



**Prince George's County
Office of Ethics and Accountability and
Board of Ethics**

Annual Report

INCLUSIVE OF CALENDAR YEAR 2024 & FISCAL YEAR 2025

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hon. Todd M. Turner, Esq.

September 2025



It is with great pleasure that I provide the Calendar Year 2024/Fiscal Year 2025 annual report for the Office of Ethics and Accountability (OEA) in conjunction with the Board of Ethics (BOE).

Since Fiscal Year 2015, as a result of the OEA's investigations, legal reviews, and other activities, we are providing recommendations each year to Executive and County Council Leadership to promote a culture of integrity, efficiency, and public trust. We highlighted several top Fiscal Year 2025 recommendations and cases in this Report.

During Fiscal Year 2025, OEA continued to provide administrative support to the Board of Ethics through the collection of financial disclosure statements from County officials and employees, the registration and reporting of lobbying activities, and the continuation of regular board meetings and hearings, which were conducted virtually. There were fourteen (14) referrals of alleged ethics violations complaints referred to the Board of Ethics, of which seven (7) were substantiated or partially substantiated.

This past year, OEA again collaborated with the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) to offer mandatory ethics training and resources to the County's workforce of more than 6,000 employees and officials. We conducted several in-person and virtual trainings, including for the Legislative Branch staff and County Council Members.

In FY 2025, the Office continued additional community outreach and education activities to inform the public of the mission of OEA and the Board of Ethics in County government.

Additional information and reports are available on the OEA/BOE website - <https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/departments-offices/ethics-accountability>. I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to serve and provide increased accountability and oversight in the operations of the Prince George's County government.

Sincerely,

Hon. Todd M. Turner
Executive Director

*“Your **A**dvice, **C**ompliance, & **E**nforcement Team”*

Mission

The mission of the Office of Ethics and Accountability is to promote public trust in County government through:

- Providing comprehensive intake, processing, investigations, management, and adjudication of allegations of waste, fraud, abuse, and illegal acts in County government.
- Promoting disclosure of outside business and monetary interests of County government employees/officials and real-time notice of lobbying activity directed towards County government.
- Providing training, technical assistance, and public education necessary to ensure County government services are delivered with integrity and in accordance with the standards of professional conduct identified within the ethics code.

Purpose

The Office of Ethics and Accountability provides increased accountability and oversight in the operations of the County government by identifying fraud, waste, abuse, and illegal acts pursuant to Prince George's County Code §2-299. It also provides support to the Prince George's County Board of Ethics in the exercise of its authority to interpret the County Code of Ethics in order to promote public trust in County government by ensuring the impartiality of the employees and elected officials in accordance with Prince George's County Code §2-292.

The Office of Ethics and Accountability's two main functions are best described as investigative of County operations and administrative in its support to the Board of Ethics. Investigations are initiated in several ways: (1) through the PGC Ethics Hotline, (2) directly to the Office, (3) via media, or (4) by other means. After an initial investigation by OEA, a matter may eventually be referred to law enforcement, an appropriate agency, or the Board of Ethics. Administratively, OEA oversees Financial Disclosure Statement submissions and lobbyists' registrations and reports; renders ethics advice to individuals governed by the Ethics Code; maintains compliance with the Open Meetings Act for the Board of Ethics; and provides ethics training to County officials, employees, and lobbyists.

Office of Ethics and Accountability Staff

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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Melanie Barr Brooks



In accordance with Section 2- 292(a)(6) of the Prince George's County Code, the Board of Ethics is required to provide an annual report of its activities to the County Executive and County Council. I am pleased to provide the Calendar Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Report of the Board of Ethics ("Board").

I am excited to report that Calendar Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025 included the continuation of the County's mandatory ethics training for employees, board and commission members, and elected officials. The Office of Ethics and Accountability successfully collaborated with the Office of Human Resources Management to offer training through the County's online learning module system NEOGOV.

Throughout the year, the Board and OEA staff continued to receive and respond to a large number of requests for ethics advice, regarding, but not limited to, conflicts of interest, gifts, political activity, secondary employment, and post-employment matters. The Office of Ethics and Accountability continued to investigate several complaints alleging violations of the Ethics Code. Some of the complaints have resulted in the issuance of recommendations to improve County policies and procedures.

To ensure compliance with the County's Code of Ethics, during the Financial Disclosure Statement filing season, the Office of Ethics and Accountability staff provided assistance and legal advice on electronic filings to several officials, employees, volunteer commissioners, and board members. To date, staff have received and processed approximately one thousand (1,000) Financial Disclosure Statements in Calendar Year 2024, as well as three hundred eighty-nine (389) lobbyist registration and annual report forms from seventy-eight (78) total registered lobbyists in Calendar Year 2024.

The Board issued two formal advisory opinions to officials and the employees of the County and conducted one hearing that resulted in a Board Order. The Board will continue to address all questions arising under the Code of Ethics, receive complaints, and authorize, when applicable, the conduct of investigations in connection with the Code of Ethics.

During the past year, we recognized two long-standing Board Members and Past Chairs – Cassandra Burckhalter and Sharon Theodore Lewis – for their years of service and welcomed two new Board Members – Dr. Kara Hunt and Jason Papanikolas. I want to thank my fellow Board Members for their dedicated service. I appreciated the opportunity to promote public trust in its officials and employees.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melanie Barr Brooks". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a light-colored background.

Melanie Barr Brooks
Board Chair

Purpose of the Board of Ethics

The Code was enacted to guard against improper influence and even the appearance of improper influence by County officials, employees, and appointees to boards and commissions. To ensure impartiality and independent judgment, the Ethics Code requires designated individuals to disclose their financial affairs, and it sets standards for their business conduct. The Board of Ethics is the advisory body responsible for interpreting the Ethics Code and advising those persons subject to it. The Board of Ethics also serves as the body to hear and determine ethics complaints and violations.

Members of the Board of Ethics

The Board of Ethics currently consists of four (4) members. Members must be residents of Prince George's County, and no more than three members may be of the same political party. Todd M. Turner serves as the Executive Director to the Board of Ethics in addition to serving as the Executive Director of the Office of Ethics and Accountability. The Board of Ethics selected Melanie Barr Brooks to serve as Chair through December 31, 2025. The remaining members are as follows: Charlene Gallion, Dr. Kara Hunt, and Jason Papanikolas.

Meetings of the Board of Ethics

All regular meetings were either held virtually or in the Office of Ethics and Accountability, in the Largo Government Center, 9201 Basil Court, Suite 155, Largo, Maryland 20774. As required, advance notice of meetings and the possibility of closed sessions were posted on the County's website. All decisions of the Board of Ethics are reflected in the minutes of the monthly meetings and are available on the OEA's website.

Generally, agenda topics included establishing procedures for the Board of Ethics, consideration of formal requests for advisory opinions on the application of the Ethics Code, and review of investigation reports related to alleged violations of the County's Ethics Code, many of which include recommendations to Executive Leadership in the County. The Board has reviewed proposed legislation to the County Council for revisions to the County's Ethics Code disclosure requirements as part of the requirements to align with the State's Ethics Laws and to promote public trust in County government.

During the 2025 fiscal year, the Board of Ethics met eight (8) times for regular sessions and one (1) special session. A notice of the meetings appeared on the County's website. The Board of Ethics conducted closed sessions to discuss advisory opinion requests, exemption requests, and Board investigation referrals. The Board of Ethics conducted open meetings for all other actions.

Charter §1002 Waivers

The Board of Ethics did not receive any requests for Section 1002 waivers in the calendar year of 2024. Section 1002 of the Charter provides that the Board of Ethics may authorize any County employee to own stock or maintain a business that engages in business with the County, subject to the Board of Ethics' determination that the employee's involvement does not violate the public trust and that there is full disclosure of all pertinent facts.

Board of Ethics Referrals

The Board of Ethics is empowered with the authority to determine violations of the County's Ethics Code. The Board of Ethics reviews all complaints of alleged violations, conducts fact findings and hearings, and determines if an Ethics Code violation has occurred. Investigations of ethics violations completed by the Office of Ethics and Accountability are referred to the Board of Ethics for a determination of violations. Some complaints may be determined by the Board of Ethics in the following fiscal year upon completion of investigations. During the 2025 Fiscal Year, the Board received fourteen (14) referrals of alleged ethics violations, of which seven (7) were substantiated or partially substantiated through investigations by the Office of Ethics and Accountability.

Enforcement Activities

The Board of Ethics is empowered to impose fines and other penalties as warranted and to seek judicial enforcement of its sanctions. The Board of Ethics did not seek judicial enforcement but did impose late filing fees for delinquent filing of Financial Disclosure Statements and Lobbyists' Annual Reports during the fiscal year. For the 2025 Fiscal Year, OEA collected approximately \$5,000 in late fees (as of July 31).

Proposed Legislative Changes

Periodically, certain provisions in the Prince George's County Code will require revisions to comply with statutory changes made by the State Ethics Commission or to clarify interpretation to ensure compliance. Any proposed amendments to the Prince George's County Code of Ethics embodied in legislative proposals require approval by the State Ethics Commission in addition to an enactment by the County Council. There were two County Code legislative reviews in FY 2025. OEA also reviews, at the request of the Executive Branch, State legislative bills in the General Assembly session for potential impacts on the County Code and/or OEA operations.

Ethics Training

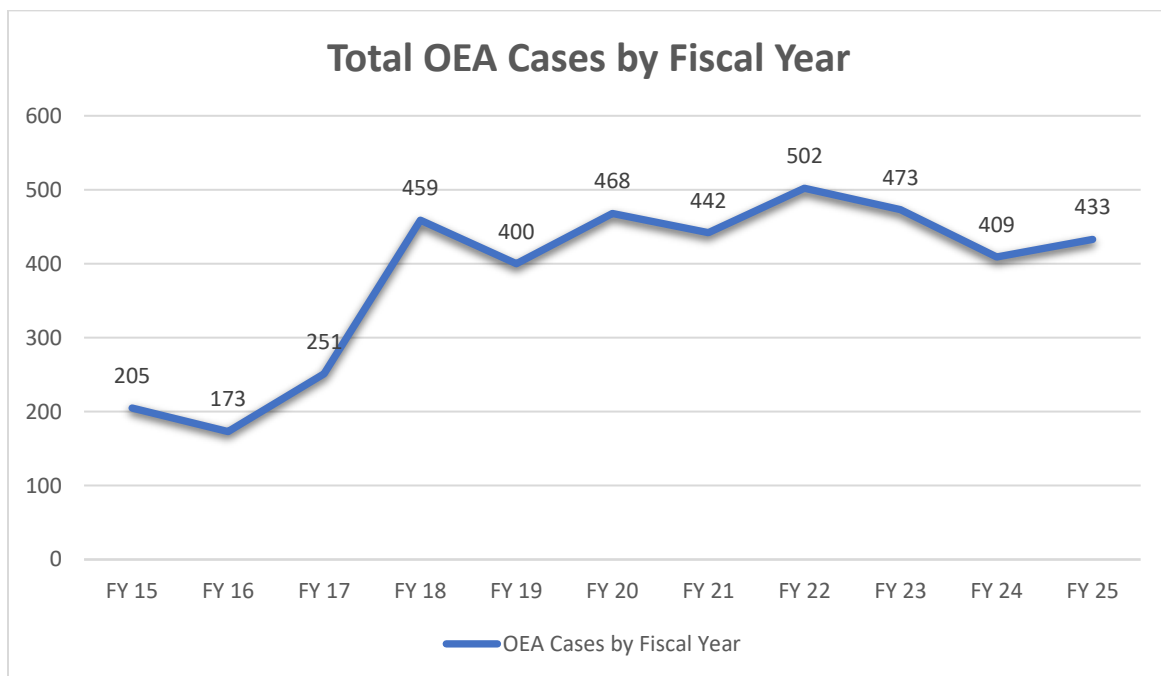
The Office of Ethics & Accountability collaborated with the OHRM to offer mandatory ethics training and other ethics training resources to more than 6,000 employees, officials, and board/commission members. Between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025, the Office provided in-person and/or online ethics training to several agencies, boards, and commission (NEOGOV)s, including the County Council, the Library Board of Trustees, and the Prince George's County Police Department. The Office promotes ethics training and compliance through five (5) distinct training areas: new employee orientation materials, online Learning Management System training (NEOGOV), in-person or virtual online workshops, on-site agency training by agency request, and special ethics topics training. OEA Director Turner is an instructor with the University of Maryland Academy for Excellence in Local Governance (AELG). Finally, OEA also provides monthly Countywide public service announcements on ethics topics to County officials and employees.



FY2025 Key Accomplishments

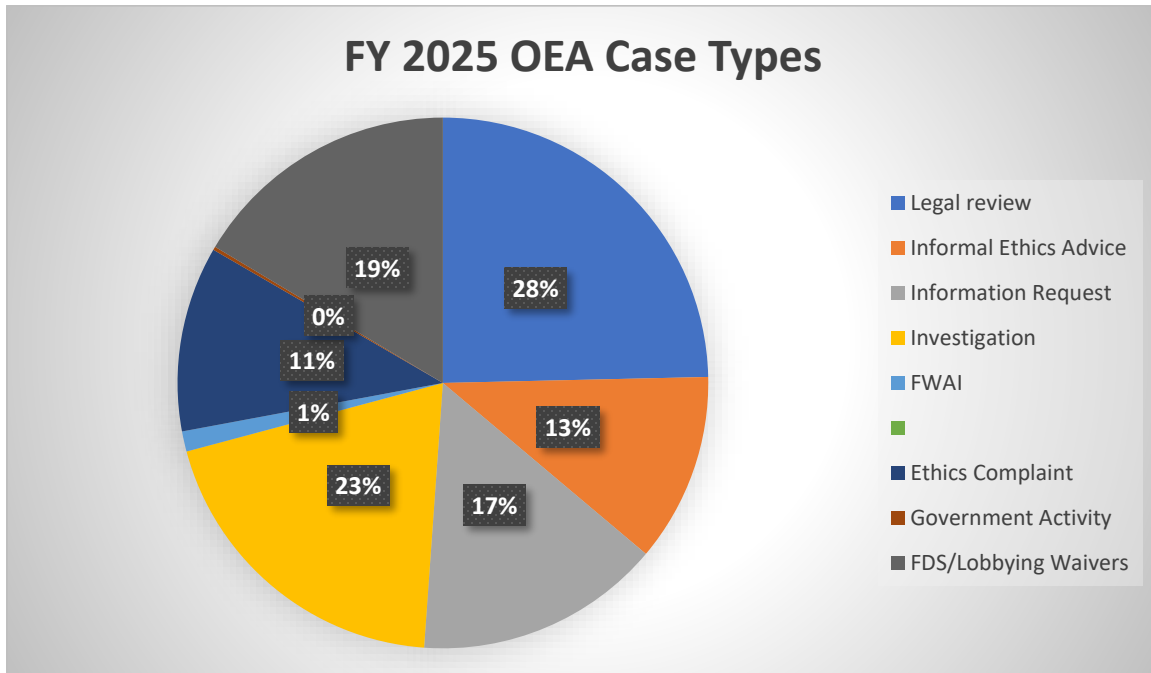
The Office of Ethics and Accountability (OEA) achieved the following key milestones:

The Office of Ethics and Accountability processed four hundred thirty-three (433) requests for the following case types in Fiscal Year 2025: investigations, operations reviews, legal reviews, formal Board advisory opinions & informal OEA ethics advice, information requests, and financial disclosure exemptions or fee waivers – largely received electronically. The Office has seen a substantial increase in cases since its establishment in Fiscal Year 2014. Of the complaints investigated solely or jointly by the Office of Ethics and Accountability this fiscal year, seven (7) cases were substantiated or partially substantiated with appropriate actions to be taken by agencies to address the identified ethics violations. Information related to Advisory Opinions, Informal Ethics Advice, and Information Requests are provided on the OEA's website.



During Fiscal Year 2025, twenty-three percent (23%) of the cases involved investigations, and thirteen percent (13%) involved the rendering of informal ethics advice. Legal reviews constituted another twenty-eight percent (28%) of the Office's efforts, which entailed, in part, a review of Appointments, Secondary Employment Requests, and the County and State legislation that impacted ethics laws. Information Requests (including Maryland Public Information Act - MPIA) requests comprised seventeen percent (17%) of cases, and FDS & Lobbying Waivers or Exemptions comprised nineteen percent (19%) of cases. OEA also provided administrative support to the Board of Ethics in the interpretation of permissible activities under the County's Ethics Code.

Most cases received by OEA in Fiscal Year 2025 were filed electronically, by phone, or via email directly to the Office, through the County's web portal, or the Ethics hotline, allowing reporters to file complaints anonymously. OEA continues to utilize the County online payment system (Govolution) for late fees and fines due from designated filers of Financial Disclosure Statements and lobbyists.



In its role of providing oversight and review of the collection of Financial Disclosure Statements (FDS) from designated filers in accordance with the County's Ethics Code, the Office of Ethics and Accountability processed over one thousand (1,000) Financial Disclosure Statements. OEA annually conducts a common error, and FDS schedules audits pertaining to Schedule E (business entities employed with the County), Schedule H (other sources of income), and Schedule J (Other Interests) to determine any conflicts related to secondary employment.

The Office of Ethics and Accountability continues to partner with agencies to broaden its global ethics training initiatives and, through training, bring awareness to officials and employees on the importance of reporting ethics violations and instances of fraud, waste, abuse, illegal acts, and noncompliance with County policies.

Other completed FY 2025 Goals:

- Implemented the recommendations from the completed in the 2024 5-year required independent Quality Assurance Review.
- Updated Executive Order 13-2014, which requires additional individuals and bodies to file Financial Disclosure Statements (now Executive Order 5-2025).
- Continued implementation of the County's Language Access Program (LAP) within OEA.
- Conducted additional community outreach and education activities.

Major Objectives for Fiscal Year 2026

The Office of Ethics and Accountability will continue to focus on establishing processes to govern its core services of investigations, evaluation of County operations, collection of Financial Disclosure Statements for employees and officials, collection of registrations and annual reports for lobbyists, and provision of ethics training and advice to include the following:

- To continue to provide comprehensive intake, processing, investigation, management, adjudication, analysis, reporting of allegations of fraud, waste, abuse, illegal acts, and operations review in County government and make necessary recommendations to executive and legislative officials to promote efficiency and accountability in County government.
- To continue to promote disclosure of the outside business and monetary interests of County government employees/officials and real-time notice of lobbying activity directed towards County government.
- To continue to provide ethics advice and legal reviews to officials and employees to ensure compliance with the County's Ethics Code.
- Seek State and County Ethics Code clarifying legislation for State Financial Disclosure Statements (FDS) filing requirements with the County Board of Ethics/OEA in Prince George's County for Bi-County Commissions (M-NCPPC, WSSC, and WSTC) (FY 2024 OEA Recommendation).

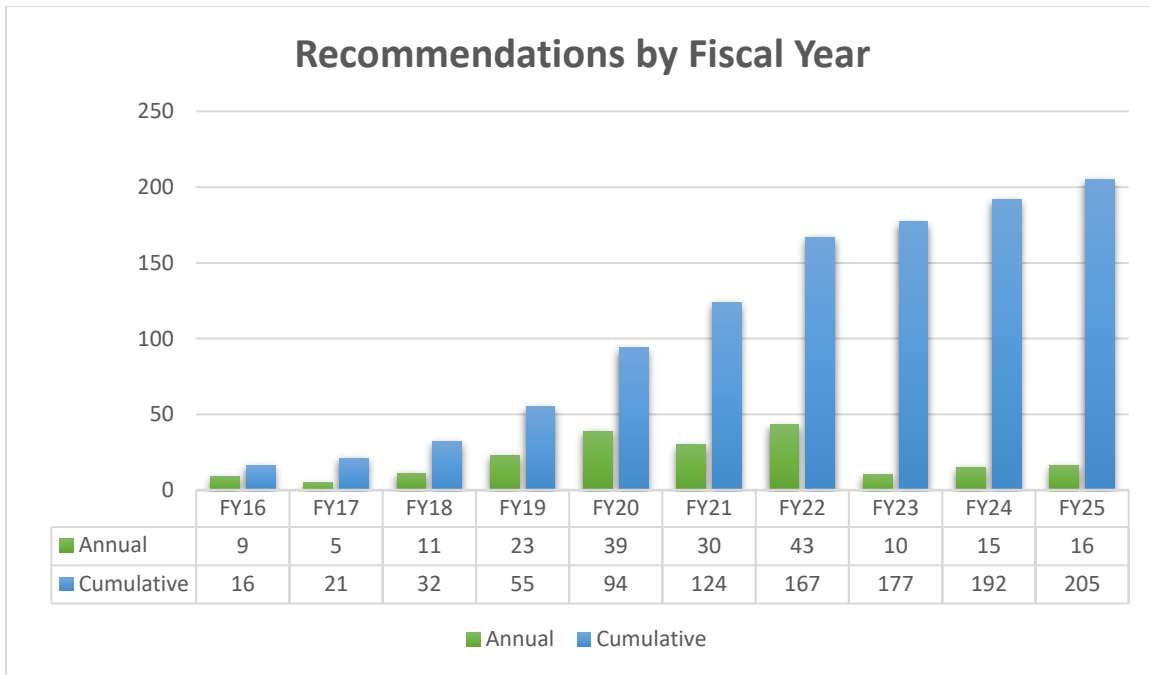


New Board Members Swearing In
Dr. Kara Hunt (top) and Jason Papanikolas (bottom)



Recommendations and Actions Taken

In Fiscal Year 2025, the Office of Ethics and Accountability is providing additional recommendations to Executive Management and County Council Leadership. The total number of recommendations by Fiscal Year are provided in the table below (please note: starting in FY 2023 – OEA only provided highlighted recommendations in the Annual Report).



Executive Director Turner conducting the Ethics training with the Library Board of Trustees.
Pictured with Sylvia Bolivar, Board Chair, and Mark Winston, PGCMLS Executive Director
March 2025.

FY 2025 Highlighted Recommendations

1.	N/A	N/A	Proposed State Ethics Code clarifying legislation for State Financial Disclosure Statements (FDS) filing requirements with the County Board of Ethics/OEA in Prince George's County for Bi-County Commissions (M-NCPPC, WSSC, and WSTC)(Gen. Prov. Art. §§5-602, 5-822 — 5-832) (Continuation of 2023 Recommendation).	Continuing
2.	N/A	N/A	Proposed County Ethics Code §2-294(b) clarifying legislation for Bi-County Commissions (M-NCPPC, WSSC, and WSTC) to provide their State Financial Disclosure Statements (FDS) to the County Board of Ethics/OEA. (Continuation of 2023 Recommendation).	Continuing
3.	24-0307e	Case Type: Secondary Employment/ Conflict of Interest Agency/Board/Commission: County Council Subject: Allegation that an employee holding both positions with the County and municipal government is a conflict of interest. Disposition: Board Order, Finding of Facts and Law Issued	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The simultaneous employment constitutes a <i>per se</i> apparent conflict of interest due to (a) the employee's position of authority in their Council position, (b) the lack of any structures to avoid or prevent conflicts of interest, and (c) the relationship between Prince George's County and the municipal government. 2. The dual employment created an appearance of impropriety that undermines the public's trust and faith in the institutions of Prince George's County government. 	6/24

4.	24-0156e	<p>Case Type: Use of County Resources/ FWAI/Secondary Employment</p> <p>Agency/Board/Commission: DPWT</p> <p>Subject: Allegation that several employees were stealing time by changing timesheets to indicate that they were working when they were not actually at work and were working at a private business during work hours.</p> <p>Disposition: Substantiated</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) Management should confer with the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) to determine appropriate discipline for Respondent #1 and Respondent #3, as both Respondents committed violations of official timekeeping procedures. 2. Respondent #1 should immediately submit a Secondary Employment Request for approval. DPWT should require the Respondent #1 to review and sign an affidavit stating that the Respondent #1 understands all County Secondary Employment requirements and will adhere to the County Secondary Employment policy – Administrative Procedure 152. And that any additional violations of the Secondary Employment policy by Respondent #1 will result in further disciplinary action by DPWT. 3. Respondent #3 should be counseled by DPWT Management on County policy regarding County employees attending School, and the use of County Resources and Official Time to attend school or conduct classwork. Respondent #3 should be required to review and sign an affidavit stating that they will abide by all County policies regarding a County employee attending school and conducting classwork. And that any additional violations by Respondent #3 will result in further disciplinary action by DPWT. 4. DPWT should review and conduct mandatory official timekeeping training for all DPWT Management staff, to ensure proper accounting of Official Timekeeping procedures and records. 	10/24
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5.	24-0174e	<p>Case Type: Use of County Resources/ FWAI</p> <p>Agency/Board/ Commission: DPWT</p> <p>Subject: Allegation that several employees were stealing time to indicate that they were working when they were not actually at work, and attended class while on County time.</p> <p>Disposition: Substantiated</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allegation #1 regarding discrimination against a Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) employee by Respondent #1 should be referred to DPWT and the Office of Human Resources Management (ORHM), to be investigated as a Personnel Complaint. 2. The Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) Management should confer with the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) to determine appropriate discipline for Respondent #1 and Respondent #2, as both Respondents committed violations of official timekeeping procedures. 3. Respondent #2 should be counseled by DPWT Management on County policy regarding County employees attending school, and the use of County Resources and Official Time to attend school or conduct classwork. Respondent #2 should be required to review and sign an affidavit stating that they will abide by all County policies regarding a County employee attending school and conducting classwork. Any additional violations by Respondent #2 will result in further disciplinary action by DPWT. 4. Respondent #2 should be required to review the County Telework Agreement Program (TAP) policy. Respondent #2 should be required to sign an affidavit stating that he understands the conditions of the TAP policy and that any additional violations of the TAP policy will result in further discipline from DPWT and OHRM. 	10/24
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6.	24-0345e	<p>Case Type: Prestige of Office/Gifts</p> <p>Agency/Board/Commission: County Council</p> <p>Subject: Allegation that County officials accepted tickets to a basketball game.</p> <p>Disposition: The Board found a reasonable basis to believe a violation had occurred and reserved taking further action for thirty (30) days to allow the officials to respond to the identified ethics violation. The Board accepted the actions taken by the officials as appropriate to address the violation.</p>	<p>I. Officials were required to list gifts of tickets on their Annual Financial Disclosure Statement.</p>	10/24
7.	25-0004/ 25-0026/ 25-0028/ 25-0048	<p>Case Type: FWAI/ Use of County Resources</p> <p>Agency/B/C: County Council</p> <p>Subject: Allegation that At-Large Council Member Special Election candidates' use of County resources (mailer, community meeting & cost of election).</p> <p>Disposition: Unsubstantiated</p>	<p>I. The Council Administrator should consider implementing a County policy for the Legislative Branch to govern elected officials' use of franking privileges close to all elections. (Previous OEA and Board of Ethics recommendations (OEA Cases #23-0016e and #24-0362).</p> <p>2. The Council Administrator is to remind Council Members and staff to refrain from discussion of campaign-related matters while conducting official County Council activities, especially during periods close to elections.</p>	10/24

8.	25-0019e	<p>Case Type: Conflict of Interest/Nepotism Agency/B/C: DPWT Subject: Allegation that a DPWT human resources employee is related to another DPWT employee and engaged in the hiring process. Disposition: Unsubstantiated</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) Management should confer with the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) to provide the Respondent an official letter of counseling regarding this matter. 2. While the reported relationship between the Respondent and the employee does not violate the nepotism code, the Respondent should be fully aware of the appearance of a conflict when anyone with a family relationship is hired by the Agency. The Respondent should have fully reported the relationship with the employee at the time they submitted their application to the County. 3. Further, the Respondent should have recused themselves from any hiring processes regarding the employee. 4. That OHRM review and consider the impact of amending the Personnel Code Section 16-150 – Nepotism – to include a broader definition of family members and other personal relationships (i.e. friendships) to restrict the actual or appearance of conflicts of interest. 	10/24
9.	25-0034	<p>Case Type: FWAI/ Use of County Resources Agency/Board/ Commission: County Council Subject: Allegation that a member of the County Council was not a resident of their Council District. Disposition: Not subject to the authority of the Prince George's County Code of Ethics.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The matter should be referred to the County Council for any review or any action pursuant to the County Charter Sections 307, 307B, and 310, including review of the voter registration information with the Prince George's County Board of Elections. 	3/25

10.	25-0086e	<p>Case Type: Use of County Resources/ Prestige of Office</p> <p>Agency/Board/Commission: County Council</p> <p>Subject: Request for review of documentary produced by Council member.</p> <p>Disposition: Unsubstantiated</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. According to the County Council procedure, the documentary should be reviewed by the Council Administration. 2. The documentary should include a disclaimer that was solely produced by the Council Member using County resources and does not express the opinion of the County Council. 3. If compensation or honoraria are received in the future, it would be subject to the disclosure and/or restrictions under the Code of Ethics. 	10/24
11.	25-0087e	<p>Case Type: Use of County Resources/ Prestige of Office</p> <p>Agency/Board/Commission: County Council</p> <p>Subject: Allegation that an employee tasked Summer Youth Employment Program interns with performing campaign duties during normal county work hours; sent print material through a local printer, without going through the proper procurement process; and directed office employees to create false meeting agendas for the expense reimbursements, to get approval for the expense reimbursements.</p> <p>Disposition: Partially Substantiated</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A letter of caution should be issued to the Respondent regarding the solicitation and use of interns for political activity. 2. The County Council Administrator and Council Finance Office should confer with the County Office of Finance to amend the "Prince George's County Council Expense Reimbursement Requests Guidelines" and implement an official policy governing the Expense Reimbursement procedures for County Council employees, including specific rules pertaining to what items can be submitted for reimbursement and the timeline to submit these items for reimbursement. 3. The Respondent should be required to sign a statement stating that they understand the policies governing the submission of print material to print shops. The statement should state that the Respondent will follow all policies regarding the submission of print material and that any further violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action against the Respondent. 	3/25

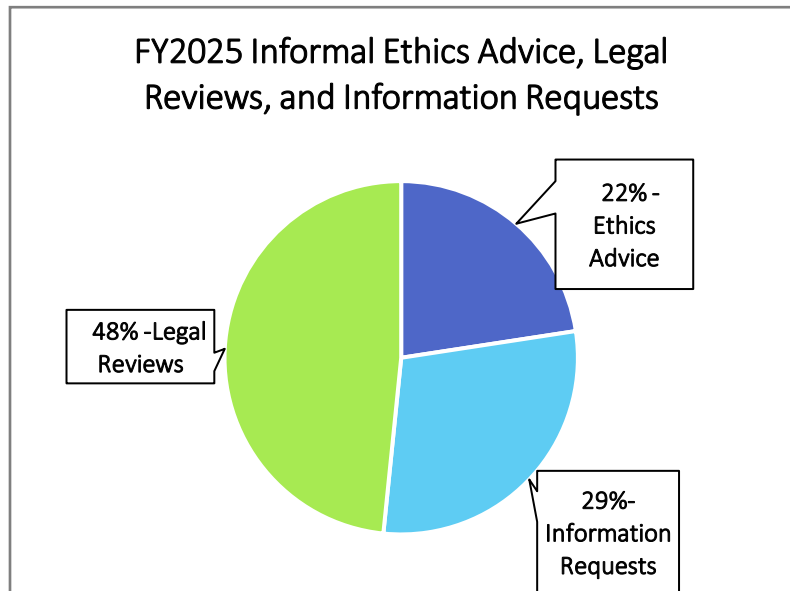
12.	25-0103e	<p>Case Type: Use of County Resources Agency/Board/Commission: DPIE Subject: Allegation that employee was working for a municipal government at the same time they were working for the County, "double dipping." Disposition: Partially Substantiated</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DPIE Management should require Respondent to review and sign an affidavit/agreement stating that Respondent understands all County Secondary Employment requirements and will adhere to the County Secondary Employment policy - Administrative Procedure 152. And that any additional violations of the Secondary Employment policy by Respondent could result in further disciplinary action by DPIE. 2. DPIE Management should confer with the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) on appropriate disciplinary action for the Respondent, regarding the violation of theft of time. 	12/24
13.	25-0159e	<p>Case Type: Use of Prestige of Office Agency/Board/Commission: Police Department Subject: Allegation that an officer participated in a political ad, identifying themselves as a County police officer. Disposition: Partially substantiated</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Prince George's County Police Department (PGPD) should issue a letter of caution to the Respondent. The letter of caution should outline PGPD General Orders and County Code provisions related to political activities and prohibited political activities. 	3/25
14.	25-0227	<p>Case Type: FWAI/Operational Review Agency/Board/Commission: Fire Commission Subject: Allegation that the Fire Commission failed to elect a Chair and Vice Chair, violating General Orders. Disposition: Substantiated</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prince George's County Fire/EMS Chief and leadership provided OEA with a letter of action to address the issues stated in this complaint. 	3/25

15.	25-0278e	<p>Case Type: Formal Advisory Opinion /Financial Disclosure</p> <p>Agency/Board/Commission: Redevelopment Authority</p> <p>Subject: Request for exemption from filing Financial Disclosure Statement.</p> <p>Disposition: Formal Opinion Issued</p>	<p>I. After review of all matters, the Board of Ethics opined that the employee should be required to file a financial disclosure statement because: (1) Title 15B of the County Code states that the Authority's work entails the use of County funding for its programs, development, and management of real property assets; (2) a review of Executive Order No. 13-2014 which lists the Authority as one of the agencies, boards, and commissions designated by the County Executive as being required to file financial disclosure statements due to the significance of its work, (3) the employee is an "official" as defined in Section 2-191(10) of the Code; and (4) the employee's approved position description, includes aspects of "procurement or contracting"; "administering or monitoring grants or subsidies" and "licensing, regulating, . . . any nongovernmental enterprise," under the Section 2-294(a)(36) "functional criteria."</p>	4/25
16.	25-0378e	<p>Case Type: Formal Advisory Opinion/Use of Prestige of Office</p> <p>Agency/Board/Commission: Department of the Environment</p> <p>Subject: Whether employees who hold advanced and/or professional degrees or experience can use their County title, position, and work performed in their County capacity to be recognized for research in professional publications as part of their professional development or to meet continuing education requirements.</p> <p>Disposition: Formal Opinion Issued</p>	<p>I. The Board granted a limited modification to several provisions of the County Code of Ethics under Section 2-293(h). The Board found that the County benefits from its employees' expertise via the staff member's name, reputation, and work product within their industry or academy, the agency's mission, and the County's reputation. Therefore, employees generally can use their County title, position, and work performed in their County capacity to be recognized for research in professional publications for their professional development or to meet continuing education requirements, absent any payment or honorarium.</p>	6/25

Ethics Advice by the Office of Ethics and Accountability

The Office of Ethics and Accountability provides support to the Board in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Accountability, Code of Ethics §2-303. The Office's Legal Counsel provides written and verbal advice to County officials, employees, agencies, and the public who seek advice regarding the application of the County's Code of Ethics.

The Office of Ethics and Accountability received a combined total of two hundred forty-eight (248) requests for Informal Ethics Advice, Legal Reviews (including Appointments and Secondary Employment), or Information Requests (including Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) requests) in Fiscal Year 2025. One hundred-twenty (120) involved legal reviews; seventy-two (72) involved requests for information; and fifty-six (56) involved informal ethics advice. The informal ethics advice involved subject matter such as conflicts of interest, gifts/solicitation/fundraising, secondary employment, and Financial Disclosure Statements. Other Types of Informal Ethics Advice include advice pertaining to post-employment, political activity, prestige of office, lobbying, honorarium, and other related matters.



OEA Executive Administrative Aide Chelinda Bullock (center) being recognized by the Acting Chief Administrative Officer Barry Stanton for Public Service Recognition Week – May 2025.

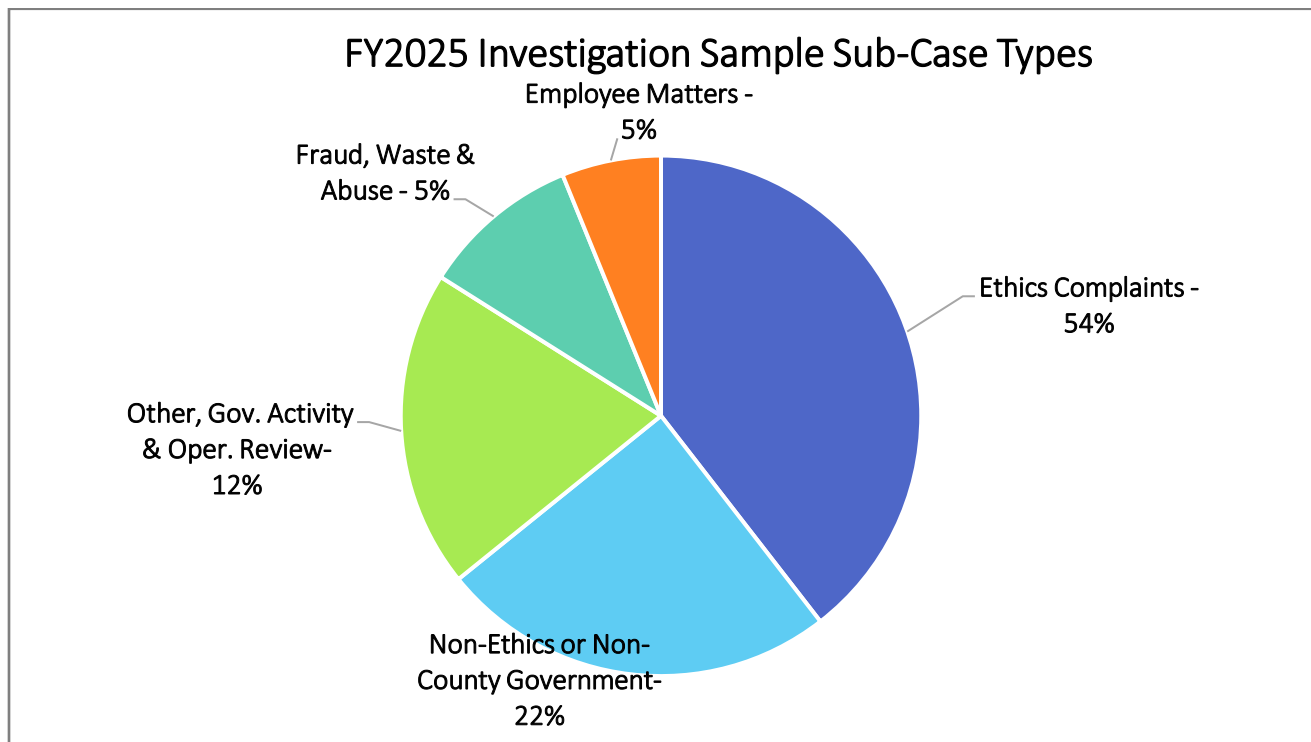
Photo Credit: Office of the County Executive

FY 2025 Investigations

The Office of Ethics and Accountability is authorized pursuant to the County's Ethics Code, §2-303 to conduct criminal, civil, and administrative investigations; to provide information and evidence that relates to criminal acts to appropriate law enforcement officials; to initiate reviews of operations of County government as deemed appropriate; to investigate complaints from any source or upon its own initiative concerning alleged fraud, waste, abuse and service deficiencies; and to conduct joint investigations and projects with the Office of Audits and Investigations as well as other oversight, public safety or law enforcement agencies.

The Office of Ethics and Accountability does not prosecute criminal conduct. However, criminal conduct discovered by OEA during its investigation of a complaint or tip is referred to the appropriate prosecuting authority in accordance with the County's Ethics and Accountability Code. Moreover, the Office of Ethics and Accountability does not administer personnel matters or seek to resolve personnel conflicts that have existing procedures in place to address. Although allegations may be unsubstantiated, many of the investigations may result in the issuance of recommendations to Executive and Legislative branch leadership to address appearances of conflicts of interest, policy gaps, and operational deficiencies.

During Fiscal Year 2025, OEA conducted one hundred two (102) investigations involving concerns with government activities (1), alleged fraud, waste, abuse, or illegal activity (6), ethics complaints (55), non-Ethics or Governmental referrals (23), employee matters (6), operational reviews (1), and others (10). Investigations comprised percent (23%) of all case types, and the following chart displays additional investigation Sub-Case types.





Outgoing Board Members and Past Chairs
Sharon Theodore Lewis (left) and Cassandra Burckhalter (right)



Executive Director Turner and the OEA Summer Youth Intern
Gabrielle C. Johnson-Prince at National Night Out – Aug. 2024.

Lobbyist Disclosures and Annual Reports

The Office of Ethics & Accountability (OEA) reviewed all Lobbyists' 2024 Registration & Disclosure Forms and 2024 Annual Report Forms. In Calendar Year 2024, OEA processed three hundred eighty-nine (389) Registration Forms and Annual Reports from seventy-eight (78) total registered lobbyists or firms. As of July 2025, our Office has processed two hundred seventy-nine (279) registration forms from sixty-three (63) total registered lobbyists or firms for Calendar Year 2025. For Fiscal Year 2025 (for late filing of 2024 Registrations or Annual Reports), OEA collected \$3,590 in late fees from registered lobbyists. A list of lobbyists registered with the Office of Ethics and Accountability in calendar years 2024 and 2025 (as of August 31) and their clients can be found on the OEA's website.

The following is the summary of Lobbyists' Annual Reports filed with the Board of Ethics for Calendar Year 2024. Total expenditures for 2024 lobbying activities were \$3,431,514. This is an approximately nine (9%) decrease from the 2023 total expenditures of \$3,515,542. The summary of sub-categories on the 2024 Lobbyists' Annual Reports is as follows:

Lobbying Activities	Total Expenditures
(A) Total compensation paid to the lobbyist, not including expenses reported under (B) through (I) below, salaries, compensations, or reimbursed expenses of the staff of the lobbyist:	\$3,419,678
(B) Office expenses of the lobbyist not reported in (A):	\$1,097
(C) Professional and technical research and assistance not reported in (A):	\$240
(D) Publications which expressly encourage persons to communicate with Prince George's County officials or employees:	\$240
(E) Fees and expenses paid to witnesses:	\$0
(F) Meals and beverages for Prince George's County Officials or employees, or their spouses or dependent children:	\$0
(G) Special events in which all members of the Council or standing committee are invited:	\$7,313
(H) Expenses for food, lodging, and entertainment of officials or employees for a meeting that was given in return for participation in a panel or speaking engagement at the meeting:	\$0
(I) Other gifts to or for officials or employees or their spouses or their dependent children:	\$0
(J) Other expenses:	\$2,946
Subtotal of A through F:	\$3,421,225
Subtotal of G through J:	\$10,259

[illegible]