

BALTIMORE COUNTY  
BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON  
ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Interim Report

January 17, 2023

**Baltimore County  
Blue Ribbon Commission on Ethics and Accountability**

**Interim Report**

**Submitted to:  
County Executive John A. Olszewski, Jr.  
and County Council Chair Julian E. Jones, Jr.**

**Submitted by:  
Rev. William E. Johnson, Jr., Chair  
Blue Ribbon Commission on Ethics and Accountability  
[blueribbonethics@ubalt.edu](mailto:blueribbonethics@ubalt.edu)**

**January 17, 2023**

January 17, 2023

Honorable John A. Olszewski, Jr.  
County Executive, Baltimore County  
400 Washington Avenue  
Towson, Maryland 21204

Honorable Julian E. Jones, Jr.  
Chair, Baltimore County Council  
400 Washington Avenue  
Towson, Maryland 21204

Dear County Executive Olszewski and Council Chair Jones:

The Blue Ribbon Commission on Ethics and Accountability is pleased to present you with this Interim Report. As directed by Executive Order No. 2021-025, the Commission is proceeding in its work “to perform a comprehensive review and evaluation of Article 3, Title 14 and Article 7 of the County Code. The Commission will develop recommendations to modernize the Public Ethics and Open Government laws and the Office of Inspector General in accordance with best practices for review by the County Executive and the County Council.”

The Commission has met nine times including its first meeting on June 7, 2022. At these meetings, Commission members have met with County officials, the Baltimore County Inspector General, experts on offices of inspector general, and the inspectors general from Baltimore City and Montgomery County. They have also heard the findings of the Ethical Climate Survey and Best Practices of Offices of Inspector General research conducted by the Schaefer Center for Public Policy at The University of Baltimore.

Commission members were asked to participate in one of two subcommittees: the Organizational Structure and Accountability Subcommittee or the Policy, Process and Procedure Subcommittee. During these meetings, the subcommittee members heard from County officials and employees as well as members of the public about their relevant experiences concerning the Office of Inspector General and conducted other fact-finding work. In order to provide individuals with the opportunity to speak freely and in line with the Maryland Open Meetings Act, these meetings and information about those who participated were not public.

As detailed in the “Next Steps” section of this report, the Commission will be finalizing its draft recommendations and providing information about how these recommendations were developed. We look forward to providing you with the Final Report, as instructed in Executive Order No. 2021-025. That report will provide Baltimore County with practical recommendations, including legislative and non-legislative changes, “for streamlining and improvement of policies, functions and outcomes in order to align processes and procedures for ethics training and compliance and the Office of the Inspector General with national best practices.”

Sincerely,

*William E. Johnson, Jr.*

William E. Johnson, Jr.

Chair, Baltimore County Blue Ribbon Commission on  
Ethics and Accountability

Attachment

**Baltimore County**  
**Blue Ribbon Commission on Ethics and Accountability**

**Members**

**William E. Johnson, Jr., Chair**

Former Inspector General for the Maryland Department of Human Resources

**Joanne Antoine**

Executive Director, Common Cause Maryland

**Brigadier General Janeen L. Birckhead**

**Judge Kathleen Cox**

Former Baltimore County Circuit Court Administrative Judge

**Thomas X. Glancy, Esq.**

Former Member at Belsky, Weinberg & Horowitz; Former Chair of the Board of Directors of the Public Justice Center and former member of the Committee on Law and Public Policy of the ACLU of Maryland

**Jon Laria, Esq.**

Managing Partner of Ballard Spahr

**Cindy Leppert, Esq.**

Chair of Baltimore County's Ethics Commission

**Judge Joseph F. Murphy, Jr. (Retired)**

Partner at Silverman and Thompson - Alternative Dispute Resolution Practice  
*Judge Murphy was the original chair for the Commission, but never participated in the Commission's work. He passed away in July 2022.*

***The Commission was staffed by the  
Schaefer Center for Public Policy at the University of Baltimore.***

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## Introduction

Baltimore County issued Executive Order No. 2021-025, signed by County Executive John A. Olszewski, Jr., on October 26, 2021.<sup>1</sup> This Executive Order established the Baltimore County Commission on Ethics and Accountability (“Commission”) and charged it “to perform a comprehensive review and evaluation of Article 3, Title 14 and Article 7 of the County Code. The Commission will develop recommendations to modernize the Public Ethics and Open Government laws and the Office of Inspector General in accordance with best practices for review by the County Executive and the County Council.” Nine individuals experienced in the relevant issues who operate outside of County government were asked to volunteer to serve on the Commission. The Schaefer Center for Public Policy at The University of Baltimore was contracted to provide facilitation and technical support for the Commission. The Commission members have met nine times and plan to meet once more to develop recommendations with respect to the Baltimore County Office of Inspector General (OIG) and related laws.

## *Impact of Initial Delays*

The Executive Order establishing the Commission originally required the Interim Report to be provided to the County Executive and County Council no later than July 1, 2022, and the Final Report to be provided to the County Executive and County Council no later than November 1, 2022. However, the County experienced challenges identifying an organization to provide facilitation and technical support for the Commission, which delayed the start of the Commission meetings. The Schaefer Center for Public Policy at The University of Baltimore was ultimately selected to provide this assistance, and it began work in May 2022.

As a result of this delay, the County issued a revised Executive Order (No. 2022-004) on June 30, 2022, which revised the due dates of the Interim and Final Reports to no later than December 16, 2022, and January 16, 2023, respectively.<sup>2</sup> The other portions of the original Executive Order were unchanged in the revised order. Ultimately, the Commission Chair requested a one-month extension for the due dates of the Interim and Final Reports, which was accepted by the County Executive in December 2022 and confirmed in an updated Executive Order (No. 2022-006).<sup>3</sup>

In addition, Judge Joseph F. Murphy, Jr. (Retired) was originally selected as Chair for the Commission. However, Judge Murphy was ill and not able to participate in the first Commission meeting on June 7, 2022. In response, the County Executive asked member William E. Johnson, Jr., to serve in the role of Chair. Judge Murphy ultimately passed away in July 2022, and Mr. Johnson continued to serve as Chair through the remainder of the Commission’s work.

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<sup>1</sup> The Executive Order is included in this Interim Report as Appendix 1.

<sup>2</sup> The revised Executive Order included in this Interim Report as Appendix 2.

<sup>3</sup> The revised Executive Order included in this Interim Report as Appendix 3.

## **Commission Process**

During its first public meeting on June 7, 2022, Commission members reviewed the charge for the Commission and a list of proposed questions to guide the work of the Commission. These questions were:

### **Organizational Structure**

- How is the Office of Inspector General organized?

### **Independence**

- Should the Ethics Commission be an independent entity?

### **Resources**

- What is the current budget and staff for the IG and the Ethics Commission?
- Does the IG need additional resources? If so, what is needed?
- Should the Ethics Commission be staff separately?

### **Current Practice**

- What prompts an IG investigation (currently, best practices)?
- What are the appropriate boundaries for communication about investigations?
- With regard to investigations, what is process for deciding if an issue is a personnel matter, business operations issue, or an issue that should be subject to investigation.

### **Performance and Accountability**

- What are the appropriate performance metrics for local Inspectors General?
- Should there be formal accountability or oversight of IG office?

### **Authority**

- Are there overlaps in the roles of the Inspector General and the County Auditor? If so, how are distinctions made?
- Should there be any limits on IG's access to protected personal identifiable information and/ or the IG's public release of personal or privileged information?
- What are/should be the rights and obligations of employees and contractors regarding IG investigations?

To consider these questions and if they should be amended or added to, the Commission agreed to meet up to 10 times prior to the submission of its Final Report on January 16, 2023. Commission meeting dates were cancelled or added to as needed during that time. These



meetings were scheduled on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from June to December 2022, per Commission member and Schaefer Center staff availability. Meetings were held on Zoom via The University of Baltimore's Office of Technology Services and were open to the public with recordings published on the website developed for the Commission. Two of the original meeting dates were cancelled to allow for Commission members to work within their subcommittees (discussed below), and additional meeting dates were added for Commission members to work on developing their recommendations.

The initial meetings of the Commission were focused on receiving information from County officials about the authority and functions of the Baltimore County Auditor, Baltimore County Inspector General, and Baltimore Ethics Commission and on operations of the Office of Inspector General. These meetings helped inform the list of issues for which Commission members would develop recommendations. Meetings then focused on learning about best practices of offices of inspector general, with presentations by national experts on OIGs and the inspectors general from Baltimore City and Montgomery County. In addition, the Schaefer Center presented findings from its Ethical Climate Survey and research on Best Practices for Offices of Inspector General, commissioned as part of its contract with the county.<sup>4</sup> The meetings of the Commission from November 29, 2022, to January 12, 2023, were focused on learning about the results of subcommittee fact-finding on relevant issues (discussed below), on developing recommendations in line with the requirements of the Executive Order, and speaking with Baltimore County executives about specific processes and practices of the Office of Inspector General and how potential recommendations could impact their agencies. In addition, the Commission members heard comments from the public about the Office of Inspector General at its meeting on November 29, 2022.

The Commission members ultimately held nine public meetings from June 7, 2022, through January 12, 2023.<sup>5</sup> During the nine meetings, Commission members have heard from and asked questions of the following individuals:

- County executives:
  - Ms. Stacy L. Rodgers, Baltimore County Administrative Officer
  - Mr. James R. Benjamin Jr., Baltimore County Attorney, Office of Law
  - Ms. Rhoda Benjamin, Director of Office of Human Resources
  - Mr. Mike Fried, Chief Information Office
  - Ms. Kelly Madigan, Baltimore County Inspector General

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<sup>4</sup> These reports are included in this Interim Report as Appendix 4 and Appendix 5, respectively.

<sup>5</sup> Agendas for the meetings will be included in the Final Report of the Commission. They are currently available on the Commission's website along with recordings and minutes of the meetings.

- National experts:
  - Robin Kempf, University of Colorado-Colorado Springs
  - Stephen B. Street, Jr., State Inspector General for State of Louisiana and National President, Association for Inspectors General
  - Gregory Hill, JD, Executive Director, Association of Inspectors General
- Inspectors General for Montgomery County and Baltimore City:
  - Megan Limarzi, Montgomery County Office of the Inspector General
  - Isabel Cumming, Baltimore City Office of the Inspector General
- Schaefer Center for Public Policy leadership and research team:
  - Ann Cotten, Director, Schaefer Center for Public Policy
  - Sarah Ficenec, Research Manager, Schaefer Center for Public Policy

Based upon the Commission's charge and issues that have come to light during the course of the Commission's work, Commission members are developing recommendations relating to the topics listed below with respect to Baltimore County's Office of Inspector General or ethical concerns in Baltimore County. While the Commission has made substantial progress on developing its recommendations, the Commission members decided to not provide draft or partial recommendations with this report and focus its efforts on finalizing its recommendations.

- Structural Characteristics of the Office of the Inspector General
  - OIG scope of responsibility (investigations only or investigations and audits)
  - OIG staffing
  - OIG access to materials and records
  - OIG subpoena authority and waiting period
  - Financial independence of the OIG
  - Oversight of the OIG
  - Independence of the OIG
  - Placement of the Ethics Commission
- Office of Inspector General Policies and Procedures
  - Access to independent legal counsel for the OIG
  - Communication about new investigations
  - Investigative practices
  - Written policies and procedures for the OIG (internal and public facing)
  - Draft report notification and response period
- Reimbursement of Employee Legal Expenses
- Ethical Climate in Baltimore County
  - Promotion of and assessment of ethical climate in Baltimore County Government

### ***Public Communications and Input About the Commission's Work***

As instructed in Executive Order No. 2021-025, an email address and website were established for public input. This email address and website were established on The University of Baltimore's website at [BlueRibbonEthics@UBalt.edu](mailto:BlueRibbonEthics@UBalt.edu) and <https://BlueRibbonEthics.ubalt.edu>, respectively. Website visitors were provided with a form they could complete to contact the Commission anonymously. Both the email address and website form were monitored by the Schaefer Center, and comments received were forwarded to Commission members. At the beginning of each public meeting of the Commission, audience members were reminded they could contact the Commission via either method; this reminder included the anonymous option available on the Commission's website.

Members of the public had additional opportunities to provide comments throughout the Commission process. These additional opportunities were: responses to open-ended questions on the Ethical Climate Survey, on which respondents could anonymously identify relevant concerns or experiences and identify if they were willing to speak with the Commission about their experiences; meetings with one of the two Commission subcommittees; and a public comment period during the full Commission public meeting on November 29, 2022. Four individuals registered in advance to provide comments at the November 29 meeting, and four individuals ultimately provided public comments at the meeting.<sup>6</sup>

### ***Commission Subcommittees***

At the first meeting of the Commission, members were asked to serve on one of two subcommittees. These subcommittees were tasked with fact-finding concerning the main two categories of concerns before the entire Commission. These subcommittees and their members were:

1. Organizational Structure and Accountability Subcommittee
  - Chair – Brigadier General Janeen Birkhead
  - Members – Thomas Glancy and Jon Laria
2. Policy, Process and Procedure Subcommittee
  - Chair – Judge Kathleen Cox
  - Members – Cynthia Leppert and Joanne Antoine

Subcommittees met virtually multiple times throughout the Commission's work period. At these meetings the subcommittee members conducted fact-finding for the various topics the

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<sup>6</sup> One of the original registrants was unable to attend the meeting. One of the individuals who ultimately made comments asked to make a comment during the start of the meeting.

Commission was asked to explore about offices of inspector general and ethics in Baltimore County government. The topics under the scope of responsibility for each subcommittee were:

1. Organizational Structure and Accountability Subcommittee

- OIG scope of responsibility (investigations only or investigations and audits)
- OIG staffing
- Access to independent legal counsel for the OIG
- Financial independence of the OIG
- Oversight of the OIG
- Ethical Climate in Baltimore County – Promotion of and assessment of ethical climate in Baltimore County Government
- Independence of the OIG
- Placement of the Ethics Commission

2. Policy, Process and Procedure Subcommittee

- OIG access to materials and records
- OIG subpoena authority and waiting period
- Written policies and procedures for the OIG (internal and public-facing)
- Communication about new investigations
- Investigative practices
- Draft report notification and response period
- Reimbursement of Employee Legal Expenses

As part of this fact-finding, subcommittee members met with Baltimore County employees and agency directors to discuss their relevant experiences and concerns. To allow these individuals to speak freely and in line with the Maryland Open Meetings Act, these meetings were not public and information about the people meeting with the subcommittees was not made public. More information about these meetings will be included in the Final Report of the Commission.

Subcommittee members presented their findings beginning with the Commission's public meeting on November 29, 2022. Subcommittee members also presented initial drafts of potential recommendations for the issues under their purview, which Commission members then discussed and revised at its public meetings.

### ***Next Steps***

The Commission is required to provide its Final Report to the County Executive and County Council Chair no later than February 16, 2023.

The Commission members are in the process of drafting their recommendations for the County as outlined in Executive Order No. 2021-025. As noted above, initial drafts of these recommendations were written by one of the two subcommittees of the Commission, who suggested the language during the Commission's public meeting on November 29, 2022. Commission members discussed the proposed recommendations and revised them at the public meetings on December 20, 2022, and January 12, 2023. At the January meeting, Commission members decided that the subcommittees would be tasked with revising the edited recommendations. The full Commission will ultimately agree to or revise the drafted recommendations at its final public meeting on February 2, 2023.

The Final Report of the Commission will include the final language of the recommendations as well as the information that Commission members learned that was relevant to their decision-making on the recommendations.

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## **Baltimore County Commission on Ethics and Accountability**

### **Executive Order No. 2021-025**

WHEREAS, Baltimore County's mission is to deliver the highest standard of service to residents, businesses, and visitors and to ensure effective, efficient, and ethical stewardship of County resources; and

WHEREAS, public ethics, transparent and open government, and accountability are fundamental to ensuring effective, ethical stewardship of County resources in furtherance of integrity, efficiency and public trust; and

WHEREAS, the comprehensive review, evaluation and modernization of Baltimore County's ethics laws and the laws governing the Office of the Inspector General are necessary to align processes and procedures with national best practices;

NOW, THEREFORE, it is this 26<sup>th</sup> day of October 2021, by the County Executive of Baltimore County, Maryland, ordered that the Baltimore County Commission on Ethics and Accountability ("Commission") shall be created and charged as follows:

#### **Section I: Goal of the Commission.**

The purpose of the Commission is to perform a comprehensive review and evaluation of Article 3, Title 14 and Article 7 of the County Code. The Commission will develop recommendations to modernize the Public Ethics and Open Government laws and the Office of Inspector General in accordance with best practices for review by the County Executive and the County Council.

#### **Section II: Membership, appointment, terms of office, officers, and compensation of members.**

- A. Membership. The Baltimore County Commission on Ethics and Accountability shall consist of up to 11 voting members appointed by the County Executive.
- B. Terms. The term of a member appointed under subsection A of this section expires when the Commission submits its final report. Members of the Commission shall receive no salaries but shall be reimbursed for all expenses necessarily incurred in the performance of their duties in accordance with appropriations approved by the County Council.
- C. Chair. The Chair of the Commission shall be appointed by the County Executive.

#### **Section III: Meetings, quorums.**

- A. Meetings. The Commission shall meet at the request of the Chair as frequently as required to perform its duties. Meetings will be conducted virtually as long as necessary due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In the event that in-person meetings are scheduled, Commission members may attend electronically as needed.
- B. Quorum. A majority of voting members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and an affirmative vote of the majority of those present at any meeting shall be sufficient for any official action.



#### **Section IV. Duties and Responsibilities.**

The Commission shall perform the following duties:

- Study Article 3, Title 14 and Article 7 of the Baltimore County Code and formulate recommendations for streamlining and improvement of policies, functions and outcomes in order to align processes and procedures for ethics training and compliance and the Office of the Inspector General with national best practices;
- Propose legislative changes to implement its recommendations, if necessary;
- Review existing State ethics laws to ensure there are no conflicts between State laws and proposed recommendations;
- Issue an interim report to the County Executive and County Council not later than July 1, 2022;
- Issue a final report to the County Executive and County Council no later than November 1, 2022.

#### **Section V. Staff Assistance.**

An RFP shall be issued and vendor selected to provide facilitation and technical support for the Commission.

#### **Section VI. Public Input.**

The Commission shall create a webpage and publish its criteria and process, and shall provide an e-mail address to receive written comments from members of the public.


This Order shall take effect **IMMEDIATELY** according to its terms and shall continue thereafter until November 1, 2022, unless further extended by the County Executive.

ATTEST:

  
Secretary to the County Executive

  
John A. Olszewski, Jr.  
County Executive

Reviewed for Form and Legal Sufficiency and Approved for Execution

  
James R. Benjamin, Jr.  
County Attorney





## EXECUTIVE ORDER

No. 2022-004

WHEREAS, Baltimore County's mission is to deliver the highest standard of service to residents, businesses, and visitors and to ensure effective, efficient, and ethical stewardship of County resources; and

WHEREAS, public ethics, transparent and open government, and accountability are fundamental to ensuring effective, ethical stewardship of County resources in furtherance of integrity, efficiency and public trust; and

WHEREAS, the comprehensive review, evaluation and modernization of Baltimore County's ethics laws are necessary to develop and adopt creative and innovative practices for ethics and the Office of the Inspector General;

WHEREAS, the Baltimore County Commission on Ethics and Accountability was created on October 26, 2021, by Executive Order No. 2021-025; and

WHEREAS, the Executive Order required the Commission to issue an interim report to the County Executive and the County Council no later than July 1, 2022, and a final report no later than November 1, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has advised the County Executive that it needs additional time to complete and deliver the interim and final reports.

NOW, THEREFORE, on this 30<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2022, it is hereby **ORDERED** by the County Executive of Baltimore County that the October 26, 2021 Executive Order No. 2021-025 be and is hereby amended to provide that the Baltimore County Commission on Ethics and Accountability shall:

- Issue an interim report to the County Executive and the County Council no later than **December 16, 2022**; and
- Issue a final report to the County Executive and the County Council no later than **January 16, 2023**.

The other portions of Executive Order No. 2021-025 remain unchanged.

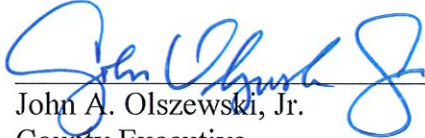
This Order remains effective until rescinded, superseded, amended, or revised by additional orders.

The effect of any statute, rule or regulation of any agency of Baltimore County, Maryland inconsistent with this Order is hereby suspended.

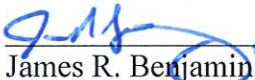
A copy of this Executive Order shall be made available on-line at [www.baltimorecountymd.gov](http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov) for the public.

ATTEST:

  
Dawn Kile  
Executive Secretary

  
John A. Olszewski, Jr.  
County Executive

Reviewed for Form and Legal Sufficiency and approved for Execution.

  
James R. Benjamin, Jr.  
County Attorney



**EXECUTIVE ORDER**  
**No. 2022-006**

WHEREAS, Baltimore County's mission is to deliver the highest standard of service to residents, businesses, and visitors and to ensure effective, efficient, and ethical stewardship of County resources; and

WHEREAS, public ethics, transparent and open government, and accountability are fundamental to ensuring effective, ethical stewardship of County resources in furtherance of integrity, efficiency and public trust; and

WHEREAS, the comprehensive review, evaluation and modernization of Baltimore County's ethics laws are necessary to develop and adopt creative and innovative practices for ethics and the Office of the Inspector General;

WHEREAS, the Baltimore County Commission on Ethics and Accountability was created on October 26, 2021, by Executive Order No. 2021-025 and was amended on June 30, 2022 by Executive Order No. 2022-004; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order No. 2022-004 required the Commission to issue an interim report to the County Executive and the County Council no later than December 16, 2022, and a final report no later than January 16, 2023; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has advised the County Executive that it needs additional time to complete and deliver the interim and final reports.

NOW, THEREFORE, on this 16<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2022, it is hereby **ORDERED** by the County Executive of Baltimore County, John A. Olszewski, Jr., that Executive Order No. 2021-025 dated October 26, 2021, as amended by Executive Order No. 2022-004 dated June 30, 2022, be and is hereby further amended to provide that the Baltimore County Commission on Ethics and Accountability shall:

- Issue an interim report to the County Executive and the County Council no later than **January 17, 2023**.
- Issue a final report to the County Executive and the County Council no later than **February 16, 2023**.

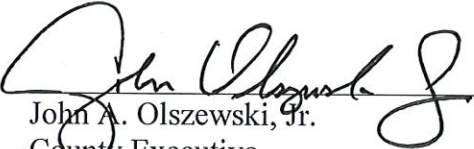
This Order remains effective until rescinded, superseded, amended, or revised by additional orders.

The effect of any statute, rule or regulation of any agency of Baltimore County, Maryland inconsistent with this Order is hereby suspended.

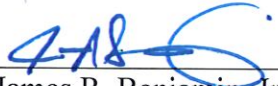
A copy of this Executive Order shall be made available on-line at [www.baltimorecountymd.gov](http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov) for the public.

ATTEST:

  
Dawn Kile  
Executive Secretary

  
John A. Olszewski, Jr.  
County Executive

Reviewed for Form and Legal Sufficiency and Approved for Execution.

  
James R. Benjamin, Jr.  
County Attorney





# SCHAEFER CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY

KNOWLEDGE THAT WORKS FOR GOVERNMENT AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

**Baltimore County  
Blue Ribbon Commission for  
Ethics and Accountability**

**Report on Findings of the  
Ethical Climate Survey**



**UNIVERSITY OF  
BALTIMORE**

Schaefer Center for  
Public Policy

**Baltimore County  
Blue Ribbon Commission for  
Ethics and Accountability**

**Report on Findings of the  
Ethical Climate Survey**

**Submitted by:**

**P. Ann Cotten, DPA, CPA | Director**

**Schaefer Center for Public Policy  
The University of Baltimore – College of Public Affairs**

1420 N. Charles Street

Baltimore, MD 21201

410.837.6188

[acotten@ubalt.edu](mailto:acotten@ubalt.edu)

**December 2, 2022**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following Schaefer Center staff members and The University of Baltimore faculty members played key roles in the collection and analysis of the data used for the analysis included in this document:

- Dr. Ann Cotten, Director (Principal Investigator)
- Dr. Sarah V. Ficenec, Research Manager
- Michelle Cantave, Survey Research Manager
- Jasmyne Jardot, Schaefer Center Graduate Fellow

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# Baltimore County Blue Ribbon Commission for Ethics and Accountability

## Report on Findings of the Ethical Climate Survey

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of its work to support the Baltimore County Blue Ribbon Commission on Ethics and Accountability (BRCEA), the Schaefer Center for Public Policy was asked to undertake a survey of the ethical climate in the county. This survey assesses multiple aspects of the ethical climate, with emphasis on 1) individuals' experiences reporting or being involved in investigations concerning suspected ethical misconduct or fraud, waste, and abuse and 2) opinions on whether county employees and members of boards and commissions view their general environment as one where coworkers and colleagues generally act ethically. This survey was planned to occur and for results to be available in the first half of the working sessions for the BRCEA. The purpose of this timeframe was to ensure the findings could be of use to its work concerning the overall ethical climate and the Baltimore County Office of Inspector General and Ethics Commission.

The survey was sent to 7,667 Baltimore County employees and members of boards and commissions, and 1,470 people responded to the survey. The response rate of 19.25% and the overall margin of error for the survey is +/- 2.3% at the 95% confidence level. It should be noted that the error rate for individual questions may be larger due to the smaller number of responses. Due to the nature of the survey, there is a possibility that the individuals who responded to the survey are not representative of all Baltimore County employees and members of boards and commissions. However, the survey findings are instructive about the overall ethical climate in Baltimore County Government.

The key findings of this survey include:

- Most of the survey respondents did not report suspected ethical misconduct or fraud, waste, or abuse, with 86% of respondents saying they did not make such a report and 6% saying they had done so.
  - These complaints were most frequently given to the respondents' agency leadership, although the Baltimore County OIG or Office of Human Resources (OHR) were also common recipients.
  - Respondents generally were not concerned about the reactions of their supervisors, coworkers, colleagues, and others to their reports of suspected misconduct, although almost 7 in 10 of those who reported did have their reporting become known.

- Respondents were divided on whether they experienced a hostile work environment when their reporting became known, with 37% saying they did experience this and 48% saying they did not.
- Most respondents also had not been involved in investigations of suspected ethical misconduct in Baltimore County, with 6% saying they had been involved in at least one investigation and 88% saying they had not.
  - A majority of those involved in an investigation were informed about the subject of the investigation at the outset of the process, while fewer than half said they received information on the investigative office's policies and procedures or on their rights as a participant in the investigation.
  - Most of those involved in investigations said they did not consult legal counsel during the process.
  - Respondents generally characterized investigators as prepared, professional, and knowledgeable, although some did report feeling threatened or physically intimidated during those interactions.
  - Most involved in an investigation were not concerned about the reactions of their supervisors, coworkers, colleagues, and others to their reports of suspected misconduct.
  - Approximately 8% of respondents said they experienced retribution or a hostile work environment due to their involvement in an investigation.
- The most common ethical issues faced by Baltimore County employees and members of boards and commissions concern working conditions and conflicts of interest. Approximately 40% of respondents did not face any ethical issues in the prior four years, and a slight majority of those who did face such issues did not seek ethical advice.
  - Respondents sought ethical advice most frequently from their supervisor or agency leadership.
  - Two-thirds of respondents who sought ethical advice from the Baltimore County OIG found it very helpful, while 57% of those who sought advice from the Ethics Commission said it was very helpful.
  - The most common reasons for not requesting advice from the OIG, Ethics Commission, or County Auditor Fraud Line were respondents being unaware of the agencies or not knowing how to contact them.
- When asked to respond to a series of prompts about different ethical experiences they may have encountered in their agency or on their board or commission, respondents, on average, suggested that Baltimore County workplaces are neither overly ethical nor unethical, but the results did tend slightly toward more ethical workplaces. While the average response, overall, did not tend toward unethical workplaces, there does appear to be significant space for the county to encourage more ethical behaviors.

- Most respondents were not familiar or only somewhat familiar with the county's ethical oversight agencies and its ethics law and training.

## INTRODUCTION

As part of its work to support the Baltimore County Blue Ribbon Commission on Ethics and Accountability (BRCEA), the Schaefer Center for Public Policy was asked to undertake a survey of the ethical climate in the county. This survey assesses multiple aspects of the ethical climate, with emphasis on 1) individuals' experiences reporting or being involved in investigations concerning suspected ethical misconduct or fraud, waste, and abuse and 2) opinions on whether county employees and members of boards and commissions view their general environment as one where coworkers and colleagues generally act ethically. This survey was planned to occur and for results to be available in the first half of the working sessions for the BRCEA. The purpose of this timeframe was to ensure the findings could be of use to its work concerning the overall ethical climate and the Baltimore County Office of Inspector General and Ethics Commission.

This report provides a brief overview of the methodology of the survey, then proceeds to cover each of the following:

- Experiences reporting suspected ethical misconduct in Baltimore County;
- Experiences being involved in an investigation of suspected ethical misconduct in Baltimore County;
- General ethical climate in Baltimore County; and
- Familiarity with Baltimore County ethics agencies, law, and training.

## METHODOLOGY

The Schaefer Center developed an online survey for Baltimore County employees and individuals who serve on County boards and commissions. The survey was designed to gather information on the general ethical climate in Baltimore County and on experiences reporting or being involved in investigations concerning suspected waste, fraud, abuse, and ethical misconduct.

The survey was based on surveys developed by the University of Illinois, Springfield Center for State Policy and Leadership Survey Research Office. A total of 7,667 employees and members of boards and commissions were invited to participate in the survey, which was open July 11-26, 2022. There were 1,470 individuals who answered at least one question on the survey, and over 70% completed the survey through the questions on reporting suspected ethical misconduct, being involved in investigations by the Baltimore County Auditor, Ethics Commission, or Office of Inspector General, and the general ethical climate in Baltimore County workplaces. More information on the Methodology is available in Appendix A, along with the survey instrument.

The margin of error for the survey is 2.3% with a confidence interval of 95%. Because of the number of respondents who said they had reported suspected misconduct or waste, fraud or abuse was so few relative to the number of respondents overall, measures of statistical significance on the questions were not calculated. Similarly, measures of statistical significance were also not calculated with respect to those who were involved in investigations. Calculations of statistical significance were used with respect to respondents who were county employees with respect to the survey questions on ethical climate in their workplace.



## SECTION 1: EXPERIENCES REPORTING ETHICAL MISCONDUCT IN BALTIMORE COUNTY

Overall, the number of complaints regarding suspected ethical misconduct in a jurisdiction can be indicative of the overall ethical culture, as more complaints may suggest more ethical wrongdoing. However, a smaller number of complaints can be the result of individuals unwilling to voice the issues if they are concerned about confidentiality, retaliation, or other negative responses. Moreover, individuals may refrain from issuing a complaint if they do not believe there will be an investigation of the concern or, if misconduct is found, there will be consequences for such misconduct.

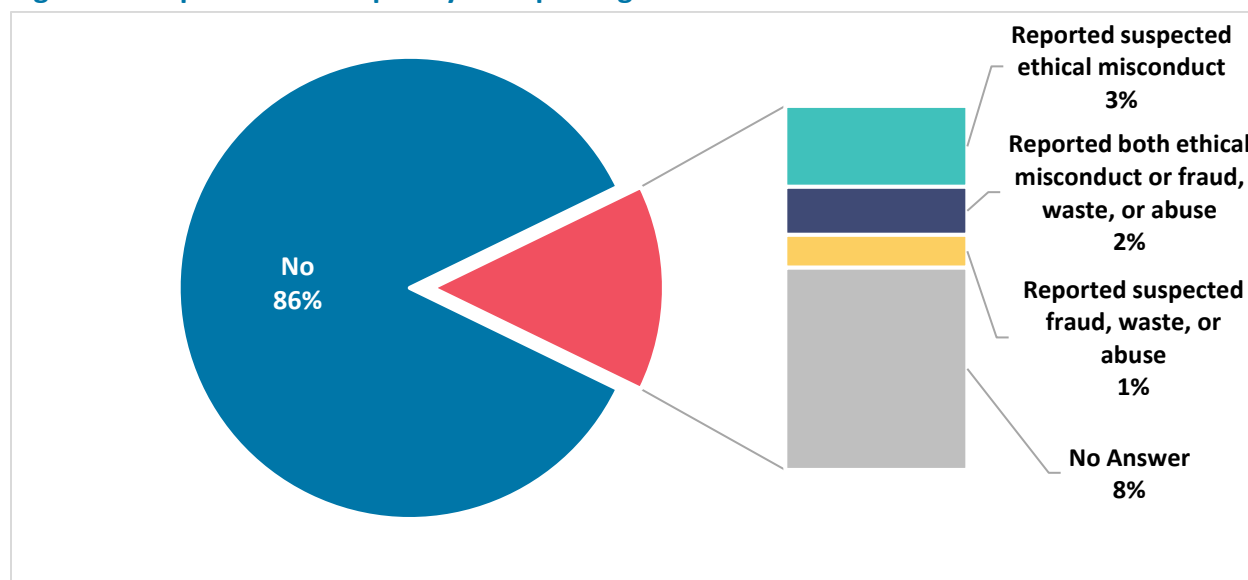
To learn more about this aspect of Baltimore County's ethical climate, survey respondents were asked questions about whether they had reported instances of waste, fraud, abuse, or other ethical misconduct in Baltimore County. If they had done so, they were asked their experiences, including whether they faced retaliation and were satisfied with the outcomes. Those who had not reported suspected ethical misconduct were asked what they thought the results of such reporting would be.

Most respondents (86%) said they had not reported instances of waste, fraud, abuse, or other ethical misconduct in Baltimore County (Figure 1): 3% of respondents had reported suspected ethical misconduct; 1% reported suspected fraud, waste, or abuse; 2% reported both; and 8% did not answer the question. Almost all of the reports of suspected ethical misconduct or fraud, waste, or abuse were made by respondents who were general employees (i.e., those who did not identify as an elected official or staff or a member of a board or commission).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Because the number of respondents who reported suspected misconduct and identified as members of boards or commissions or as elected officials or their staff is so few, further information will not be provided by affiliation with respect to reporting suspected misconduct, in order to maintain confidentiality. Measures of statistical significance are also not presented due to the small number of respondents who reported suspected misconduct or fraud, waste, or abuse.

**Figure 1: Respondents' Frequency of Reporting Misconduct**

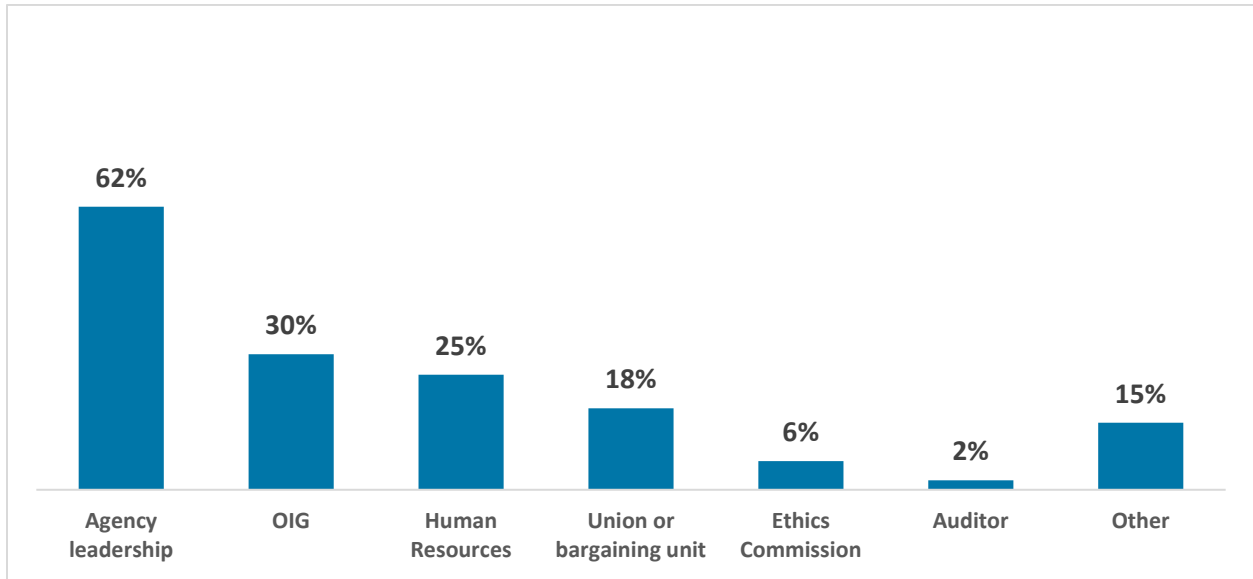


Note: N = 1,470.

As shown in Figure 2, the most frequent recipient of reports of suspected misconduct was the reporter's agency leadership (62%). The OIG was the second most frequent recipient of these reports (29%), followed by Human Resources (25%) and the person's union or bargaining unit (18%). Other recipients included the respondent's immediate supervisor, the supervisor of the person suspected of reporting misconduct, Baltimore County Police, and an inspector general at the state level. Figure 2 also shows that most survey respondents reported suspected misconduct to more than one entity, with an average of 2.4 complaints by those who made more than one complaint.<sup>2</sup> Most of those who reported suspected misconduct did so within the past two years (61%; Figure 3). Just under half of the respondents who reported suspected misconduct did so one time (45%; Figure 4).

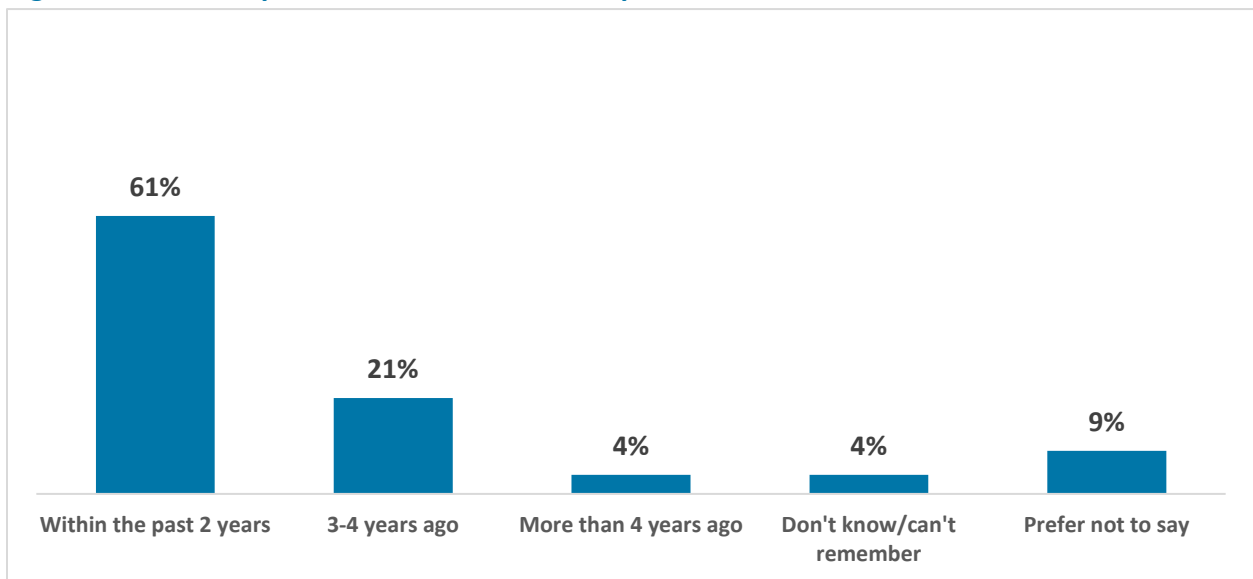
<sup>2</sup> Of those who made multiple complaints, the most common recipient of complaints was someone in the respondents' agency leadership followed by Human Resources.

**Figure 2: To Whom Suspected Misconduct Was Reported**



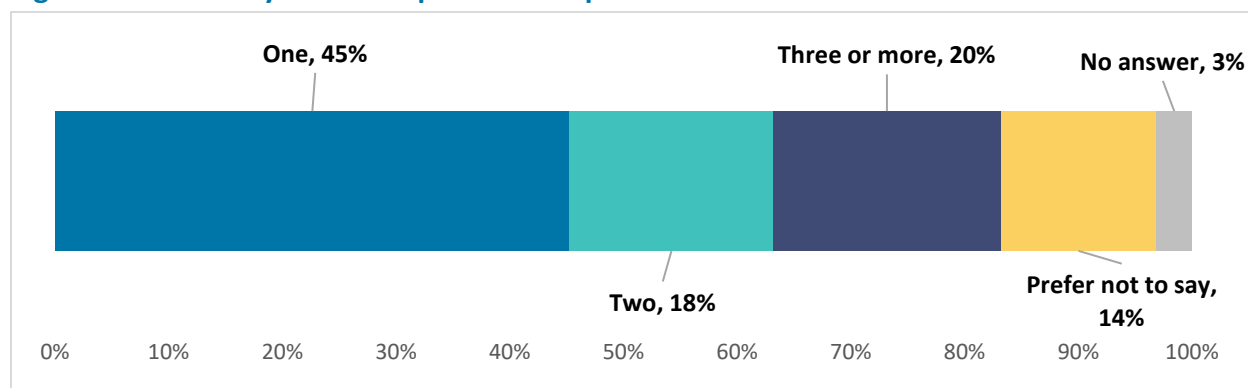
Notes: N = 95. Respondents could select more than one answer.

**Figure 3: When Suspected Misconduct Was Reported**



Notes: N = 95. Respondents could select more than one answer.

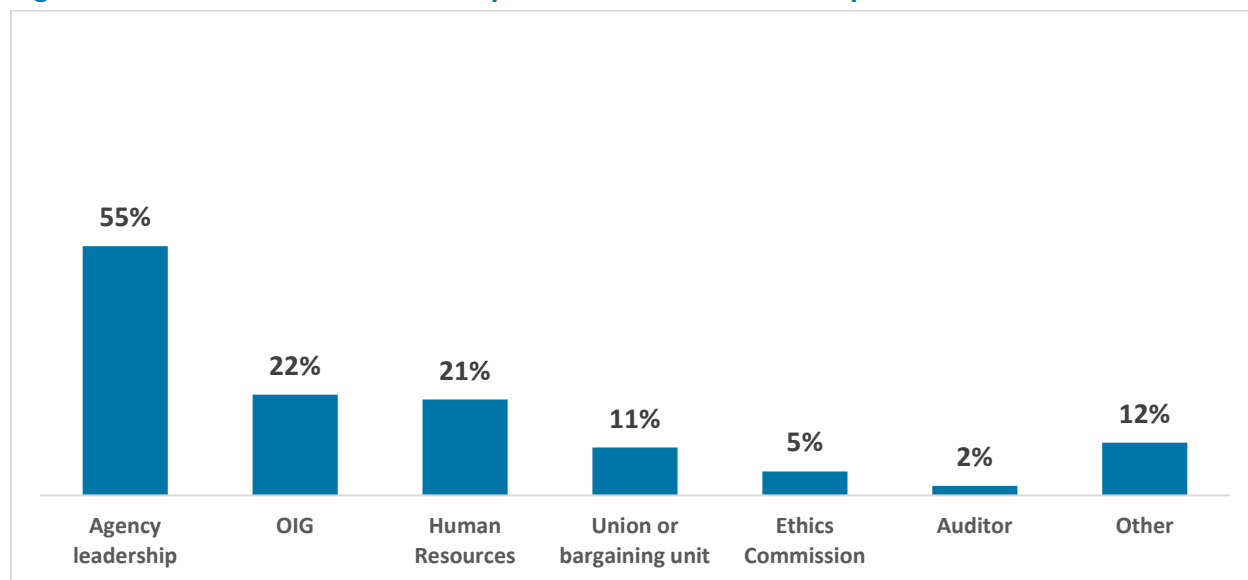
**Figure 4: How Many Times Respondents Reported Misconduct**



Note: N = 95.

To learn more about respondents' experiences reporting misconduct, they were then asked about their most recent experience. To whom respondents reported suspected misconduct for the most recent incident was the same as the responses presented in Figure 2, with agency leadership (55%) being the target of more than half of the reports, followed by the OIG (22%) and Human Resources (21%; Figure 5).

**Figure 5: To Whom Most Recent Suspected Misconduct Was Reported**

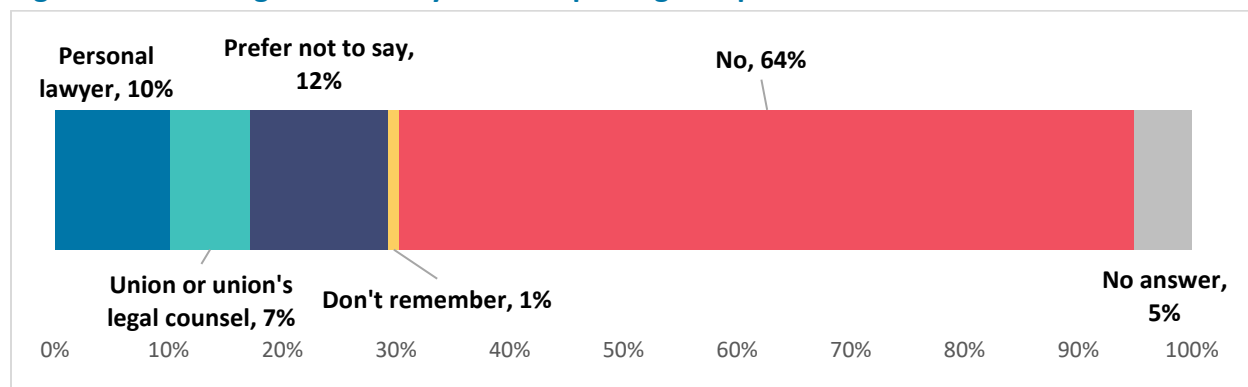


Notes: N = 95. Respondents could select more than one answer.

Most respondents (64%) did not contact legal counsel before or after reporting suspected misconduct, and, of those who did contact legal counsel, they were more likely to contact a personal lawyer over their union or its counsel (Figure 6). Of those who contacted legal counsel, two-thirds talked to a lawyer after reporting suspected misconduct (63%), while just over one-

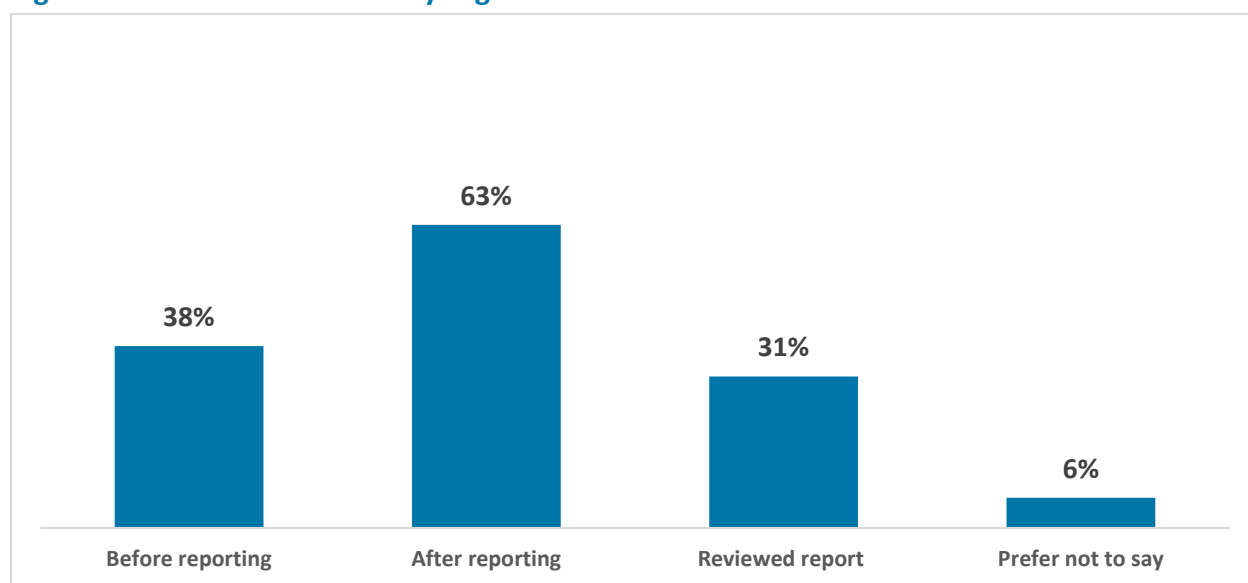
third contacted before the report was made and 31% had their legal counsel review the report that was made (Figure 7).

**Figure 6: Use of Legal Counsel by Those Reporting Complaints**



Note: N = 95. Total equals 99% due to rounding.

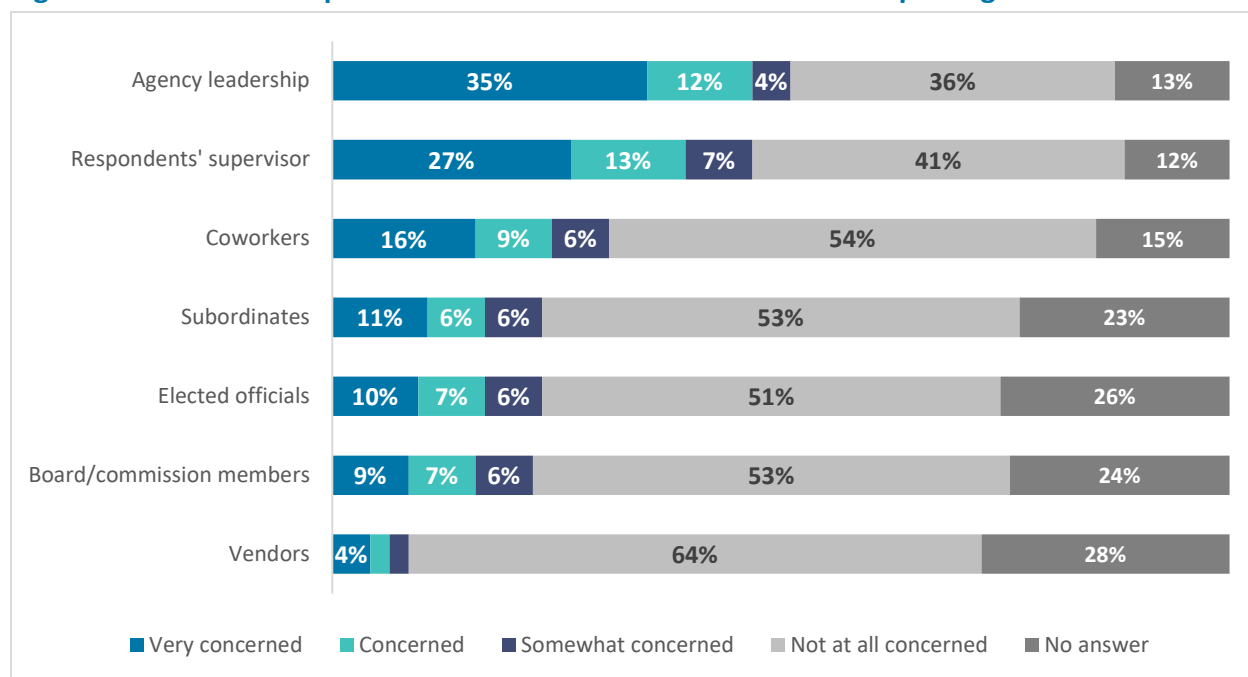
**Figure 7: Assistance Provided by Legal Counsel**



Notes: N = 16. Respondents could select more than one answer.

Generally, respondents who reported misconduct were not very concerned about others' reactions to their report. The most common concern was the reaction of agency leadership, with 35% of respondents saying they were very concerned about this group's reaction, and another 16% saying they were concerned or somewhat concerned (Figure 8). The respondents' second most common concern was their supervisor, with 27% very concerned about their reaction and 20% concerned or somewhat concerned. Over half of those who reported suspected misconduct were not concerned about the reactions of elected officials (51%), subordinates (53%), board or commission members (53%), coworkers (54%), and vendors (64%).

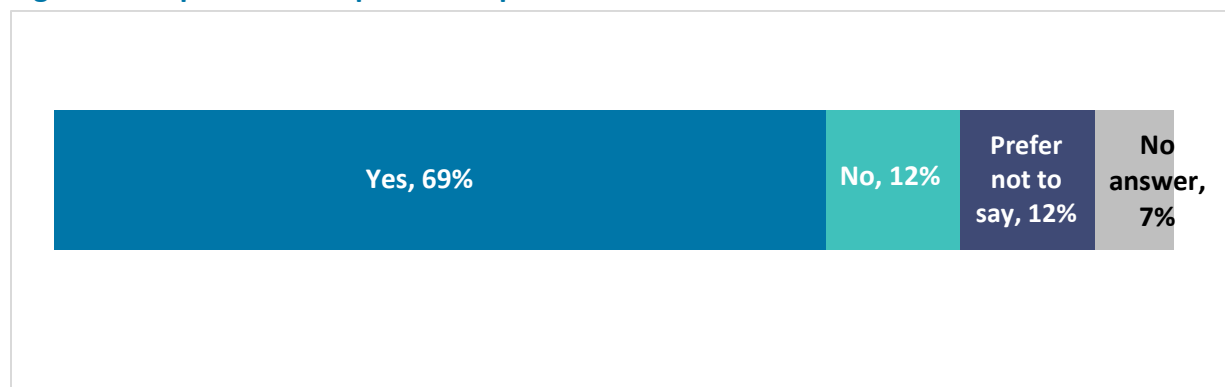
**Figure 8: Percent of Respondents Concerned about Reactions to Reporting**



Note: N = 94.

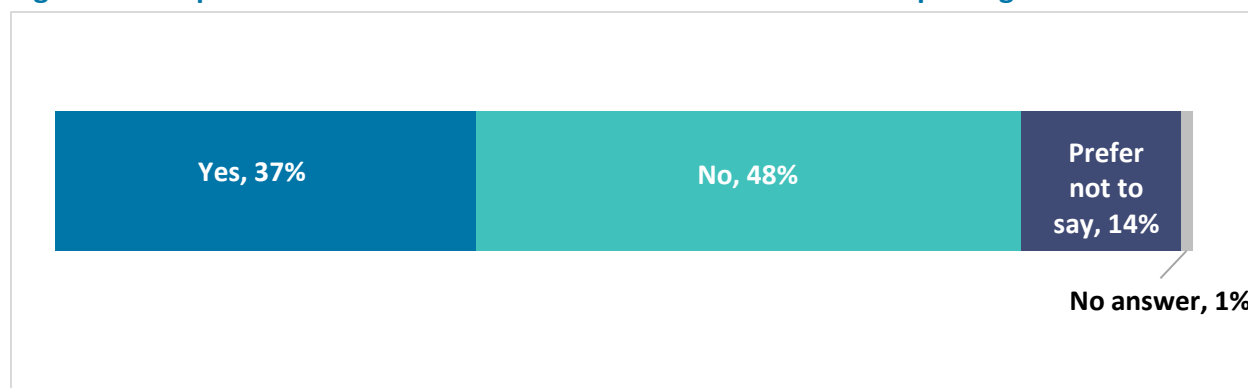
Almost 7 in 10 respondents who reported suspected misconduct had that reporting become known to their supervisor, agency leadership, coworkers, or subordinates (Figure 9). Of those whose reports became known, less than half said they experienced a hostile work environment due to the reporting (48%; Figure 10). Of the 37% who said they did experience such a hostile work environment, almost two-thirds said their supervisor was responsible (Figure 11). One-third said their agency leadership was responsible, and one-third also said their coworkers were responsible.

**Figure 9: Respondents' Report of Suspected Misconduct Became Known**



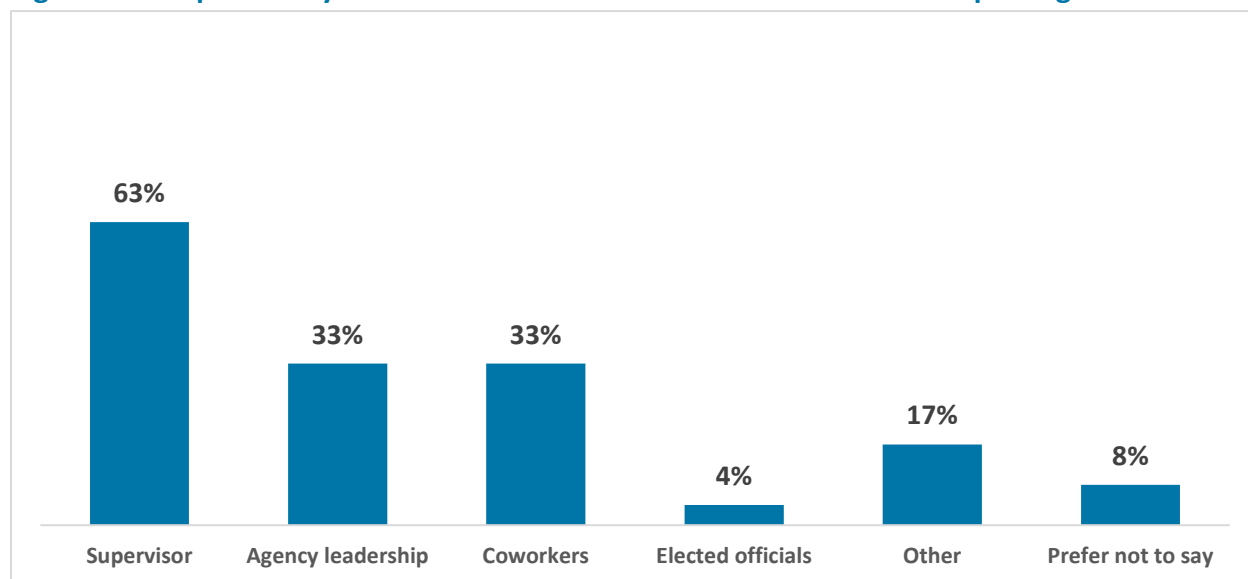
Note: N = 94.

**Figure 10: Respondents Who Faced a Hostile Environment Due to Reporting**



*Note: N = 65.*

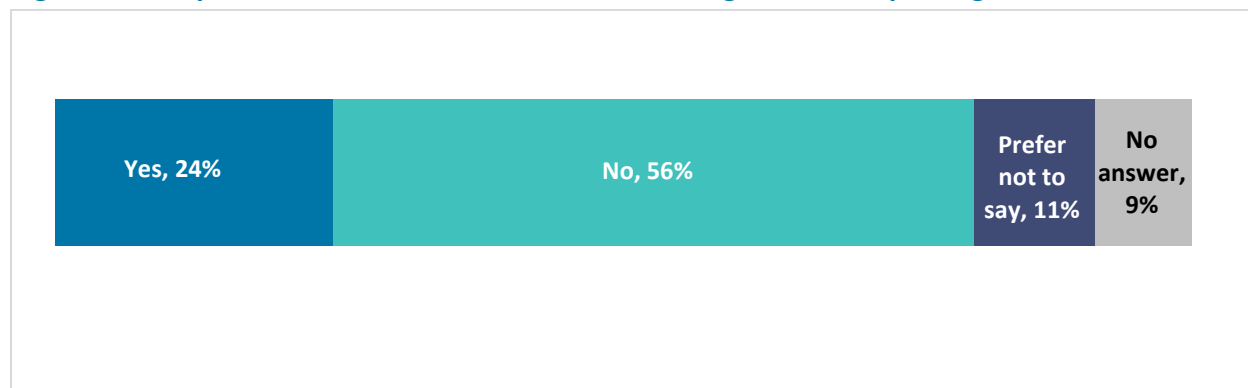
**Figure 11: Responsibility for Hostile Work Environment in Reaction to Reporting**



*Notes: N = 24. Respondents could select more than one answer.*

Most of those who reported suspected ethical misconduct were not satisfied with the handling of their reporting (56%). The most common recipient of complaints in these cases was someone in the respondents' agency leadership. When asked why they were unsatisfied, the most common reason was because "nothing happened," "no action was taken," or similar responses. Many respondents to the question also said they experienced retaliation or were told to work for another agency or leave Baltimore County employment altogether.

**Figure 12: Respondents' Satisfaction with the Handling of Their Reporting**



*Note: N = 94.*

#### PERCEPTIONS ABOUT HOW REPORTING WOULD BE HANDED

Respondents who had not reported suspected instances of waste, fraud, or abuse or ethical misconduct during the past four years were asked a series of questions about how they thought such reporting would be handled by the Auditor, Ethics Commission, and OIG. As shown in Table 1, the responses were remarkably consistent regardless of the agency asked about or even the question asked. Just under 60% of respondents thought the three offices were likely to take the report seriously, and just over half thought the offices were likely to address the factors that led to the issue and maintain privacy. Half of respondents – or just under – thought their report would be handled fairly, while slightly smaller shares thought the report was likely to be forwarded to investigators. For the five questions, the percentage of respondents saying the OIG's office was likely to do the actions was slightly higher than those who thought the Ethics Commission and the Auditor would do so. However, for the five questions, the differences were no more than 3 percentage points, indicating respondents generally thought the offices would act the same on each action.



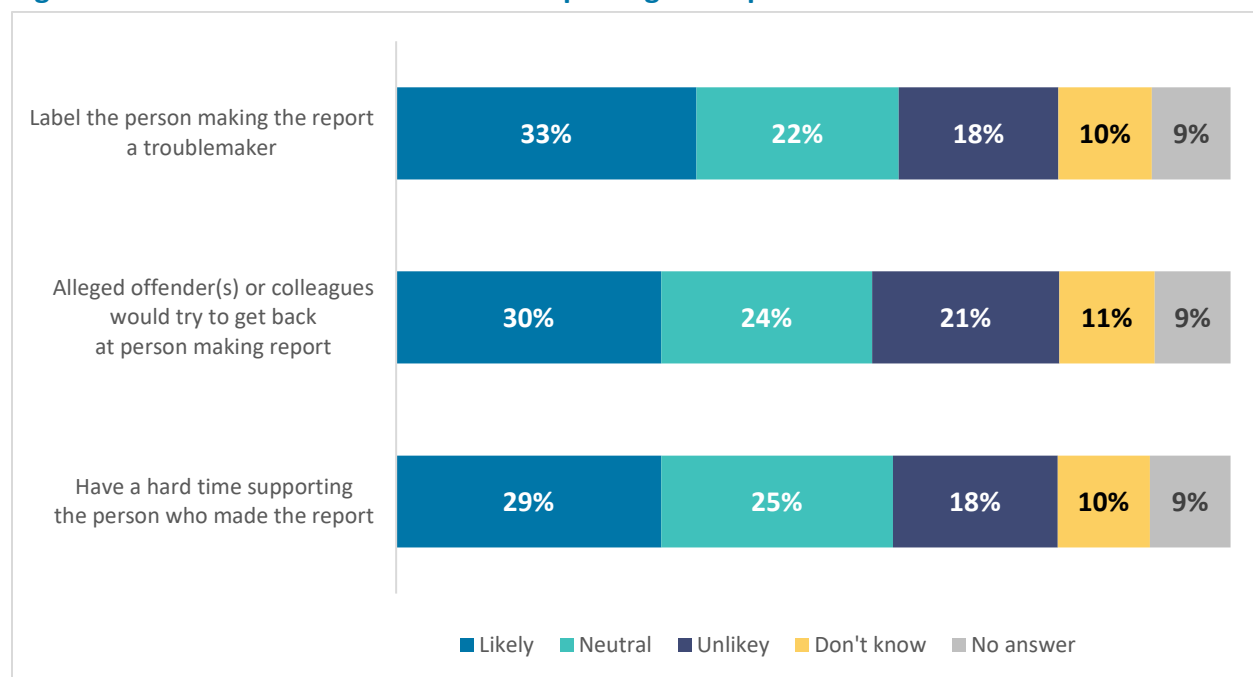
**Table 1: Respondents' Perceptions about How Complaints Would Be Handled**

	OIG		Ethics Commission		Auditor	
	Likely	Unlikely	Likely	Unlikely	Likely	Unlikely
Take the report seriously	59%	4%	58%	6%	57%	7%
Address factors that led to issue	52%	6%	52%	9%	51%	9%
Maintain privacy	52%	7%	51%	10%	51%	10%
Handle report fairly	50%	7%	49%	10%	47%	10%
Forward report to investigators	45%	5%	43%	9%	43%	8%

Notes: N = 1,258. When answering questions about how they thought reporting would be handled by the OIG, Ethics Commission, and Auditor, respondents were given the option of answering "Very likely," "Likely," "Neutral," "Unlikely," "Very unlikely," or "Don't know." The categories "Very likely" and "Likely" and "Very unlikely" and "Unlikely" are collapsed in this table. See Appendix C for more detailed results.

As shown in Figure 13, respondents were divided on whether they expected repercussions from reporting suspected misconduct, with their responses suggesting more negative reactions were expected. One-third of respondents thought it was likely or very likely that the person making the report would be labeled a troublemaker, while one-quarter thought it was unlikely this would happen. Respondents were more closely divided on the other two questions. With respect to the likelihood of the alleged offender or their colleagues trying to get back at the person making the report and whether others would have a hard time supporting those who made the report, 1 in 3 respondents thought each of those outcomes was likely, while only 2 in 10 respondents thought each was unlikely.

**Figure 13: How Others Would React to Reporting of Suspected Misconduct**



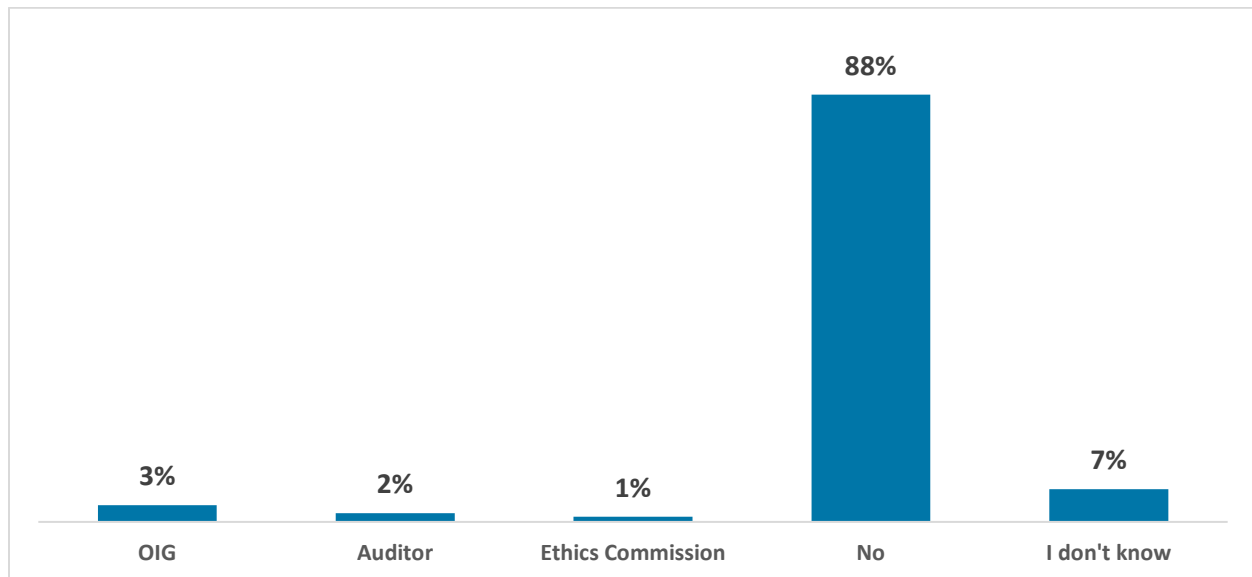
*Note: N = 1,232.*

## SECTION 2: EXPERIENCES BEING INVOLVED IN AN INVESTIGATION

One aspect of an ethical work climate is how investigations of suspected ethical misconduct are handled. Negative experiences, regardless of if the individual is a suspect or witness, could make people less likely to come forward about ethical concerns or incentivize them to retaliate against those who make complaints, thus negatively impacting the ethical climate. Therefore, a series of questions in the survey asked about respondents' experiences with OIG, Ethics Commission, and Auditor investigations.

Most survey respondents said they had not been involved in an investigation by the county Auditor, Ethics Commission, or OIG (88%), as shown in Figure 14. Of those who did say they were involved in an investigation, 43 respondents (3%) were involved in an OIG investigation, 22 respondents (2%) were involved in an Auditor investigation, and 13 respondents (1%) were involved in an Ethics Commission investigation.<sup>3</sup> Most respondents said they had only been involved in one investigation by one of the three offices, with 23 respondents involved in one OIG investigation, eight respondents involved in one Ethics Commission investigation, and six respondents involved in one Auditor investigation (Figure 15).

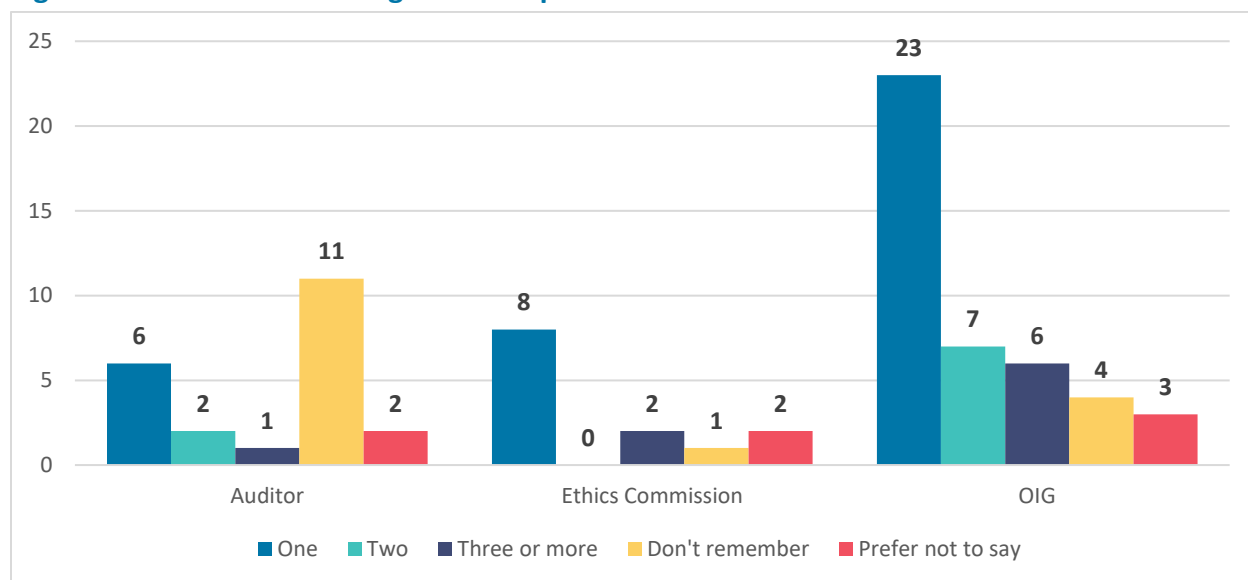
**Figure 14: Respondents' Frequency of Involvement in Investigations**



*Notes: N = 1,239. Respondents could select more than one agency. Percentages are out of those who answered the question.*

<sup>3</sup> Since almost all of the respondents who said they were involved in an investigation were regular employees of Baltimore County (rather than elected officials or their staff or members of a board or commission), the remaining items in this section will not be shown by job affiliation, in order to maintain respondents' confidentiality. Measures of statistical significance are also not presented due to the small number of respondents who reported being involved in an investigation.

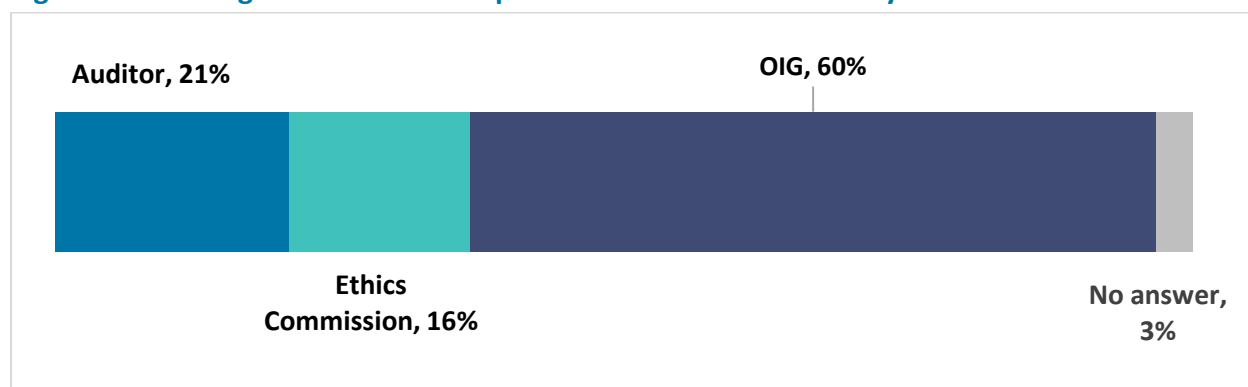
**Figure 15: Number of Investigations Respondents Have Been Involved in**



Notes: N = 22 for Auditor; N = 13 for Ethics Commission; N = 43 for OIG.

Survey respondents who said they had been involved with an investigation were asked to identify which office was involved in the most recent investigation.<sup>4</sup> More than 60% of respondents said the investigation they were involved in most recently was conducted by the OIG, followed by Auditor (21%) and the Ethics Commission (16%; Figure 16). Just over half of respondents were interviewed in the most recent investigation in which they were involved, while 43% said they provided documentation, and 22% provided written answers to questions (Figure 17).

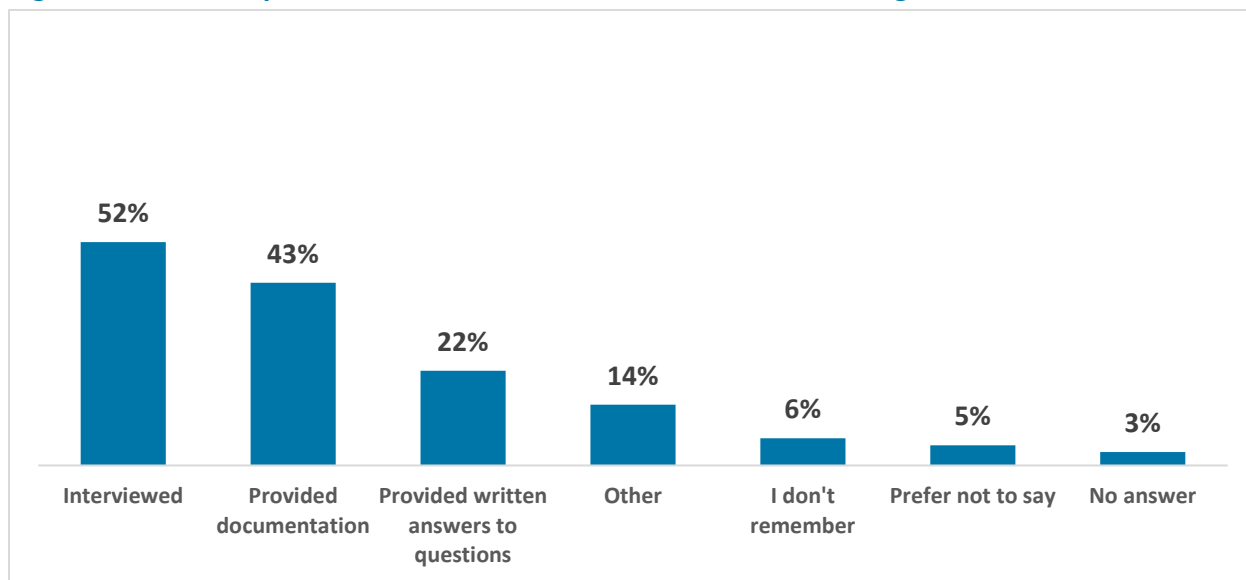
**Figure 16: Investigation in which Respondents Were Most Recently Involved**



Note: N = 63.

<sup>4</sup> Percentages in the remainder of this section represent the share of respondents who initially said they had been involved in an investigation by the Auditor, Ethics Commission, or OIG.

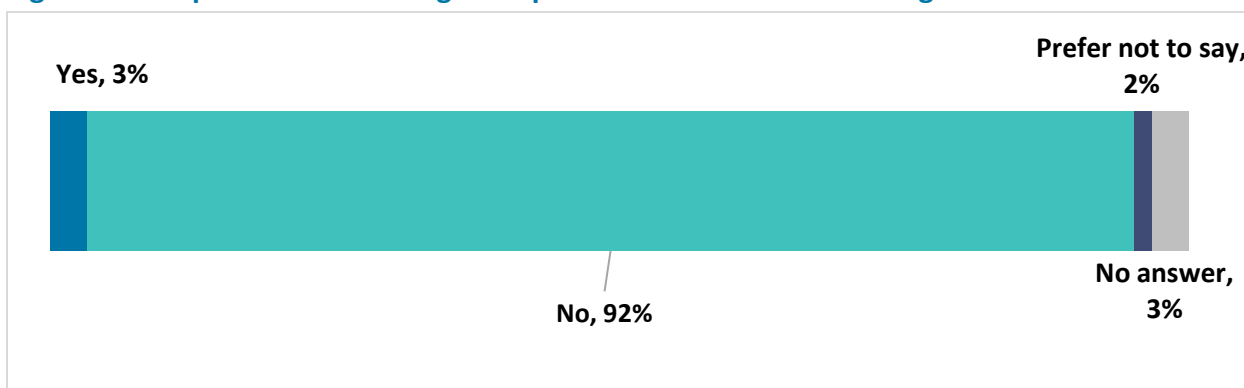
**Figure 17: How Respondents Were Involved in Most Recent Investigation**



*Notes: N = 63. Respondents could select more than one answer.*

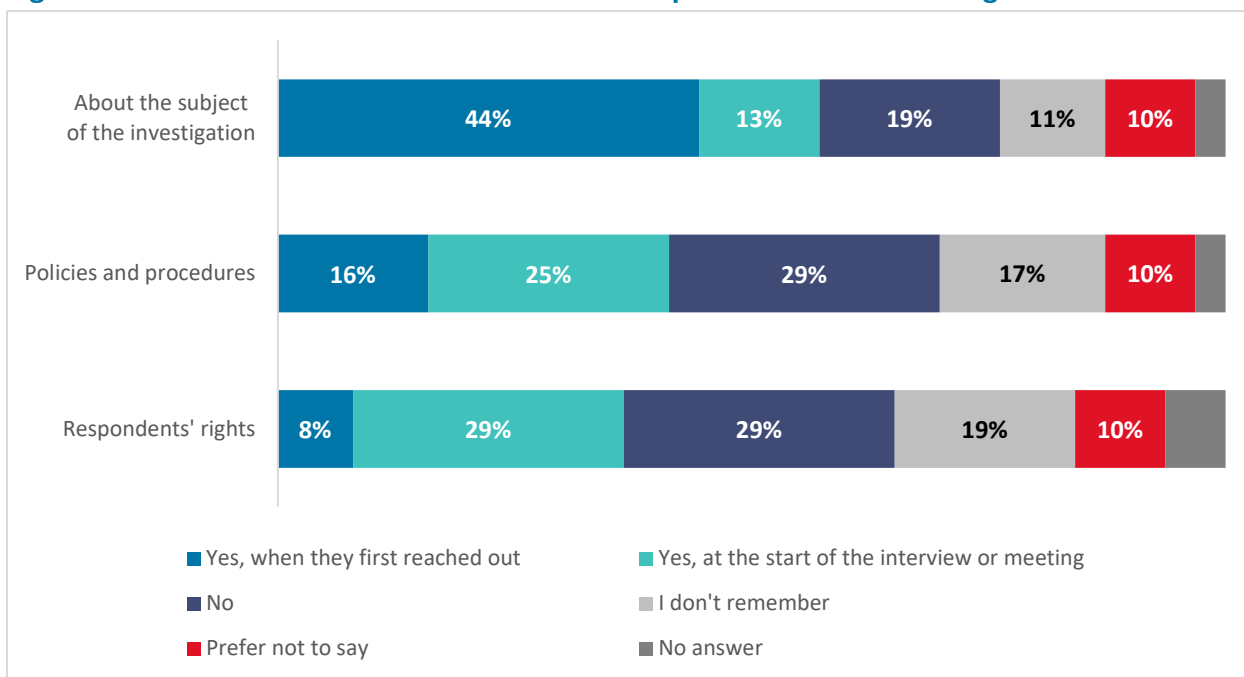
Only 3% of respondents said they had received a subpoena in the most recent Auditor, Ethics Commission, or OIG investigation in which they had been involved (Figure 18). Over half of respondents were provided with the topic of the investigation, name of entity, or person who was the subject of the investigation. As shown in Figure 19, 44% of respondents to this question received the information when the investigator first reached out and 13% receiving the information at the start of the meeting or interview with the investigator. Almost 20% of respondents said they were not provided with information about the subject of the investigation. A smaller share of respondents said they were provided with policies and procedures by the investigator, with more saying they received this information at the start of the interview or investigation (25%) compared to those who received it before (16%). Finally, only 37% of respondents were provided information about their rights in the investigation either when the investigator first reached out or at the first meeting or interview.

**Figure 18: Respondents Receiving a Subpoena in Most Recent Investigation**



Note = N = 63.

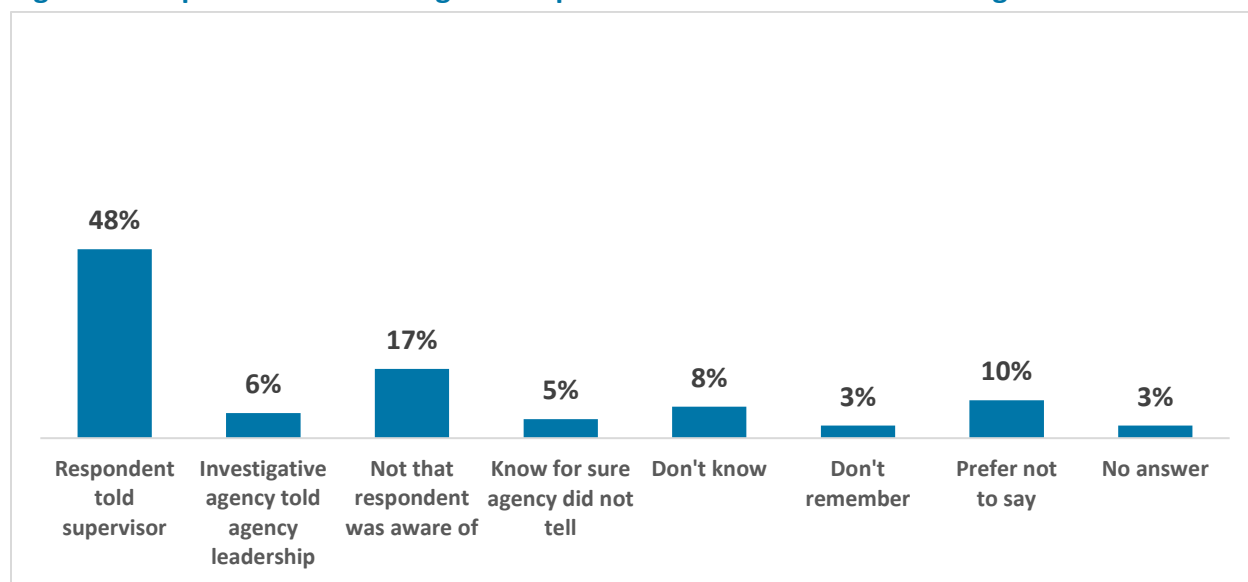
**Figure 19: When Information Was Provided to Respondents About Investigations**



Note: N = 63.

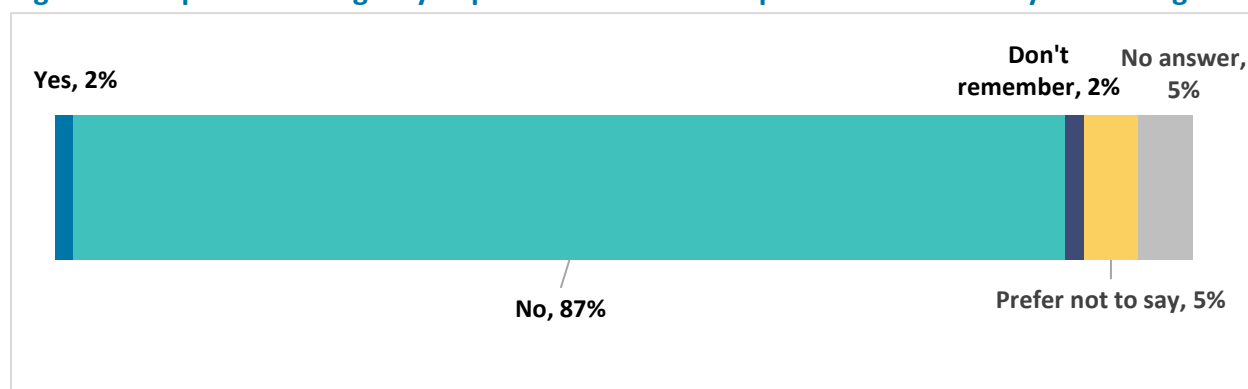
Those who had been involved in investigations in Baltimore County were asked questions about their supervisors' knowledge of and potential advice for the investigation. Almost half of respondents (48%) said they informed their supervisors about the investigation, while 6% of respondents said the agency conducting the investigation informed their supervisors (Figure 20). About 17% of respondents said they did not think their supervisors were aware of their participation in the investigation, and 5% said they knew for sure their supervisors did not know. Most respondents who said their supervisor knew about the investigation said the supervisor or another agency representative did not tell them what to say in the investigation (Figure 21).

**Figure 20: Supervisors' Knowledge of Respondents' Involvement in Investigations**



Note: N = 63.

**Figure 21: Supervisor or Agency Representative Told Respondent What to Say to Investigator**

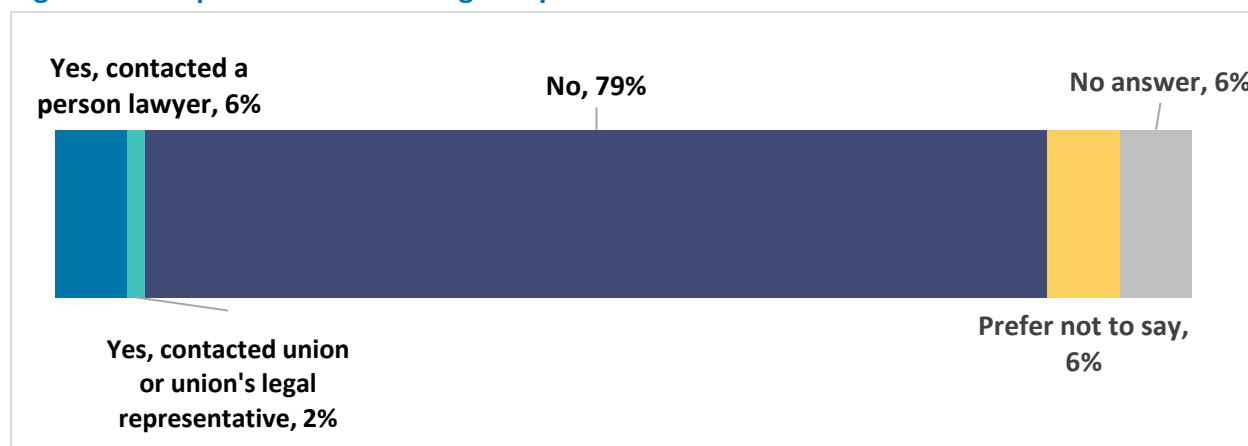


Note: N = 63.

Respondents were also asked about their use of legal representation in investigations by the Auditor, Ethics Commission, and OIG. Most respondents (79%) said they did not contact legal representation about their involvement in the investigation, while 6% contacted a personal lawyer and 2% contacted their union or the union's legal representative (Figure 22).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Since only five individuals said they contacted a legal representative related to an investigation, further information on what role the legal representative provided is not available.

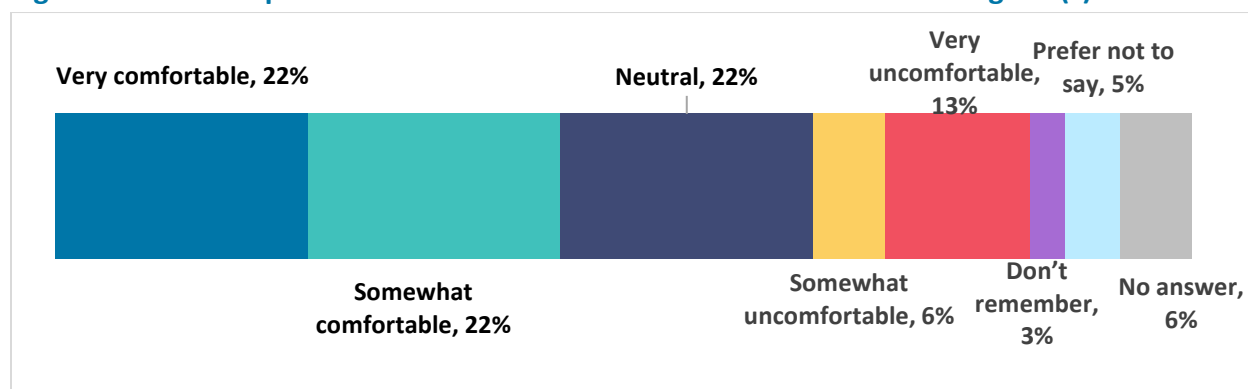
**Figure 22: Respondents' Use of Legal Representation**



Note: N = 63.

Respondents generally characterized their interactions with investigators as comfortable, with 22% saying they were very comfortable and another 22% saying they were somewhat comfortable (Figure 23). However, almost 1 in 5 respondents characterized the interactions as uncomfortable, with most of those saying it was very uncomfortable. Majorities of respondents said the investigators were prepared (60%), professional (60%), and knowledgeable (57%), although 17% of respondents did say that the investigators were not knowledgeable (Figure 24). Finally, 10% of respondents said they felt threatened or physically intimidated by their interactions with the investigators, while 83% said they did not (Figure 25). Responding to an open-ended question about their interactions with an investigator, several respondents indicated negative experiences of being “questioned as if I was a criminal” or feeling like they broke a law and would be sent to jail; some respondents did speak positively of their experience or a specific investigatory agency.

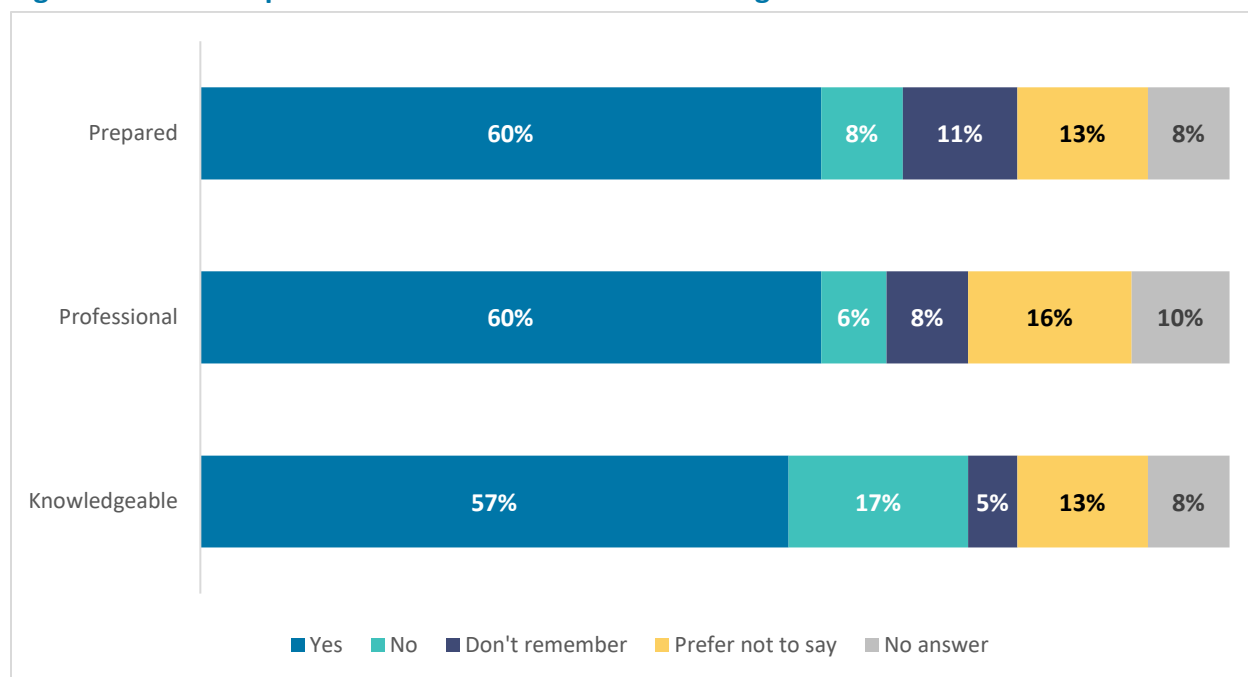
**Figure 23: How Respondents Would Characterize Interactions with Investigator(s)**



Note: N = 63.

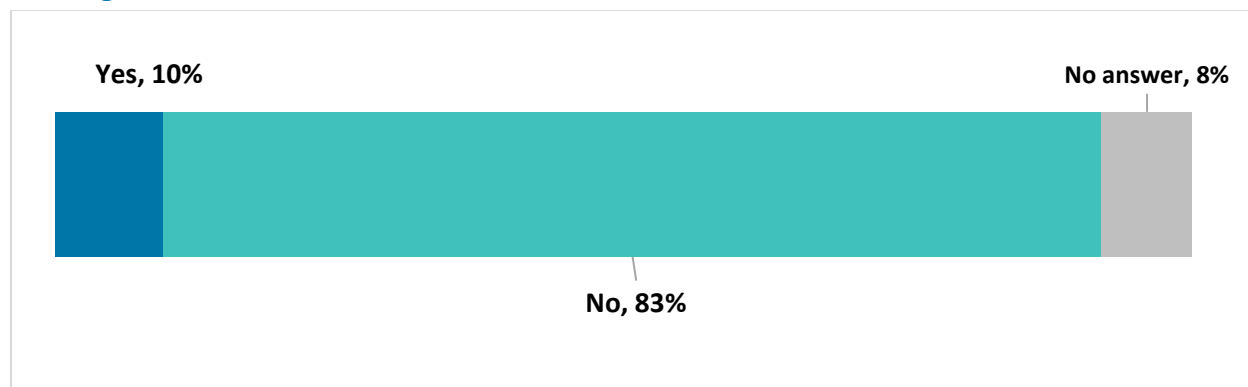


**Figure 24: How Respondents Would Characterize Investigators**



Note: N = 63.

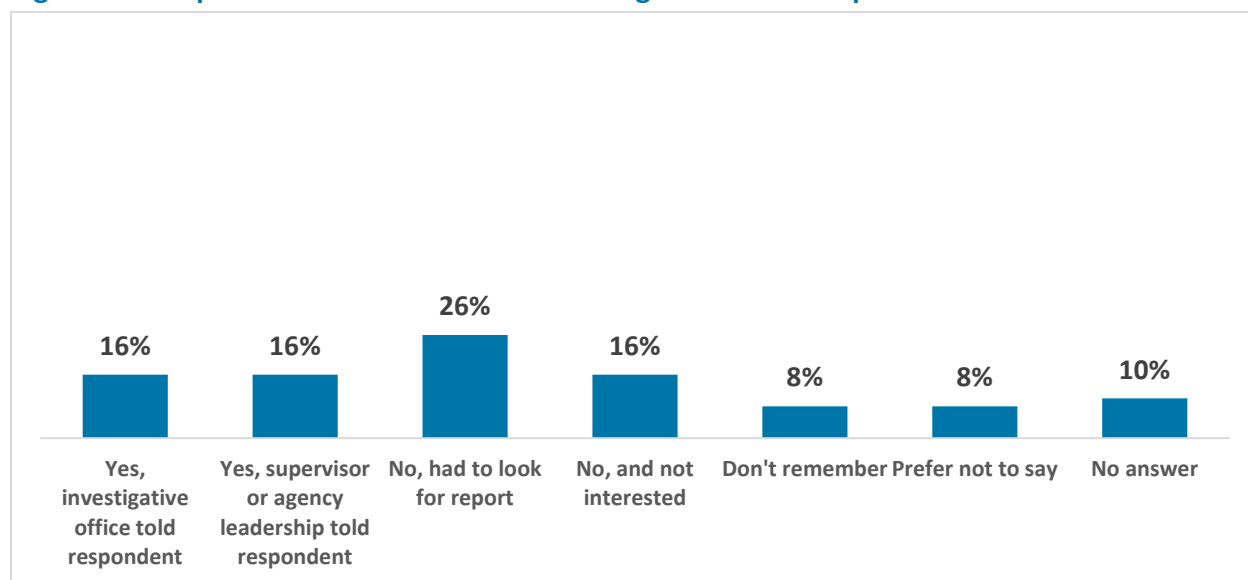
**Figure 25: Respondents Felt Threatened or Physically Intimidated During Interactions with Investigators**



Note: N = 63.

Many respondents who were involved in an investigation were not informed when the investigation was completed. As shown in Figure 26, 26% of these respondents had to look for the report when they thought the investigation was over, and 16% were not informed of the end of the investigation and were not interested in the results. Only 32% were informed, with half informed by the investigative office and half by their supervisor or other agency leadership.

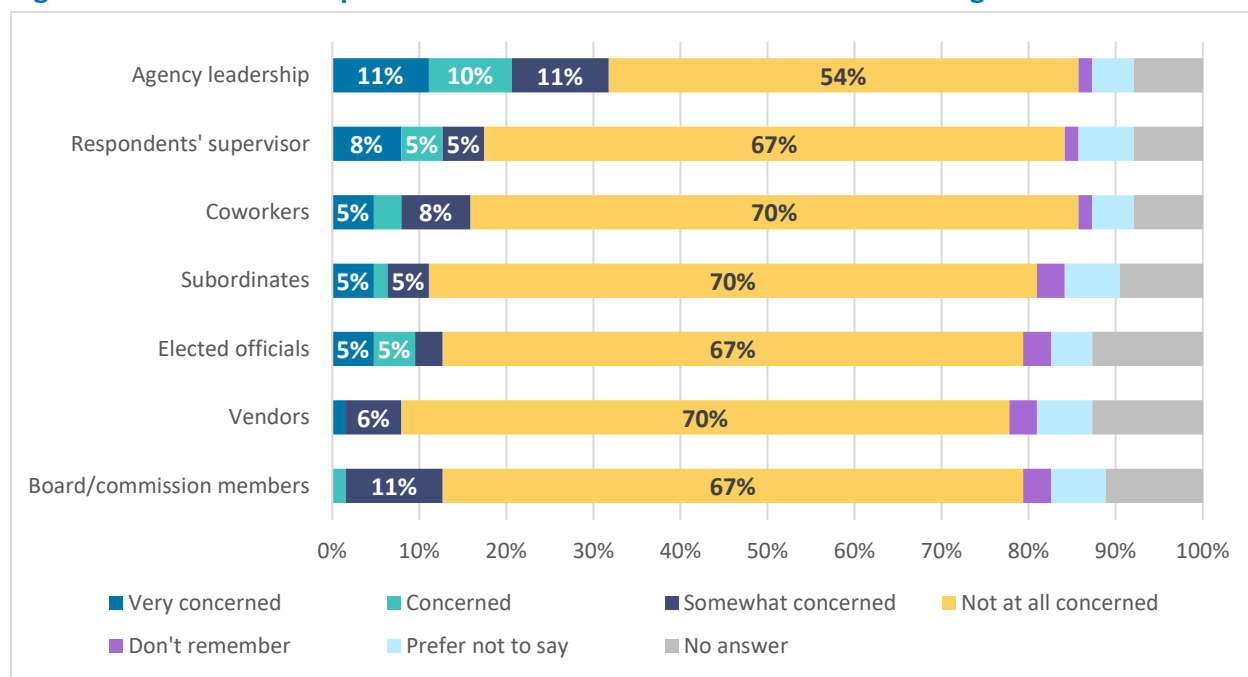
**Figure 26: Respondents Informed When Investigation Was Completed**



*Note: N = 50.*

Finally, respondents were asked questions about if their involvement in the investigation produced a hostile work environment. First, they were asked if they were concerned about responses to their involvement by different categories of colleagues. As shown in Figure 27, majorities of respondents were not at all concerned about the reactions of their agency leadership (54%), their supervisor (67%), elected officials (67%), board and commission members (67%), their coworkers (70%), their subordinates (70%), and vendors (70%). In many cases, these colleagues may not have been directly impacted by a respondent's participation in an investigation, but there could be indirect effects by agency leadership and elected officials, who could use various policy tools – such as the budget – in response to an investigation. Concern about reactions by vendors and members of boards and commissions are much narrower, as not all investigations concern procurement from vendors and many agencies and programs do not have boards or commissions involved. However, for both groups, investigations could influence perceptions of Baltimore County as a whole or of specific departments or employees. Respondents were most concerned about the reactions of agency leadership (11% were very concerned) and their supervisor (8% were very concerned).

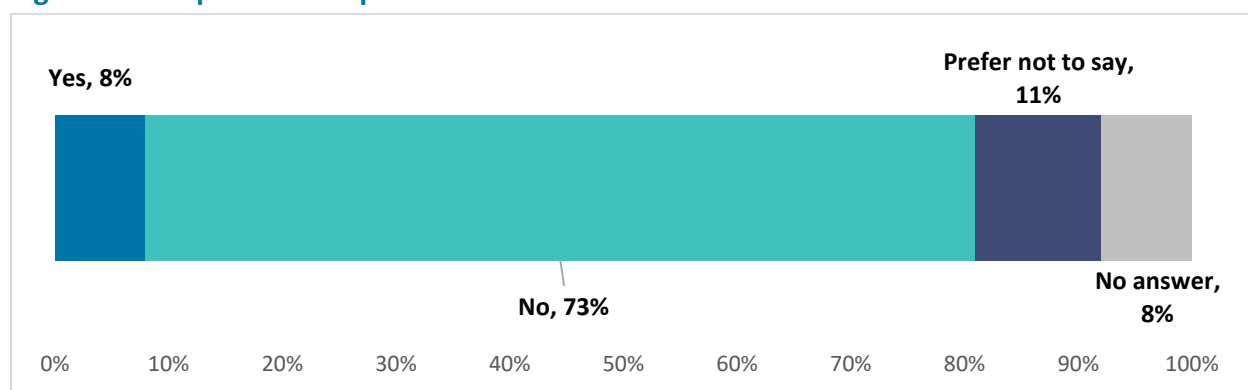
**Figure 27: Percent of Respondents Concerned about Reactions to Investigation**



Note: N = 63.

Most respondents did not face retribution or a hostile work environment due to their participation in the investigation, with only 8% experiencing a negative reaction from colleagues (Figure 28).<sup>6</sup>

**Figure 28: Respondents Experienced Retribution or Hostile Work Environment**



Note: N = 63.

<sup>6</sup> Since only five individuals said they faced retribution or a hostile work environment for participating in the investigation, further information on this issue is not available.

### SECTION 3: OVERALL ETHICAL CLIMATE IN BALTIMORE COUNTY

In addition to learning about specific experiences of Baltimore County employees and board and commission members concerning reports and investigations about suspected ethical misconduct, waste, fraud, and abuse, the survey was also designed to learn more about the general environment around ethics in the county. The survey was divided into three sections and asked the following: 1) about the most recent ethical challenges respondents faced in their work in Baltimore County and who they turned to for advice; 2) whether certain ethical and unethical behaviors are experienced in their workplaces; and 3) open-ended questions on ethics in their workplaces. Each of these will be discussed separately in this section.

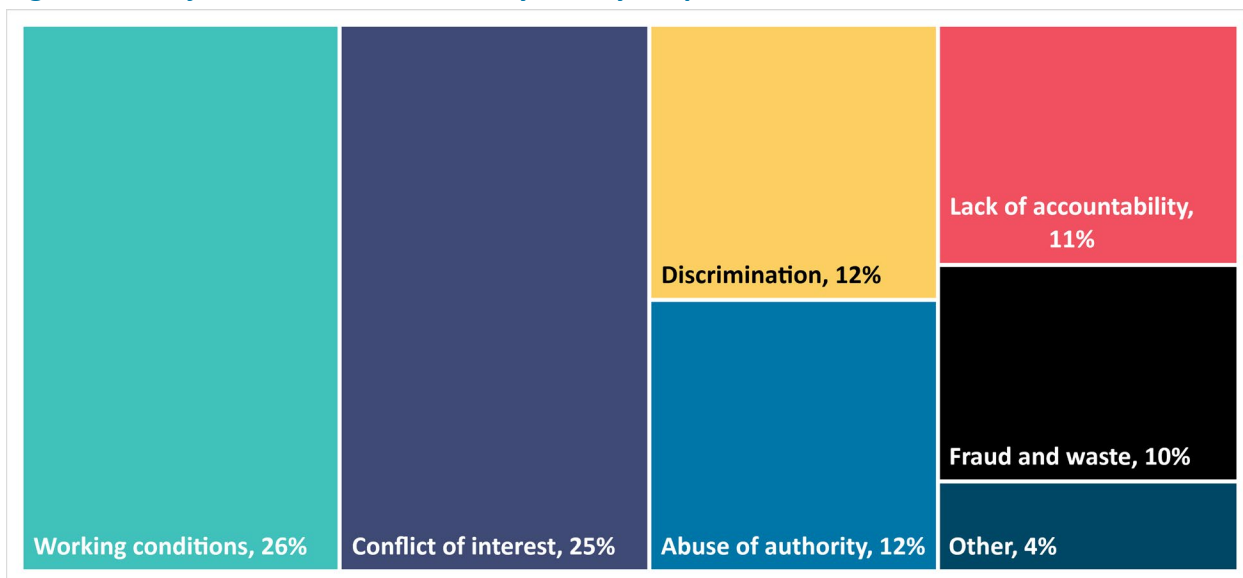
#### WORKPLACE SOURCES OF ETHICAL ADVICE

Respondents were asked to identify the three most difficult ethics issues they had faced in their work in Baltimore County in the last four years. Over 500 respondents to the survey provided at least one example of the difficult ethical decisions. This represents approximately 35% of all individuals who answered at least one question on the survey. Figure 29 displays a breakdown of their responses, and since each respondent could identify up to three ethical issues, there were a total of 1,105 issues broken into these seven categories.<sup>7</sup> The most common ethical issues experienced by the survey respondents concerned working conditions, which were 26% of those reported. This included problems such as bullying, harassment, or other actions creating a hostile workplace; compensation and benefits; concerns about confidentiality and privacy; and issues with administration or leadership. The second most common ethical issue concerned conflicts of interest (25%), especially nepotism. Discrimination and abuse of authority each represented 12% of the ethical issues; the former includes race, ethnicity, and other forms of discrimination as well as complaints about diversity, while abuse of authority included concerns about supervisors abusing their position and retaliation or intimidation. The issues around lack of accountability (11%) included problems with County leadership, supervisors and managers, and staff, employees, and volunteers, while fraud and waste included time-related fraud and wasteful spending, and misuse of funds.

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<sup>7</sup> A full breakdown of the categories is available in Appendix D.

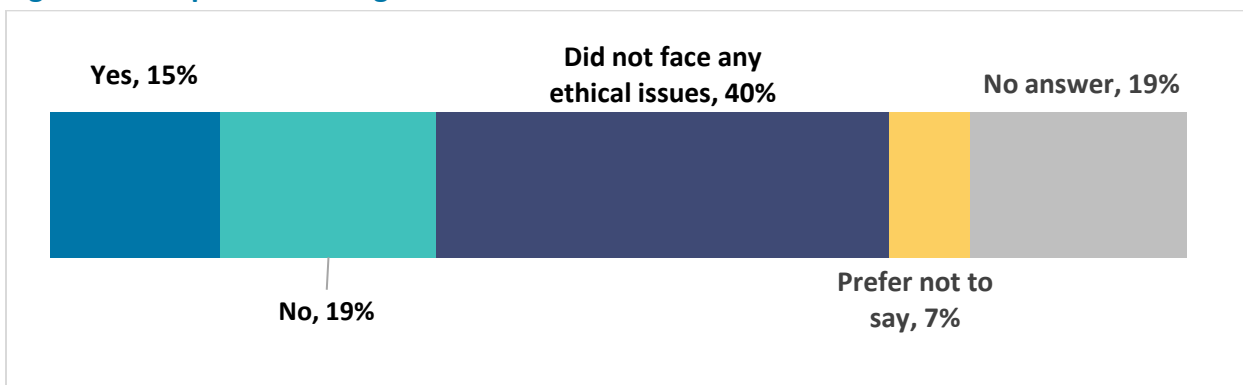
**Figure 29: Major Ethical Issues Faced by Survey Respondents**



Note: N = 511

To learn more about who Baltimore County workers and board and commission members turned to for ethical advice, survey respondents were then asked a series of questions about the most recent ethical issue they had faced. As shown in Figure 30, only 15% of respondents said they sought advice for their most recent ethical issue, while 19% said they did not seek advice. Of note, 40% of respondents said they did not face any ethical issues. Those who said they did not seek advice for their most recent ethical issue were then asked if they sought advice for other ethical issues, and almost all (91%) said they did not. The rest of the analysis in this section concerns survey respondents who said they did seek advice for their most recent ethical issue.

**Figure 30: Respondents Sought Advice for Most Recent Ethical Issue**

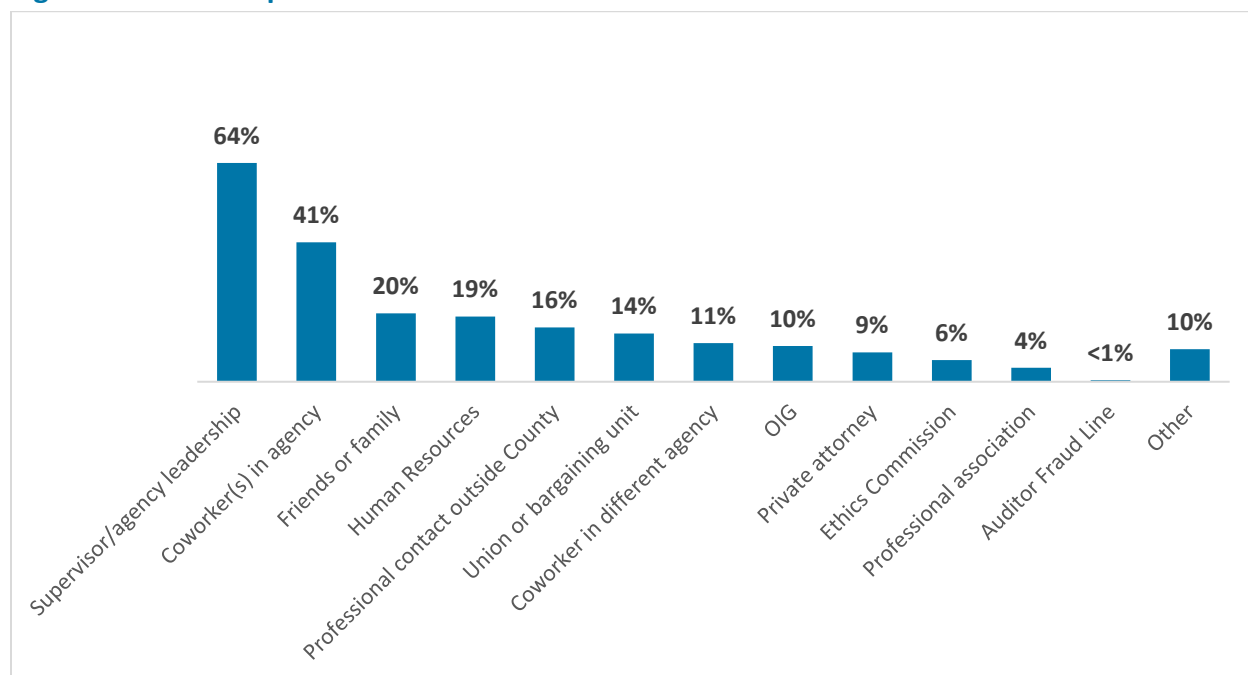


Note: N = 1,470.

Respondents were provided a list of possible sources of ethical advice and asked which ones they turned to about their most recent ethical issue. Almost two-thirds of respondents (64%) said they

sought the advice of their supervisor or agency leadership, and this was the only source of advice selected by a majority of respondents (Figure 31). The second most frequently used source of ethical advice was coworker(s) in their agency, which was selected by 41% of respondents to the question. Of specific note for this survey, 19% of respondents said they sought advice from Baltimore County’s Office of Human Resources. Ten percent selected the OIG, 6% went to the Ethics Commission, and less than 1% utilized the Auditor’s Fraud Line. Other sources of advice included the annual ethics training, the County’s ethics law, the County Attorney, and the Maryland Ethics Commission.

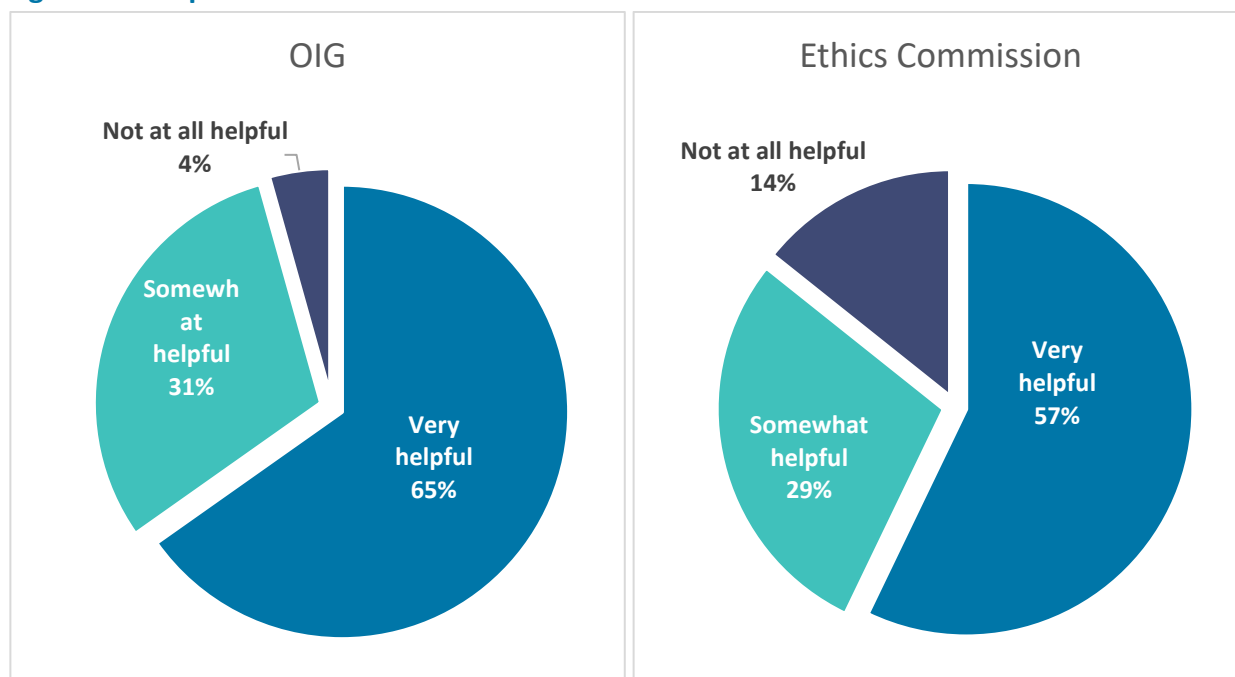
**Figure 31: Who Respondents Contacted for Advice on Ethical Issues**



Notes: N = 220. Respondents could select more than one answer.

Many respondents who contacted the OIG for their most recent ethical issue found the office very helpful (65%), while only 4% found it not at all helpful (Figure 32). In comparison, a smaller share of those who contacted the Ethics Commission found it very helpful (57%), while a larger share found it not at all helpful (14%). These differences are especially interesting considering the OIG and Ethics Commission are co-located in Baltimore County, meaning it is likely that the same person would have answered the telephone call or email inquiry to either office.

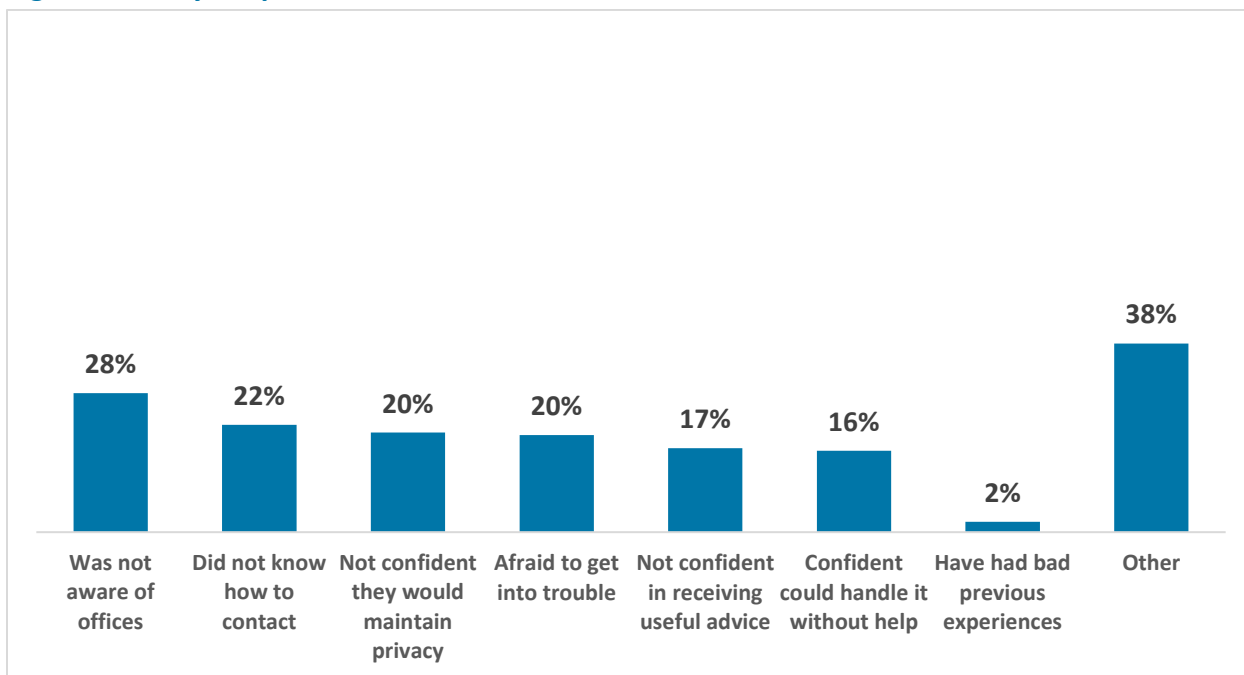
**Figure 32: Helpfulness of OIG and Ethics Commission**



Notes: N = 23 for OIG; N = 14 for Ethics Commission.

Respondents who did not contact the OIG, Auditor Fraud Line, or Ethics Commission for their most recent ethical concern were asked why they did not seek advice from these offices. Of the possible reasons provided on the survey, the most commonly selected was that they were not aware of the offices (28%), followed by 22% of respondents not knowing how to contact the offices (22%), as shown in Figure 33. Other common reasons were that respondents were not confident the offices would maintain their privacy (20%) and were afraid they would get into trouble (20%). These results suggest that the offices need to increase their communications to county employees and board and commission members and to include in those communications if and how the inquiries would be kept confidential. Those who chose the *Other* response option provided many different reasons, including that they thought Human Resources was a more appropriate venue for their concern or because they sought advice within their own agency.

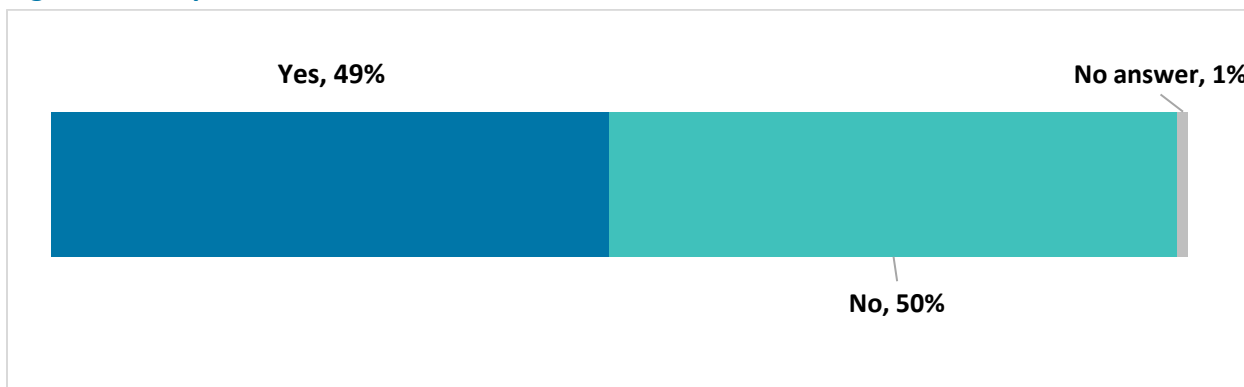
**Figure 33: Why Respondents Did Not Contact OIG, Auditor Fraud Line or Ethics Commission**



*Note: N = 188. Respondents could select more than one answer.*

Respondents were almost evenly divided between those who said their ethical concerns were resolved (49%) or not (50%; Figure 34).

**Figure 34: Respondents Whose Ethical Concerns Resolved**



*Note: N = 220.*

## ETHICAL CLIMATE IN THE WORKPLACE

To understand the general ethical climate in Baltimore County, survey respondents were provided 25 statements about potential ethical conduct or misconduct and asked to indicate their level of agreement with them. These statements were customized for the respondents



based on whether they had indicated at the outset of the survey that they were employed in an agency, employed in the office of an elected official, were themselves an elected official, or served on a board or commission. (Those respondents who indicated they were both employed by the county and served on a board or commission were presented with the questions for both affiliations.) The average results for all survey respondents are presented in Table 2, and they are separated between items in which agreement suggests a good ethical climate and measures in which disagreement suggests a good ethical climate.<sup>8</sup>

As shown in Table 2, respondents gave an average score between 2.6 and 3.0 for all the positive statements. This corresponds to “agreeing” or being “neutral” on each of the statements that would indicate a positive ethical climate in Baltimore County. The statements receiving the most agreement were:

- (Employees/Members of this board or commission/Employees) seek advice within this agency when ethics issues arise.
- (Employees in the agency/Members of this board or commission/Employees in this office) recognize ethics issues when they arise.
- I would feel comfortable reporting ethics violations.

As these are general statements of office ethical culture, it suggests that, overall, respondents view their workplaces as, at a minimum, not negative environments. The two positive statements with the highest scores, at 3.0, suggest, at worst, respondents as a whole would experience a neutral ethical culture.

For the negative measures, a higher score indicates more disagreement with the statement, which is suggestive of a positive ethical climate (i.e., negative ethical behaviors are not experienced). Survey respondents were neutral or disagreed with four of these six statements, since the average score on these statements was 3.2-3.6. However, there were two items on which the average score was 2.7-2.8, which suggests overall agreement (or neutrality) on these statements indicates a negative ethical workplace. These two statements were:

- (Employees in this agency/Members of this board or commission/Employees in this office) are expected to do as they are told, no matter what.
- Senior (officials in this agency/members on this board or commission/officials in this office) are less likely to be disciplined for violating ethical standards than other (employees/members/employees).

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<sup>8</sup> More detailed results for each of the three subgroups (general employees, elected officials and staff, and board or commission members) are provided in Appendix E.

**Table 2: Average of Responses on Ethical Climate Statements – All Respondents**

<b>Question</b> <i>Average responses range from 1 = Strongly Agree to 5 = Strongly Disagree.</i>	<b>Average response</b>
Positive measures	
(Employees/Members of this board or commission/Employees) <b>seek advice within this agency</b> when ethics issues arise.	2.6
(Employees in the agency/Members of this board or commission/Employees in this office) <b>recognize ethics issues</b> when they arise.	2.6
I would feel <b>comfortable reporting ethics violations</b> .	2.6
(Supervisors at my agency/Leadership on this board or commission/Supervisors in my office) <b>include discussions of ethics</b> when talking with their (employees/members/employees).	2.7
When ethical issues arise, (employees/members of this board or commission/employees) <b>look for advice within</b> the (agency/board or commission/office).	2.7
(This agency/Board or commission leadership/This office) <b>follows up on ethical concerns</b> that are reported by (employees/members/employees).	2.7
(Employees/Members/Employees) who are caught <b>violating ethics are disciplined</b> .	2.7
(Employees/Members of this board or commission/Employees) can <b>talk</b> with (supervisors/leadership/supervisors) <b>about problems without fear</b> of having their comments held against them.	2.8
(Employees/Members of this board or commission/Employees) here make decisions that <b>comply with ethics policies</b> because of the ethics program that is in place.	2.8
(Employees at all levels in this agency/Members of this board or commission/Employees at all levels in this office) are held <b>accountable for adhering to ethical standards</b> .	2.8
This (agency/board or commission/office) makes a <b>serious attempt to detect violations of ethics</b> standards.	2.8
Leadership of this (agency/board or commission/office) regularly <b>shows that it cares about ethics</b> .	2.8
If ethics <b>concerns are reported</b> to (the agency/board or commission leadership/the office), <b>action is taken</b> to resolve them.	2.8
Employees (in this agency/on this board or commission/in this office) feel <b>comfortable talking about ethics</b> .	2.9
(Employees/Members of this board or commission/Employees) are <b>comfortable delivering bad news to their supervisors</b> .	2.9
Ethics rules and (agency/board or commission/office) <b>practices are consistent</b> .	2.9
This (agency/board or commission/office) <b>practices what it preaches</b> when it comes to ethics.	2.9

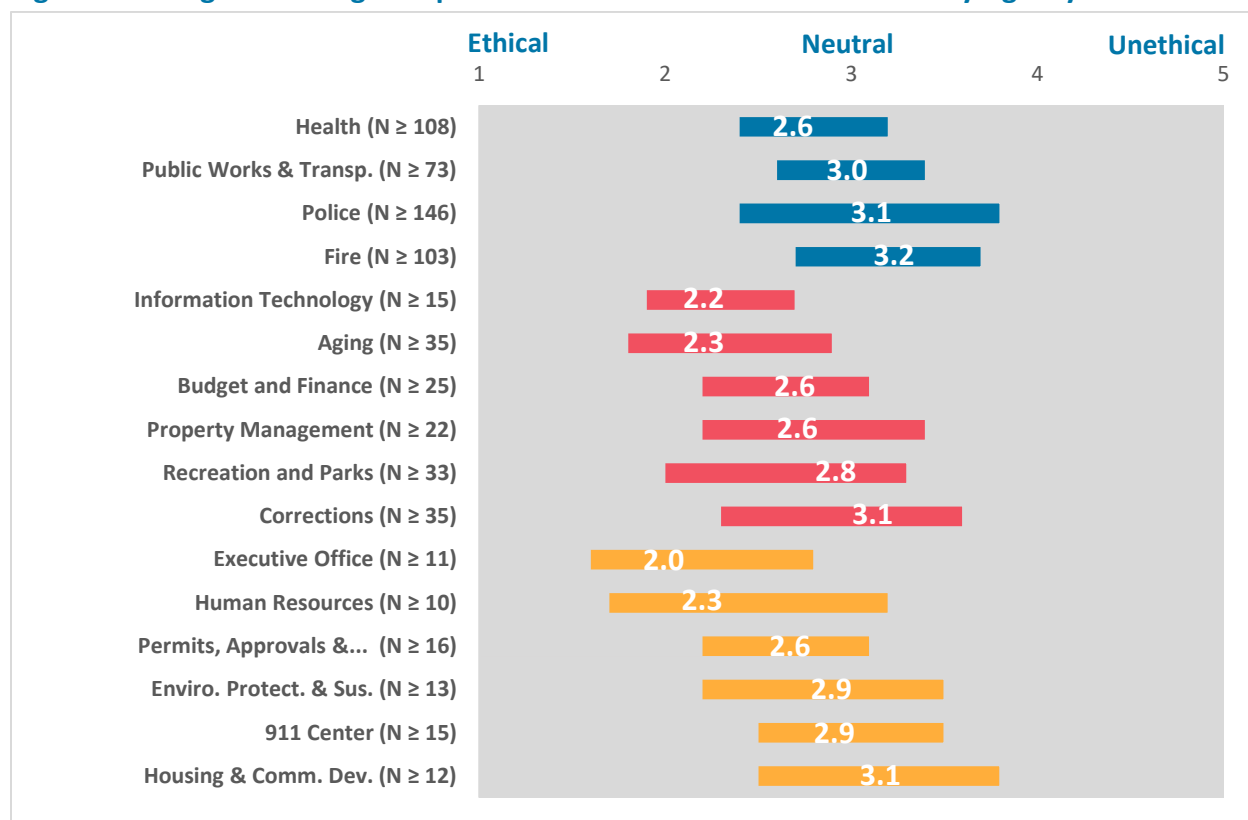
<b>Question</b> <i>Average responses range from 1 = Strongly Agree to 5 = Strongly Disagree.</i>	<b>Average response</b>
(Employees in the agency/Members of this board or commission/Employees) <b>openly discuss the ethics</b> of their decisions and actions.	3.0
(Employees/Members of this board or commission/Employees) who report <b>misconduct are not retaliated against.</b>	3.0
Negative measures	
(Supervisors at my work location/Board or commission leadership/Supervisors at my work location) usually <b>do not pay attention to ethics.</b>	3.6
(Employees in this agency/Members of this board or commission/Employees in this office) <b>do not recognize ethics issues</b> that come up at work.	3.4
You <b>can ignore ethics and still get ahead</b> (in this agency/on this board or commission/in this office).	3.2
(Our agency leadership/Our leadership/Leadership in this office) <b>cares more about getting the job done</b> than about ethics.	3.2
Senior (officials in this agency/members on this board or commission/officials in this office) are <b>less likely to be disciplined for violating ethical standards</b> than other (employees/members/employees).	2.8
(Employees in this agency/Members of this board or commission/Employees in this office) are <b>expected to do as they are told</b> , no matter what.	2.7

Note: See Appendix E for more detailed results.

Figure 35 shows the range of average responses to the ethical climate statements for those agencies that had enough responses to maintain confidentiality.<sup>9</sup> Average responses that indicated a more ethical environment (i.e., 1-2 on positive statements, 4-5 on negative statements) extend further to the left on the chart, while average responses that indicate a more unethical environment (i.e., 4-5 on positive statements, 1-2 on negative statements) are on the right; responses indicating an environment relatively neutral on ethics (i.e., 3 on both positive and negative statements) would be in the middle. This chart suggests that respondents from these larger agencies generally tended to experience environments that were neutral, or not strongly ethical or unethical (Figure 35). For example, the range of responses from individuals in the 911 Center were between 2.5-3.5 (regardless of if the statements were positive or negative). In comparison, the responses by employees in Aging were between 1.8-2.9, so the bar is further to the left. The bar for Aging is slightly longer than that for 911 Center because there was a slightly bigger range in average score for the former versus the latter (1.1 versus, 1.0, relatively).

<sup>9</sup> Agencies with seven or fewer responses to questions as well as responses by member of boards and commissions or elected officials and their staff are not provided to maintain confidentiality. Detailed results are in Appendix E.

**Figure 35: Range of Average Responses on Ethical Climate Statements by Agency**



*Note: See Appendix E for more detailed results. Average result for each agency on all Ethical Climate Statements shown in white.*

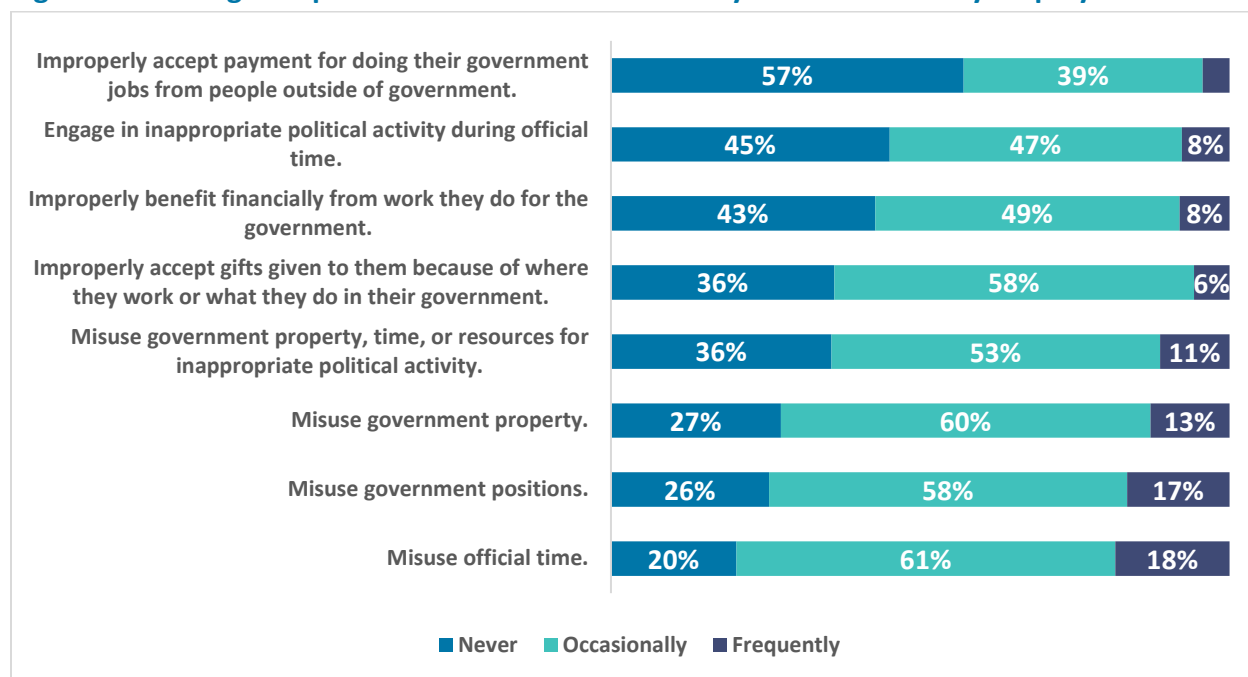
Finally, the average responses to the question by those who worked in larger county agencies were also compared.<sup>10</sup> These agencies were grouped into three tiers by the number of responses, and the average score of all responses to all 25 questions were compared. Of the four agencies with the most respondents – Fire, Police, Public Works and Transportation, and Health – respondents from Health had statistically significantly lower average scores, indicating more ethical working environments, than the other three agencies. Of the middle tier of agencies, respondents from Corrections had statistically significantly higher average scores than Budget and Finance, Aging, and Information Technology, suggesting that respondents from Corrections were less likely to experience an ethical workplace environment. While the average score for Corrections was also higher than those for Recreation and Parks and Property Management, these differences were not statistically significant. Respondents from Recreation and Parks had statistically significantly higher average scores than respondents in Aging and Information Technology. Finally, of the six agencies with the fewest respondents (but still with at least seven responses per question), respondents from the Executive Office had statistically significantly

<sup>10</sup> Smaller agencies were excluded in order to maintain confidentiality.

lower scores – again, suggesting a more ethical workplace – than respondents from Human Resources, 911 Center, Environmental Protection and Sustainability, Housing and Community Development, and Permits, Approvals, and Inspections. Respondents from Human Resources also had statistically significantly lower average scores than respondents from Housing and Community Development.

All respondents were asked to respond on how frequently they believe Baltimore County government employees engage in different kinds of ethical misconduct. The results are shown in Figure 36 and suggest that Baltimore County employees are generally believed to act ethically in their government roles.<sup>11</sup> For each statement of ethical misconduct, sizable majorities of respondents said Baltimore County employees engage in the activity never or only occasionally, while less than 20% of respondents said workers engage in the activity frequently. Respondents were most likely to say that workers misused company time frequently, with 18% of respondents responding this way; however, 20% of respondents said Baltimore County employees never did this and 61% said it happened occasionally. In contrast, respondents were least likely to think Baltimore County workers accepted payment for doing their government jobs from people outside of government – 4% said this happened frequently while 57% said it never happened.

**Figure 36: Average Responses on Ethical Misconduct by Baltimore County Employees**



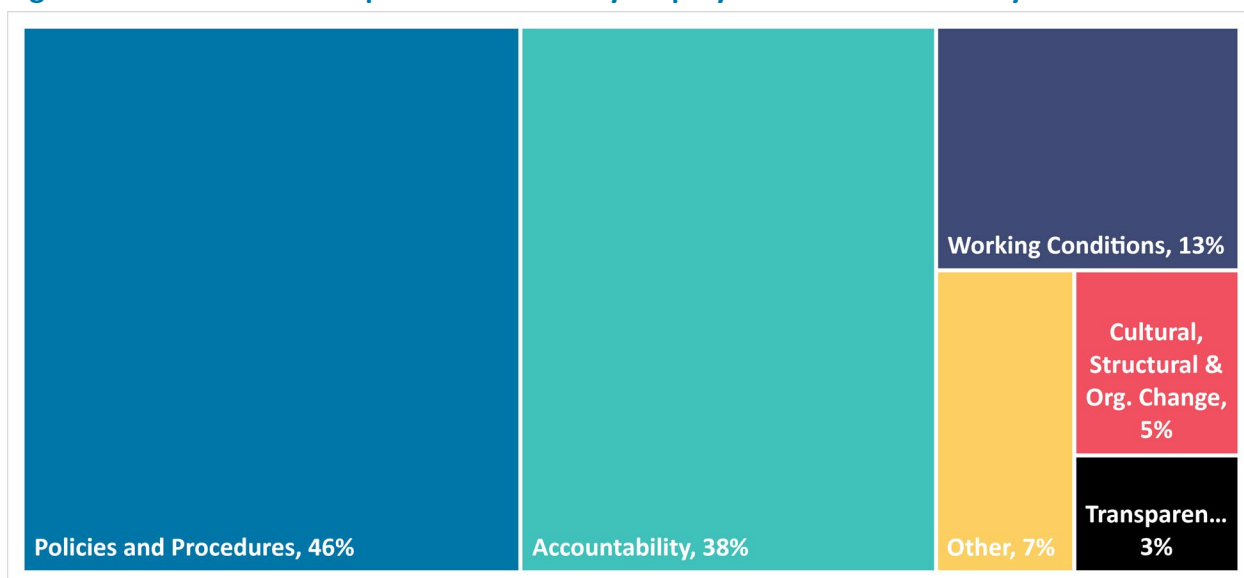
*Note: See Appendix E for more detailed results.*

<sup>11</sup> More detailed results are available in Appendix E.

## GENERAL COMMENTS ON ETHICS IN BALTIMORE COUNTY

At the end of the subject matter questions in the survey, respondents were given three open-ended prompts to provide their overall thoughts on the ethical climate in Baltimore County government. The first question concerned what respondents thought would help employees in Baltimore County act more ethically in their work. Almost half (46%) of the suggestions involved policies and procedures, with most of these comments calling for training, reinforcement, and continued education for Baltimore County employees and clearer policies, procedures, and expectations (Figure 37). Just under 40% of respondents suggested more accountability would help, and these responses focused on greater accountability for leadership. The third largest share of comments were suggestions around working conditions (13%), such as improved support, communication, and access to information as well as better management and supervision.

**Figure 37: What Would Help Baltimore County Employees Act More Ethically**



*Notes: N = 368. Percentages represent number of respondents who provided a response that would be included in the category. Respondents may have contributed to more than one category.*

Respondents were asked to identify what makes it difficult for employees to comply with ethics policies. Just over 20% of respondents (21%) suggested that a lack of understanding causes makes it difficult to behave ethically (Figure 38). This includes general awareness of ethical behaviors and policies. Almost as many respondents (20%) named office culture as a problem, which includes distrust of management, lack of resources, and politics. Leadership was referenced by 18% of respondents, and personal culture issues such as being unconcerned with ethical guidelines or working for personal gain was mentioned by 17% of respondents.

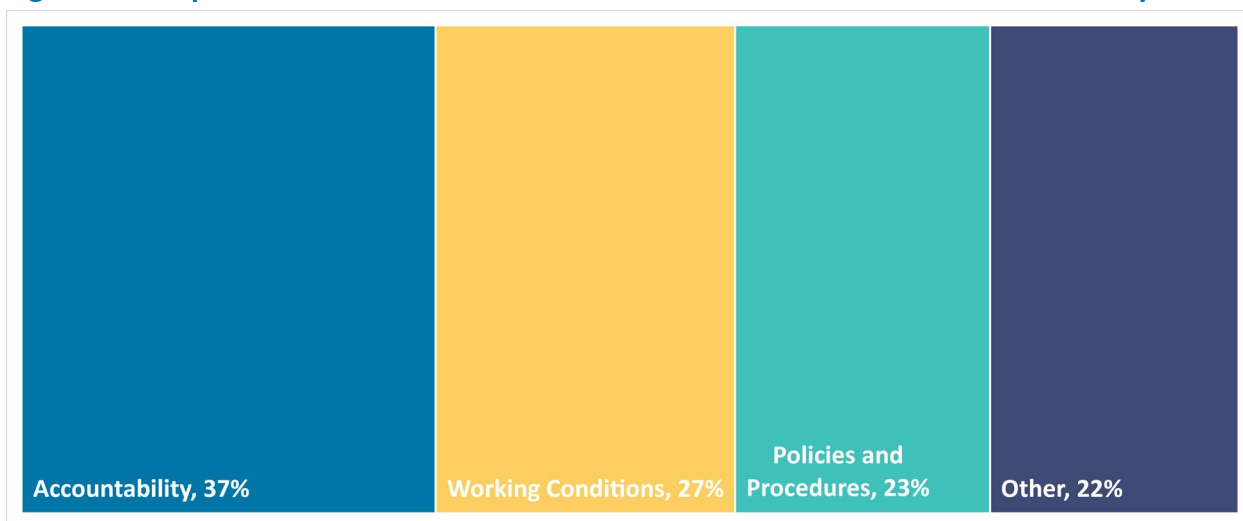
**Figure 38: Factors That Make It Difficult to Act Ethically**



Note: N = 397.

Finally, respondents were asked if there was anything they wanted to share regarding the ethical climate in Baltimore County. There were 174 responses to this question, with the most frequent comment concerning accountability – 37% of these individuals mentioned a concern about county leadership or managers, supervisors, and departmental oversight (Figure 38). Approximately one-quarter (27%) mentioned working conditions and their connection to ethical work behaviors. Many of these comments concerned retaliation, intimidation, or anonymity. There were also comments about policies and procedures by approximately 23% of these respondents.

**Figure 39: Respondents' General Comments about Ethical Climate in Baltimore County**

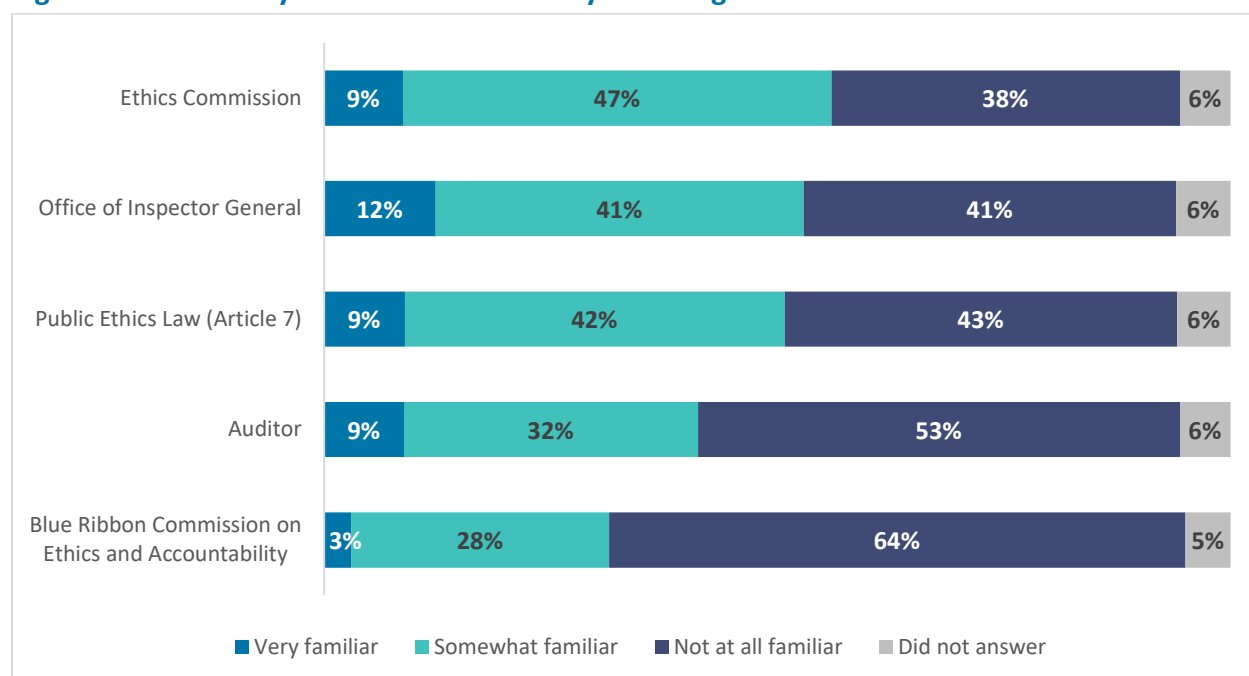


Note: N = 174.

## SECTION 4: FAMILIARITY WITH BALTIMORE COUNTY ETHICS AGENCIES, LAW AND TRAINING

Respondents were asked their familiarity with the County's ethics law, agencies, and commissions. As shown in Figure 40, respondents overall did not feel very familiar with all of the sources of ethics guidance, as less than 10% of respondents called themselves *very familiar* with the law, the Ethics Commission, the Auditor, and the BRCEA, while 12% of respondents were very familiar with the OIG. Moreover, almost 4 in 10 respondents said they were *not at all familiar* with these sources, ranging from almost 40% of respondents being unfamiliar with the Ethics Commission to 53% not at all familiar with the Auditor and 64% not at all familiar with the BRCEA.

**Figure 40: Familiarity with Baltimore County Ethics Agencies and Law**

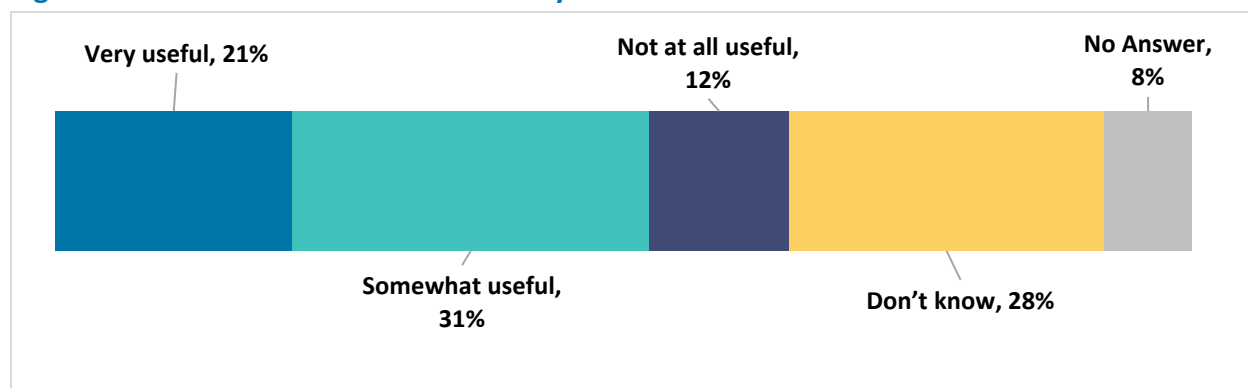


Note: N = 1,470.

Half of respondents said the Public Ethics Law was very or somewhat useful (21% and 31%, respectively) in guiding their decision and conduct in their work (Figure 41).



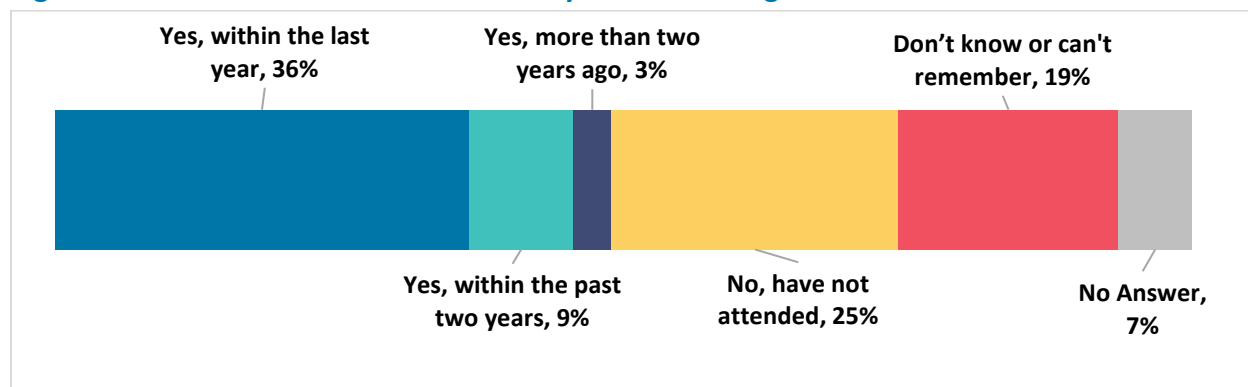
**Figure 41: Usefulness of Baltimore County Public Ethics Law**



Note: N = 1,470.

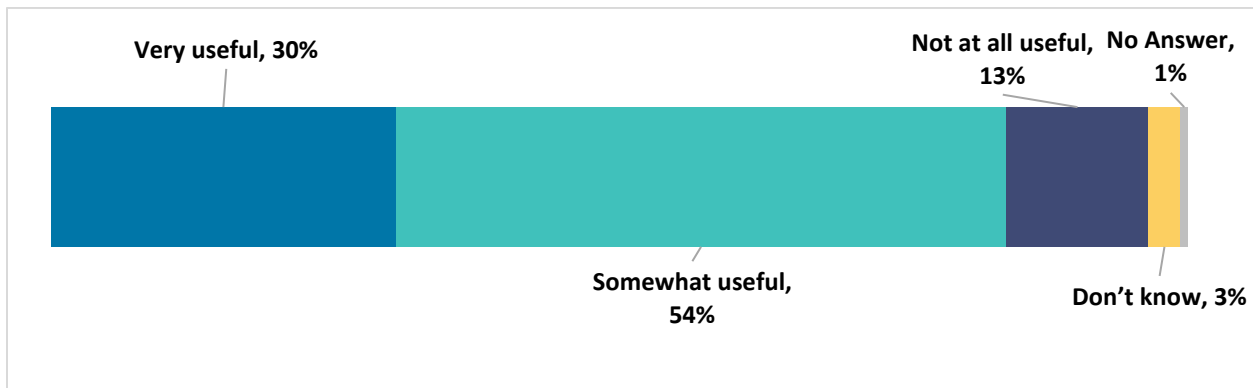
Approximately 45% of respondents said they had taken the County's ethics training during the past two years (Figure 42), which aligns with the current OIG overhauling the training and requiring all employees take it. One-quarter of respondents said they have not taken the training, and almost 20% said they did not know or could not remember if they did. Thirty percent (30%) of those who had taken the training classified it as *very useful* in navigating ethical challenges at work, while another 54% said it was *somewhat useful* for this purpose (Figure 43).

**Figure 42: Attendance at Baltimore County Ethics Training**



Note: N = 1,470.

**Figure 43: Usefulness of Baltimore County Ethics Training**



Note: N = 719.

## APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

The Schaefer Center developed an online survey for Baltimore County employees and individuals who serve on County boards and commissions. The survey was designed to gather information on the general ethical climate in Baltimore County and on individuals' experiences reporting or being involved in investigations concerning suspected waste, fraud, abuse, and ethical misconduct.

The questions on the general ethical climate were based on those developed by the University of Illinois, Springfield Center for State Policy and Leadership Survey Research Office for the 2014 Illinois Executive Employee Ethics Survey; questions from this survey were also used as the basis for questions about Baltimore County respondents' familiarity with and use of ethical laws, training, and agencies.<sup>12</sup> Questions on respondents' employment status or demographic characteristics were based on those from a study the Schaefer Center recently completed on organizational climate for a Maryland state agency. The final version of the survey is available below.

The survey was drafted and shared with the Blue Ribbon Commission on Ethics and Accountability (BRCEA), the Baltimore County Chief Administrative Officer, and the Baltimore County Inspector General for input and suggested questions prior to its launch.

In June 2022, Baltimore County supplied the Schaefer Center with a list of all employees and members of boards and commissions who are required to file an ethics disclosure. Prior to the opening of the survey, the Baltimore County Chief Administrative Officer distributed a pre-survey alert by email to these individuals. This email went out on July 7, 2022. It told respondents that the Schaefer Center was conducting a survey about ethical experiences and climate in the county and requested their voluntary participation. They were told that responses would be anonymous and individual responses would not be seen by members of the BRCEA or Baltimore County government. They were also provided with email addresses for both county leadership and the Schaefer Center in case email recipients had questions.

A total of 7,667 employees and members of boards and commissions were invited to participate in the survey. The survey was available for responses on July 11-26, 2022. Email requests for participation were sent by the Schaefer Center using the Qualtrics survey software on July 11, 18, and 25. There were 556 emails that bounced back. This number only includes those that bounced

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<sup>12</sup> This survey is available at <https://www2.illinois.gov/eec/Documents/Ethics%20Survey%20Agencies%20Under%20the%20Governor.pdf>.

back on both the first and last email request for participation; if the email address was not associated with a bounce back on both dates, it is assumed the respondent received the email at least once and therefore would have had the opportunity to respond. Most of these bounce backs were because the respondent's email was not authorized to receive external messages (313, or 66.7%) or because the mailbox was disabled from receiving email (128, or 27.3%).

The American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) Response Rate 2 (RR2) is a standard method of calculating survey response rates. It includes the number of complete interviews (or surveys) divided by the number of interviews (complete plus partial) plus the number of non-interviews (refusals, break-offs, plus non-contacts) plus all cases of unknown eligibility. The overall (RR2) was 19.2%.

Of the 1,470 who completed at least one question on the survey, 1,032 (or 70.3%) answered the first question of the last section of the survey (on Demographics). Since these individuals reached the final section of the survey, they would have seen and had the opportunity to answer all of the relevant proceeding questions.

The findings include all responses to a question that were received. Therefore, the number of respondents per question varies because respondents may have opted not to answer a question, or they may not have been shown a question due to their responses to earlier questions.

Respondents were provided with an opportunity near the end of the survey to indicate if they would be interested and willing to speak with the BRCEA about their experiences with suspected ethical misconduct in Baltimore County. Respondents who indicated they would be willing to do so were, at the end of the survey, redirected to a separate survey to record their contact information (since the Ethical Climate Survey responses were anonymous), the topic on which they would be able to speak, and their general availability. There were 105 respondents to the Ethical Climate Survey who indicated their willingness to speak to the BRCEA.

## SURVEY INSTRUMENT

**Q1** The Baltimore County Blue Ribbon Commission on Ethics and Accountability is interested in developing a baseline assessment of the ethical climate among County employees, officials, and members of boards and commissions governed by the County's ethics laws. To support the work of the Commission, the Schaefer Center for Public Policy at the University of Baltimore is conducting this ethics climate survey of County employees, elected officials, and members of

boards and commissions on their knowledge, perceptions and experiences with ethical issues in the workplace.

**Your participation in the survey is voluntary and there is no penalty if you decide not to participate.** If you agree to participate, your responses will be **completely confidential**. Your survey responses will not be stored with your email address, and survey responses will only be reported in aggregate. Survey responses will go directly to the Schaefer Center for Public Policy at The University of Baltimore. In the reporting from this survey, breakdowns by agency or other demographic indicators will only be shown if there are seven or more respondents with that characteristic. This is to prevent readers from potentially identifying individuals.

Please note that you do not have to complete the entire survey in one sitting. You may return to the survey using the email link at any time until July 25, 2022. Your answers will be saved throughout. The survey should take an estimated 20 minutes to complete.

If you have questions about: survey access or technical issues, please contact Michelle Cantave, Survey Research Manager at the Schaefer Center at [mcantave@ubalt.edu](mailto:mcantave@ubalt.edu); or your rights as a survey participant, please contact The University of Baltimore Institutional Review Board at [irb@ubalt.edu](mailto:irb@ubalt.edu) or 410-837-4057.

If you would like to share comments directly with the members of The Baltimore County Blue Ribbon Commission on Ethics and Accountability you may do so by sending an email to [BlueRibbonEthics@ubalt.edu](mailto:BlueRibbonEthics@ubalt.edu) or use the anonymous contact link on the Commission website [www.BlueRibbonEthics.ubalt.edu](http://www.BlueRibbonEthics.ubalt.edu).

Please select below if you agree to participate in this survey.

- ☐ Yes, I agree and want to take the survey.
- ☐ No, I do not agree and do not wish to take the survey.

**Q2** Please specify your role with Baltimore County Government. Please mark all that apply.

- ☐ Appointed Department Head or Deputy
- ☐ Manager
- ☐ Supervisor
- ☐ County employee/staff
- ☐ Elected official
- ☐ Staff to elected official(s)
- ☐ Member of a Baltimore County commission
- ☐ Member of a Baltimore County board

*Display Q3 only if Q2 = "Appointed Department Head or Deputy," "Manager," "Supervisor," or "County employee/staff."*

**Q3** Please identify the County agency you work for:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ▼ 911 Center                                  | ▼ Information Technology                                   |
| ▼ Administrative Hearings                     | ▼ Law  |
| ▼ Aging                                       | ▼ Liquor Board   |
| ▼ BCVFA                                       | ▼ Local Management Board                                   |
| ▼ Board of Appeals                            | ▼ NRCS   |
| ▼ Budget and Finance                          | ▼ Office of the Inspector General                          |
| ▼ Circuit Court                               | ▼ Orphan's Court   |
| ▼ Corrections                                 | ▼ People's Counsel   |
| ▼ County Auditors                             | ▼ Permits, Approvals and Inspections                       |
| ▼ County Council                              | ▼ Planning   |
| ▼ Economic and Workforce Development          | ▼ Police   |
| ▼ Elections                                   | ▼ Property Management                                      |
| ▼ Environmental Protection and Sustainability | ▼ Public Works and Transportation                          |
| ▼ Executive Office                            | ▼ Recreation and Parks                                     |
| ▼ Fire  | ▼ Register of Wills  |
| ▼ Health                                      | ▼ Sheriff's Office   |
| ▼ Housing and Community Development           | ▼ Social Services  |
| ▼ Human Relations                             | ▼ State's Attorney Office                                  |
| ▼ Human Resources                             | ▼ Other (please specify)                                   |
|   | ▼ <i>Display Q4 only if Q3 = "Other (please specify)."</i> |

**Q4** What is the name of the agency you work for?

---

**Q5** To your knowledge, are you required to file an annual financial disclosure with the Baltimore County Ethics Commission?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't Know
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

*Display Q6 = "Manager" or "Supervisor."*

**Q6** How many people do you supervise?

---

*Display Q7 only if Q2 = "Appointed Department Head or Deputy," "Manager," "Supervisor," "County employee/staff," "Elected official," or "Staff to elected official(s)."*

**Q7** Please specify your current primary work location:

- ☐ Workplace office
- ☐ Remote or home
- ☐ Hybrid (workplace office and home/remote)
- ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

*Display Q8 only if Q2 = "Appointed Department Head or Deputy," "Manager," "Supervisor," "County employee/staff," "Elected official," or "Staff to elected official(s)."*

**Q8** How long have you worked in your current position?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 3-5 years
- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

*Display Q9 only if Q2 = "Appointed Department Head or Deputy," "Manager," "Supervisor," "County employee/staff," "Elected official," or "Staff to elected official(s)."*

**Q9** How long have you worked for Baltimore County in your current and any past positions?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 3-5 years
- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

*Display Q10 only if Q2 = "Member of a Baltimore County commission" or "Member of a Baltimore County board."*



**Q10** Please identify the Boards or Commissions you serve on:

- ☐ Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board
- ☐ Board of Appeals
- ☐ Board Of Health
- ☐ Board Of Library Trustees
- ☐ Board Of Liquor License Commissioners
- ☐ Board Of Recreation And Parks
- ☐ Board Of Social Services
- ☐ CCBC Board of Trustees
- ☐ Electrical Administrative Board
- ☐ Ethics Commission
- ☐ Planning Board
- ☐ Plumbing And Gasfitting Board
- ☐ Revenue Authority
- ☐ Workforce Development Board
- ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

*Display Q11 only if Q2 = "Member of a Baltimore County commission" or "Member of a Baltimore County board."*

**Q11** How long have you served as a Board or Commission member?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 3-5 years
- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

**Q12** How familiar are you with the Baltimore County Blue Ribbon Commission on Ethics and Accountability?

- ☐ Very familiar
- ☐ Somewhat familiar
- ☐ Not at all familiar

**Q13** How familiar are you with the Baltimore County Ethics Commission?

- ☐ Very familiar
- ☐ Somewhat familiar
- ☐ Not at all familiar

**Q14** How familiar are you with the Baltimore County Office of Inspector General?

- ☐ Very familiar
- ☐ Somewhat familiar
- ☐ Not at all familiar

**Q15** How familiar are you with the Baltimore County Auditor?

- ☐ Very familiar
- ☐ Somewhat familiar
- ☐ Not at all familiar

**Q16** How familiar are you with County Public Ethics Law – Article 7 of the Baltimore County Code?

- ☐ Very familiar
- ☐ Somewhat familiar
- ☐ Not at all familiar

**Q17** Have you attended Baltimore County Public Ethics Law Training, either in-person or virtually?

- ☐ Yes, within the last year
- ☐ Yes, within the past two years
- ☐ Yes, more than two years ago
- ☐ No, have not attended
- ☐ Don't know or cannot remember

*Display Q18 only if Q17 = "Yes, within the last year," "Yes, within the past two years," or "Yes, more than two years ago."*

**Q18** How useful did you find Baltimore County Public Ethics Law Training with regard to your ability to navigate ethical challenges/issues at work?

- ☐ Very useful
- ☐ Somewhat useful
- ☐ Not at all useful
- ☐ Don't know

**Q19** How useful is the Baltimore County Public Ethics Law in guiding your decisions and conduct in connection to your work?

- ☐ Very useful
- ☐ Somewhat useful
- ☐ Not at all useful
- ☐ Don't know

**Q20** In the past four years, have you ever reported any suspected instances of waste, fraud, abuse or other ethical misconduct in Baltimore County?

- ☐ Yes, reported suspected ethical misconduct
- ☐ Yes, reported suspected fraud, waste, or abuse
- ☐ Yes, reported both ethical misconduct or fraud, waste, or abuse
- ☐ No

*Skip to Q33 if Q20 = "No."*

**Q21** To whom did you report the suspected instances of waste, fraud, abuse or other ethical misconduct in Baltimore County? Please mark all that apply.

- ☐ Baltimore County Ethics Commission
- ☐ Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General
- ☐ Baltimore County Auditor
- ☐ Baltimore County Office of Human Resources
- ☐ Someone in your agency's leadership
- ☐ Your union or bargaining unit
- ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Q22** When did you report any suspected instances of waste, fraud, abuse or other ethical misconduct in Baltimore County? Please mark all that apply.

- ☐ Within the past two years
- ☐ Three to four years ago
- ☐ More than four years ago
- ☐ Don't know/don't remember
- ☐ Prefer not to say

**Q23** How many times have you reported suspected instances of waste, fraud, abuse or other ethical misconduct in Baltimore County?

- ☐ One
- ☐ Two
- ☐ Three or more
- ☐ Prefer not to say

*Carry Forward Selected Choices from Q21.*

**Q24** The rest of the questions in this section concern the most recent report you made about suspected instances of fraud, waste, abuse or other ethical misconduct. Please only respond concerning your most recent reporting experience.

To whom did you report the most recent suspected instance of waste, fraud, abuse or other ethical misconduct in Baltimore County?

- ☐ Baltimore County Ethics Commission
- ☐ Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General
- ☐ Baltimore County Auditor
- ☐ Baltimore County Office of Human Resources
- ☐ Someone in your agency's leadership
- ☐ Your union or bargaining unit
- ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Q25** Did you talk with a lawyer or other legal representative before or after reporting suspected instances of waste, fraud, abuse or other ethical misconduct?

- ☐ Yes, I contacted a personal lawyer
- ☐ Yes, I contacted my union or the union's legal representative
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't remember
- ☐ Prefer not to say

*Display Q26 only if Q25 = "Yes, I contacted a personal lawyer" or "Yes, I contacted my union or the union's legal representative."*

**Q26** How did your legal representation provide assistance? Please mark all that apply.

- ☐ I talked to them before I made my report
- ☐ I talked to them after I made my report
- ☐ They reviewed the report that I provided
- ☐ Prefer not to say

**Q27** Overall, how concerned were you about each of the following groups' reactions to your reporting of suspected instances of waste, fraud, abuse or other ethical misconduct, if such reporting were to become known?

	Very concerned	Concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not at all concerned
My supervisor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My agency head or other agency leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My coworkers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My subordinates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vendors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Elected officials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Baltimore County Board or Commission members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q28** Did your reporting of suspected instances of waste, fraud, abuse or other ethical misconduct become known to your supervisor, agency leadership, coworkers or subordinates?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

*Display Q29 only if Q28 = "Yes."*

**Q29** Did you face retribution or a hostile work environment resulting from your reporting of suspected instances of waste, fraud, abuse or other ethical misconduct?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

*Display Q30 only if Q29 = "Yes."*

**Q30** Who was responsible for the retribution or the hostile environment? Please mark all that apply.

- ☐ My supervisor
- ☐ My agency head or other agency leadership
- ☐ My coworkers
- ☐ My subordinates
- ☐ Vendors
- ☐ Elected officials
- ☐ Baltimore County Board or Commission members
- ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Prefer not to say

**Q31** Were you satisfied with the handling of your reporting of suspected instances of waste, fraud, abuse or other ethical misconduct?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

*Display Q32 only if Q31 = "Yes."*

**Q32** Why were you unsatisfied with the handling of your reporting?

\_\_\_\_\_

*Display Q33 only if Q20 = "No."*

**Q33** The following statements describe how the **Baltimore County Q20Response's** office might handle an employee's report of an ethical concern in the workplace. Please indicate how likely you think each response is.

	Very likely	Likely	Neutral	Unlikely	Very unlikely	Don't know
The office would take the report seriously.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The office would do its best to maintain the privacy of the person making the report.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The office would forward the report to criminal investigators (e.g., the police).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The office would take action to address factors that may have led to the ethical issue.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The office would handle the report fairly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



*Display Q34 only if Q20 = "No" and Q2 = "Appointed Department Head or Deputy," "Manager," "Supervisor," "County employee/staff," "Elected official," or "Staff to elected official(s)."*

**Q34** The following statements are about how you think people in your workplace would react to someone reporting an ethical concern in a County workplace. How likely do you think it would be for each of the following to happen?

	Very likely	Likely	Neutral	Unlikely	Very unlikely	Don't know
People would label the person making the report a troublemaker.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People would have a hard time supporting the person who made the report.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The alleged offender(s) or their colleagues would try to get back at the person making the report.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q35** Have you been involved in an investigation, audit or other evaluation conducted by the Baltimore County Auditor, the Baltimore County Ethics Commission or the Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General? Please mark all that apply.

- ☐ Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Auditor
- ☐ Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Ethics Commission
- ☐ Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

*Display Q36 only if Q35 = "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Auditor."*

**Q36** How many investigations by the **Baltimore County Auditor** have you been involved with?

- ☐ One
- ☐ Two
- ☐ Three or more
- ☐ I don't remember
- ☐ Prefer not to say

*Display Q37 only if Q35 = "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Ethics Commission."*

**Q37** How many investigations by the **Baltimore County Ethics Commission** have you been involved with?

- ☐ One
- ☐ Two
- ☐ Three or more
- ☐ I don't remember
- ☐ Prefer not to say

*Display Q36 only if Q35 = "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General."*

**Q38** How many investigations by the **Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General** have you been involved with?

- ☐ One
- ☐ Two
- ☐ Three or more
- ☐ I don't remember
- ☐ Prefer not to say

*Display Q30 only if Q35 = "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Auditor," "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Ethics Commission," or "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General."*

**Q39** The rest of the questions in this section concern the more recent investigation you participated in. Please only respond concerning your most recent reporting experience.

Which agency was involved with your most recent investigation experience?

*Display this choice only if Q35 = "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Auditor."*

☐ Baltimore County Auditor

*Display this choice only if Q35 = "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Ethics Commission."*

☐ Baltimore County Ethics Commission

*Display this choice only if Q35 = "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General."*

☐ Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General

*Display Q40 only if Q35 = "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Auditor, "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Ethics Commission," or "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General."*

**Q40** How were you involved in the investigation, audit or other evaluation?

- ☐ I was interviewed (either in-person or virtually) by a representative of the Q39Response
- ☐ I provided documentation to the Q39Response
- ☐ I provided written answers to questions (by email, an online portal or other method) to the Q39Response
- ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I don't remember
- ☐ Prefer not to say

*Display Q41 only if Q35 = “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Auditor, “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Ethics Commission,” or “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General.”*

**Q41** Did you receive a subpoena that required your participation in an investigation?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don’t remember
- ☐ Prefer not to say

*Display Q42 only if Q35 = “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Auditor, “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Ethics Commission,” or “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General.”*

**Q42** Did the Q39Response provide you with information on policies or procedures for the investigation?

- ☐ Yes, when they first reached out to me
- ☐ Yes, at the start of an interview or meeting for the investigation
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don’t remember
- ☐ Prefer not to say

*Display Q43 only if Q35 = “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Auditor, “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Ethics Commission,” or “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General.”*

**Q43** Did the Q39Response provide you with information about the subject (topic, entity, or person) of the investigation or audit?

- ☐ Yes, when they first reached out to me
- ☐ Yes, at the start of an interview or meeting for the investigation
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don’t remember
- ☐ Prefer not to say

*Display Q44 only if Q35 = "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Auditor, "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Ethics Commission," or "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General."*

**Q44** Was your supervisor informed that you were part of the investigation, audit or other evaluation?

- ☐ Yes, I told my supervisor
- ☐ Yes, the representative from the Q39Response told me that they told my supervisor
- ☐ Yes, the representative from the Q39Response told me they informed my agency head or other agency leadership
- ☐ Not that I know of
- ☐ I know for sure they did not tell my supervisor
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ I don't remember
- ☐ Prefer not to say

*Display Q45 only if Q35 = "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Auditor, "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Ethics Commission," or "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General."*

**Q45** Did you supervisor or another agency representative tell you what you should say to the Q39Response?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't remember
- ☐ Prefer not to say

*Display Q46 only if Q45 = "Yes."*

**Q46** How did they tell you to interact with the office?

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*Display Q47 only if Q35 = "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Auditor, "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Ethics Commission," or "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General."*

**Q47** Did the Q39Response inform you of your rights with regard to the investigation?

- ☐ Yes, when they first reached out to me
- ☐ Yes, at the start of an interview or meeting for the investigation
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't remember
- ☐ Prefer not to say

*Display Q48 only if Q35 = "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Auditor, "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Ethics Commission," or "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General."*

**Q48** Did you contact legal representation about your involvement with the investigation?

- ☐ Yes, I contacted a personal lawyer
- ☐ Yes, I contacted my union or the union's legal representative
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

*Display Q49 only if Q48 = “Yes, I contacted a personal lawyer” or “Yes, I contacted my union or the union’s legal representative.”*

**Q49** What did your legal representation do during your involvement with the investigation?  
Please mark all that apply.

- ☐ A lawyer or other representative attended my interview(s) with the Q39Response
- ☐ A lawyer or other representative reviewed or provided guidance on a request for documents from the Q39Response
- ☐ A lawyer or other representative reviewed or provided guidance on my written correspondence with the Q39Response
- ☐ I talked to the lawyer when I was first contacted by the Q39Response but they were not active during my involvement with the investigation(s)
- ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I don’t remember
- ☐ Prefer not to say

*Display Q50 only if Q35 = “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Auditor, “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Ethics Commission,” or “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General.”*

**Q50** How would you characterize your interactions with representatives from the Q39Response?

- ☐ Very comfortable
- ☐ Somewhat comfortable
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat uncomfortable
- ☐ Very uncomfortable
- ☐ I don’t remember
- ☐ Prefer not to say

*Display Q51 only if Q35 = “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Auditor, “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Ethics Commission,” or “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General.”*

Q51 Would you characterize the representatives from the Q39Response as

	Yes	No	Don't Remember	Prefer not to say
Knowledgeable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prepared	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*Display Q52 only if Q35 = “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Auditor, “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Ethics Commission,” or “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General.”*

**Q52** Did you feel threatened or physically intimidated during your interactions with the representatives from the Q39Response?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

*Display Q53 only if Q52 = “Yes.”*

**Q53** Did a representative from the Q39Response verbally threaten or otherwise intimidate you during your interactions with them?

- ☐ Yes, I was verbally threatened or physically intimidated
- ☐ No, I was not verbally threatened or physically intimidated

*Display Q54 only if Q35 = “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Auditor, “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Ethics Commission,” or “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General.”*



**Q54** Were you concerned about each of the following groups' reactions to your involvement in the investigation, audit or other evaluation?

	Very concerned	Concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not at all concerned	Don't remember	Prefer not to say
My supervisor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My agency head or other agency leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My coworkers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My subordinates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vendors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Elected officials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Baltimore County Board or Commission members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*Display Q55 only if Q35 = "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Auditor, "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Ethics Commission," or "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General."*

Q55 Were you told when the investigation was completed and the results or findings?

- ☐ Yes, the Q39Response informed me
- ☐ Yes, my supervisor or agency leadership told me
- ☐ No, I had to look for the report myself
- ☐ No, and I was not interested in the results
- ☐ I don't remember
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Not applicable

*Display Q56 only if Q35 = "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Auditor, "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Ethics Commission," or "Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General."*

**Q56** Did you face retribution or a hostile work environment resulting from your participation in the investigation?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't remember
- ☐ Prefer not to say

*Display Q57 only if Q56 = "Yes."*

**Q57** Who was responsible for the retribution or the hostile environment? Please check all that apply.

- ☐ My supervisor
- ☐ My agency head or other agency leadership
- ☐ My coworkers
- ☐ My subordinates
- ☐ Vendors
- ☐ Elected officials
- ☐ Baltimore County Board or Commission members
- ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I don't remember
- ☐ Prefer not to say

*Display Q58 only if Q35 = “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Auditor, “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Ethics Commission,” or “Yes, an investigation by the Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General.”*

**Q58** Is there anything else you would like us to know about your experience with the Q39Response?

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**Q59** The questions in this section refer to times when you confronted ethical issues while working in the Baltimore County government. These issues concern behavior or actions by your coworkers, supervisors, subordinates, volunteers, vendors, or others or that you yourself engaged in. These issues may have ultimately led to your reporting an instance of ethical misconduct or a criminal complaint, but the questions do not concern that reporting experience.

As a reminder, this information is collected confidentially. Your survey responses will not be stored with your email address, and survey responses will only be reported in aggregate.

What are the three most difficult ethics issues that you have faced in your work in Baltimore County in the last four years?

Issue 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Issue 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Issue 3 \_\_\_\_\_

**Q60** Thinking about the most recent ethical issue you have faced in your work in Baltimore County in the last four years, did you seek advice regarding this issue?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Did not face any ethical issues in the last four years
- ☐ Prefer not to say

*Skip to Q69 only if Q60 = “Did not face any ethical issues in the last four years.”*

*Display Q61 only if Q60 = “Yes.”*

**Q61** Who did you consult for advice? Mark all that apply.

- ☐ Baltimore County Auditor Fraud Line
- ☐ Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General
- ☐ Baltimore County Ethics Commission
- ☐ Baltimore County Office of Human Resources
- ☐ Supervisor or other management within your agency
- ☐ Coworker(s) in your agency
- ☐ Worker(s) in another County agency
- ☐ Other professional contacts outside County employment
- ☐ Professional association
- ☐ Union or bargaining unit
- ☐ Private attorney
- ☐ Friends or family
- ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

*Display Q62 only if Q 61 = "Baltimore County Auditor Fraud Line."*

**Q62** How helpful was the Baltimore County Auditor Fraud Line?

- ☐ Very helpful
- ☐ Somewhat helpful
- ☐ Not at all helpful

*Display Q63 only if Q 61 = "Baltimore County Auditor Office of the Inspector General."*

**Q63** How helpful was the Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General?

- ☐ Very helpful
- ☐ Somewhat helpful
- ☐ Not at all helpful

*Display Q64 only if Q 61 = "Baltimore County Ethics Commission."*

**Q64** How helpful was the Baltimore County Ethics Commission?

- ☐ Very helpful
- ☐ Somewhat helpful
- ☐ Not at all helpful

*Display Q65 only if Q61 does not include “Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General,” “Baltimore County Auditor Fraud Line,” or “Baltimore County Ethics Commission” and if Q60 = “Yes.”*

**Q65** Why didn’t you consult the Baltimore County Office of the Inspector General, Auditor Fraud Line, or Ethics Commission? Mark all that apply.

- ☐ I was not aware those offices exist
- ☐ I do not know how to contact those offices
- ☐ I was not confident that I would receive useful advice
- ☐ I was not confident that they would maintain my privacy
- ☐ I was afraid I would get into trouble
- ☐ I was confident I could handle the issue myself
- ☐ I have had bad previous experiences with public ethics individuals or issues
- ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

*Display Q66 only if Q60 = “Yes.”*

**Q66** Were your ethical concerns resolved?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

*Skip to Q69 only if Q66 = “Yes.”*

*Display Q67 only if Q66 = “No.”*

**Q67** Have you sought assistance for any other ethical issues beyond the most recent ethical issue you’ve encountered?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

*Display Q68 only if Q60 = “Prefer not to say” or Q67 = “Prefer not to say.”*

**Q68** What influenced your decision to select “prefer not to say”? Mark all that apply.

- ☐ I feel embarrassed or ashamed.
- ☐ It is a private matter; I wanted to deal with it on my own.
- ☐ I am concerned my answer will be traced back to me.
- ☐ I wanted to forget it happened.
- ☐ I have had bad previous experiences with public ethics individuals or issues
- ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Prefer not to say

*Display Q69 only if Q2 = “Appointed Department Head or Deputy,” “Manager,” “Supervisor,” or “County employee/staff.”*

**Q69** Please mark the response indicating your level of agreement with each of the statements based on your experience, opinions, or perceptions.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Supervisors at my agency include discussions of ethics when talking with their employees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This agency follows up on ethical concerns that are reported by employees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our agency leadership cares more about getting the job done than about ethics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This agency practices what it preaches when it comes to ethics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees in this agency feel comfortable talking about ethics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You can ignore ethics and still get ahead in this agency.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leadership of this agency regularly shows that it cares about ethics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Senior officials in this agency are less likely to be disciplined for violating ethical standards than other employees.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

If ethics concerns are reported to the agency, action is taken to resolve them.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

Supervisors at my work location usually do not pay attention to ethics.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

This agency makes a serious attempt to detect violations of ethics standards.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

Employees who are caught violating ethics are disciplined.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

Employees in the agency openly discuss the ethics of their decisions and actions.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

*Display Q70 only if Q2 = "Appointed Department Head or Deputy," "Manager," "Supervisor," or "County employee/staff."*



**Q70** Please mark the response indicating your level of agreement with each of the statements based on your experience, opinions, or perceptions.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Ethics rules and agency practices are consistent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees in this agency are expected to do as they are told, no matter what.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees at all levels in this agency are held accountable for adhering to ethical standards.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees in the agency recognize ethics issues when they arise.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees seek advice within this agency when ethics issues arise.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees are comfortable delivering bad news to their supervisors.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees here make decisions that comply with ethics policies because of the ethics program that is in place.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Employees can talk with supervisors about problems without fear of having their comments held against them.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

I would feel comfortable reporting ethics violations.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

When ethical issues arise, employees look for advice within the agency.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

Employees in this agency do not recognize ethics issues that come up at work.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

Employees who report misconduct are not retaliated against.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

*Display Q71 only if Q2 = "Member of a Baltimore County commission" or "Member of a Baltimore County board."*

**Q71** Please mark the response indicating your level of agreement with each of the statements based on your experience, opinions, or perceptions.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Leadership on this board or commission includes discussions of ethics when talking with their members.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Board or commission leadership follows up on ethical concerns that are reported by members.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our leadership cares more about getting the job done than about ethics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This board or commission practices what it preaches when it comes to ethics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees on this board or commission feel comfortable talking about ethics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You can ignore ethics and still get ahead on this board or commission.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leadership of this board or commission regularly shows that it cares about ethics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Senior members on this board or commission are less likely to be disciplined for violating ethical standards than other members.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

If ethics concerns are reported to board or commission leadership, action is taken to resolve them.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

Board or commission leadership usually does not pay attention to ethics.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

This board or commission makes a serious attempt to detect violations of ethics standards.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

Members who are caught violating ethics are disciplined.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

Members of this board or commission openly discuss the ethics of their decisions and actions.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

*Display Q72 only if Q2 = "Member of a Baltimore County commission" or "Member of a Baltimore County board."*

**Q72** Please mark the response indicating your level of agreement with each of the statements based on your experience, opinions, or perceptions.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Ethics rules and board or commission practices are consistent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Members of this board or commission are expected to do as they are told, no matter what.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Members of this board or commission are held accountable for adhering to ethical standards.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Members of this board or commission recognize ethics issues when they arise.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Members of this board or commission seek advice within this board or commission when ethics issues arise.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Members of this board or commission are comfortable delivering bad news to leadership.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Members of this board or commission here make decisions that comply with ethics policies because of the ethics program that is in place.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

Members of this board or commission can talk with leadership about problems without fear of having their comments held against them.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

I would feel comfortable reporting ethics violations.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

When ethical issues arise, members of this board or commission look for advice within the board or commission.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

Members of this board or commission do not recognize ethics issues that come up at work.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

Members of this board or commission who report misconduct are not retaliated against.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

*Display Q73 only if Q2 = "Elected official" or "Staff to elected official(s)."*

**Q73** In your opinion, how often, if at all, do these types of conduct occur at your office?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Supervisors in my office include discussions of ethics when talking with their employees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This office follows up on ethical concerns that are reported by employees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leadership in this office cares more about getting the job done than about ethics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This office practices what it preaches when it comes to ethics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees in this office feel comfortable talking about ethics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You can ignore ethics and still get ahead in this office.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leadership of this office regularly shows that it cares about ethics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Senior officials in this office are less likely to be disciplined for violating ethical standards than other employees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If ethics concerns are reported to the office, action is taken to resolve them.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

Supervisors at my work location usually do not pay attention to ethics.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

This office makes a serious attempt to detect violations of ethics standards.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

Employees who are caught violating ethics are disciplined.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

Employees in the office openly discuss the ethics of their decisions and actions.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

*Display Q73 only if Q2 = "Elected official" or "Staff to elected official(s)."*



**Q74** In your opinion, how often, if at all, do these types of conduct occur at your office?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Ethics rules and office practices are consistent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees in this office are expected to do as they are told, no matter what.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees at all levels in this office are held accountable for adhering to ethical standards.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees in the office recognize ethics issues when they arise.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees seek advice within this office when ethics issues arise.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees in this office are comfortable delivering bad news to their supervisors.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees here make decisions that comply with ethics policies because of the ethics program that is in place.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees can talk with supervisors about problems without fear of having their comments held against them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I would feel comfortable reporting ethics violations.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

When ethical issues arise, employees look for advice within the office.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

Employees in this office do not recognize ethics issues that come up at work.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

Employees who report misconduct are not retaliated against.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

**Q75** In your opinion, how often, if at all, do these types of conduct occur?

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently	Don't know
Baltimore County government employees improperly accept gifts given to them because of where they work or what they do in their government.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Baltimore County government employees misuse government property, time, or resources for inappropriate political activity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Baltimore County government employees improperly benefit financially from work they do for the government.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Baltimore County government employees misuse government property.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Baltimore County government employees misuse government positions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Baltimore County government employees misuse official time.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

Baltimore County government employees improperly accept payment for doing their government jobs from people outside of government.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

Baltimore County government employees engage in inappropriate political activity during official time.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

**Q76** In your opinion, what, if anything, would further assist employees to act ethically in connection with their work?

---

**Q77** In your opinion, what, if anything, makes it difficult for employees to comply with ethics policies?

---

**Q78** Is there anything else you would like to share with regard to the ethics climate, reporting ethical misconduct or waste, fraud or misuse of County resources, or participating in an investigation by the Baltimore County Auditor, Ethics Commission, or Office of Inspector General? If yes, please provide your comments below.

---

*Display Q79 only if Q20 does not equal "No" or Q35 does not equal "No" or "I don't know."*

**Q79** The Commission may interview Baltimore County employees, elected officials and members of Boards and Commissions about their experiences reporting ethical misconduct or fraud, waste and abuse or being investigated by the Ethics Commission or Office of Inspector General.

Would you be interested and willing to speak about your experiences? If you respond yes, you will be taken to a separate survey to provide contact information. Your responses there will not be linked to your answers to this survey.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**Q80** Please select your gender.

- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Man
- ☐ Trans Woman
- ☐ Trans Man
- ☐ Genderqueer, gender non-binary, or gender non-conforming
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

**Q81** Please select the option that reflects your age range:

- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ 65 or older
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

**Q82** Please select the option that best describes your race:

- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- ☐ White or Caucasian
- ☐ Two or more races
- ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

**Q83** Are you of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

**Q84** Please select your highest complete level of education:

- ☐ Some high school
- ☐ High school diploma/GED
- ☐ Some college
- ☐ College degree
- ☐ Terminal Master's degree (such as M.A. or M.S.)
- ☐ Doctoral/Professional degree (such as Ph.D., J.D., M.D., or Psy.D.)
- ☐ Other (other specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

*Display Q85 only if Q79 = "Yes."*

**Q85** Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your responses have been recorded. The report of the results of this survey will be shared with the Blue Ribbon Commission on Ethics and Accountability and will be posted on the Commission's website.

You will now be taken to a separate survey to provide contact information. Your responses there will not be linked to your answers to this survey.

If you would like to contact the Commission, please email [BlueRibbonEthics@ubalt.edu](mailto:BlueRibbonEthics@ubalt.edu) or use [this form](#) to contact the Commission anonymously.

*Display Q85 only if Q79 = "Yes."*

**Q86** Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your responses have been recorded. The report of the results of this survey will be shared with the Blue Ribbon Commission on Ethics and Accountability and will be posted on the Commission's website.

If you would like to contact the Commission, please email [BlueRibbonEthics@ubalt.edu](mailto:BlueRibbonEthics@ubalt.edu) or use [this form](#) to contact the Commission anonymously.

## APPENDIX B: SURVEY RESPONDENTS' DEMOGRAPHICS

Below is information on the respondents for this survey, including whether they were Baltimore County employees or members of boards or commissions, other general characteristics of their tenure with the county, and basic demographics such as gender, age, race, and ethnicity.

### RESPONDENTS BY AFFILIATION AND WORK CHARACTERISTICS

Of the 1,470 people who agreed to take the survey, almost all were employees of Baltimore County. Specifically, these were employees who identified as working in an agency rather than identifying as an elected official or staff of an elected official or members of boards or commissions. As shown in Table 3, just over 1,400 of the respondents (95%) identified as an employee or leadership in a county agency, while 20 individuals identified as elected officials or staff to elected officials (1%) and 32 individuals were members of a board or commission (2%). Approximately 1% of respondents did not identify their affiliation with the county, while less than 1% were identified as belonging to two or all of the affiliations (for example, as an agency employee and a member of a board and commission). Since fewer than seven respondents indicated they were both employees and a member of a board or commission, further information is not provided on them alone to maintain their confidentiality.

**Table 3: General Affiliation of Survey Respondents**

	Number of Respondents	Percent of All Respondents
Agency employees	1,402	95%
Members of boards and commissions	32	2%
Elected officials or staff	20	1%
Did not indicate affiliation	22	1%
Total respondents	1,470	100%

*Note: Respondents could choose more than one option. Individuals who identified as an elected official or their staff were not included in the count of agency employees.*

Respondents who worked for Baltimore County were asked to identify the agency for which they worked. The Baltimore County Police Department had the largest share of respondents, with 308 people (21%) saying they worked for that agency (Table 4). The second largest group of respondents was from the Health Department (191, 13%), followed by the Fire Department (179, 12%) and Public Works and Transportation (125, 9%). Just over 400 respondents identified as a manager or supervisor, and the median number of employees supervised was eight. Over half of employees identified their current work location as a workplace office (879, 60%), while 312 said they were in a hybrid work environment (21%) and 43 said they primarily worked remotely or at



home (3%). Many of those who said they worked in an *Other* location said they worked “in the field” or similar.

**Table 4: Agency Affiliation of Survey Respondents Who Were County Employees**

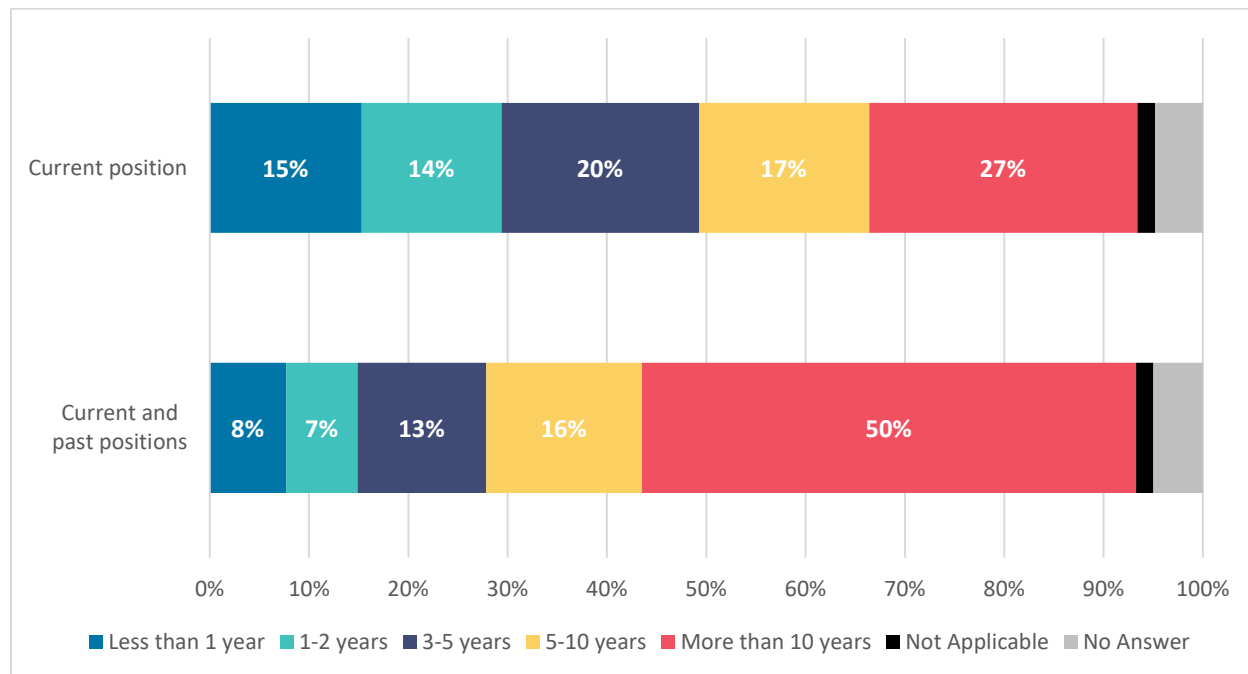
	Number of Respondents	Percent of All Respondents
Police	308	21%
Health	191	13%
Fire	179	12%
Public Works and Transportation	125	9%
Aging	69	5%
Corrections	55	4%
Recreation and Parks	55	4%
Information Technology	47	3%
Budget and Finance	45	3%
Property Management	39	3%
Environmental Protection and Sustainability	31	2%
911 Center	30	2%
Permits, Approvals and Inspections	30	2%
Housing and Community Development	27	2%
Economic and Workforce Development	23	2%
Human Resources	22	1%
Other (specify)	22	1%
Planning	19	1%
Executive Office	15	1%
Law	14	1%
Sheriff's Office	9	1%
State's Attorney's Office	8	1%
Other	27	2%
No answer or not applicable	80	5%
Total respondents	1,470	101%

*Notes: Other includes all respondents who worked for agencies with fewer than seven respondents; these respondents are grouped to maintain their confidentiality. Agencies on this list include individuals who work in elected offices, as employees in these offices include civil servants who are not elected. Total equals 101% due to rounding.*

Survey respondents generally had long-term experience working in Baltimore County, with over one-quarter of respondents (27%) saying they had been in their current position for more than 10 years (Figure 44). Only 15% said they had been in their position less than one year. When asked about their time in both their current and other past positions in Baltimore County, this percentage dropped to 8%, while half of respondents had worked more than 10 years in the

county. Of board and commission members who identified their tenure with the county, fewer than 6% had served less than one year, while 16% served more than 10 years.

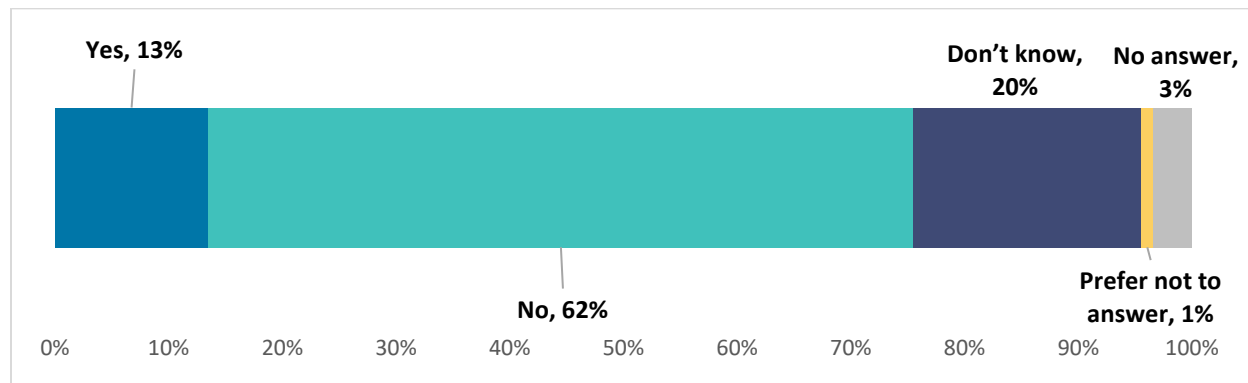
**Figure 44: Employment Tenure with Current Affiliation and with Baltimore County in General**



Note: N = 1,470.

Individuals who work for Baltimore County or serve on a board or commission and meet certain income thresholds need to file an annual financial disclosure. The majority of respondents (912, 62%) said they were not required to file such a disclosure, while 198 respondents (13%) said they were (Figure 45). Presumably, the 20% of respondents who said they did not know if they had to file an annual disclosure are not actually required to do so or are new to county employment.

**Figure 45: Respondents Required to File Annual Financial Disclosure**

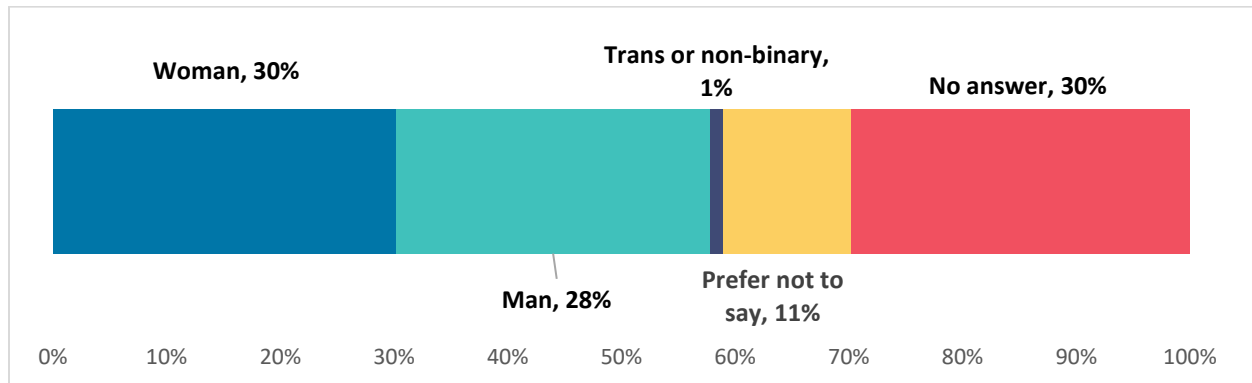


Note: N = 1,470.

## RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

More women (444 respondents, or 30%) than men (405 respondents, or 28%) responded to the survey (Figure 46). There were 165 respondents (11%) who preferred not to provide their gender and 18 respondents (1%) who indicated they were trans woman, trans man, genderqueer, gender non-binary, or gender non-conforming or preferred to self-describe.

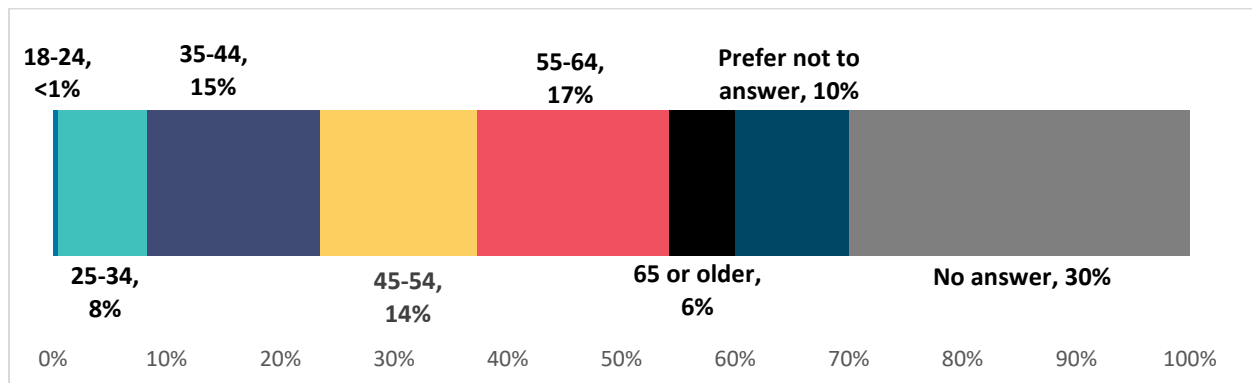
**Figure 46: Respondents by Gender**



Note: N = 1,470.

Respondents to the survey were generally middle age, with three different age groups (35-44, 45-54, and 55-64) each comprising between 14%-17% of respondents (Figure 47). Less than 10% of respondents were below age 35, and 6% were 65 years or older.

**Figure 47: Respondents by Age**

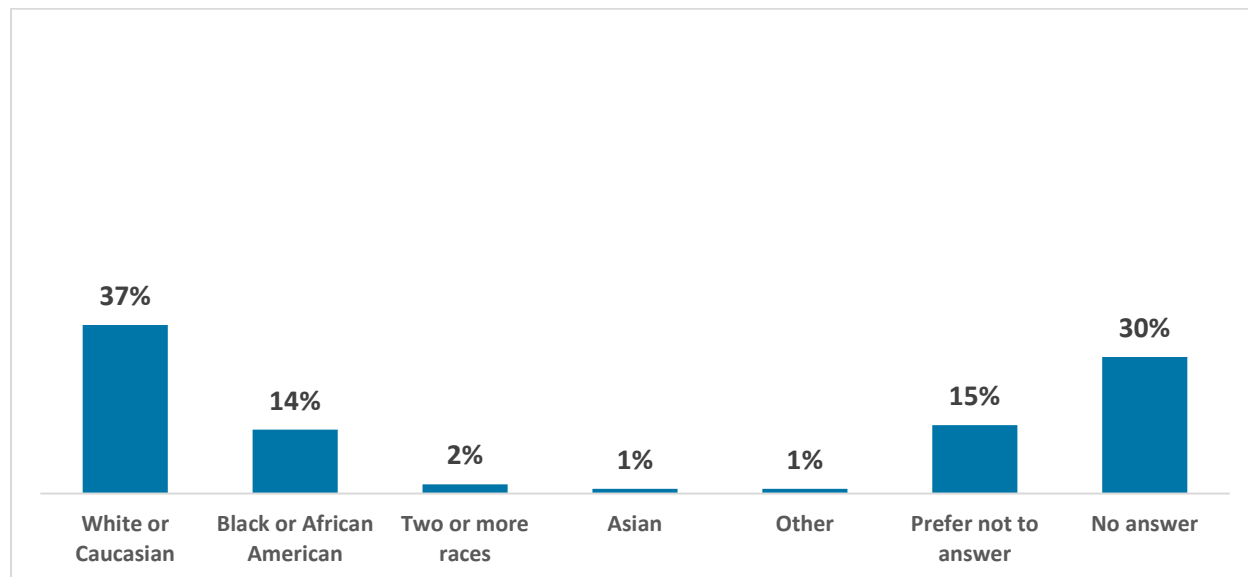


Note: N = 1,470.

As shown in Figure 48, the largest share of those who provided their race identified as White or Caucasian (542 respondents, 37%) followed by those who identified as Black or African American (208 respondents, 14%). However, almost half of respondents either did not provide their race (30%) or said they preferred not to answer (15%). Over half of respondents indicated they were

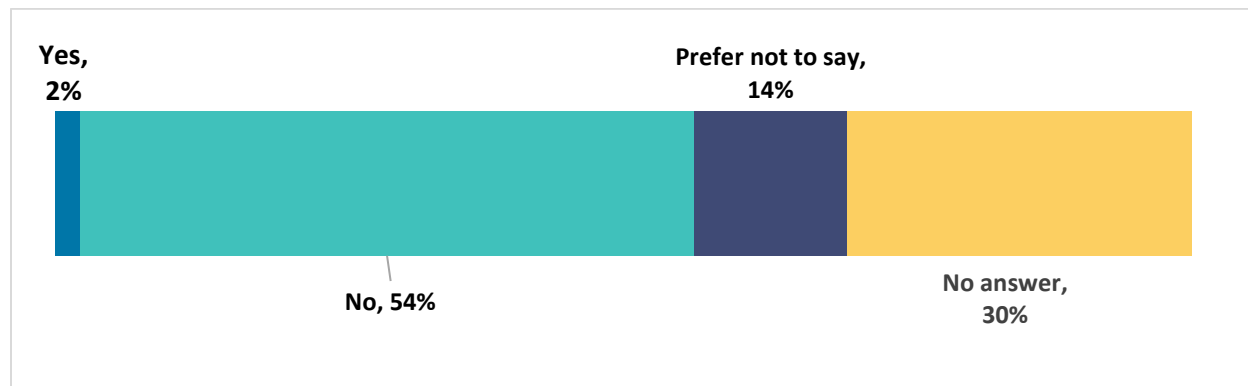
not Hispanic (794 respondents), while 32 respondents said they were Hispanic (2%) and 44% preferred not to say or did not answer the question.

**Figure 48: Respondents by Race**



Note: N = 1,470.

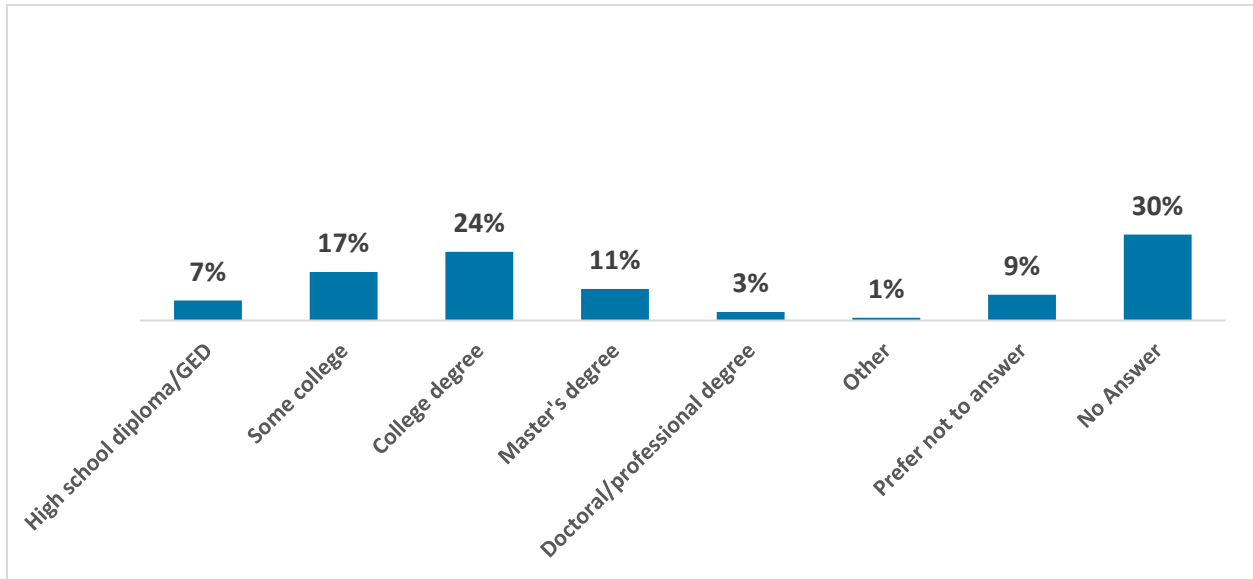
**Figure 49: Respondents by Ethnicity**



Note: N = 1,470.

One-quarter of respondents (351 respondents) said they held a college degree, while another 17% said they had some college education (Figure 50). Just over 100 respondents had a high school diploma or GED (7%), while almost 15% had a Master's, Doctoral or other professional degree.

**Figure 50: Respondents by Education**



*Note: N = 1,470.*

## APPENDIX C: RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT HOW COMPLAINTS WOULD BE HANDLED

**Table 5: Respondents' Perceptions about How Complaints Would Be Handled**

	Very likely	Likely	Neutral	Unlikely	Very unlikely	Don't know	No Answer
<b>OIG</b>							
Take the report seriously	399	344	154	26	20	195	120
	32%	27%	12%	2%	2%	16%	10%
Address factors that led to issue	310	348	200	44	28	205	123
	25%	28%	16%	3%	2%	16%	10%
Maintain privacy	322	328	189	54	32	210	123
	26%	26%	15%	4%	3%	17%	10%
Handle report fairly	306	318	218	49	39	204	124
	24%	25%	17%	4%	3%	16%	10%
Forward report to investigators	265	307	226	41	23	274	122
	21%	24%	18%	3%	2%	22%	10%
<b>Ethics Commission</b>							
Take the report seriously	360	369	163	56	31	180	99
	29%	29%	13%	4%	2%	14%	8%
Address factors that led to issue	301	355	202	65	51	186	98
	24%	28%	16%	5%	4%	15%	8%
Maintain privacy	308	340	200	73	46	192	99
	24%	27%	16%	6%	4%	15%	8%
Handle report fairly	272	338	231	69	57	193	98
	22%	27%	18%	5%	5%	15%	8%
Forward report to investigators	252	289	245	65	47	261	99
	20%	23%	19%	5%	4%	21%	8%
<b>Auditor</b>							
Take the report seriously	355	369	169	48	39	216	62
	28%	29%	13%	4%	3%	17%	5%
Address factors that led to issue	288	358	219	69	48	213	63
	23%	28%	17%	5%	4%	17%	5%
Maintain privacy	301	340	206	72	55	223	61
	24%	27%	16%	6%	4%	18%	5%
Handle report fairly	262	332	266	62	59	214	63
	21%	26%	21%	5%	5%	17%	5%
Forward report to investigators	243	298	259	65	40	289	64
	19%	24%	21%	5%	3%	23%	5%

## APPENDIX D: ETHICAL ISSUES EXPERIENCED BY RESPONDENTS IN PRIOR FOUR YEARS

**Table 6: Ethical Issues Encountered by Survey Respondents in Prior Four Years**

Category	Number of Mentions
<b>Working conditions</b>	<b>289</b>
Bullying, harassment, or a hostile workplace	82
Issues with co-workers	29
Compensation and benefits	25
Concerns about confidentiality and privacy	25
Unclear or unsafe boundaries and expectations	21
Issues with administration and leadership	20
Promotions and growth opportunities	19
Staffing and scheduling	16
COVID-19	11
General	11
Work outside job description	10
Other	20
<b>Conflict of interest</b>	<b>281</b>
Nepotism and Favoritism	151
Bribery	71
General	17
Misuse of Position	17
Non-Bribery Vendor Interactions	16
Other	9
<b>Discrimination</b>	<b>132</b>
Race or ethnicity	52
Complaints about diversity	30
General	25
Sex or gender	15
Other	10
<b>Abuse of authority</b>	<b>130</b>
Supervisors abusing their position	63
Retaliation or intimidation	39
County leadership	23
Other	5
<b>Lack of accountability</b>	<b>120</b>
General	39
County leadership	30
Supervisors and managers	25
Staff, employees, and volunteers	13
Police	11
Other	2

Category	Number of Mentions
<b>Fraud and waste</b>	<b>108</b>
Time-related fraud	32
Wasteful spending and misuse of funds	22
Procurement and reimbursement	13
General	8
Other	33
<b>Other</b>	<b>45</b>

Note: N = 174



## APPENDIX E: RESPONSES ON ETHICAL CLIMATE IN THE WORKPLACE BY WORKPLACE

**Table 7: Responses on Ethical Climate Statements – All Respondents**

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Don't Know	No Answer	Average Score
<i>Positive statements</i>								
(Employees/Members of this board or commission/Employees) seek advice within this agency when ethics issues arise.	94 12%	287 35%	281 35%	112 14%	38 5%	222 N/A	449 N/A	2.6
(Employees in the agency/Members of this board or commission/Employees in this office) recognize ethics issues when they arise.	103 12%	350 40%	291 33%	106 12%	35 4%	149 N/A	449 N/A	2.6
I would feel comfortable reporting ethics violations.	185 19%	361 37%	210 22%	131 14%	82 8%	64 N/A	450 N/A	2.6
(Supervisors at my agency/Leadership on this board or commission/Supervisors in my office) include discussions of ethics when talking with their (employees/members/employees).	139 14%	331 34%	267 27%	150 15%	95 10%	109 N/A	392 N/A	2.7
When ethical issues arise, (employees/members of this board or commission/employees) look for advice within the (agency/board or commission/office).	90 11%	322 39%	234 28%	125 15%	61 7%	203 N/A	448 N/A	2.7
(This agency/Board or commission leadership/This office) follows up on ethical concerns that are reported by (employees/members/employees).	140 17%	279 33%	238 28%	107 13%	84 10%	242 N/A	393 N/A	2.7
(Employees/Members/Employees) who are caught violating ethics are disciplined.	120 15%	275 34%	259 32%	104 13%	62 8%	268 N/A	395 N/A	2.7
(Employees/Members of this board or commission/Employees) can talk with (supervisors/leadership/supervisors) about problems without fear of having their comments held against them.	118 13%	314 33%	230 24%	156 17%	122 13%	93 N/A	450 N/A	2.8
(Employees/Members of this board or commission/Employees) here make decisions that comply with ethics policies because of the ethics program that is in place.	73 9%	249 29%	321 38%	147 17%	56 7%	186 N/A	451 N/A	2.8
(Employees at all levels in this agency/Members of this board or commission/Employees at all levels in this office) are held accountable for adhering to ethical standards.	129 14%	288 31%	228 25%	161 17%	117 13%	111 N/A	449 N/A	2.8
This (agency/board or commission/office) makes a serious attempt to detect violations of ethics standards.	121 13%	241 27%	310 34%	150 17%	86 9%	181 N/A	394 N/A	2.8

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Don't Know	No Answer	Average Score
Leadership of this (agency/board or commission/office) regularly shows that it cares about ethics.	155 16%	288 29%	269 27%	163 16%	124 12%	90 N/A	394 N/A	2.8
If ethics concerns are reported to (the agency/board or commission leadership/the office), action is taken to resolve them.	123 15%	243 29%	272 32%	128 15%	80 9%	239 N/A	398 N/A	2.8
Employees (in this agency/on this board or commission/in this office) feel comfortable talking about ethics.	120 12%	257 27%	290 30%	180 19%	116 12%	124 N/A	396 N/A	2.9
(Employees/Members of this board or commission/Employees) are comfortable delivering bad news to their supervisors.	91 10%	298 33%	230 26%	189 21%	93 10%	128 N/A	454 N/A	2.9
Ethics rules and (agency/board or commission/office) practices are consistent.	111 12%	268 29%	248 27%	196 21%	92 10%	121 N/A	447 N/A	2.9
This (agency/board or commission/office) practices what it preaches when it comes to ethics.	147 15%	260 26%	297 30%	146 15%	136 14%	105 N/A	392 N/A	2.9
(Employees in the agency/Members of this board or commission/Employees) openly discuss the ethics of their decisions and actions.	75 8%	190 21%	372 41%	193 21%	74 8%	182 N/A	397 N/A	3.0
(Employees/Members of this board or commission/Employees) who report misconduct are not retaliated against.	93 12%	195 25%	247 32%	148 19%	100 13%	251 N/A	449 N/A	3.0
<b>Negative statements</b>								
(Employees in this agency/Members of this board or commission/Employees in this office) are expected to do as they are told, no matter what.	151 16%	284 30%	239 25%	214 22%	64 7%	83 N/A	448 N/A	2.7
Senior (officials in this agency/members on this board or commission/officials in this office) are less likely to be disciplined for violating ethical standards than other (employees/members/employees).	210 23%	208 23%	199 22%	171 19%	121 13%	180 N/A	394 N/A	2.8
You can ignore ethics and still get ahead (in this agency/on this board or commission/in this office).	133 13%	183 19%	202 20%	277 28%	193 20%	103 N/A	392 N/A	3.2
(Our agency leadership/Our leadership/Leadership in this office) cares more about getting the job done than about ethics.	128 13%	201 20%	250 25%	242 24%	184 18%	86 N/A	392 N/A	3.2
(Employees in this agency/Members of this board or commission/Employees in this office) do not recognize ethics issues that come up at work.	36 4%	108 12%	306 35%	309 36%	109 13%	165 N/A	450 N/A	3.4
	50	103	251	337	236	102	404	3.6

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Don't Know	No Answer	Average Score
(Supervisors at my work location/Board or commission leadership/Supervisors at my work location) usually do not pay attention to ethics.	5%	11%	26%	34%	24%	N/A	N/A	

*Notes: The average score excludes the "Don't Know" and "No Answer" responses. The total number of responses to each statement, which includes "Don't Know" and "No Answer" categories, is 1,483 because some respondents identified as belonging to two or all affiliations. For example, a respondent may have identified as an agency employee and a member of a board and commission.*

**Table 8: Responses on Ethical Climate Statements – Regular Employees Only**

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Don't know	No answer	Average score
<i>Positive statements</i>								
Employees seek advice within this agency when ethics issues arise.	80	276	278	111	38	220	408	2.7
	10%	35%	36%	14%	5%	N/A	N/A	
Employees recognize ethics issues when they arise.	88	340	290	105	35	145	408	2.6
	10%	40%	34%	12%	4%	N/A	N/A	
I would feel comfortable reporting ethics violations.	168	350	208	131	82	63	409	2.6
	18%	37%	22%	14%	9%	N/A	N/A	
Supervisors include discussions of ethics when talking with their employees.	127	320	265	147	93	107	352	2.7
	13%	34%	28%	15%	10%	N/A	N/A	
When ethical issues arise, employees look for advice within the agency.	81	310	231	124	61	197	407	2.7
	10%	38%	29%	15%	8%	N/A	N/A	
This agency follows up on ethical concerns that are reported by employees.	128	271	236	106	84	233	353	2.7
	16%	33%	29%	13%	10%	N/A	N/A	
Employees who are caught violating ethics are disciplined.	114	269	254	103	61	255	355	2.7
	14%	34%	32%	13%	8%	N/A	N/A	
Employees can talk with supervisors about problems without fear of having their comments held against them.	103	305	229	155	120	90	409	2.9
	11%	33%	25%	17%	13%	N/A	N/A	
Employees here make decisions that comply with ethics policies because of the ethics program that is in place.	63	236	318	144	56	184	410	2.9
	8%	29%	39%	18%	7%	N/A	N/A	
Employees at all levels in this agency are held accountable for adhering to ethical standards.	114	278	224	160	117	110	408	2.9
	13%	31%	25%	18%	13%	N/A	N/A	
This agency makes a serious attempt to detect violations of ethics standards.	109	232	306	148	85	177	354	2.9
	12%	26%	35%	17%	10%	N/A	N/A	
Leadership of this agency regularly shows that it cares about ethics.	134	284	265	161	124	89	354	2.9
	14%	29%	27%	17%	13%	N/A	N/A	
If ethics concerns are reported to the agency, action is taken to resolve them.	110	237	270	125	80	232	357	2.8
	13%	29%	33%	15%	10%	N/A	N/A	
Employees in this agency feel comfortable talking about ethics.	106	246	288	178	115	122	356	2.9
	11%	26%	31%	19%	12%	N/A	N/A	

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Don't know	No answer	Average score
Employees are comfortable delivering bad news to their supervisors.	78 9%	285 33%	228 26%	188 22%	93 11%	126 N/A	413 N/A	2.9
Ethics rules and agency practices are consistent.	96 11%	257 29%	245 28%	195 22%	92 10%	120 N/A	406 N/A	2.9
This agency practices what it preaches when it comes to ethics.	129 13%	252 26%	295 31%	145 15%	136 14%	102 N/A	352 N/A	2.9
Employees in the agency openly discuss the ethics of their decisions and actions.	64 7%	182 21%	364 42%	190 22%	74 8%	180 N/A	357 N/A	3.0
Employees who report misconduct are not retaliated against.	83 11%	186 25%	244 32%	147 19%	99 13%	244 N/A	408 N/A	3.0
<b>Negative statements</b>								
Employees in this agency are expected to do as they are told, no matter what.	150 16%	284 31%	236 26%	201 22%	51 6%	82 N/A	407 N/A	2.7
Senior officials are less likely to be disciplined for violating ethical standards than other employees.	209 24%	207 23%	197 22%	163 18%	107 12%	174 N/A	354 N/A	2.7
You can ignore ethics and still get ahead in this agency.	133 14%	183 19%	199 21%	269 28%	173 18%	102 N/A	352 N/A	3.2
Our agency leadership cares more about getting the job done than about ethics.	128 13%	199 20%	249 26%	234 24%	165 17%	85 N/A	351 N/A	3.1
Employees in this agency do not recognize ethics issues that come up at work.	35 4%	105 13%	306 36%	297 35%	97 12%	162 N/A	409 N/A	3.4
Supervisors at my work location usually do not pay attention to ethics.	49 5%	103 11%	247 26%	332 35%	216 23%	101 N/A	363 N/A	3.6

*Note: The average score excludes the "Don't Know" and "No Answer" responses.*

**Table 9: Responses on Ethical Climate Statements – Elected Officials and Staff Only**

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Don't know	No answer	Average score
<i>Positive statements</i>								
Employees seek advice within this agency when ethics issues arise.	2	6	0	0	0	0	32	1.8
	25%	75%	0%	0%	0%	N/A	N/A	
Employees in this office recognize ethics issues when they arise.	3	5	0	0	0	0	32	1.6
	38%	63%	0%	0%	0%	N/A	N/A	
I would feel comfortable reporting ethics violations.	2	5	1	0	0	0	32	1.9
	25%	63%	13%	0%	0%	N/A	N/A	
Supervisors in my office include discussions of ethics when talking with their employees.	1	3	1	0	2	1	32	2.9
	14%	43%	14%	0%	29%	N/A	N/A	
When ethical issues arise, employees look for advice within the office.	1	5	1	0	0	1	32	2
	14%	71%	14%	0%	0%	N/A	N/A	
This office follows up on ethical concerns that are reported by employees.	1	3	0	1	0	3	32	2.2
	20%	60%	0%	20%	0%	N/A	N/A	
Employees who are caught violating ethics are disciplined.	1	3	2	0	0	2	32	2.2
	17%	50%	33%	0%	0%	N/A	N/A	
Employees can talk with supervisors about problems without fear of having their comments held against them.	2	3	0	1	1	1	32	2.4
	29%	43%	0%	14%	14%	N/A	N/A	
Employees here make decisions that comply with ethics policies because of the ethics program that is in place.	1	5	0	1	0	1	32	2.1
	14%	71%	0%	14%	0%	N/A	N/A	
Employees at all levels in this office are held accountable for adhering to ethical standards.	3	4	0	1	0	0	32	1.9
	38%	50%	0%	13%	0%	N/A	N/A	
This office makes a serious attempt to detect violations of ethics standards.	1	5	0	1	0	1	32	2.1
	14%	71%	0%	14%	0%	N/A	N/A	
Leadership of this office regularly shows that it cares about ethics.	5	1	1	1	0	0	32	1.8
	63%	13%	13%	13%	0%	N/A	N/A	
If ethics concerns are reported to the office, action is taken to resolve them.	1	2	1	1	0	3	32	2.4
	20%	40%	20%	20%	0%	N/A	N/A	
Employees in this office feel comfortable talking about ethics.	1	5	0	1	0	1	32	2.1
	14%	71%	0%	14%	0%	N/A	N/A	

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Don't know	No answer	Average score
Employees are comfortable delivering bad news to their supervisors.	2	6	0	0	0	0	32	1.8
	25%	75%	0%	0%	0%	N/A	N/A	
Ethics rules and office practices are consistent.	2	5	1	0	0	0	32	1.9
	25%	63%	13%	0%	0%	N/A	N/A	
This office practices what it preaches when it comes to ethics.	5	2	1	0	0	0	32	1.5
	63%	25%	13%	0%	0%	N/A	N/A	
Employees openly discuss the ethics of their decisions and actions.	1	2	4	0	0	1	32	2.4
	14%	29%	57%	0%	0%	N/A	N/A	
Employees who report misconduct are not retaliated against.	2	3	1	0	0	2	32	1.8
	33%	50%	17%	0%	0%	N/A	N/A	
Negative statements								
Employees in this office are expected to do as they are told, no matter what.	1	0	2	5	0	0	32	3.4
	13%	0%	25%	63%	0%	N/A	N/A	
Senior officials in this office are less likely to be disciplined for violating ethical standards than other employees.	0	1	1	3	1	2	32	3.7
	0%	17%	17%	50%	17%	N/A	N/A	
You can ignore ethics and still get ahead in this office.	0	0	1	2	5	0	32	4.5
	0%	0%	13%	25%	63%	N/A	N/A	
Leadership in this office cares more about getting the job done than about ethics.	0	1	0	2	5	0	32	4.4
	0%	13%	0%	25%	63%	N/A	N/A	
Employees in this office do not recognize ethics issues that come up at work.	0	2	0	4	1	1	32	3.6
	0%	29%	0%	57%	14%	N/A	N/A	
Supervisors at my work location usually do not pay attention to ethics.	1	0	1	2	4	0	32	4.0
	13%	0%	13%	25%	50%	N/A	N/A	

*Note: The average score excludes the "Don't Know" and "No Answer" responses.*

**Table 10: Responses on Ethical Climate Statements – Board and Commission Members Only**

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Don't know	No answer	Average score
<i>Positive statements</i>								
Members of this board or commission seek advice within this agency when ethics issues arise.	12	5	3	1	0	2	9	1.7
	57%	24%	14%	5%	0%	N/A	N/A	
Members of this board or commission recognize ethics issues when they arise.	12	5	1	1	0	4	9	1.5
	63%	26%	5%	5%	0%	N/A	N/A	
I would feel comfortable reporting ethics violations.	15	6	1	0	0	1	9	1.4
	68%	27%	5%	0%	0%	N/A	N/A	
Leadership on this board or commission include discussions of ethics when talking with their members.	11	8	1	3	0	1	8	1.8
	48%	35%	4%	13%	0%	N/A	N/A	
When ethical issues arise, members of this board or commission look for advice within the board or commission.	8	7	2	1	0	5	9	1.8
	44%	39%	11%	6%	0%	N/A	N/A	
This board or commission leadership follows up on ethical concerns that are reported by members.	11	5	2	0	0	6	8	1.5
	61%	28%	11%	0%	0%	N/A	N/A	
Members who are caught violating ethics are disciplined.	5	3	3	1	1	11	8	2.2
	38%	23%	23%	8%	8%	N/A	N/A	
Members of this board or commission can talk with leadership about problems without fear of having their comments held against them.	13	6	1	0	1	2	9	1.6
	62%	29%	5%	0%	5%	N/A	N/A	
Members of this board or commission here make decisions that comply with ethics policies because of the ethics program that is in place.	9	8	3	2	0	1	9	1.9
	41%	36%	14%	9%	0%	N/A	N/A	
Members of this board or commission are held accountable for adhering to ethical standards.	12	6	4	0	0	1	9	1.6
	55%	27%	18%	0%	0%	N/A	N/A	
This board or commission makes a serious attempt to detect violations of ethics standards.	11	4	4	1	1	3	8	1.9
	52%	19%	19%	5%	5%	N/A	N/A	
Leadership of this board or commission regularly shows that it cares about ethics.	16	3	3	1	0	1	8	1.5
	70%	13%	13%	4%	0%	N/A	N/A	



	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Don't know	No answer	Average score
If ethics concerns are reported to board or commission leadership action is taken to resolve them.	12	4	1	2	0	4	9	1.6
	63%	21%	5%	11%	0%	N/A	N/A	
Employees on this board or commission feel comfortable talking about ethics.	13	6	2	1	1	1	8	1.7
	57%	26%	9%	4%	4%	N/A	N/A	
Members of this board or commission are comfortable delivering bad news to their supervisors.	11	7	2	1	0	2	9	1.7
	52%	33%	10%	5%	0%	N/A	N/A	
Ethics rules and board or commission practices are consistent.	13	6	2	1	0	1	9	1.6
	59%	27%	9%	5%	0%	N/A	N/A	
This board or commission practices what it preaches when it comes to ethics.	13	6	1	1	0	3	8	1.5
	62%	29%	5%	5%	0%	N/A	N/A	
Members of this board openly discuss the ethics of their decisions and actions.	10	6	4	3	0	1	8	2.0
	43%	26%	17%	13%	0%	N/A	N/A	
Members of this board or commission who report misconduct are not retaliated against.	8	6	2	1	1	5	9	1.9
	44%	33%	11%	6%	6%	N/A	N/A	
Negative statements								
Members of this board or commission are expected to do as they are told, no matter what.	0	0	1	8	13	1	9	4.5
	0%	0%	5%	36%	59%	N/A	N/A	
Senior members on this board or commission are less likely to be disciplined for violating ethical standards than other members.	1	0	1	5	13	4	8	4.5
	5%	0%	5%	25%	65%	N/A	N/A	
You can ignore ethics and still get ahead in this on this board.	0	0	2	6	15	1	8	4.6
	0%	0%	9%	26%	65%	N/A	N/A	
Our leadership cares more about getting the job done than about ethics.	0	1	1	6	14	1	9	4.5
	0%	5%	5%	27%	64%	N/A	N/A	
Members of this board or commission do not recognize ethics issues that come up at work.	1	1	0	8	11	2	9	4.3
	5%	5%	0%	38%	52%	N/A	N/A	
Board or commission leadership usually do not pay attention to ethics.	0	0	3	3	16	1	9	4.6
	0%	0%	14%	14%	73%	N/A	N/A	

Note: The average score excludes the "Don't Know" and "No Answer" responses.

**Table 11: Average Responses on Ethical Climate Statements by Agency (911-Executive Office)**

*Average responses range from 1 = Strongly Agree to 5 = Strongly Disagree.*

		911 Center	Aging	Budget & Finance	Corrections	Economic & Workforce Development	Environmental Protection & Sustainability	Executive Office
<i>Positive statements</i>								
Employees seek advice within this agency when ethics issues arise.	Avg.	2.5	2.2	2.7	3.0	2.4	2.8	2.1
	N	17	39	29	35	12	18	12
Employees in the agency recognize ethics issues when they arise.	Avg.	2.8	2.3	2.4	2.9	2.4	2.4	2.4
	N	17	40	31	40	11	22	13
I would feel comfortable reporting ethics violations.	Avg.	2.6	2.0	2.2	2.9	2.4	3.0	1.8
	N	17	49	33	37	17	26	13
Supervisors at my agency include discussions of ethics when talking with their employees.	Avg.	2.7	2.1	2.6	3.3	2.9	3.0	2.2
	N	19	49	33	39	14	24	14
When ethical issues arise, employees look for advice within the agency.	Avg.	2.8	2.1	2.6	2.9	2.6	2.6	2.0
	N	16	41	30	36	12	19	11
This agency follows up on ethical concerns that are reported by employees.	Avg.	2.7	2.2	2.5	3.2	2.7	2.8	2.1
	N	15	42	30	38	10	13	13
Employees who are caught violating ethics are disciplined.	Avg.	2.6	2.1	2.7	2.3	3.0	2.2	2.2
	N	18	42	27	38	12	13	11

		911 Center	Aging	Budget & Finance	Corrections	Economic & Workforce Development	Environmental Protection & Sustainability	Executive Office
Employees can talk with supervisors about problems without fear of having their comments held against them.	Avg.	3.2	2.3	2.6	3.3	2.5	2.6	2.1
	N	17	50	33	39	15	26	13
Employees here make decisions that comply with ethics policies because of the ethics program that is in place.	Avg.	2.9	2.4	2.6	3.3	2.9	2.8	2.2
	N	16	41	32	39	10	20	13
Employees at all levels in this agency are held accountable for adhering to ethical standards.	Avg.	3.2	2.4	2.4	3.0	2.8	2.9	1.9
	N	17	47	34	39	12	22	13
This agency makes a serious attempt to detect violations of ethics standards.	Avg.	2.8	2.3	2.7	3.2	3.4	3.2	2.2
	N	19	48	32	40	11	20	14
Leadership of this agency regularly shows that it cares about ethics.	Avg.	3.1	2.0	2.5	3.2	2.5	3.1	1.6
	N	19	51	35	40	12	24	14
If ethics concerns are reported to the agency, action is taken to resolve them.	Avg.	2.8	2.3	2.6	3.2	2.6	3.1	2.0
	N	17	42	31	37	7	15	14

		911 Center	Aging	Budget & Finance	Corrections	Economic & Workforce Development	Environmental Protection & Sustainability	Executive Office
Employees in this agency feel comfortable talking about ethics.	Avg.	3.3	2.3	2.7	3.6	2.5	3.1	1.8
	N	19	46	33	39	11	24	14
Employees are comfortable delivering bad news to their supervisors.	Avg.	3.0	2.5	2.8	3.3	2.9	2.7	2.3
	N	16	44	31	36	14	23	13
Ethics rules and agency practices are consistent.	Avg.	3.2	2.3	2.5	3.3	2.9	2.9	2.2
	N	17	45	33	40	12	23	13
This agency practices what it preaches when it comes to ethics.	Avg.	3.1	2.2	2.4	3.3	2.6	3.0	1.8
	N	19	52	34	41	14	23	14
Employees in the agency openly discuss the ethics of their decisions and actions.	Avg.	3.2	2.6	2.6	3.1	2.9	2.9	2.6
	N	17	45	33	36	12	23	14
Employees who report misconduct are not retaliated against.	Avg.	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.0	2.6	3.1	2.1
	N	15	35	25	37	8	14	12
<b>Negative statements</b>								
Employees in this agency are expected to do as they are told, no matter what.	Avg.	2.5	3.4	2.9	2.4	2.8	2.5	3.2
	N	17	48	34	40	12	26	13
Senior officials in this agency are less likely to be disciplined for violating ethical standards than other employees.	Avg.	2.5	3.5	3.1	2.9	2.6	2.7	3.8
	N	17	45	33	39	11	18	14

		911 Center	Aging	Budget & Finance	Corrections	Economic & Workforce Development	Environmental Protection & Sustainability	Executive Office
You can ignore ethics and still get ahead in this agency.	Avg.	3.4	3.9	3.7	2.9	3.3	3.0	4.2
	N	19	47	33	41	13	24	13
Our agency leadership cares more about getting the job done than about ethics.	Avg.	2.9	3.9	3.2	2.6	2.8	2.9	4.2
	N	19	54	34	40	13	25	14
Employees in this agency do not recognize ethics issues that come up at work.	Avg.	3.4	3.5	3.7	2.8	3.5	3.6	3.7
	N	16	42	31	38	13	20	11
Supervisors at my work location usually do not pay attention to ethics.	Avg.	3.5	4.2	3.6	2.8	3.9	3.5	4.4
	N	19	53	34	38	14	25	14

**Table 12: Average Responses on Ethical Climate Statements by Agency (Fire-Law)**

*Average responses range from 1 = Strongly Agree to 5 = Strongly Disagree.*

		Fire	Health	Housing & Community Development	Human Resources	Information Technology	Law
<i>Positive statements</i>							
Employees seek advice within this agency when ethics issues arise.	Avg.	3.1	2.6	2.8	2.4	2.0	2.6
	N	103	120	13	15	21	8
Employees in the agency recognize ethics issues when they arise.	Avg.	2.9	2.6	2.6	2.3	2.0	2.7
	N	112	128	14	16	27	11
I would feel comfortable reporting ethics violations.	Avg.	3.0	2.4	2.6	2.1	2.1	3.1
	N	118	140	18	18	30	11
Supervisors at my agency include discussions of ethics when talking with their employees.	Avg.	3.1	2.6	3.1	2.5	2.3	3.1
	N	120	142	20	17	34	9
When ethical issues arise, employees look for advice within the agency.	Avg.	3.2	2.4	2.9	2.5	2.2	3.0
	N	107	126	12	16	24	6
This agency follows up on ethical concerns that are reported by employees.	Avg.	2.9	2.6	2.9	1.7	2.1	3.3
	N	111	121	17	14	23	4
Employees who are caught violating ethics are disciplined.	Avg.	2.9	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.1	2.8
	N	108	109	14	10	20	5
Employees can talk with supervisors about problems without fear of having their comments held against them.	Avg.	3.5	2.7	3.5	2.4	1.9	3.5
	N	116	134	16	18	28	11
Employees here make decisions that comply with ethics policies because of the ethics program that is in place.	Avg.	3.1	2.7	2.7	2.4	2.1	3.2
	N	111	125	12	16	23	10
Employees at all levels in this agency are held accountable for adhering to ethical standards.	Avg.	3.2	2.6	2.9	2.4	2.1	2.9
	N	112	131	15	17	27	10
This agency makes a serious attempt to detect violations of ethics standards.	Avg.	3.1	2.6	3.3	2.5	2.1	2.8
	N	115	121	16	15	27	9
Leadership of this agency regularly shows that it cares about ethics.	Avg.	3.3	2.6	3.3	2.1	2.1	3.1
	N	121	143	16	17	33	12
If ethics concerns are reported to the agency, action is taken to resolve them.	Avg.	3.1	2.7	3.0	2.1	1.9	2.8
	N	110	112	16	15	25	8

		Fire	Health	Housing & Community Development	Human Resources	Information Technology	Law
Employees in this agency feel comfortable talking about ethics.	Avg.	3.5	2.6	3.3	2.5	2.2	2.9
	N	120	138	18	15	33	9
Employees are comfortable delivering bad news to their supervisors.	Avg.	3.5	2.7	3.2	2.8	2.2	3.5
	N	115	129	17	16	25	10
Ethics rules and agency practices are consistent.	Avg.	3.4	2.6	3.1	2.5	2.1	3.2
	N	115	128	15	14	28	12
This agency practices what it preaches when it comes to ethics.	Avg.	3.5	2.7	3.1	2.1	2.1	2.9
	N	120	137	17	18	33	10
Employees in the agency openly discuss the ethics of their decisions and actions.	Avg.	3.3	2.8	3.2	3.2	2.7	3.1
	N	112	126	15	14	25	9
Employees who report misconduct are not retaliated against.	Avg.	3.3	2.8	2.9	2.7	2.4	3.4
	N	109	108	14	15	15	10
<b>Negative statements</b>							
Employees in this agency are expected to do as they are told, no matter what.	Avg.	2.4	2.8	2.2	2.9	3.5	2.5
	N	118	134	17	16	26	11
Senior officials in this agency are less likely to be disciplined for violating ethical standards than other employees.	Avg.	2.3	2.9	2.9	3.5	3.5	2.9
	N	115	118	18	15	25	11
You can ignore ethics and still get ahead in this agency.	Avg.	2.7	3.4	2.7	4.3	3.7	3.8
	N	121	144	14	17	31	10
Our agency leadership cares more about getting the job done than about ethics.	Avg.	2.7	3.3	2.5	3.7	3.8	3.7
	N	118	142	18	18	33	10
Employees in this agency do not recognize ethics issues that come up at work.	Avg.	3.1	3.4	3.1	4.2	3.6	3.7
	N	110	124	13	17	23	9
Supervisors at my work location usually do not pay attention to ethics.	Avg.	3.3	3.5	2.9	4.1	4.0	3.8
	N	118	138	15	17	28	10

**Table 13: Average Responses on Ethical Climate Statements by Agency (Permits...-Recreation...)**

*Average responses range from 1 = Strongly Agree to 5 = Strongly Disagree.*

		Permits, Approvals & Inspections	Planning	Police	Property Management	Public Works & Transportation	Recreation & Parks
<i>Positive statements</i>							
Employees seek advice within this agency when ethics issues arise.	Avg.	2.4	2.2	2.9	2.4	2.8	2.6
	N	16	10	146	23	76	36
Employees in the agency recognize ethics issues when they arise.	Avg.	2.4	2.2	2.7	2.6	2.8	2.6
	N	20	14	161	27	84	36
I would feel comfortable reporting ethics violations.	Avg.	2.5	1.9	2.7	2.6	2.9	2.7
	N	22	16	177	32	87	39
Supervisors at my agency include discussions of ethics when talking with their employees.	Avg.	2.5	2.3	2.8	2.6	3.0	2.4
	N	24	13	178	28	89	45
When ethical issues arise, employees look for advice within the agency.	Avg.	2.6	2.2	2.9	2.7	3.0	2.7
	N	16	11	149	24	83	35
This agency follows up on ethical concerns that are reported by employees.	Avg.	2.2	2.1	2.9	2.6	2.9	2.6
	N	17	12	164	24	81	38
Employees who are caught violating ethics are disciplined.	Avg.	2.5	1.9	2.8	2.6	3.0	2.9
	N	22	7	170	25	77	38
Employees can talk with supervisors about problems without fear of having their comments held against them.	Avg.	2.7	2.1	3.1	2.6	3.1	2.6
	N	21	14	170	28	88	37
Employees here make decisions that comply with	Avg.	2.6	2.1	3.3	2.7	3.1	2.7



		Permits, Approvals & Inspections	Planning	Police	Property Management	Public Works & Transportation	Recreation & Parks
ethics policies because of the ethics program that is in place.	N	17	13	150	24	78	35
Employees at all levels in this agency are held accountable for adhering to ethical standards.	Avg.	2.4	2.1	3.4	2.8	3.1	2.8
	N	20	13	173	29	88	38
This agency makes a serious attempt to detect violations of ethics standards.	Avg.	2.4	2.3	3.1	2.6	3.1	2.8
	N	21	12	171	23	89	40
Leadership of this agency regularly shows that it cares about ethics.	Avg.	2.2	2.1	3.4	2.7	3.0	2.8
	N	21	16	185	30	94	45
If ethics concerns are reported to the agency, action is taken to resolve them.	Avg.	2.2	1.7	3.1	2.7	2.9	2.9
	N	20	9	166	25	79	38
Employees in this agency feel comfortable talking about ethics.	Avg.	2.7	2.3	3.1	2.8	3.3	2.9
	N	23	14	178	29	89	43
Employees are comfortable delivering bad news to their supervisors.	Avg.	2.7	2.4	3.0	2.6	3.1	2.8
	N	17	14	168	27	85	37
Ethics rules and agency practices are consistent.	Avg.	2.6	2.2	3.3	2.6	3.1	2.8
	N	18	16	171	27	86	36
This agency practices what it preaches when it comes to ethics.	Avg.	2.3	2.2	3.5	2.4	3.0	2.8
	N	21	15	181	28	93	45
Employees in the agency openly discuss the ethics of their decisions and actions.	Avg.	3.0	2.3	3.2	3.0	3.3	3.0
	N	21	14	164	26	89	43
Employees who report misconduct	Avg.	2.9	2.0	3.2	2.6	3.4	2.7

		Permits, Approvals & Inspections	Planning	Police	Property Management	Public Works & Transportation	Recreation & Parks
are not retaliated against.	N	17	11	153	22	73	33
<i>Negative statements</i>							
Employees in this agency are expected to do as they are told, no matter what.	Avg.	2.8	3.1	2.5	2.8	2.6	2.7
	N	20	15	178	29	91	39
Senior officials in this agency are less likely to be disciplined for violating ethical standards than other employees.	Avg.	2.9	3.5	2.2	3.0	2.6	2.7
	N	19	13	183	24	84	41
You can ignore ethics and still get ahead in this agency.	Avg.	3.4	4.1	2.6	3.7	2.9	3.2
	N	22	16	189	27	91	44
Our agency leadership cares more about getting the job done than about ethics.	Avg.	3.1	3.8	3.0	3.3	2.9	2.8
	N	22	16	187	29	94	46
Employees in this agency do not recognize ethics issues that come up at work.	Avg.	3.4	3.7	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.3
	N	18	12	161	26	82	37
Supervisors at my work location usually do not pay attention to ethics.	Avg.	3.6	3.9	3.6	3.8	3.4	4.0
	N	24	15	180	27	93	43

**Table 14: Average Responses on Ethical Misconduct by Baltimore County Employees – All Respondents**

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently	Don't know	No answer
Baltimore County government employees <b>improperly accept payment</b> for doing their government jobs from people outside of government.	301 57%	159 30%	45 9%	16 3%	7 1%	493 N/A	449 N/A
Baltimore County government employees engage in <b>inappropriate political activity</b> during official time.	245 45%	171 31%	86 16%	29 5%	13 2%	475 N/A	451 N/A
Baltimore County government employees <b>improperly benefit financially</b> from work they do for the government.	243 43%	186 33%	94 17%	32 6%	14 2%	452 N/A	449 N/A
Baltimore County government employees <b>improperly accept gifts</b> given to them because of where they work or what they do in their government.	200 36%	218 39%	104 19%	20 4%	12 2%	468 N/A	448 N/A
Baltimore County government employees <b>misuse government property, time, or resources</b> for inappropriate political activity.	209 36%	185 32%	126 22%	44 8%	22 4%	435 N/A	449 N/A
Baltimore County government employees <b>misuse government property.</b>	174 27%	224 35%	155 24%	54 9%	27 4%	384 N/A	452 N/A
Baltimore County government employees <b>misuse government positions.</b>	165 26%	186 29%	187 29%	62 10%	45 7%	373 N/A	452 N/A
Baltimore County government employees <b>misuse official time.</b>	135 20%	202 30%	206 31%	87 13%	36 5%	350 N/A	454 N/A

N = 1,470.

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# SCHAEFER CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY

KNOWLEDGE THAT WORKS FOR GOVERNMENT AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

**Baltimore County  
Blue Ribbon Commission for  
Ethics and Accountability**

**Report on Best Practices for  
Offices of Inspector General**



**UNIVERSITY OF  
BALTIMORE**

Schaefer Center for  
Public Policy

**Baltimore County  
Blue Ribbon Commission for  
Ethics and Accountability**

**Report on Best Practices for  
Offices of Inspector General**

**Submitted by:**

**P. Ann Cotten, DPA, CPA | Director**

**Schaefer Center for Public Policy  
The University of Baltimore – College of Public Affairs  
1420 N. Charles Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
410.837.6188  
[acotten@ubalt.edu](mailto:acotten@ubalt.edu)**

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- Dr. Sarah V. Ficenec, Research Manager
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- Savannah Smith, Schaefer Center Graduate Fellow

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# Baltimore County Blue Ribbon Commission for Ethics and Accountability

## Report on Findings on Best Practices for Offices of Inspectors General

### INTRODUCTION

The use of Offices of Inspectors General (OIGs) by federal, state, and local governments has risen greatly in the past 50 years. While the structure and processes of OIGs at the federal level have been systematized, these offices at lower levels of government vary as much as the governments initiating them do. The national accrediting body, the Association of Inspectors General, has produced suggested policies for operating these offices. However, not all local and state OIGs adopt these policies and those that do customize the policies for their organization. Because of these variations, there is a common saying among inspectors general: “If you’ve met one inspector general, you’ve met one inspector general.”

Baltimore County’s Office of Inspector General (OIG) was formally created as the Office of Ethics and Accountability in 2019 and renamed through the passage of county legislation in 2020. The Blue Ribbon Commission on Ethics and Accountability was established to provide recommendations relating to the operations of the Baltimore County OIG.

This report provides a summary of the practices of state and local OIGs across the nation, with the goal of helping to inform the Commission’s recommendations. Due to the size of this data collection enterprise – information on more than 20 discrete aspects of over 100 OIGs at the state and local level – and the timeline for this project, the report’s findings concern how many offices were found to meet certain criteria. Except when identified in the findings below, information is only shown for those offices found to affirmatively have these characteristics. The default assumption should not be that OIGs not included in that count do not have the characteristic. In some cases, OIGs not included in the count may indeed follow a certain policy or have a certain structural element but did not make that information public.

The structure of this report is as follows: first, general structural information on the OIGs identified and researched is presented, which is followed by information about their structural characteristics and then their policies and procedures. The appendices include the methodology for the study and a review of what was found about Maryland county-level Ethics Commissions.

## SECTION 1: GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF OIGS

There were 106 OIGs identified via the initial research for this project, including the OIG for Baltimore County. This total represents 42 local OIGs and 64 state OIGs.

It should be noted that this count of OIGs may differ from others due to decisions about how an individual OIG was defined here. Three aspects of these decisions had significant impacts on the count of OIGs:

1. In some jurisdictions, there is a central OIG that coordinates and mandates operations of others. For example, New York City's Department of Investigation is identified as the city's inspector general,<sup>1</sup> but it houses 12 inspectors general with responsibility for various city agencies and vendors. New York City's OIG is only counted as one office in this analysis, since the other OIGs follow the Department's leadership and policies. Similarly, at the state level, in 1994 the Florida state statutes mandated that all state agencies have an OIG, and the activities of these departmental OIGs are monitored by the Office of the Chief Inspector General.<sup>2</sup> As such, there are only one New York City OIG and one Florida state OIG included in the count.
2. The number of OIGs in this report is also lower due to the decision to exclude OIGs in National Guard units. While these OIGs are usually identified on state National Guard websites, they have very little staff or involvement in the OIG process. Rather, much of the work is done through the military's Judge Advocate General offices. Therefore, these OIGs were considered distinct enough to exclude from the count in this report.
3. There are other state and local agencies with duties very similar to those of OIGs but not formally named as an Office of Inspector General. A broader study of oversight entities concerned with investigations or audits of government actions would have included such offices, but they are beyond the scope of this study.

In addition to differentiating between OIGs at the local and state levels, these offices can also be separated into those offices that have oversight of the government generally and those with oversight of specific departments or programs. The former may be limited to oversight of Executive Branch agencies or agencies funded by the General Fund. Table 1 shows the counts of OIGs included in this study by level of government and range of oversight. General government OIGs are more common at the local level compared to the state level. Specifically, there were 37

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doi/about/about.page> and <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doi/images/content/misc/OrgChart.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> See [https://www.flgov.com/inspector\\_general/](https://www.flgov.com/inspector_general/).

general government OIGs and 5 departmental OIGs at the local level compared to 10 general government and 52 departmental OIGs at the state level.<sup>3</sup>

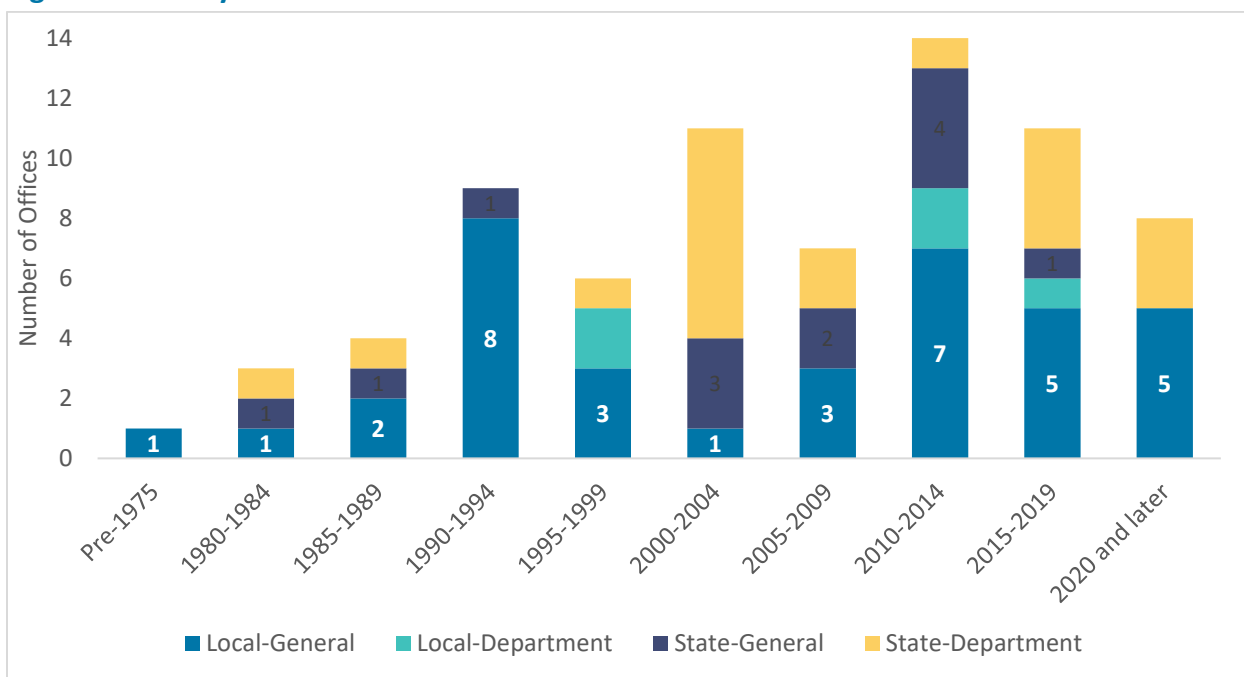
**Table 1: Count of OIGs at State and Local Level and by Range of Oversight**

		Level of Government	
		Local	State
Range of Oversight	General Government	37	12*
	Department/Program	6	51

*Note: The count of state-general government OIGs includes an office with oversight of the legislature.*

The year of establishment was identified for 79 of the 106 OIGs. As shown in Figure 1, from 1985 to 2020, there has been a trend of more OIGs created in each decade, although a larger share has been created in the first half of a decade. The greatest number of local, general government OIGs were established between 1990 and 1994, with the creation of eight county-level OIGs in Florida via local executive order and under the state constitution.

**Figure 1: OIGs by Year Created**

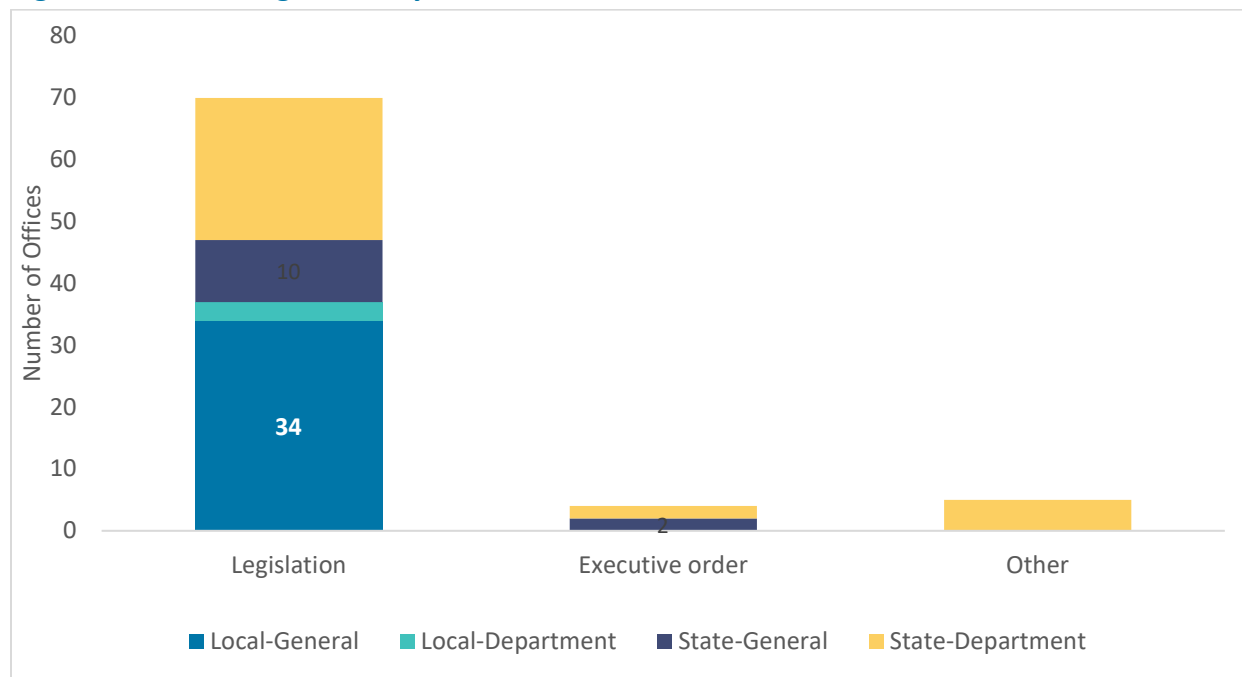


*Note: Data above are of those OIGs for whom data is available.*

<sup>3</sup> This report will focus on the characteristics of OIGs at the local level with general government oversight. OIGs such as these are more similar to the Baltimore County OIG than state OIGs with general government oversight and OIGs with department or program oversight at either level of government.

The establishing authority for 80 of the OIGs was identified. Legislation is by far the most common method for state and local governments, with 89% of the OIGs created in this way (Figure 2). This holds true for local, general government OIGs as well, with 34 created via legislation.

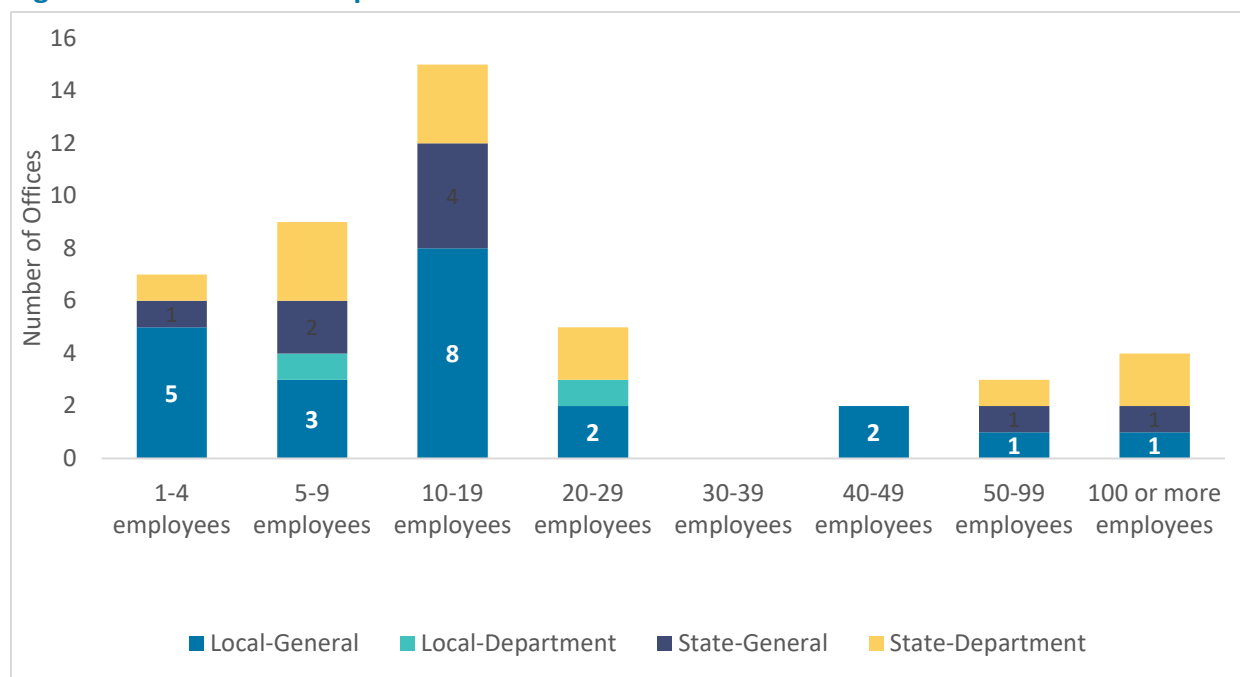
**Figure 2: Establishing Authority for OIGs**



*Note: Data above are of those OIGs for whom data is available.*

Overall, OIGs for which the number of staff are known tend to be smaller, with most of the offices identified having less than 20 employees (Figure 3). As would likely be assumed, state OIGs tend to be bigger than local government OIGs due to larger state budgets and populations. Local, general government OIGs also tended to be smaller, with five having between 1 and 4 employees, 3 having between 5 and 9 employees, and 8 having between 10 and 19 employees. The largest local, general government OIG was in Washington, DC with 129 employees.

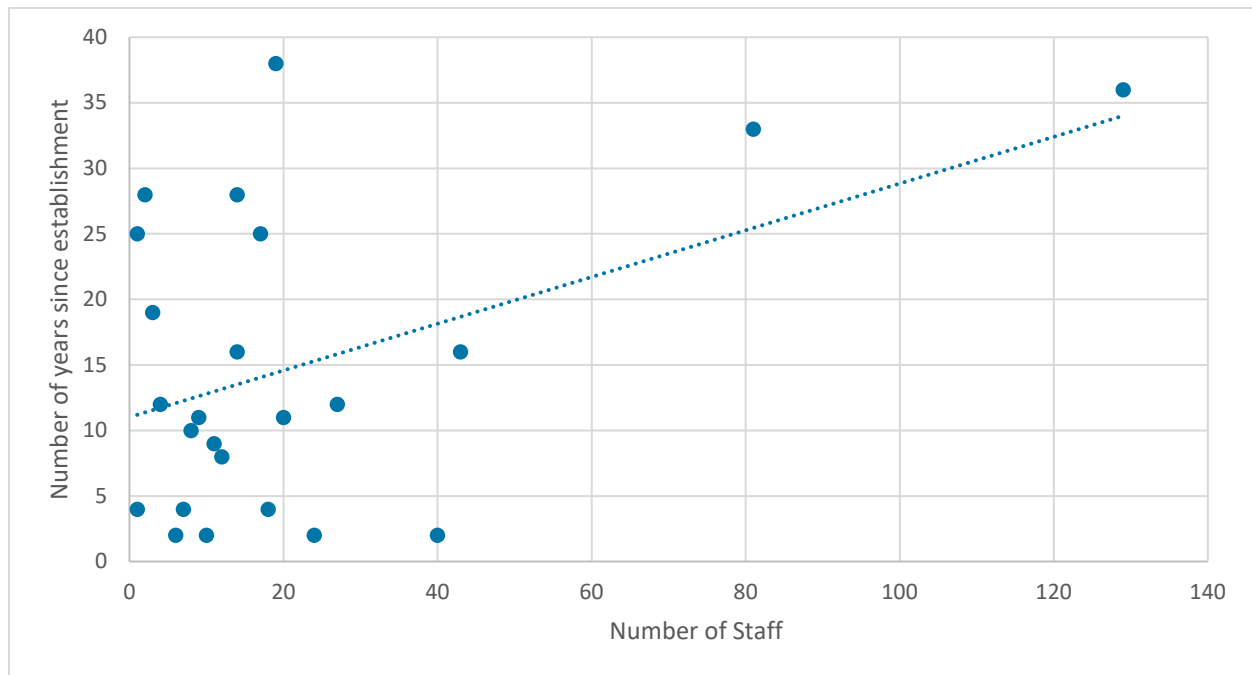
**Figure 3: Number of Staff per OIG**



*Notes: Data above are of those OIGs for whom data is available. Staff count is for most recent year available.*

However, simply noting the number of staff per OIG can be misleading, as there are different factors that may affect staff counts. One way to normalize staff counts is to compare the number of staff to the number of years since the OIG was established. A scatterplot for local, general government OIGs, for which both pieces of this information are known, is shown in Figure 4. This data suggests that there is a trend that bigger OIGs are more likely to be older OIGs, but outliers exist and the direction of the relationship cannot be assumed.

**Figure 4: Number of Staff for Local, General Government OIGs by Years Since Founding**



## SECTION 2: OIG STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

Many of the defining characteristics of OIGs are their structural characteristics. This includes their general responsibilities, their authorities, whether they have financial independence, oversight and removal, their relationships to Ethics Commissions, and their overall level of independence. Each of these characteristics are discussed below, along with the number of OIGs that were found to have the characteristic (excluding Baltimore County).

### RESPONSIBILITY FOR INVESTIGATIONS, AUDITS, OR BOTH

**What are audits and investigations?** Audits and investigations are the primary means by which OIGs practice their authority to conduct oversight within their jurisdiction. Investigations normally focus on obtaining factual evidence for use in determining whether criminal, civil, or administrative actions should be initiated. Audits function as independent, objective assessments of an organization's operations that are designed to add value.

**Why is this important?** OIGs that have the authority to conduct both audits and investigations are afforded more tools and strategies to detect cases of fraud, waste, and abuse. Organizations limited to audit functions are less capable of proactively addressing issues because their work is retrospective by definition. Meanwhile, organizations limited to investigatory powers may be less equipped to identify patterns of fraud or abuse or other opportunities to improve organizational functioning.

**What is the current status of audit and investigatory powers for the Baltimore County OIG?** The Baltimore County OIG has the authority to pursue investigations at its discretion, while the auditing function is assigned to the Baltimore County Auditor.

#### **How many OIGs have both audit and investigatory powers?**

Total	Local – General Government	Local – Department/ Program	State – General Government	State – Department/ Program
41 (39%)	12 (32%)	3 (50%)	5 (42%)	21 (41%)

*Note: Percentages are for the share of OIGs in that category found to affirmatively have both audit and investigatory powers. The default assumption should not be that OIGs not included in that count have only audit or investigatory powers.*



## INDEPENDENCE OF ACTION

**What is independence of action?** Independence of action is the ability of an OIG to pursue cases proactively and without interference from those outside the office.

**Why is this important?** Independence of action allows an OIG to pursue cases without constraints from those who might want to control investigations for political or personal reasons. In addition, OIGs may only be able to investigate in response to inquiries received, rather than initiate investigations on its own authority. Both of these features limit the OIG's ability to root out suspected ethical misconduct and waste, fraud, and abuse. In the worst cases, statutory authority grants executive oversight of OIG work, limiting them to cases approved by the executive branch (e.g., mayor, county executive, governor).

**What is the current status of independence of action for the Baltimore County OIG?** The Baltimore County OIG has the independence of action to pursue cases at its discretion.

### **How many OIGs have independence of action?**

Total	Local – General Government	Local – Department/ Program	State – General Government	State – Department/ Program
35 (33%)	19 (51%)	2 (33%)	7 (58%)	7 (14%)

*Note: Percentages are for the share of OIGs in that category found to affirmatively have independence of action. The default assumption should not be that OIGs not included in that count do not have independence of action.*

## CONFIDENTIALITY

**What is confidentiality?** Confidentiality concerns an OIG's ability to safeguard data or information collected during an investigation or audit. Confidential information may include but is not limited to the identities of sources or their testimony and information provided to the OIG.

**Why is this important?** Confidentiality provides complainants with confidence that their decision to report on a suspected violation will be anonymous. Without anonymity, the complainant may be subject to retaliation for their actions. The perception that retaliation may occur can be enough to prevent people from reporting suspected misconduct.

**What is the current status of confidentiality for the Baltimore County OIG?** In Baltimore County, the names and identities of individuals making complaints and information protected by

whistleblower protection or other legislations will not be disclosed without written consent unless required by law or court processes.

#### **How many OIGs can maintain confidentiality?**

<b>Total</b>	<b>Local – General Government</b>	<b>Local – Department/ Program</b>	<b>State – General Government</b>	<b>State – Department/ Program</b>
55 (52%)	28 (76%)	3 (50%)	10 (83%)	14 (27%)

*Note: Percentages are for the share of OIGs in that category found to affirmatively provide confidentiality. The default assumption should not be that OIGs not included in that count do not provide confidentiality.*

### **UNRESTRICTED ACCESS TO MATERIALS**

**What is unrestricted access to materials?** OIGs with unrestricted access to materials are capable of requesting information from sources deemed relevant to the scope of an investigation or audit without limit. Information is defined by the statutory language but may include digital communications such as email, phone records, documents, and any other forms of information within the OIG’s authority. Generally, this is enforced through other statutory language forcing the individual to comply with the request upon penalty of legal action.

**Why is this important?** OIGs that do not have unrestricted access to materials are hindered in their ability to understand the facts pertinent to a case and to fully investigate claims of wrongdoing. Individuals may be capable of hiding or otherwise preventing the OIG from finding information that may be vital to an investigation or audit.

**What is the current status of access to materials for the Baltimore County OIG?** Baltimore County’s OIG currently has unrestricted access to any materials deemed necessary for its investigations.

#### **How many OIGs have unrestricted access to materials?**

<b>Total</b>	<b>Local – General Government</b>	<b>Local – Department/ Program</b>	<b>State – General Government</b>	<b>State – Department/ Program</b>
53 (50%)	27 (73%)	4 (67%)	9 (75%)	13 (25%)

*Note: Percentages are for the share of OIGs in that category found to affirmatively have unrestricted access to materials. The default assumption should not be that OIGs not included in that count do not have unrestricted access to materials.*

## SUBPOENA AUTHORITY

**What is subpoena authority?** Subpoena authority grants an OIG the ability to file a subpoena to compel an individual to provide information, testimony, or otherwise as granted by their statutory authority.

**Why is this important?** Subpoena authority is an important tool for OIGs as they conduct investigations and audits. If an OIG does not have subpoena authority, its investigations or audits can be stopped or significantly delayed as individuals refuse to provide needed information. To have full authority, statutory language should stipulate that a judge must grant the subpoena upon request by the OIG.

**What is the current status of subpoena authority for the Baltimore County OIG?** The Baltimore County OIG has the authority to issue subpoenas. According to the Balt. Co. Code, Title 14, Section 3-14-107, “the Office may issue a subpoena to compel compliance with a request issued under subsection (a) of this section if the recipient of the request has not complied with the request within 90 days after the request.”

### How many OIGs have subpoena authority?

Total	Local – General Government	Local – Department/ Program	State – General Government	State – Department/ Program
42 (40%)	22 (59%)	1 (71%)	9 (75%)	10 (20%)

*Note: Percentages are for the share of OIGs in that category found to affirmatively have subpoena authority. The default assumption should not be that OIGs not included in that count do not subpoena authority.*

- Some OIGs are required to wait before they can formally issue a subpoena, but these wait times are generally not publicly available.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY

**What is law enforcement authority?** Law enforcement authority grants an OIG police or peace officer powers. The specific powers granted by this authority can include but are not limited to arresting individuals, carrying a weapon, and issuing warrants. The specific authority and powers are typically outlined in the state’s or local jurisdiction’s code of ordinances (or equivalent).

**Why is this important?** OIGs with law enforcement authority can use their own powers to arrest and hold individuals accountable. Rather than informing law enforcement agencies about

potentially criminal behavior, at which point the case is out of the OIG's jurisdiction, OIGs with law enforcement authority can enforce the results of their investigations.

***What is the current status of law enforcement authority for the Baltimore County OIG?*** The Baltimore County OIG does not have law enforcement authority.

***How many OIGs have law enforcement authority?***

Total	Local – General Government	Local – Department/ Program	State – General Government	State – Department/ Program
9 (8%)	2 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (8%)	6 (12%)

*Note: Percentages are for the share of OIGs in that category found to affirmatively have law enforcement authority. The default assumption should not be that OIGs not included in that count do not law enforcement authority.*

## FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

***What is financial independence?*** Financial independence refers to when a government agency's funding is not subject to executive or legislative adjustment but rather is set in legislation. This legislation may say that the OIG will receive a set amount or an amount calculated by a formula and that amount cannot be decreased. This includes agencies that have a set amount mandated by legislation, but they can request additional funding at the discretion of the executive or legislators.

***Why is financial independence important?*** Financial independence is important because it removes a method of control by jurisdiction or departmental leadership that could eliminate or reduce an OIG's funding to impede or retaliate for investigations or conclusions.

***What is the current status of financial independence for the Baltimore County OIG?*** The Baltimore County OIG currently does not have financial independence. The office's budget is part of the annual appropriations process and is fully at the discretion of the county executive and county council.

### How many OIGs have financial independence?

Total	Local – General Government	Local – Department/ Program	State – General Government	State – Department/ Program
7 (7%)	6 (16%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)

*Note: Percentages are for the share of OIGs in that category found to affirmatively have financial independence. The default assumption should not be that OIGs not included in that count do not financial independence.*

- At the local, general government level, examples of financial independence include Chicago, IL (0.14% of all appropriations), Jacksonville, FL (minimum funding of \$400,000), New Orleans, LA (0.75% of General Fund), and Tallahassee, FL (no less than 0.8% of General Fund).

## OVERSIGHT

**What is oversight?** OIG oversight refers to the mechanisms by which OIGs are directed and given direction from an outside group that has authority over their actions.

**Why is oversight important?** OIGs often serve as the primary oversight bodies for governments seeking to limit ethical misconduct and waste, fraud, and abuse. However, an OIG itself is not free from acting unethically or overstepping its authority. Oversight of OIG provides a method for keeping the office's actions in line with expectations and offers the public assurance that the OIG is not acting in an unethical manner.

**What is the current status of oversight for the Baltimore County OIG?** The Baltimore County OIG is subject to quality assurance reviews by an independent organization every 3 to 5 years, but there is no oversight of the office within the county's government beyond the ability of the county executive and county council to remove the IG for cause.

### How many OIGs have oversight?

Total	Local – General Government	Local – Department/ Program	State – General Government	State – Department/ Program
55 (52%)	31 (84%)	3 (50%)	6 (50%)	15 (29%)

*Note: Percentages are for the share of OIGs in that category found to affirmatively have oversight. The default assumption should not be that OIGs not included in that count do not oversight.*

- Oversight of an OIG is frequently due to the IG serving at the pleasure of an elected chief executive or legislative body or a department's leadership. Oversight might also be conducted

by a jurisdiction’s office of human resources or personnel review committees (or similar instruments). In some examples, oversight may be via an independent group, including the AIG’s peer review process.

- Some oversight of an OIG occurs through Advisory Boards. Regionally, this has been a point of discussion for Baltimore City, where the Inspector General Advisory Board conducts the IG’s annual performance review. A referendum in November will allow voters to decide if membership on the board would change from elected officials or their designees to members of the community and representation from relevant state professional associations and deans of the state’s two law schools. Oversight of Atlanta’s IG is also conducted via a governing board appointed by the mayor and city council from nominations by professional, civic, and other groups.

## REMOVAL PROCESS

**What is removal process?** IGs are usually appointed to their position for a set term, but removal processes provide a way to change the head of the office during their term of office.

**Why is the removal process important?** As noted above, OIGs are not immune from ethical misconduct or waste, fraud, and abuse despite their role in rooting it out among other government offices. A removal process holds OIGs accountable for their actions, and, without such a process, IGs could continue their misconduct and harass others. However, the removal process can also be used to rein in or retaliate against OIGs for the pursuit of misconduct by the removal authority. According to the AIG, oversight should be written in such a way that OIGs can only be removed for good cause and without undue influence from the jurisdiction they oversee.

**What is the current status of removal processes for the Baltimore County OIG?** Currently, the Baltimore County OIG can be removed by the county executive with approval from the county council.

### How many OIGs have a removal process?

Total	Local – General Government	Local – Department/ Program	State – General Government	State – Department/ Program
50 (47%)	29 (78%)	4 (67%)	8 (67%)	9 (18%)

*Note: Percentages are for the share of OIGs in that category found to affirmatively have a removal process. The default assumption should not be that OIGs not included in that count do not have a removal process.*

- In many cases, the elected official or department head with oversight of the OIG also has the capacity to remove the IG from their position. In some cases, the IG can only be removed for cause, but there are also many examples of removal authority being subject to an official's discretion. They may also be removed via the legislative process. The most common removal processes occur through votes by the legislature.

## ETHICS COMMISSIONS

**What are ethics commissions?** Government ethics commissions take a variety of forms and commonly have duties such as answering questions from government workers about ethical conduct (including suspected ethical misconduct) and collecting financial disclosures (from workers or others).<sup>4</sup>

**Why are ethics commissions important?** Ethics commissions provide a resource for employees about ethical situations applicable in government contexts and can provide jurisdiction-specific guidance. In addition, by collecting information like financial disclosures, ethics commissions can be proactive in identifying possible avenues to ethical misconduct or be reactive in identifying potential incidents of misconduct (e.g., conflicts of interest). Some ethics commissions can investigate on their own, while others need to refer concerns to law enforcement or other agencies.

**What is the current status of the Ethics Commission in Baltimore County?** The Baltimore Inspector General serves as the executive director of the County Ethics Commission and carries out staff work related to the Commission (e.g., coordinating the financial disclosure process with the County Chief Administrative Officer and working with the Commission members to respond to inquiries).

### How many jurisdictions with an OIG also have an ethics commission?

Total	Local – General Government	Local – Department/ Program	State – General Government	State – Department/ Program
83 (78%)	32 (86%)	5 (83%)	11 (92%)	42 (82%)

*Note: Percentages are for the share of OIGs in that category found to affirmatively have an ethics commission. The default assumption should not be that OIGs not included in that count do not have an ethics commission.*

<sup>4</sup> For more on ethics commissions in Maryland, see Appendix B.

### **How many of these OIGs and ethics commissions are operationally independent?**

<b>Total</b>	<b>Local – General Government</b>	<b>Local – Department/ Program</b>	<b>State – General Government</b>	<b>State – Department/ Program</b>
85 (94%)	29 (91%)	5 (100%)	11 (100%)	40 (42%)

*Note: Percentages are for the share of OIGs and ethics commissions found to be affirmatively operationally independent. The default assumption should not be that OIGs and ethics commissions not included in that count are not operationally independent.*

### **How many operationally independent ethics commissions have paid staff separate from OIG?**

<b>Total</b>	<b>Local – General Government</b>	<b>Local – Department/ Program</b>	<b>State – General Government</b>	<b>State – Department/ Program</b>
60 (71%)	20 (69%)	2 (40%)	9 (82%)	29 (73%)

*Note: Percentages are for the share of operationally independent OIGs and ethics commissions for which the ethics commission was found to have separate paid staff. The default assumption should not be that operationally independent OIGs and ethics commissions have shared paid staff.*

## **OVERALL OIG INDEPENDENCE**

**What is Overall OIG Independence?** Overall OIG Independence is a summary variable describing the operational independence of an OIG. It includes the financial independence, independence from oversight, and independence of action findings discussed above, resulting in OIGs being classified as having high independence (OIG meets all three criteria), medium independence (OIG meets two of the criteria), or low overall independence (OIG meets one or zero of the criteria).

**Why is Overall OIG Independence important?** Overall OIG Independence is a simple method to determine whether an OIG is free of undue influence from others and meets the standards for best practices as outlined by the AIG. If an OIG lacks independence along any of the parameters, it is likely more difficult for them to fully carry out their oversight authority.

**What is the current status of Overall OIG Independence for the Baltimore County OIG?** The Baltimore County OIG has a medium level of Overall OIG Independence. The Office has limited executive oversight statutorily (i.e., there is no statutory oversight beyond how to remove the IG from office) and has the discretion to pursue its own cases but does not have financial independence.



### *How many OIGs have Overall OIG Independence?*

<b>Level of Overall Independence</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Local – General Government</b>	<b>Local – Department/ Program</b>	<b>State – General Government</b>	<b>State – Department/ Program</b>
High	5 (5%)	5 (14%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Medium	27 (25%)	20 (54%)	0 (0%)	5 (42%)	2 (4%)
Low	58 (55%)	10 (27%)	6 (100%)	5 (42%)	37 (73%)

*Note: Percentages are for the share of OIGs in that category found to affirmatively have high, medium, or low Overall OIG Independence. The default assumption should not be that OIGs not included in that count are not independent.*

## SECTION 3: OIG POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Association of Inspectors General provides the *Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspector General* (known as the “Green Book”), which are often used as a basis for operating policies and procedures in individual OIG offices. However, deviations from these policies and processes by OIGs do occur for a variety of reasons, and not all of the questions that have been raised in Baltimore County are encompassed in the AIG *Principles and Standards*. Therefore, this section covers what is known about the policies and processes of other OIGs.

### SOURCES FOR STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

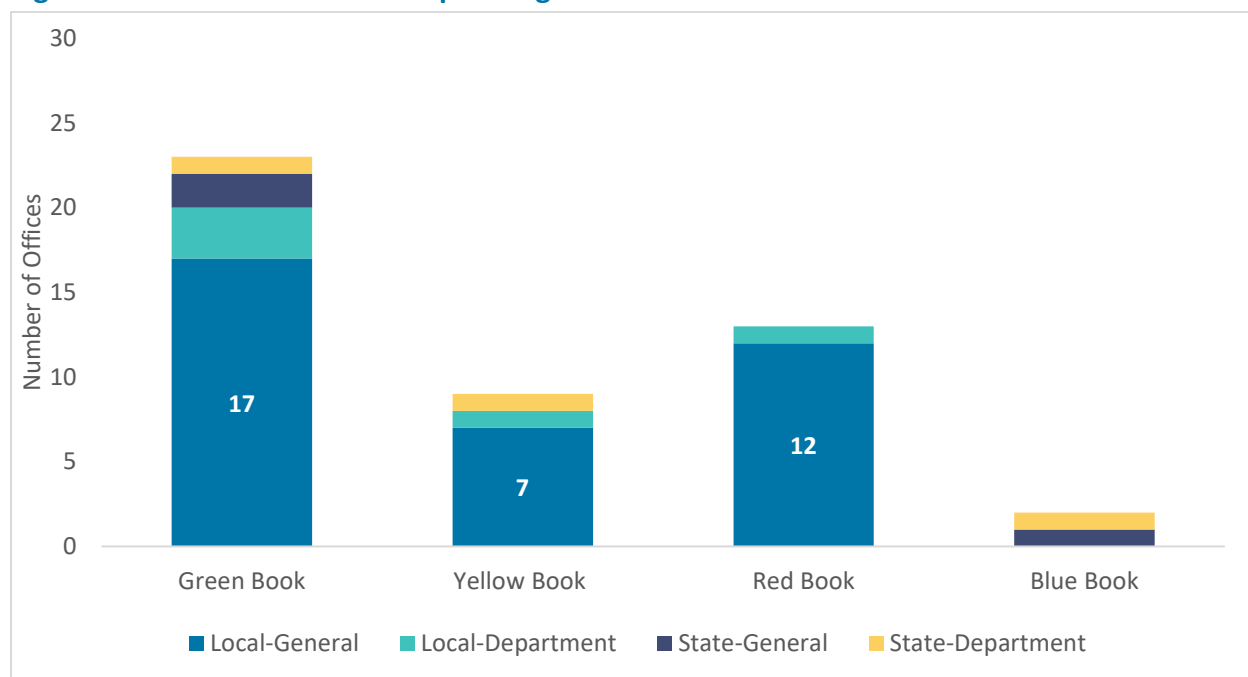
***What are sources for OIG standard operating procedures?*** Along with the *Principles and Standards* issued by the AIG, there are three other primary sources of standards for OIG activities:

- Yellow Book – Generally Accepted Government Audit Standards by the Government Accountability Office,
- Red Book – *International Professional Practices Framework* by Institute of Internal Auditors, and
- Blue Book – *Governmental Accounting, Auditing, and Financial Reporting* by Government Finance Officers Association.

***Why are sources for OIG standard operating procedures important?*** Professional standards of operation help professionalize and standardize operations, offering transparency, accountability, and validity for internal operations that might otherwise be opaque or divergent in different jurisdictions.

***What is the current status of sources for OIG standard operating procedures for the Baltimore County OIG?*** The Baltimore County OIG uses the Green Book as the basis for its operating policies and procedures, and this source was found to be the most common for other local, general government OIGs. As shown in Figure 5, it is used by 17 of these offices. The second most common source for local, general government OIGs is the Red Book, although these standards and those in the Blue books are not relevant to Baltimore County’s OIG since it does not conduct audits.

**Figure 5: Sources for Standard Operating Procedures**



*Notes: Most OIGs use more than one set of standards. Counts are for the share of OIGs in that category found to affirmatively have the identified standards. The default assumption should not be that OIGs not included in that count do not use the identified standards.*

## INDEPENDENT LEGAL COUNSEL

**What is independent legal counsel?** Independent legal counsel refers to attorneys who work either on staff or contractually to provide legal guidance to OIG staff and to represent the OIG should it need to go to court, mediation, arbitration, etc. as part of or due to its operations.

**Why is independent legal counsel important?** Independent legal counsel can help an OIG navigate complex cases and ensure the office is in line with its legal authority and other regulations. Moreover, in cases where the OIG must enter into legal procedures against a government entity of the same jurisdiction, there may be a conflict of interest if the jurisdiction's legal authority would otherwise represent both the OIG and the other entity.

**What is the current status of independent legal counsel for the Baltimore County OIG?** The Baltimore County OIG does not have independent legal counsel. It is represented by the County Attorney as needed.

### ***How many OIGs have independent legal counsel?***

<b>Total</b>	<b>Local – General Government</b>	<b>Local – Department/ Program</b>	<b>State – General Government</b>	<b>State – Department/ Program</b>
14 (13%)	9 (24%)	0 (0%)	2 (17%)	3 (6%)

*Note: Percentages are for the share of OIGs in that category found to affirmatively have independent legal counsel. The default assumption should not be that OIGs not included in that count do not have independent legal counsel.*

## **ADVISORY BOARDS**

***What is an advisory board?*** An advisory board is an organization or group of individuals affiliated with the OIG that supports the OIG in its general operations and provides guidance and feedback.

***Why are advisory boards important?*** Having perspectives outside of the office provides the OIG with meaningful insights that may be overlooked by those within the day-to-day operations. When these boards do not also have an oversight role, OIGs are able to seek guidance on challenges or potential concerns. Advisory board members act as valuable points of contact for both the OIG and those outside the OIG; specifically, they serve as a more objective third-party group concerned with the operations of the OIG.

***What is the current status of the advisory board for the Baltimore County OIG?*** The Baltimore County OIG does not have an independent advisory board.

### ***How many OIGs have advisory boards?***

<b>Total</b>	<b>Local – General Government</b>	<b>Local – Department/ Program</b>	<b>State – General Government</b>	<b>State – Department/ Program</b>
2 (2%)	0 (0%)	1 (17%)	1 (8%)	0 (0%)

*Note: Percentages are for the share of OIGs in that category found to affirmatively have an advisory board. The default assumption should not be that OIGs not included in that count do not have an advisory board.*

## REQUIRED TRAININGS

**What are required trainings?** Government employees may be required to complete trainings as a condition of their employment. These may include bias, ethics, harassment, or other trainings.

**Why are trainings important?** Mandatory ethics and bias trainings are intended to improve service delivery by creating a more equity-focused and educated workforce. By completing bias and harassment trainings, staff will, hopefully, provide better service and have greater tolerance and understanding for those with whom they interact. Annual or otherwise systematic trainings lend credibility to a culture of ethics and accountability, which may stem the tide of unethical behavior as well as empower individuals to report when they witness possible fraud and waste.

**What is the current status of required trainings for the Baltimore County OIG?** New employees of the Baltimore County OIG are required to complete new employee orientation, which includes modules on ethics, diversity, bias, and inclusion. There are no known trainings specific to the OIG beyond the AIG's credentialing program.

### **How many OIGs require trainings?**

Total	Local – General Government	Local – Department/ Program	State – General Government	State – Department/ Program
6 (6%)	4 (11%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (4%)

*Note: Percentages are for the share of OIGs in that category found to affirmatively have required training. The default assumption should not be that OIGs not included in that count do not required trainings.*

## OIG POLICIES WITH RESPECT TO CONFLICTS

**What are policies with respect to conflict?** Conflict policies are formal processes for OIGs that are explicitly designed to help these offices deal with conflict during their work. There may be separate policies for different types of conflict, such as personal conflicts or conflicts of interest.

**Why are conflict policies important?** OIGs by nature have responsibilities that will put them at odds with others. Formal conflict policies help OIGs deal with these situations ethically and appropriately. Furthermore, having policies covering conflict may empower employees to report unethical actions by creating equal terms of engagement between the OIG and complainants, subjects of investigation, etc.

### ***What is the current status of policies with respect to conflict for the Baltimore County OIG?***

Baltimore County executive branch employees have whistleblower protections under the Executive Employees Whistleblower Protection Act and to general employee restrictions on conflicts of interest, but no other policies covering conflict specific to the OIG have been identified.

### ***How many OIGs have policies with respect to conflict?***

Total	Local – General Government	Local – Department/ Program	State – General Government	State – Department/ Program
85 (80%)	37 (100%)	3 (50%)	11 (92%)	34 (67%)

*Note: Percentages are for the share of OIGs in that category found to affirmatively have policies with respect to conflict. These policies may include those applicable to a jurisdiction's employees generally. The default assumption should not be that OIGs not included in that count do not have policies with respect to conflict.*

## **TIME AVAILABLE FOR RESPONSES TO DRAFT REPORTS**

***What is time available for responses to draft reports?*** OIGs often produce reports of their findings, and it is customary for some government investigative bodies to provide a draft of the report to the party subject to the investigation. OIGs may set a period of time in which the parties may respond to correct errors and provide clarifying information, after which the report will be publicly available.

***Why is the time available for responses to draft reports important?*** Without a set time for a report to go public after a draft is made available to relevant parties, a party could delay public release of the information by continually saying they are working on producing the response.

***What is the current status of draft report responses for the Baltimore County OIG?*** The OIG provides two weeks for responses to its draft reports, and extensions are made upon request.

### ***How many OIGs have information available about time available for responses to draft reports?***

Total	Local – General Government	Local – Department/ Program	State – General Government	State – Department/ Program
1 (1%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

*Note: Percentages are for the share of OIGs in that category found to affirmatively have a time available for responses to draft reports. The default assumption should not be that OIGs not included in that count do not have a time available for responses to draft reports.*

## APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

The initial step in producing this data on common practices of Offices of Inspectors General (OIGs) was identifying all OIGs in the United States at the local and state government levels.<sup>5</sup> To do so, the research team first collected those listed as members on the website of the Association of Inspectors General, then employed a systematic search method to identify others. Beginning with Maryland, the team used state and local government websites, Codes of Ordinances, news publications, online directories, and databases (e.g., LexisNexis) to create a resource directory. This process was expanded to the rest of the United States to identify OIGs across the country.

Concurrently, the research team also began identifying the key topics of concern with respect to the structure, accountability, and processes of the Baltimore County OIG. These items were identified via discussions with the OIG, the County Chief Executive and Chief Administration Officer, and members of the Baltimore County Blue Ribbon Commission on Ethics and Accountability (BRCEA) as well as media sources and other research.

The research team then systematically conducted research to determine how OIGs at the local and state level handle the key topics of concern. The research team used state and local codes of ordinances, executive orders, legislation, departmental rules, policies and procedures manuals, and annual reports for each jurisdiction identified in the process. The focus was on OIGs at the local level that had oversight over more than one agency, such as all government operations or those limited to the executive branch or General Fund budgets. However, where possible, the information was collected for state OIGs and local OIGs that had oversight over just one agency or program. The research team also called some OIGs in jurisdictions similar to Baltimore County to gather information about those offices not publicly available; the limited responses received via telephone inquiries is included in this report as it was made available.

### CAVEAT

Frequencies and other information are only shown for OIGs that were affirmatively found to have certain characteristics. While OIGs not included in that count may indeed not have that characteristic, the default assumption should not be that OIGs not included in that count do not have the characteristic. Rather, due to the nature of the key issues of concern, an OIG may follow a certain policy or have a certain structural element but does not make that information public.

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<sup>5</sup> While National Guard and military-based OIGs exist at the state level, they primarily operate within federal military agencies. They were therefore omitted from this report.

## APPENDIX B: MARYLAND COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSIONS

By state statute, each county-level jurisdiction in Maryland has an ethics commission. Below is a count of how many of the ethics commissions were found to have certain characteristics.

**Table 2: Characteristics of Maryland County-Level Ethics Commissions**

	Number of Counties	Baltimore County Ethics Commission
Operates as an independent agency	9	No
Receives financial support independent of other organizations	5	No
Handle employee financial disclosures	19	Yes
Offers ethics training or similar education	8	Yes
Provides opinions on ethical issues	15	Yes
Hears complaints about suspected ethics violations	19	Yes
Investigates suspected ethics violations	4	Yes

*Note: Number of counties shows how many counties' ethics commissions were affirmatively found to have this characteristic or do this task. This count does not include the Baltimore County Ethics Commission. The default assumption should not be that ethics commissions not included in that count do not have policies with respect to conflict.*