

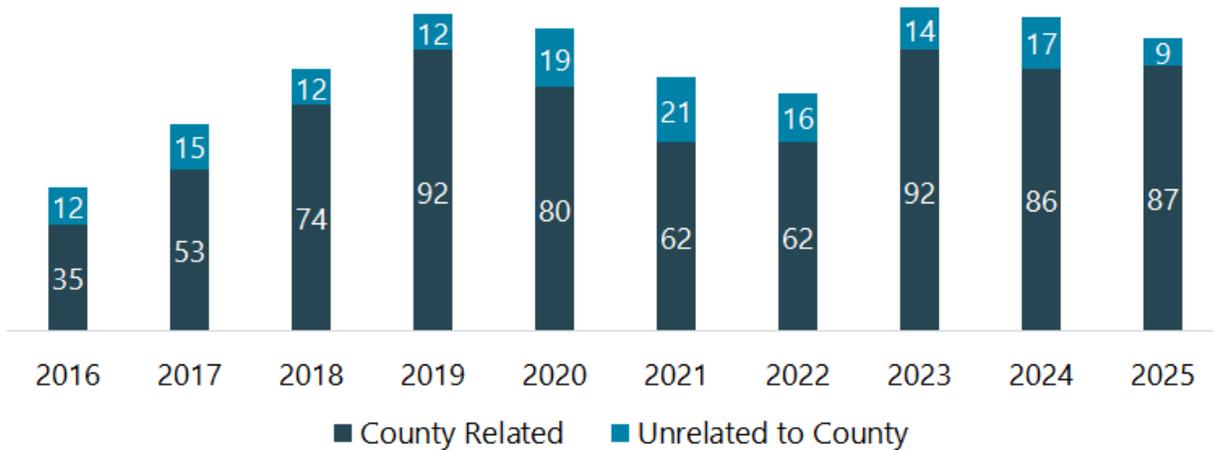
Good Government Hotline Activity Report 2025



The Multnomah County Auditor’s Hotline provides a way for county employees and community members to report concerns of fraud, waste, inefficiency, and abuse of position.

We received 96 total, unduplicated Hotline reports in 2025. Eighty-seven of those reports were county related. For the reports that were not county related, we tried to connect the reporter to the correct resource.

The Hotline received 87 county-related, unduplicated reports in 2025



Reports can be made anonymously. Reporter confidentiality is protected by Oregon Law.

In 2025, we extended our Hotline outreach through a training video, office hours during International Fraud Awareness Week, and in presentations to departments and new county employees. In 2026, training on how to make a report to the Hotline will be required for all county employees.

In 2025, fraud, waste, and abuse of position reports declined slightly, while employee misconduct reports increased by 27%



Good Government Hotline Activity Report 2025

We investigate all reports regarding fraud, waste, or abuse. We may incorporate reports about other issues into an audit. However, in the case of rule violations, disagreements with hiring, policy, or budgeting decisions, or other personnel matters, we refer reporters to management or human resources. Occasionally – with the reporter’s permission, or for health or safety concerns – we refer reports directly to management.

In 2025, we investigated 18 reports, and identified 6 for audit or potential audit



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Tips are by far the most effective way to identify fraud in an organization, outpacing any other mode of detection by more than 3 times. Tips from county employees have historically been the most common source of tips to the Hotline. Employees often have access to information that the public does not, which can greatly improve the odds of a substantiated allegation. However, the public, including county contractors and vendors, are an important source for reports of fraud, waste, and abuse, and have made impactful tips to the Hotline.

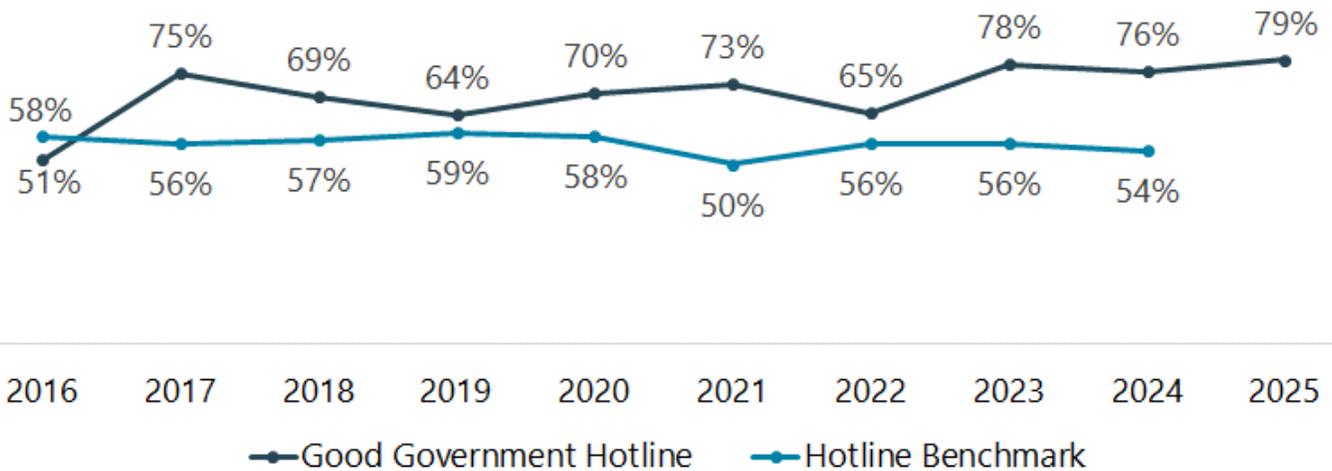
Over the past three years, reports from employees have increased, while reports from the public have decreased



The rate of anonymous reports increased slightly to 79% in 2025. The ability to report anonymously is a best practice for an effective hotline. However, anonymous reports are often more difficult to substantiate, and a high rate of anonymous reports may indicate that reporters fear retaliation. When reporters leave contact information, we can ask follow-up questions and gather more information, which may help substantiate reports. Every reporter's identity is kept confidential, in accordance with Oregon law.

2025's rate of anonymous reports was again far above the benchmark*

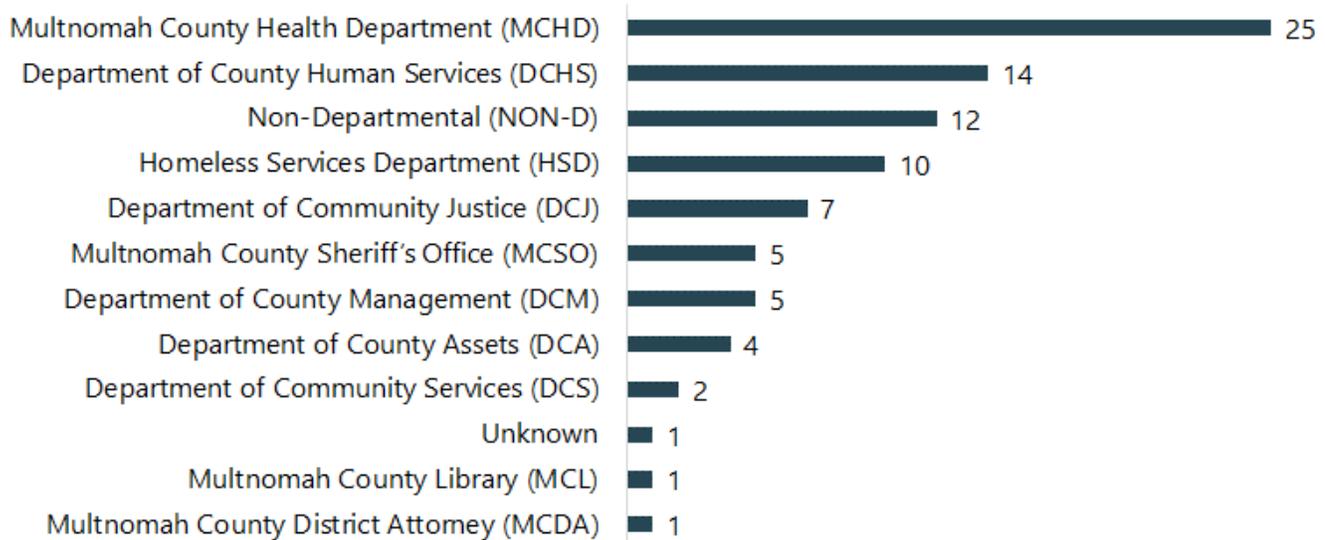
*The benchmark trails our reporting period by one year.



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We categorize each county-related hotline report we receive based on the department in which the allegation was reported to have occurred. The Health Department, which had the most complaints, also had by far the largest number of employees and budget among county departments.

A quarter of 2025 complaints were related to the Health Department



Fraud, waste, inefficiency, and abuse of position investigation results

We investigated 18 reports to the Hotline in 2025, and incorporated 6 additional reports into a current or potential audit. Of the 18 reports we investigated, we substantiated 1, found 12 to be unsubstantiated, and have 5 investigations in progress. In 2025, we released two reports detailing substantiated allegations.

Recap of reports we issued in 2025

[Hotline Tip Report: The county overpaid for executive recruiting services by over \\$78,000, due to deviating from contract terms and failing to identify overbilling](#)

We substantiated waste. The county overpaid for services by over \$78,000. These overpayments occurred for two primary reasons:

- The county permitted a contractor to charge a higher rate than provided by the payment terms in the contract.
- The county did not properly reconcile submitted invoices to contract terms.

In addition, in the case of one contractor, terms that would have reduced costs for the county were left out of a contract.

The county has a responsibility to be efficient with taxpayer dollars. The county's current general fund reductions make this even more important. To prevent future, similar instances of waste, we recommended that the county reinforce contracting and invoice approval requirements to ensure that incoming invoices agree with the applicable financial terms in contracts.

[Hotline Tip Report: Inadequate oversight means the county cannot verify recycling rates on four major construction projects](#)

We substantiated an allegation of waste by the county. We found that due to inadequate oversight, the county could not verify actual recycling rates on four major construction projects. As a result, the county will forego some LEED certification points and fail to comply with City of Portland code and county policy on some projects.

The inaccurate and unreliable recycling data stemmed from a subcontractor waste hauler that did not meet prescribed construction waste disposal standards for the projects. These standards were intended, in part, to ensure that as much waste was recycled as possible.

We recommended that the county implement policies and procedures to ensure contractors and subcontractors are aware of and comply with recycling standards and provide accurate recycling data.

More information about the Hotline

A brief history of the Hotline

The County Auditor established the Good Government Hotline in 2007 to provide county employees and community members with a secure, confidential method for reporting suspected fraud, waste, or abuse of position.

Hotlines are effective reporting mechanisms and are an integral part of an anti-fraud control system. Organizations with hotlines experience significantly fewer fraud losses than organizations without hotlines. And tips are by far the most effective method for detecting fraud.

The hotline was adopted into county ordinance in 2023 as an operation of the Auditor's Office.

How we process and investigate reports

We take all reports made to the Good Government Hotline seriously. If you suspect fraud, waste, inefficiency, or abuse of position in the county government, we want you to know that you can confidentially report to the hotline. We know it takes bravery to make a report to the hotline, and that matters to us.

All of our hotline investigations are the result of tips from people who made a report to the hotline. While not every allegation made to the hotline results in a public report, we investigate all complaints of suspected fraud, waste, or abuse of position in county government.

For each county-related report, we conduct a preliminary review. Depending on the type of report, preliminary review may include reviewing documents and/or data, or talking with employees. In that preliminary review phase, a fact-finding process is used to determine whether the report will be further investigated, and who will investigate.

If we determine, after preliminary review, that a report needs further investigation, we initiate a primary investigation. Through the process of the investigation, we do fact-finding and analysis of the facts based on standards, rules, and laws. If a report is substantiated, we create a public report, and share it with the Board of County Commissioners. We often include recommendations when we issue reports. We do not have disciplinary authority over county employees. However, the county may choose to use our investigation results as a basis for disciplinary action.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Oregon Revised Statute 297.765, *Policies and procedures for local government waste hotline*, states that reporter identity for hotline complaints is confidential cannot be disclosed without the reporter's explicit permission. The Hotline always operates in strict compliance with this statute and protects reporter identity to the fullest legal extent. In addition, reporters can report anonymously if they choose.