



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

JOCELYN E. STRAUBER
COMMISSIONER

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NEW YORK, NY 10038
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October 31, 2024

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL

Honorable Eric Adams
Mayor
City of New York
City Hall
New York, New York 10007

Honorable Adrienne Adams
Speaker
New York City Council
City Hall
New York, New York 10007

Re: Whistleblower Law Complaints for Fiscal Year 2024

Dear Mr. Mayor and Madam Speaker:

The New York City Department of Investigation (DOI) is submitting this report pursuant to Section 12-113 of the New York City Administrative Code, the City's "Whistleblower Protection Law." Section 4, Subdivision (i) of the law provides that, "[n]ot later than October thirty-first of each year, the commissioner [of investigation], in consultation with the special commissioner of investigation [for the New York City School District] and the corporation counsel, shall prepare and forward to the mayor and the council a report" on the complaints governed by this section for the preceding Fiscal Year. The following is DOI's report to the Mayor and the City Council for Fiscal Year 2024.¹

¹ This report does not incorporate whistleblower complaints received and investigated by the Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District (SCI) or the Corporation Counsel. That information is available in separate reports, which are attached.

The Whistleblower Protection Law prohibits retaliation against New York City employees, as well as certain employees of City contractors and subcontractors, for reporting corruption, criminal activity, conflict of interest, gross mismanagement or abuse of authority in City government to DOI. The law protects such a report of information whether the employee makes a formal complaint to DOI or reports information to DOI as a witness in an already pending investigation.²

The City Council has periodically amended and expanded the categories protected by the Whistleblower Protection Law. A 2007 amendment expanded the scope to include complaints concerning risk of harm to the health, safety or educational welfare of children. In 2012, the Law was amended to extend protection to officers and employees of vendors who have contracts with the City valued at \$100,000 or more. Further amendments to the law in 2021 added SCI as one of the designated entities for receipt of a complaint of retaliation, expanded the data DOI includes in its annual fiscal year report, and required DOI to send written notification every 90 days to a whistleblower complainant regarding the status of an open investigation.

Under 1978's Mayoral Executive Order 16 (MEO 16), all public officers and employees have an affirmative obligation to report corruption, fraud and other wrongdoing or risk their jobs and professional advancement if they do not.³ MEO 16 operates in tandem with the Whistleblower Protection Law, with the latter providing essential protections to individuals who step forward as part of their 'duty to report' and suffer adverse actions as a result. Public servants who report wrongdoing are vital to DOI's mission to root out corruption, instill public confidence in government, promote integrity, and ensure that City services and operations are not undermined by misconduct, fraud, or waste.

DOI is providing the following information pursuant to Section 12-113 of the City's Administrative Code:

- In Fiscal Year 2024, DOI logged 2,083 complaints from City employees alleging corruption, criminal activity, conflict of interest, gross management or abuse of

² The Law also protects reports of information made to a member of the City Council, the Public Advocate, the City Comptroller, or the Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District (SCI), each of whom has a duty to refer the information to DOI unless (1) the conduct is within the jurisdiction of SCI, in which case the complaint shall be referred to SCI, or (2) the conduct is alleged to have been committed by the DOI Commissioner, the SCI Commissioner, or a DOI Deputy Commissioner, in which case the complaint must be referred to the corporation counsel.

³ Mayoral Executive Order 16, Section 4(d) states, "Every officer and employee of the City shall have the affirmative obligation to report, directly and without undue delay, to the Commissioner or an Inspector General any and all information concerning conduct which they know or should reasonably know to involve corrupt or other criminal activity or conflict of interest, (i) by another City officer or employee, which concerns his or her office or employment, of (ii) by persons dealing with the City, which concerns their dealings with the City. The knowing failure of any officer or employee to report as required above shall constitute cause for removal from office or employment or other appropriate penalty."

authority, of which more than 265 resulted in investigations, preliminary investigations, or were merged into existing investigations. Additional City employees may have made complaints anonymously or without identifying their employment status. Many City employees provided valuable information in the course of DOI investigations, even if those investigations did not originate with an employee complaint.

- In Fiscal Year 2024, DOI logged one complaint from employees of contractors. Additional employees of contractors may have made complaints to their contracting agency, or to DOI, without identifying their employment status.
- In Fiscal Year 2024, DOI logged 12 complaints regarding the “risk of harm to the health, safety or educational welfare of a child.” Most such complaints would be made in the first instance to DOE, ACS, or another law enforcement agency.
- DOI currently has almost 250 staff in its Investigations Division, including Inspectors General, attorneys, and investigators, who conduct or participate in whistleblower investigations.

In Fiscal Year 2024, DOI received five complaints from individuals who specifically alleged job-related retaliation or sought protection for reporting misconduct in City government, and DOI opened four investigations. The remaining complaint was administratively closed. Broken down by the agencies where the complainants worked, the whistleblower retaliation complaints DOI received in Fiscal Year 2024 are as follows:

Agency	Number of Complaints
Health + Hospitals	3
New York City Housing Authority	1
Law Department	1

Of the four complaints that were opened as Whistleblower Law investigations in Fiscal Year 2024, DOI closed two matters during the reporting period. Two remained open and under investigation as of the end of the reporting year. In total, DOI closed six Whistleblower Law investigations in Fiscal Year 2024, including three investigations opened in Fiscal Year 2023 and one investigation opened in Fiscal Year 2019. At the end of the reporting period, two investigations remained open, both of which were opened in Fiscal Year 2024. Both of the two investigations that remained open at the end of the reporting period had been open between 180 and 365 days as of June 30, 2024. The median number of days the investigations remained open by the end of the reporting period was 264 days.

With respect to the six investigations closed in the reporting year, one of the investigations resulted in a finding that the complainant was entitled to protection under the City’s Whistleblower Protection Law. With respect to the complaint that was administratively closed, DOI determined that the retaliation complained of was alleged to have been as a result of a prior Equal Employment Opportunity complaint that the complainant had made, and not as a result of a prior complaint of corruption, criminal activity, conflict of interest, gross mismanagement or abuse of authority.

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The New York City Whistleblower Protection Law is fundamental to the work of DOI. The law supports the mandate that City employees report corruption when they see it and provides protections when they do step forward. It is good government in action, holding public servants accountable and protecting them when they do the right thing, fostering a culture that does not tolerate corruption, fraud, abuse of authority or waste of public funds. DOI is committed to continuing its efforts to ensure the effectiveness and public awareness of this Law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Strauber', is centered within a light gray rectangular box. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jocelyn E. Strauber
Commissioner

MURIEL GOODE-TRUFANT
Acting Corporation Counsel

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
LAW DEPARTMENT
100 CHURCH STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10007

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October 23, 2024

Jocelyn Strauber
Commissioner
Department of Investigation
City of New York
180 Maiden Lane
New York, NY 10038

Re: Whistleblower Complaints for Fiscal Year 2024

Dear Commissioner Strauber:

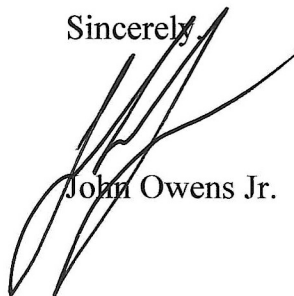
The Office of the Corporation Counsel (hereinafter “Law Department”) submits this report detailing complaints and statistics related to the New York City Whistleblower Law to the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”) in furtherance of the DOI Commissioner’s obligation to report annually to the Mayor and the New York City Council the number and disposition of complaints under the statute. The New York City Administrative Code § 12-113, also known as the Whistleblower Law, relates to employees of an agency of the City, or employees of vendors conducting business with the City, who report information concerning conduct which they know or reasonably believe to involve corruption, criminal activity, conflict of interest, gross mismanagement, or abuse of authority in City government to the DOI commissioner, the New York City Public Advocate, the New York City Comptroller, or a member of the New York City Council.

The Law Department’s review of Whistleblower complaints is limited to complaints raised by DOI employees and by employees of the Special Commissioner of Investigation for the City School District of New York (“SCI”). The Whistleblower Law prohibits any adverse personnel action against a reporting employee in retaliation for whistleblower activity.

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In Fiscal Year 2024, the Law Department received one DOI complaint alleging retaliation for reporting sexual harassment. The matter was pending more than 180 days but less than 365 days at the end of Fiscal Year 2024. The Law Department also received two SCI complaints: The first alleging EEO violations in hiring and training and the second alleging improper ammunition storage. The EEO violation investigation has been concluded and the matter has been closed with no further action. The second matter was pending more 180 days but less than 365 days at the end of Fiscal Year 2024. Finally, there was a pending complaint from Fiscal Year 2023 alleging gross mismanagement. This complaint was substantiated and referred to COIB for further action. This matter was pending more than 180 days but less than 365 days.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Owens Jr.", written over the printed name.

John Owens Jr.

City of New York
THE SPECIAL COMMISSIONER OF INVESTIGATION
FOR THE NEW YORK CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

80 Maiden Lane, 20th Floor
New York, New York 10038

Anastasia Coleman
Special Commissioner

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September 19, 2024

Honorable Jocelyn E. Strauber
Commissioner
New York City Department of Investigation
180 Maiden Lane
New York, NY. 10038

Re: SCI Whistleblower Complaints and Statistics for Fiscal Year 2024

The Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District (“SCI”) submits this report detailing complaints and statistics related to the New York City Whistleblower Law to the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”) in furtherance of the DOI Commissioner’s obligation to report annually to the Mayor and the New York City Council the number and disposition of complaints under the statute.¹

The New York City Administrative Code § 12-113, commonly known as the Whistleblower Law, relates to employees of an agency of the City, or employees of vendors conducting business with the City, who report information concerning conduct which they know or reasonably believe to involve corruption, criminal activity, conflict of interest, gross mismanagement, or abuse of authority in City government to the DOI commissioner, the New York City Public Advocate, the New York City Comptroller, or a member of the New York City Council. In matters where the underlying claim includes allegations stemming from a report regarding the physical or educational welfare of a child, the statute includes reports made to the Mayor or to the head of an agency or that agency’s designee.²

For the purposes of SCI’s review of Whistleblower complaints, New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) employees are considered employees of a City agency. The Whistleblower Law prohibits another employee from taking any adverse personnel action against the reporting employee in retaliation for making such a report. If an employee believes they have been the subject of such retaliatory

¹ This report will also be made available publicly on the SCI website at www.nycsci.org.

² For the purposes of reports regarding the New York City Department of Education, the “head of agency” title refers to the Chancellor or a deputy chancellor.

adverse personnel action, they may report such conduct to the Commissioner of DOI or, in the case of complaints regarding the DOE, the Special Commissioner, who maintains the powers conferred upon a deputy to the DOI Commissioner.

The Board of Education (“BOE”) Whistleblower Resolution (1992) prohibits adverse personnel actions against an officer or employee of the DOE who reports information concerning conduct which they know or reasonably believe to involve corrupt or other criminal activity, conflicts of interest, unethical conduct or misconduct by another officer or employee of the City School District, or by persons dealing with the City School District, to SCI.³ SCI will then conduct an investigation into the matter. If SCI finds that an adverse personnel action was taken in retaliation for making such a report, the employee will be accorded protection and, if necessary, remedial relief, under the Whistleblower Law and the BOE resolution (together, the “WB Statutes”).

In Fiscal Year (“FY”) 2024, SCI received twenty-six complaints from individuals alleging retaliation for having previously reported official wrongdoing.⁴ Ten of those matters were investigated and closed within the FY with no further action. The chart below breaks down the complaints received by statutory subsection in FY 2024:

§2 (b)(1)	§2 (b)(2)	§2 (b)(5)
25	0	1

In addition, eleven complaints received by SCI during previous FY, were closed without further action in FY 2024, after findings that the complainants were not entitled to protection under the WB Statutes.

Eleven cases being evaluated under the WB Statutes remained open and under investigation by SCI at the close of FY 2024 that commenced in FY 2024 or earlier.⁵ The chart below breaks down the total number of open investigations under the WB Statutes by number of days active at the close of FY 2024:⁶

0 – 89	90 – 179	180 – 364	365 – 729	730 or greater
4	4	0	3	0

Finally, pursuant to New York City Administrative Code § 12-113, Section 4 (i)(5)(f), SCI currently employs approximately eighteen full-time field investigators. Of those, five investigators are assigned to a select team who solely investigate matters involving sexual or other inappropriate conduct by DOE employees or those doing business with the DOE. Those investigators would likely not

³ The Board of Education is now referred to as the Panel for Educational Policy of the Department of Education.

⁴ Three complaints initially alleging retaliatory action, received during FY 2024, were closed without investigation. One complaint was referred to the DOE Office of Special Investigations after it was determined that the matter was a complaint of wrongdoing rather than retaliation. One complaint was promptly withdrawn by the complainant, and another was previously received by SCI and investigated fully in 2014.

⁵ Six of those investigations have since been closed during the current FY.

⁶ Pursuant to local law, the officer or employee who initiated the complaints in these open matters have received written notice of the status of their claim by SCI personnel at least once in every 90-day period.

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be assigned an investigation involving a potential violation of the WB Statutes. The remaining thirteen field investigators would all be eligible to investigate allegations of retaliation under the WB Statutes and may be assigned those investigations on a rotating basis.

Sincerely,



ANASTASIA COLEMAN

Special Commissioner of Investigation
for the New York City School District

AC:DS:lr

cc: Andrew Brunsten – Deputy Commissioner/General Counsel
Rebecca Chasan – Director of Intergovernmental Affairs/Special Counsel