



pennsylvania

OFFICE OF STATE INSPECTOR GENERAL

*The **mission** of the of the Office of State Inspector General is to deter, detect, prevent, and eradicate fraud, waste, misconduct, and abuse in programs, operations, and contracting of executive agencies.*

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2022-2023

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A Message from Governor Shapiro



My Administration is committed to getting stuff done for the people of Pennsylvania – and that means working efficiently and effectively across Commonwealth agencies, while using taxpayer dollars in the most responsible manner possible. The Office of State Inspector General (OSIG) plays an important role in our efforts to keep Pennsylvanians safe and ensure there is accountability and integrity in state government. This year's annual report reflects the dedication of the OSIG team in addressing the challenges faced by our state agencies, including in law enforcement, financial integrity, and program evaluation.

OSIG's proactive approach in collaborating with agencies to ensure risks are identified and addressed helps to protect the interests of Pennsylvanians and prevent the misuse of taxpayer funds.

OSIG agents are specially trained to assist those in poverty, which supports OSIG's unique focus on helping to guarantee that only Pennsylvanians in need receive public assistance benefits. OSIG leverages this specialized training to assure that anyone who cheats the system will be held accountable. Our public benefits system is built on the faith that Pennsylvanians instill in it, and OSIG is at the forefront of ensuring that public trust.

Starting in Fiscal Year 2023-24, OSIG will also administer the Pennsylvania Citizen Law Enforcement Advisory and Review (CLEAR) Commission. The CLEAR Commission will bring together law enforcement experts and criminal justice reform advocates from across the Commonwealth to support public safety and ensure accountability for hard-working law enforcement agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction.

As Attorney General, I held my agency and my staff to the highest standards of integrity and accountability, and I'm proud to say that we are bringing those same standards to the Governor's Office. Under the leadership of Inspector General Lucas M. Miller, OSIG has been unwavering in its commitment to ensuring the integrity of state agencies, safeguarding public resources, and promoting the highest standards of public service.

This annual report serves as a testament to the dedication of OSIG to assure everyone that our government operates at the highest standard. Together, we will promote trust in government and accountability for public officials while fostering dialogue and allowing our Administration to bring people together to deliver results for all Pennsylvanians.

Introduction

On July 20, 2017, Act 29 of 2017 was enacted as an amendment to the administrative code, establishing an Office of State Inspector General under statute and giving it law enforcement powers, including the ability to issue subpoenas and search warrants, access criminal justice databases and work more cooperatively with other law enforcement agencies. OSIG (formerly “OIG”) was originally created by Executive Order 1987-7 on April 6, 1987, to “deter, detect, prevent, and eradicate fraud, waste, misconduct, and abuse in the programs, operations, and contracting of executive agencies,” a mission it fulfills for the citizens of Pennsylvania to this day.

The mission of the Office of State Inspector General (OSIG) is to deter, detect, prevent and eradicate fraud, waste, misconduct and abuse in programs, operations, and contracting of executive agencies. OSIG is committed to a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion for its workforce, and these ideals are at the very core of its mission to ensure Ethics, Accountability, and Integrity in state government.

To accomplish its mission, OSIG has two investigative bureaus: the Bureau of Fraud Prevention and Prosecution (BFPP) and the Bureau of Special Investigations (BSI). OSIG has offices located in Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and Wilkes-Barre.

The Bureau of Fraud Prevention and Prosecution (BFPP) is responsible for conducting investigations into suspected public benefits fraud and abuse as well as performing collection activities for public benefit programs administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS).

The Bureau of Special Investigations (BSI) is primarily tasked with investigating allegations of waste, abuse, and misconduct in agencies under the Governor’s jurisdiction. BSI works to identify and eliminate the mismanagement of state monies, employee misconduct, and contract fraud irregularities. BSI is further tasked with conducting pre-employment background investigations for executive-level appointments and other positions of trust in state government.

Looking to the future, OSIG has initiated a pilot program, the Bureau of Inspections and Financial Integrity (BIFI), which will collaborate with Commonwealth agencies to identify and evaluate high-risk grants, contracts, and procurements for the purpose of mitigating risk within taxpayer-funded programs. Also, in 2023-24, Governor Shapiro has issued an Executive Order establishing within OSIG the Pennsylvania Citizen Law Enforcement Advisory and Review (CLEAR) Commission.

OSIG is further supported by the Bureau of Administration, Policy, and Training (BAPT), the Bureau of External Affairs (BEA), and the Office of Chief Counsel. The men and women of OSIG work each day to ensure that the values of good government - ethics, integrity, and accountability – come first in Commonwealth government.

A Message from the State Inspector General

Lucas M. Miller



I am honored to present the Fiscal Year 2022-23 annual report of the Pennsylvania Office of State Inspector General (OSIG), highlighting our dedication to integrity, accountability, and the safeguarding of taxpayer-funded programs. This report acknowledges the unwavering commitment of the OSIG team as we tackle new initiatives.

In our ongoing pursuit of efficiency, we're excited to introduce an innovative online payment platform. This tool streamlines processes, providing a user-friendly experience for stakeholders to make timely payments using credit cards or personal checking accounts. This digital approach eliminates the need for traditional mail-in

payments, saving both time and resources.

Communication is key to our mission, and this year, OSIG has embraced new forms of outreach to engage with the public. In addition to traditional channels, we have actively expanded our presence on social media platforms. This strategic move allows us to connect with a broader audience, share vital information, and foster a greater understanding of our role in the responsible stewardship of public resources.

A significant stride includes the pilot program led by the Bureau of Inspections and Financial Integrity (BIFI), evaluating high-risk grants, contracts, and procurements. Collaborating with Commonwealth agencies, BIFI proactively addresses potential risks, fortifying taxpayer-funded programs. In Fiscal Year 2023-24, BIFI will transition from a pilot to a permanent part of OSIG's services.

Looking ahead, we are laying the groundwork for the Pennsylvania Citizen Law Enforcement Advisory and Review (CLEAR) Commission. This pivotal initiative will reinforce the principles of accountability and community engagement with law enforcement under the Governor's jurisdiction.

As OSIG navigates the evolving landscape of public service, we remain committed to accountability, ethics, and preserving public trust. We extend heartfelt gratitude to the citizens of Pennsylvania for their continued support as we work toward a more resilient and responsive government.

Lucas M. Miller was appointed by Governor Josh Shapiro and is the eleventh Inspector General of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. With over 24 years at OSIG, Miller has held nearly every position within the agency. A Certified Inspector General, Miller's extensive experience uniquely qualifies him for the role, working to prevent fraud and enhance citizen trust in government.

Accomplishments, By the Numbers

Fiscal Year 2022-2023

Saved the Commonwealth \$6.57 in cost savings and collections for every \$1.00 spent on investigative activities.

Saved the Commonwealth more than \$45.8 million through its public assistance fraud prevention activities by investigating 20,010 applications for public assistance benefits.

Filed 618 criminal complaints on individuals committing public assistance fraud, totaling \$2.9 million in unlawfully obtained benefits and resulting in additional savings of \$1.9 million through disqualification of future benefits.

Successfully adjudicated 74 administrative disqualification actions on individuals committing intentional program violations, totaling \$181,428 in restitution and resulting in additional savings of \$176,370 through disqualification of future benefits.

Collected for the Commonwealth treasury \$10.64 million in restitution for Long-Term Care (LTC) benefit overpayments.

Collected in total (all benefit programs) \$23.45 million for the Commonwealth.

Received 590 complaints and investigative requests that resulted in 54 preliminary inquiries or investigations into possible fraud, waste, abuse, and misconduct in state agencies.

Conducted 337 pre-employment background investigations for executive-level appointments and other positions of trust in state government.

Answered 7,755 calls reporting suspected public assistance fraud on the Public Assistance Fraud Tipline and processed 6,876 public assistance fraud tips via the OSIG website and 131 tips via U.S. mail.

Looking to the Future

In Fiscal Year 2022-23, the Office of State Inspector General built a foundation for many future endeavors. The two most prominent were the Bureau of Inspections and Financial Integrity (BIFI) and the Pennsylvania Citizen Law Enforcement Advisory and Review (CLEAR) Commission.

The Bureau of Inspections and Financial Integrity (BIFI)

With full support from Governor Shapiro, OSIG initiated a pilot program this fiscal year to create the Bureau of Inspections and Financial Integrity (BIFI). Modeled after national best practices adopted by the Association of Inspectors General, BIFI collaborates with Commonwealth agencies to identify and evaluate high-risk grants, contracts, and procurements for the purpose of mitigating risk within taxpayer-funded programs.

In conjunction with other executive agencies, the Fiscal Year 2022-23 pilot involved three grant inspections, which resulted in over \$200,000 in taxpayer funds being identified for recovery by the Commonwealth. A number of these pilot inspections also resulted in recommendations for criminal referral to the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General.

Based on this success, in Fiscal Year 2023-24, BIFI will exit pilot status and become fully formed as a Bureau within the Office of State Inspector General.

BIFI will allow OSIG to provide other Commonwealth government agencies with a specific referral source for matters requiring timely financial analysis, along with monitoring of grant programs, grant recipients, and selected procurements. BIFI functions as an extension of the agency: prior to beginning any work, BIFI and the agency agree to the specific objectives and scope of any inspection or evaluation.

In Fiscal Year 2023-24, BIFI will continue to build partnerships with agencies to identify and eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse of Commonwealth taxpayer funds.

Pennsylvania Citizen Law Enforcement Advisory and Review (CLEAR) Commission

Through extensive study and review of past work, OSIG has prepared for the creation of the Pennsylvania CLEAR Commission. In 2023-24, CLEAR will bring together law enforcement experts and criminal justice reform advocates from across the Commonwealth to support public safety and ensure accountability for law enforcement agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction who work hard to serve Pennsylvanians every day.

The Commission will perform reviews of completed internal investigations related to allegations of incidents within agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction. CLEAR comprises individuals selected by Governor Shapiro who bring decades of experience in law enforcement, mental health, and community advocacy. This is a diverse group of highly qualified individuals who represent areas from all across the Commonwealth.

Bureau of Special Investigations (BSI)

The Bureau of Special Investigations (BSI) investigates allegations of fraud, waste, abuse, and misconduct in agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction. BSI's team of experienced investigators works closely with OSIG attorneys to conduct effective, independent, and timely investigations to identify and eliminate mismanagement of state monies, misconduct by state employees and fraud and irregularities in state contracts and grants.

Complaints received by BSI come from private citizens, state employees and Commonwealth officials. There are also instances when BSI will initiate its own investigations. Complaints can be submitted through OSIG's website, via the telephone hotline or in writing. Complaints received by BSI are reviewed to determine jurisdiction. Some complaints lead to extensive and complex BSI investigations, while others may be referred to a more appropriate state agency for follow-up. Or, after a preliminary inquiry fails to substantiate the allegations, the complaint may be closed.

Any Commonwealth employee who, in good faith, reports wrongdoing or waste to OSIG is protected under Pennsylvania's Whistleblower Law (43 P.S. § 1423).

BSI is tasked with conducting pre-employment background investigations for executive level appointments and other positions of trust within the Commonwealth. Additionally, BSI conducts judicial candidate investigative methodologies for individuals being considered as nominees by the Governor for appropriate judicial vacancies.

BSI also plays a role in increasing state government's effectiveness by conducting program reviews when problems are suspected in a work process or program. During a program review, BSI thoroughly evaluates the work process or program to improve transparency, efficient delivery of services, employee accountability and management oversight. These program reviews may originate from a related investigation or may be requested by an agency's executive-level management.

Upon completion of an investigation or program review, BSI may issue a report to the Office of General Counsel and specific agency heads, detailing BSI's findings and recommendations for the agency going forward. Investigative findings that rise to the level of criminal activity are referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency for possible prosecution. Other investigations may result in referrals to the State Ethics Commission or other administrative bodies for appropriate action.

BSI program reviews have generated positive changes in state programs and processes. Some BSI investigation subjects have been disciplined, removed from Commonwealth employment, or prosecuted. These outcomes serve as a deterrent to future employee misconduct. BSI investigations also have led to important reforms of Commonwealth operations, resulting in increased accountability, transparency, and effectiveness. BSI specifically recommends that all Commonwealth agencies initiate BSI program reviews to further reduce waste, fraud, and abuse.

Bureau of Fraud Prevention and Prosecution (BFPP)

OSIG's Bureau of Fraud Prevention and Prosecution (BFPP) investigates and prosecutes public assistance fraud and conducts collection activities for the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS). This partnership with DHS helps ensure that public assistance benefits are distributed fairly and equitably and that the integrity of the Commonwealth's public assistance programs is maintained. BFPP investigates allegations of fraud within DHS public benefits programs:

- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF - Cash Assistance)
- Medical Assistance (MA), including Long Term Care (LTC)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), including SNAP trafficking
- Subsidized Child Care (SCC)
- Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP)
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Special Allowance Programs

BFPP has regional offices in Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Wilkes-Barre. BFPP staff also are stationed in or assigned to work with DHS staff in every Pennsylvania county. Additionally, BFPP staff work with Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) offices across the Commonwealth to investigate potential fraud in the DHS Subsidized Child Care Program.

Field Investigation Program

Individuals applying or re-applying for public assistance must submit truthful, complete, and accurate information. When a DHS caseworker or ELRC eligibility specialist suspects an applicant or recipient has provided inaccurate, inconsistent, or incomplete information, they make an investigative referral to OSIG. OSIG Special Agents then conduct an investigation to verify the circumstances of the applicant or recipient. OSIG provides the results of the investigation to the DHS caseworker or ELRC eligibility specialist, who then uses the information to determine whether benefits should be authorized, continued, denied, or reduced.

Fraud Investigation Program

BFPP's Fraud Investigation Program focuses on individuals who fraudulently received public assistance benefits to which they were not entitled. Pennsylvania law prohibits the fraudulent receipt of benefits.

Individuals who commit public assistance fraud face criminal charges, payment of court costs and fines, restitution payments, and disqualification from receiving future benefits.

When a DHS caseworker or ELRC eligibility specialist discovers that an overpayment has occurred, they forward the information to OSIG. BFPP staff conduct an investigation to determine whether the case contains the elements of public

assistance fraud. If it does, BFPP staff file police criminal complaints with the appropriate Magisterial District Judge. Once public assistance fraud charges are filed, the case moves through the Commonwealth's court system.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program — Trafficking

BFPP conducts SNAP Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card-trafficking investigations of stores and SNAP recipients.

SNAP trafficking occurs when SNAP benefits are illegally exchanged for cash, services, or anything other than eligible food items. For example, a store owner may give a SNAP recipient cash at a percentage of their balance in SNAP benefits, or exchange SNAP benefits for cigarettes, drugs, or other non-allowable goods. The store owner will then redeem the benefits or use the EBT card to make purchases for the store owner's benefit.

BFPP also investigates and prosecutes other EBT card-related crimes, such as theft, access device fraud, and identity theft.

Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan Act included funding for states to establish emergency rental assistance programs. The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) was designated as the agency to oversee the administration of the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). In early 2022, DHS requested OSIG assistance with the investigation of applicant eligibility and potential fraud in ERAP. BFPP updated its systems to accommodate this new program and began accepting referrals in March 2022.

During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, BFPP completed 671 field investigations on behalf of DHS and saved the Commonwealth \$4,787,622.00 in ERAP funds by identifying fraudulent applications and ineligible applicants. BFPP filed nine criminal charges against defendants who received ERAP payments via fraudulent means. The total restitution filed with these prosecutions was \$40,495.00. OSIG continues to accept fraud referrals throughout the Commonwealth and is actively investigating referrals of ERAP fraud.

Public Assistance Fraud Tipline

OSIG is committed to identifying and eliminating fraud, waste, and abuse in public assistance programs. As part of that commitment, OSIG operates a toll-free Public Assistance Fraud Tipline at 1-800-932-0582. Concerned citizens can use the Tipline to report suspected public assistance fraud. OSIG also receives public assistance fraud tips via an online reporting system available at www.OSIG.pa.gov, through the U.S. mail, and via fax. Tips may include information on a benefit recipient's unreported income and resources or incorrectly reported household composition, all of which may affect eligibility for public assistance. Each tip received is carefully reviewed and, if appropriate, investigated by BFPP staff. When an investigation reveals information that impacts a recipient's eligibility, OSIG sends this information to DHS.

Administrative Disqualification Hearings

When an individual has committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV) in the TANF, SNAP or SCC program but criminal prosecution is not an option, OSIG can pursue the case through an Administrative Disqualification Hearing (ADH).

Individuals facing the ADH process may waive their right to a hearing, which means they accept the disqualification penalties and agree to repay improperly received benefits. Otherwise, they will have a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge who will evaluate the evidence and render a decision. Individuals found guilty of committing an IPV are ordered to pay restitution and are disqualified from receiving future benefits. The disqualification penalties imposed through the ADH process are the same as those imposed in criminal proceedings.

Long Term Care

Pennsylvania's Long Term Care (LTC) Program provides nursing home assistance and medical care for financially and medically eligible individuals. Each year, the program pays out millions of dollars to ensure that Pennsylvanians who are elderly or have disabilities receive the care they need.

When DHS discovers that an individual or their personal representative failed to report income or assets that affect their eligibility for LTC benefits, the possible overpayment is referred to OSIG for investigation and collection. If the investigation determines that the elements of public assistance fraud exist, OSIG files criminal charges. If there is no fraud, OSIG recovers by civil action the overpayment amount. OSIG's legal staff will initiate civil court actions to obtain repayment, if necessary.

Program Integrity

The Program Integrity Office (PIO) works collaboratively with DHS to eradicate abuses within public assistance programs and operations to prevent public assistance fraud and waste. This unit acts as the agency's liaison to DHS and works with DHS's Program Integrity Office and Office of Income Maintenance.

OSIG's participation in DHS work groups and projects related to program integrity initiatives has strengthened the partnership between the two agencies.

Greater cooperation and teamwork between OSIG and DHS are enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of both agencies' fraud-fighting efforts and OSIG's collection of restitution from offenders.

Collections

Individuals who are found guilty of public assistance fraud, or who have committed an Intentional Program Violation through the ADH process, are ordered to make restitution to OSIG. However, not all collections by OSIG involve public assistance fraud or come through the ADH process. Regulations state that all overpaid benefits, regardless of whether fraud occurred, must be repaid to the Commonwealth. OSIG collects all benefit overpayments for DHS through BFPP's Operation Support Division.

BFPP Significant Cases

OSIG Uncovers Plot Involving Pandemic Funds

BFPP investigators determined that a woman from Clearfield County conspired with a friend to falsely report that she was his landlord. Investigators found that the woman and friend completed and falsified Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) applications by claiming the friend was behind in rental payments due to the COVID-19 pandemic. BFPP charged the woman with felony theft and receiving stolen property. The woman pleaded guilty, was sentenced to three years' probation, and was ordered to make full restitution in the amount of \$12,750.

Woman Steals over \$76,000 in Public Assistance Benefits

BFPP investigators determined that a Cambria County woman received over \$76,000 in public assistance benefits to which she was not entitled. The woman perpetuated a fraud scheme for over four years by claiming that she resided alone with her children. The investigation determined that the woman's husband resided in the household with his family, and that he earned over \$288,000 during the time the woman falsely reported her household living arrangements. The woman received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medical Assistance (MA), Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and Subsidized Day Care (SDC) benefits to which she was not entitled and was charged with four felony counts and one misdemeanor count of public assistance fraud.

OSIG Charges Bethlehem Store Owner with SNAP Trafficking

BFPP investigators found that a Bethlehem store owner provided SNAP recipients with cash in exchange for their SNAP benefits. The store owner instructed SNAP customers to purchase bulk products with their SNAP benefits. He would then pay customers cash in exchange for the products that he would re-sell in his store. BFPP charged the store owner and one store clerk with SNAP trafficking. The defendants pleaded guilty and were ordered to pay full restitution.

Aliquippa Woman Steals Pandemic Money with Fake Property Ruse

An Aliquippa woman pretended to be the owner of an abandoned property and falsely reported that she had a tenant behind in rent, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. BFPP found that the woman completed false applications to obtain ERAP benefits. BFPP charged the woman with one felony count of theft by deception. The woman was ordered to pay \$11,700 in restitution and was sentenced to five years' probation.

OSIG Charges Woman who Stole \$33,464 in Subsidized Day Care Benefits

BFPP determined that a Lehigh County woman falsified documents to misrepresent her household circumstances to obtain SDC benefits. The woman claimed that she and her child resided alone, and that she did not earn enough income from her employment to pay for childcare. Over four years, the woman received \$33,464 in SDC benefits, but the BFPP investigation revealed that the father of the woman's child resided in the household and earned almost \$300,000 from his employment. BFPP charged the woman with felony public assistance fraud.

Bureau of Administration, Policy, and Training (BAPT)

The Bureau of Administration, Policy, and Training (BAPT) operates as a support bureau to OSIG employees by providing supplies and equipment, negotiating contracts and services, administering all fiscal budgetary matters, overseeing personnel actions and employee relations, writing agency policies and procedures, and providing training to new and existing staff. BAPT is comprised of four divisions: Employee Services, Budget, Claim Accounting, and Policy and Training.

Employee Services Division

The Employee Services Division is responsible for the coordination of all personnel management activities, which include but are not limited to recruitment, hiring, workplace injuries, human resource policy development, labor relations, employee discipline, timekeeping and leave management.

Budget Division

The Budget Division manages OSIG's budget and procurement process. This includes processing orders and purchases with contracted vendors, serving as liaison to vendors on payments and purchases, managing budget preparation and projections, and approving all personnel actions and purchases in accordance with the budget. The Division also oversees facilities management, including all office leases, space allocation and building access; management of the agency's automotive fleet; mail and courier services; and the purchase and deployment of equipment and supplies.

Claim Accounting Division

The Claim Accounting Division provides accounting support for the processing of monies recovered from public assistance recipients who obtained benefits to which they were not entitled.

Division of Policy and Training

The Division of Policy and Training offers training and program support. The division provides training to all new OSIG employees and an extensive program for all new investigators. The division also provides existing staff ongoing training as a refresher or when a new policy is implemented. The division trains other state agencies and community partners to identify and refer potential fraud, waste, and abuse to OSIG and promotes the agency to potential future employees.

The Division also provides program support not only to the bureaus within OSIG but also to other Commonwealth offices and local agencies that deliver public benefits or are involved in law enforcement. Program support takes many forms, such as developing and issuing policies; creating forms, notices, handbooks, and manuals for OSIG staff; responding to policy questions as well as non-policy related questions; preparing; designing and developing statewide promotional materials; and developing processes and procedures for other Commonwealth agencies' use when dealing with operations that affect OSIG.

Bureau of External Affairs (BEA)

The Bureau of External Affairs (BEA) is a vital division within OSIG, as it handles a wide range of external communications and public relations responsibilities. These responsibilities include legislative affairs, public policy, press relations, and digital communications, all of which play a crucial role in shaping the agency's public image and communicating its message to the public and government stakeholders.

Legislative affairs is one of BEA's most important responsibilities. This involves working with state legislators and staff to shape policy and laws related to OSIG's mission. BEA may work to promote the agency's legislative agenda, attend hearings, and work with other government agencies to advance the agency's goals. This work is crucial in ensuring that the agency has the necessary resources and support to carry out its mission effectively.

Public policy is another important aspect of the bureau's work. BEA is responsible for developing OSIG's legislative and policy agenda, as well as analyzing and commenting on proposed legislation and regulations that may impact the agency's mission. BEA may also work with other government agencies and organizations to develop policy recommendations and best practices. This work helps to ensure that OSIG's policies align with the public interest, and that the agency is held accountable for its actions.

BEA is also responsible for communicating OSIG's message to the media and responding to media inquiries. This includes developing and distributing press releases, preparing and providing background information to reporters, and arranging interviews with agency officials. BEA also plays an important role in crisis communication, ensuring that the agency's message is communicated accurately and effectively in times of crisis.

Digital communications, such as the agency's website and social media accounts, are also under the purview of BEA. BEA is responsible for creating and maintaining the agency's digital presence, including website design, content creation, and social media management. This helps the agency to engage with the public and stakeholders, provide information about the agency's mission and work, and respond to feedback and inquiries.

BEA plays a critical role in shaping the agency's public image and communicating its message to the public and government stakeholders. BEA works in coordination with the Governor's office to ensure that the agency's legislative, public policy, press, and digital communications efforts are aligned, effective, and responsive to the needs of the public and government stakeholders. BEA's work is crucial in ensuring that the agency has the necessary resources and support to carry out its mission effectively and that the agency is held accountable for its actions.

Office of Chief Counsel (OCC)

The OSIG Office of Chief Counsel (OCC) has attorneys in Harrisburg, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh. OCC provides legal advice to the Inspector General and OSIG.

OSIG's attorneys actively participate in all aspects of Bureau of Special Investigations (BSI) investigations. They interview witnesses; review and analyze investigative materials to identify potential civil, criminal, and administrative violations; recommend investigative activity; and draft OSIG investigative reports and other investigation-related summarization documents. They represent the interests of OSIG and client agencies in administrative hearings and before state and federal courts.

OSIG attorneys provide legal assistance to the Bureau of Fraud Prevention and Prosecution (BFPP) in recovering fraudulently obtained public benefits, particularly in the Long-Term Care programs. They represent OSIG and BFPP personnel in civil lawsuits filed to recover overpayments in such benefit programs as medical assistance, cash assistance and SNAP. They also provide legal assistance to BFPP in its public assistance fraud prosecution and administrative disqualification hearing initiatives.

In 2023, OSIG attorneys were vital partners in the development and operation of the Bureau of Inspections and Financial Integrity (BIFI). OSIG attorneys work to make sure inspections comply with best practices and comply with national standards.

OCC attorneys draft and review proposed agency policies, legislation, and regulations affecting OSIG programs. They assist with agency contracting, information technology, and human resource issues; respond to informal requests for public information; and assist in preparation of OSIG investigation and post-investigation hearings, along with any post-investigation legal matters.

Report fraud, waste, misconduct, or abuse

in Commonwealth programs, operations, or contracts by calling toll-free:

1-855-FRAUD-PA (1-855-372-8372)

Report public assistance fraud against an individual or business by calling toll-free:

1-800-932-0582

Send written information to the following addresses:

Public Assistance Fraud Tips:

Office of State Inspector General
555 Walnut Street, 7th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Government Fraud Tips:

Office of State Inspector General
555 Walnut Street, 8th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

<http://www.osig.pa.gov>

All calls and correspondence are confidential



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Providing investigative services for Pennsylvania's citizens for nearly 30 years