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**Good Government Hotline**  
**FY09 Annual Report**

Sarah Landis, Principal Auditor

**General Overview**

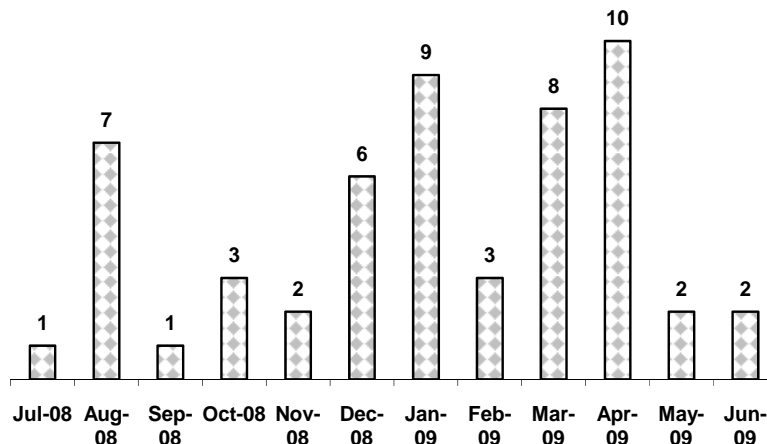
Launched in October 2007, the Good Government Hotline was established to provide Multnomah County employees and the public at large with a method of reporting suspected fraud, abuse of position, and misuse of county resources (see the general definitions on page 3). The Auditor's Office is committed to retaining this accountability asset for at least another year and has reduced our payroll expenditures so that we may continue to operate the hotline despite cuts to our budget. We will re-evaluate the costs and benefits of the hotline at the end of FY10.

This report covers Good Government Hotline activities during Fiscal Year 2009 (July 2008 through June 2009). A summary of trends, publicity activities, costs, and other statistics follow.

**Trends**

The Hotline received 54 reports during the FY09 at a rate of 4.5 per month, with significant fluctuations between months. July and September were the slowest months with one report each while April was the busiest with 10 reports. The reason for the fluctuation in the number of reports per month is unknown and it is difficult to predict future usage of the Hotline. Since the Hotline was established in October 2007, there have been 108 reports submitted.

Number of Hotline Reports per Month  
FY09



## Statistics

|                | <u>Reports Received</u> | <u>Online</u> | <u>Call Center</u> | <u>Employee</u> | <u>Public</u> |
|----------------|-------------------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| July 2008      | 1                       | 1             | 0                  | 0               | 1             |
| August 2008    | 7                       | 6             | 1                  | 4               | 3             |
| September 2008 | 1                       | 1             | 0                  | 1               | 0             |
| October 2008   | 3                       | 1             | 2                  | 2               | 1             |
| November 2008  | 2                       |               | 2                  | 1               | 1             |
| December 2008  | 6                       | 4             | 2                  | 4               | 2             |
| January 2009   | 9                       | 6             | 3                  | 9               | 0             |
| February 2009  | 3                       | 3             | 0                  | 3               | 0             |
| March 2009     | 8                       | 7             | 1                  | 6               | 2             |
| April 2009     | 10                      | 8             | 2                  | 8               | 2             |
| May 2009       | 2                       | 2             | 0                  | 2               | 0             |
| June 2009      | 2                       | 1             | 1                  | 1               | 1             |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>54</b>               | <b>40</b>     | <b>14</b>          | <b>41</b>       | <b>13</b>     |

### FY09 Hotline Allegation Categories

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Fraud                                  | 2  |
| Abuse of Position                      | 6  |
| Conflict of Interest                   | 0  |
| Theft/Unauthorized Use of Co. Property | 4  |
| Misuse of Time/Benefits                | 7  |
| Other HR Related Concern               | 13 |
| General Workplace Concern              | 7  |
| Inappropriate Behavior/Actions         | 8  |
| Improper Contractor Activity           | 2  |
| Citizen Complaint or Concern           | 2  |
| Not County Related                     | 3  |

### FY09 Allegations by Current Disposition Status

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Contacted appropriate official – no further review necessary | 18 |
| Referred report to appropriate official for resolution       | 18 |
| Referred the reporter to a more appropriate resource         | 4  |
| Review suspended due to incomplete or unavailable info       | 6  |
| Reported concern or issue resolved                           | 8  |
| Auditor's review or other investigation ongoing at this time | 0  |

- 74% of reports were submitted online
- 24% of reports came from members of the public; 76% from employees of Multnomah County
- 93% of reporters chose to remain anonymous
- 66% of reports were handled by departments, either through a review with the appropriate official or referral to them for investigation, resolution, and follow up with the Auditor's Office
- 35% of all Hotline reports fell in categories that meet the general definitions of fraud, abuse of position, and misuse of county resources
- 65% of all Hotline reports fell in one of these four categories: misuse of time/benefits; general workplace concern; other human resources related concern; or inappropriate behavior/actions.
- The average number of days from initial report to close was 42.6
- 43% of reporters came back to the hotline to check on the status of their reports or to answer follow up questions from our office
- To date, no criminal charges have resulted from any Hotline report

## Publicity

After the initial project kick-off efforts to raise awareness about the Hotline, we have not initiated any significant publicity. We intend to increase public awareness efforts this fall, and we will continue to periodically send information to employees and present to staff groups. In addition, we have worked with the County's web administrators to restore a link to the hotline directly from the county's main public web page and from the county's internal MINT site.

## **Cost**

The cost of the hotline in FY09 was approximately \$6,200 for service and maintenance from the vendor, Ethics Point. Costs associated with the Auditor's Office administration of the Hotline are not included. In addition, time spent by county staff investigating and responding to reports referred to departments and/or appropriate officials is not covered.

## **General Definitions**

**Fraud** is defined as the intentional misappropriation of county assets by any act including, but not limited to, theft, embezzlement, or misrepresentation. Fraud can be internal or external, in that it can be perpetrated by contractors or vendors, as well as by county agencies and employees. Examples of fraud include:

- Misappropriation of county cash and other funds, including funds intended for service recipients or those incarcerated in county jail facilities
- Theft or unauthorized removal of county records or property or the property of other persons
- Willful destruction or damage of county records, county property, or the property of other persons
- Falsification of records such as time cards or travel and other expense vouchers

**Abuse** is defined as use of employment with the county to obtain personal gain or benefit from the county to which one is not entitled, for the employee or for someone else, such as a friend or family member. Such actions constitute **abuse of position** and abuse of the public trust.

Examples of abuse of position include:

- Obtaining a benefit or service from the county for which an employee does not qualify
- Providing a benefit or service to someone for which they do not qualify
- Unauthorized reduction of fines or fees

**Misuse of county resources** is defined as using a county resource, such as county equipment or county-compensated time, for personal use. Examples of misuse of county resources include:

- Personal use, unauthorized use, or misuse of county property such as computers, telephones, vehicles, and fax machines
- Performing personal business on county time
- Not working when being paid to work

## **Accessing the Good Government Hotline**

Reporters can access the Hotline in a variety of ways:

- Proceed directly to the reporting page at [www.GoodGovHotline.com](http://www.GoodGovHotline.com) to submit an online report.
- Call **888-289-6839 (toll free) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week**. Reports are taken by a live intake specialist. Calls are not recorded and caller ID is disabled.
- Access the Hotline vendor, EthicsPoint, at this address: [www.ethicspoint.com](http://www.ethicspoint.com). Follow the "File New Report" link and enter "Multnomah County" to submit an online report.