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## Good Government Hotline

### Report on the First Year of Operation

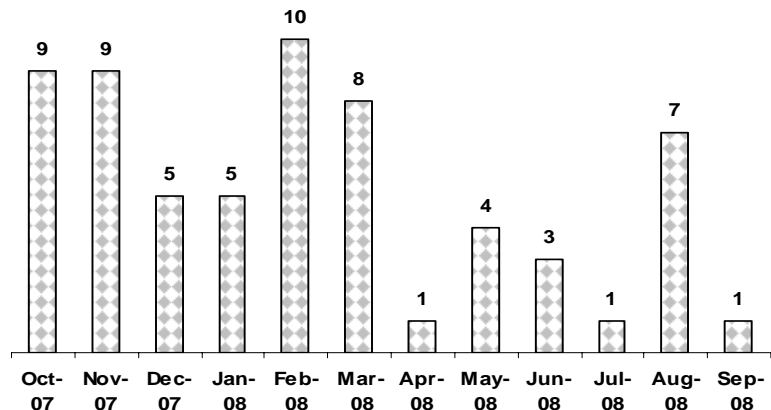
October 2007 – September 2008

#### General Overview

Launched on October 3, 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). This report covers Good Government Hotline activities during the first year of operation – October 2007 through September 2008. A summary of trends, publicity activities, costs, and other statistics follow:

*Trends.* Based on the size of the county organization, we anticipated receiving an average of five reports a month. The average was slightly more than five reports a month, but the actual number of reports per month fluctuated with a high of 10 reports in February 2008 and a low of one report in April, July, and September 2008. Over 70% of the Hotline reports received during the first year of operation were submitted during the first six months. A more detailed summary follows on page 2.

Number of Hotline Reports per Month



At this point, it is difficult to determine the reason for the fluctuation in the number of reports per month or the overall decline in the number of reports during the second six month period. It is also somewhat difficult to predict future usage of the Hotline. Our office has gotten great value out of hearing from employees and the public, and a number of managers have indicated they found information useful, as well.

*Publicity.* Information regarding the Hotline was e-mailed to all staff when it was launched in October 2007 and again in January 2008. We also met with department directors, made 16 presentations to various staffing units and groups throughout the first year, and distributed posters and information cards throughout the county. A link to the Good Government Hotline is prominently displayed on the internal MINT site, as well as on the county's public home page. We intend to increase public awareness efforts this fall, and we will continue to periodically send information to employees and present to staff groups.

Cost. The cost of implementation and start up of the Hotline was \$1,500. Service and annual maintenance fees for the last nine months of FY08 through the end of FY09 cost \$9,650. 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.

*Month-by-month statistics.*

	<b>Reports Received</b>	<b>Online</b>	<b>Call Center</b>	<b>Employee</b>	<b>Public</b>
October 2007	9	7	2	4	5
November 2007	9	7	2	7	2
December 2007	5	4	1	4	1
January 2008	5	4	1	4	1
February 2008	10	6	4	6	4
March 2008	8	6	2	4	4
April 2008	1	1	0	1	0
May 2008	4	4	0	3	1
June 2008	3	3	0	3	0
July 2008	1	1	0	1	0
August 2008	7	6	1	4	3
September 2008	1	1	0	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>21</b>

*Overall statistics.*

<b>10/07 – 9/08 Hotline Report Categories</b>	
Fraud	2
Abuse of Position	2
Conflict of Interest	7
Theft of County Property	1
Unauthorized Use of County Property	3
Misuse of Time/Benefits	11
Other HR Related Concern	5
General Workplace Concern	11
Inappropriate Behavior/Actions	11
Improper Contractor Activity	3
Citizen Complaint or Concern	6
Not County Related	1

<b>10/07 – 9/08 Reports by Current Disposition Status</b>	
Contacted appropriate official – no further review necessary	15
Referred report to appropriate official for resolution	24
Referred the reporter to a more appropriate resource	3
Review suspended due to incomplete or unavailable info	2
Reported concern or issue resolved	6
Auditor's review or other investigation ongoing at this time	13

- 79% of reports were submitted online.
- 33% of reports came from members of the public.
- 73% of reporters chose to remain anonymous.
- 38% of reports were referred to the appropriate official (i.e. management, HR, County Attorney) for resolution.
- Review or investigation currently continues for 21% of reports received during the first year of operation.

The report categories shown above are based on our analysis of reported concerns or allegations.

- 24% of all Hotline reports fell in categories that meet the general definitions of fraud, abuse of position, and misuse of county resources.
- 60% 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.
- To date, no criminal charges have resulted from any Hotline report.

## **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:**

- 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:**

- 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:**

- 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.