the services of persons who are experts in a particular field and whose expertise is necessary for successful completion of the investigation.

(C) If the authority of the attorney general terminates or expires, the authority vested in the inspector general by this section terminates upon the conclusion of ongoing investigations or upon issuance of the final report of the investigations.

121.43 Subpoena power - contempt

In performing any investigation, the inspector general and any deputy inspector general may administer oaths, examine witnesses under oath, and issue subpoenas and subpoenas duces tecum to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of all kinds of books, records, papers, and tangible things. Upon the refusal of a witness to be sworn or to answer any question put to him, or if a person disobeys a subpoena, the inspector general shall apply to the court of common pleas for a contempt order, as in the case of disobedience to the requirements of a subpoena issued from the court of common pleas, or a refusal to testify in the court.

121.44 Reports of investigations

(A) Except as otherwise provided in this section, the report of any investigation conducted by the inspector general or any deputy inspector general is a public record, open to public inspection. The inspector general, or a deputy inspector general, with the written approval of the inspector general, may designate all or part of a report as confidential if doing so preserves the confidentiality of matters made confidential by law or appears reasonably necessary to protect the safety of a witness or to avoid disclosure of investigative techniques that, if disclosed, would enable persons who have been or are committing wrongful acts or omissions to avoid detection. Confidential material shall be marked clearly as being confidential.

(B) The inspector general, free of charge, shall provide a copy of each report of an investigation, including wholly and partially confidential reports, to the governor. In addition, the inspector general, free of charge, shall provide a copy of the report of any investigation, including wholly and partially confidential reports, to a prosecuting authority who may undertake criminal prosecution of a wrongful act or omission described in the report, an ethics commission to which a wrongful act or omission described in the report was reported in accordance with section 102.06 of the Revised Code, and a licensing agency, appointing authority, or public or private employer that may take disciplinary action with regard to a wrongful act or omission described in the report. The inspector general shall not provide a copy of any confidential part of the report of an investigation to a person as required by this division if that person allegedly committed the wrongful act or omission described in the report. The governor, a prosecuting authority, ethics commission, licensing agency, appointing authority, or public or private employer that receives a report,

all or part of which is designated as confidential, shall take all appropriate measures necessary to preserve the confidentiality of the report.

(C) The inspector general shall provide a copy of any nonconfidential report, or the nonconfidential parts of any report, to any other person who requests the copy and pays a fee prescribed by the inspector general. The fee shall not exceed the cost of reproducing and delivering the report.

121.45 Cooperating in investigations

Each state agency, and every state officer and state employee, shall cooperate with, and provide assistance to, the inspector general and any deputy inspector general in the performance of any investigation. In particular, each state agency shall make its premises, equipment, personnel, books, records, and papers readily available to the inspector general or a deputy inspector general.

The inspector general and any deputy inspector general may enter upon the premises of any state agency at any time, without prior announcement, if necessary to the successful completion of an investigation. In the course of an investigation, the inspector general and any deputy inspector general may question any state officer or state employee serving in, and any other person transacting business with, the state agency, and may inspect and copy any books, records, or papers in the possession of the state agency, taking care to preserve the confidentiality of information contained in responses to questions or the books, records, or papers that is made confidential by law.

In performing any investigation, the inspector general and any deputy inspector general shall avoid interfering with the ongoing operations of the state agency being investigated, except insofar as is reasonably necessary to the successful completion of the investigation.

Each state agency shall develop, implement, and enforce policies and procedures that prevent or reduce the risk of wrongful acts and omissions by its state officers or state employees.

Other state agencies that also are responsible for investigating, auditing, reviewing, or evaluating the management and operation of state agencies shall negotiate and enter into agreements with the office of the inspector general for the purpose of sharing information and avoiding duplication of effort.

121.46 Filing complaint - form

Any person who knows or has reasonable cause to believe that a state officer or state employee has committed, or is in the process of committing, a wrongful act or omission may prepare and file with the inspector general, a complaint that identifies the person making the report and the state officer or state employee who allegedly committed or is committing the wrongful act or omission, describes the wrongful act or omission, and explains how the person reporting knew or came to his reasonable cause to believe that the state officer or state employee committed or is in the process of committing the wrongful act or omission.

The preparation and filing of the complaint described in this section is in addition to any other report of the wrongful act or omission the person is required by law to make. The inspector general shall prescribe a form for complaints under this section. The inspector general shall provide a blank copy of the form to any person, free of charge. No complaint is defective, however, because it is not made on the form prescribed by the inspector general.

121.47 Confidential information

No person shall disclose to any person who is not legally entitled to disclosure of the information, any information that is designated as confidential under section 121.44 of the Revised Code, or any confidential information that is acquired in the course of an investigation under section 121.45 of the Revised Code.

121.48 Appointment of Inspector General

There is hereby created the office of the inspector general, to be headed by the inspector general.

The term of the inspector general serving on the effective date of this amendment ends January 11, 2021. The inspector general shall be appointed by the governor quadrennially thereafter, subject to section 121.49 of the Revised Code and the advice and consent of the senate, and shall hold office for a term of four years commencing on the second Monday of January. The governor may remove the inspector general from office only after delivering written notice to the inspector general of the reasons for which the governor intends to remove the inspector general from office and providing the inspector general with an opportunity to appear and show cause why the inspector general should not be removed.

In addition to the duties imposed by section 121.42 of the Revised Code, the inspector general shall manage the office of the inspector general. The inspector general shall establish and maintain offices in Columbus.

The inspector general may employ and fix the compensation of one or more deputy inspectors general. Each deputy inspector general shall serve for a term coinciding with the term of the appointing inspector general, and shall perform the duties, including the performance of investigations, that are assigned by the inspector general. All deputy inspectors general are in the unclassified service and serve at the pleasure of the inspector general.

In addition to deputy inspectors general, the inspector general may employ and fix the compensation of professional, technical, and clerical employees that are necessary for the effective and efficient operation of the office of the inspector general. All professional, technical, and clerical employees of the office of the inspector general are in the unclassified service and serve at the pleasure of the appointing inspector general.

The inspector general may enter into any contracts that are necessary to the operation of the office of the inspector general. The contracts may include, but are not limited to, contracts for the services of persons who are experts in a particular field and whose expertise is necessary to the successful completion of an investigation.

Not later than the first day of March in each year, the inspector general shall publish an annual report summarizing the activities of the inspector general's office during the previous calendar year. The annual report shall not disclose the results of any investigation insofar as the results are designated as confidential under section 121.44 of the Revised Code.

The inspector general shall provide copies of the inspector general's annual report to the governor and the general assembly. The inspector general also shall provide a copy of the annual report to any other person who requests the copy and pays a fee prescribed by the inspector general. The fee shall not exceed the cost of reproducing and delivering the annual report.

Amended by 132nd General Assembly File No. TBD, HB 49, §101.01, eff. 9/29/2017.

Effective Date: 09-26-2003; 2007 HB119 09-29-2007.

121.481 Special investigations fund

The special investigations fund is hereby created in the state treasury for the purpose of paying costs of investigations conducted by the inspector general. In response to requests from the inspector general, the controlling board may make transfers to the fund from the emergency purposes appropriation of the board, subject to the following conditions:

- (A) The inspector general shall not request a transfer that would cause the unobligated, unencumbered balance in the fund to exceed one hundred thousand dollars at any one time;
- (B) In requesting a transfer, the inspector general shall not disclose any information that would risk impairing the investigation if it became public, provided that after any investigation using money transferred to the fund from an emergency purposes appropriation has been completed, the inspector general shall report to the board the object and cost of the investigation, but not any information designated as confidential under section 121.44 of the Revised Code.

121.482 Disposition of money received

Money the inspector general receives pursuant to court orders or settlements shall be deposited into the state treasury to the credit of the general revenue fund.

121.483 Status of deputy inspector general as peace officer

A deputy inspector general appointed under section 121.48 of the Revised Code, who has been awarded a certificate by the executive director of the Ohio peace officer training commission attesting to the person's satisfactory completion of an approved state, county, or municipal peace officer basic training program, shall, during the term of the deputy inspector general's appointment, be considered a peace officer for the purpose of maintaining a current and valid basic training certificate pursuant to rules adopted under section 109.74 of the Revised Code.

121.49 Qualifications

- (A) Subject to division (B) of this section, only an individual who meets one or more of the following qualifications is eligible to be appointed inspector general:

- (1) At least five years experience as a law enforcement officer in this or any other state;
 - (2) Admission to the bar of this or any other state;
 - (3) Certification as a certified public accountant in this or any other state;
 - (4) At least five years service as the comptroller or similar officer of a public or private entity in this or any other state.
 - (5) At least five years service as a deputy inspector general in this or any other state.
- (B) No individual who has been convicted, in this or any other state, of a felony or of any crime involving fraud, dishonesty, or moral turpitude shall be appointed inspector general.

121.50 Administrative rules

The inspector general, in accordance with Chapter 119 of the Revised Code, shall adopt, and may amend and rescind, those rules he finds necessary for the successful implementation and efficient operation of sections 121.41 to 121.48 of the Revised Code.

121.51 Deputy inspector general for transportation department

There is hereby created in the office of the inspector general the position of deputy inspector general for the department of transportation. The inspector general shall appoint the deputy inspector general, and the deputy inspector general shall serve at the pleasure of the inspector general. A person employed as the deputy inspector general shall have the same qualifications as those specified in section 121.49 of the Revised Code for the inspector general. The inspector general shall provide technical, professional, and clerical assistance to the deputy inspector general.

There is hereby created in the state treasury the deputy inspector general for ODOT fund. The fund shall consist of money credited to the fund for the payment of costs incurred by the deputy inspector general in performing the duties of the deputy inspector general as specified in this section. The inspector general shall use the fund to pay costs incurred by the deputy inspector general in performing the duties of the deputy inspector general as required under this section.

The deputy inspector general shall investigate all wrongful acts or omissions that have been committed or are being committed by employees of the department. In addition, the deputy inspector general shall conduct a program of random review of the processing of contracts associated with building and maintaining the state's infrastructure. The random review program shall be designed by the inspector general. The program shall be confidential and may be altered by the inspector general at any time. The deputy inspector general has the same powers and duties regarding matters concerning the department as those specified in sections 121.42, 121.43, and 121.45 of the Revised Code for the inspector general. Complaints may be filed with the deputy inspector general in the same manner as prescribed for complaints filed with the inspector general under section 121.46 of the Revised Code. All

investigations conducted and reports issued by the deputy inspector general are subject to section 121.44 of the Revised Code.

All officers and employees of the department shall cooperate with and provide assistance to the deputy inspector general in the performance of any investigation conducted by the deputy inspector general. In particular, those persons shall make their premises, equipment, personnel, books, records, and papers readily available to the deputy inspector general. In the course of an investigation, the deputy inspector general may question any officers or employees of the department and any person transacting business with the department and may inspect and copy any books, records, or papers in the possession of the department, taking care to preserve the confidentiality of information contained in responses to questions or the books, records, or papers that are made confidential by law. In performing any investigation, the deputy inspector general shall avoid interfering with the ongoing operations of the department, except insofar as is reasonably necessary to complete the investigation successfully.

At the conclusion of an investigation by the deputy inspector general, the deputy inspector general shall deliver to the director of transportation and the governor any case for which remedial action is necessary. The deputy inspector general shall maintain a public record of the activities of the deputy inspector general to the extent permitted under this section, ensuring that the rights of the parties involved in each case are protected. The inspector general shall include in the annual report required by section 121.48 of the Revised Code a summary of the deputy inspector general's activities during the previous year.

No person shall disclose any information that is designated as confidential in accordance with section 121.44 of the Revised Code or any confidential information that is acquired in the course of an investigation conducted under this section to any person who is not legally entitled to disclosure of that information.

121.52 Deputy inspector general for workers' compensation

There is hereby created in the office of the inspector general the office of deputy inspector general for the bureau of workers' compensation and industrial commission. The inspector general shall appoint the deputy inspector general, and the deputy inspector general shall serve at the pleasure of the inspector general. A person employed as the deputy inspector general shall have the same qualifications as those specified in section 121.49 of the Revised Code for the inspector general. The inspector general shall provide professional and clerical assistance to the deputy inspector general.

The deputy inspector general for the bureau of workers' compensation and the industrial commission shall investigate wrongful acts or omissions that have been committed by or are being committed by officers or employees of the bureau of workers' compensation and the industrial commission. The deputy inspector general has the same powers and duties regarding matters concerning the bureau and the commission as those specified in sections 121.42, 121.43, and 121.45 of the Revised Code for the inspector general. Complaints may be

filed with the deputy inspector general in the same manner as prescribed for complaints filed with the inspector general under section 121.46 of the Revised Code. All investigations conducted and reports issued by the deputy inspector general are subject to section 121.44 of the Revised Code.

There is hereby created in the state treasury the deputy inspector general for the bureau of workers' compensation and industrial commission fund, which shall consist of moneys deposited into it that the inspector general receives from the administrator of workers' compensation and receives from the industrial commission in accordance with this section. The inspector general shall use the fund to pay the costs incurred by the deputy inspector general in performing the duties of the deputy inspector general as required under this section.

The members of the industrial commission, bureau of workers' compensation board of directors, workers' compensation audit committee, workers' compensation actuarial committee, and workers' compensation investment committee, and the administrator, and employees of the industrial commission and the bureau shall cooperate with and provide assistance to the deputy inspector general in the performance of any investigation conducted by the deputy inspector general. In particular, those persons shall make their premises, equipment, personnel, books, records, and papers readily available to the deputy inspector general. In the course of an investigation, the deputy inspector general may question any person employed by the industrial commission or the administrator and any person transacting business with the industrial commission, the board, the audit committee, the actuarial committee, the investment committee, the administrator, or the bureau and may inspect and copy any books, records, or papers in the possession of those persons or entities, taking care to preserve the confidentiality of information contained in responses to questions or the books, records, or papers that are made confidential by law.

In performing any investigation, the deputy inspector general shall avoid interfering with the ongoing operations of the entities being investigated, except insofar as is reasonably necessary to successfully complete the investigation.

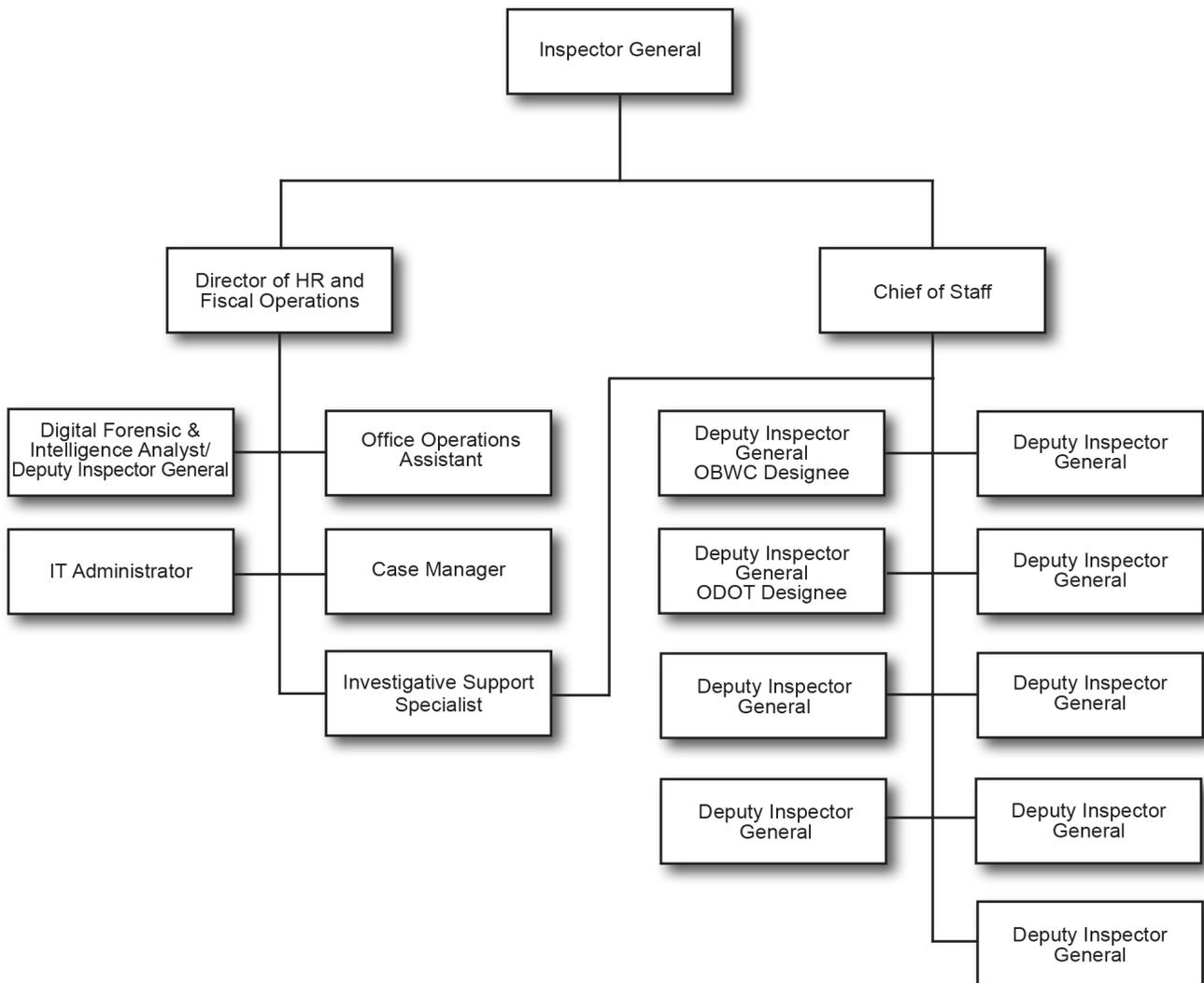
At the conclusion of an investigation conducted by the deputy inspector general for the bureau of workers' compensation and industrial commission, the deputy inspector general shall deliver to the board, the administrator, the industrial commission, and the governor any case for which remedial action is necessary. The deputy inspector general shall maintain a public record of the activities of the office of the deputy inspector general to the extent permitted under this section, ensuring that the rights of the parties involved in each case are protected. The inspector general shall include in the annual report required under section 121.48 of the Revised Code a summary of the activities of the deputy inspector general during the previous year.

No person shall disclose any information that is designated as confidential in accordance with section 121.44 of the Revised Code or any confidential information that is acquired in the course of an investigation conducted under this section to any person who is not legally entitled to disclosure of that information.

Table of Organization

Appendix 2: Table of Organization

Office of the Ohio Inspector General Table of Organization



Contact Information

Mailing Address:

Office of the Ohio Inspector General
James A. Rhodes State Office Tower
30 East Broad Street, Suite 2940
Columbus, Ohio 43215-3414

Phone:

(614) 644-9110 (General Line)
(800) 686-1525 (Toll-Free)
(614) 644-9504 (FAX)

Email and Internet:

watchdog@oig.ohio.gov (Email)
watchdog.ohio.gov (Website)

Follow us on LinkedIn and X:



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/ohio-office-of-the-inspector-general>



<https://x.com/ohioig>



Office of the Ohio Inspector General

Rhodes State Office Tower | 30 East Broad Street - Suite 2940 | Columbus, Ohio 43215-3414

Phone: 614-644-9110 | FAX: 614-644-9504 | Toll Free: 800-686-1525

Email: watchdog@oig.ohio.gov | Website: watchdog.ohio.gov