

Whistleblower Protection Information

Protected Disclosures

Current and former HHS employees, applicants for HHS employment, HHS contractors, subcontractors, personal services contractors, grantees, and subgrantees who disclose information to OIG, and other authorized recipients are protected from retaliation under the Whistleblower Protection Act of 1989, 41 U.S.C. § 4712 and [Presidential Policy Directive 19](https://www.opm.gov/our-inspector-general/whistleblower-protection-information/ppd-19.pdf) (<https://oig.hhs.govhttps://www.opm.gov/our-inspector-general/whistleblower-protection-information/ppd-19.pdf>) (PPD-19). Additionally, members of the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps are protected from retaliation for making public disclosures under the Military Whistleblower Protection Act, 10 U.S.C. § 1034 and cannot be restricted from communicating with OIG or a member of Congress. These laws protect whistleblowers who report specific wrongdoing. In order for the report to be considered a protected disclosure, it must meet the following criteria:

1. The disclosure must be based on a reasonable belief that the alleged wrongdoing has occurred. As explained in the chart below, the definition of wrongdoing varies slightly depending upon your place of employment.
2. The disclosure must be made to a person or entity that is authorized to receive it (i.e. authorized recipients). Employees who reasonably believe they have evidence of wrongdoing are always protected for submitting information to the OIG Hotline. However, as explained in the chart below, there are some limitations as to who is authorized to receive a disclosure depending upon your place of employment.

The chart below outlines the protected disclosures that may be made under Federal whistleblower laws and authorized recipients for those disclosures:

| Whistleblower Type | Wrongdoing Defined | Authorized Recipients |
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| HHS Civilian Employees | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Violation of any law, rule, or regulation;• Gross mismanagement;• Gross waste of funds;• Abuse of authority; or• Substantial and specific danger to public health or safety | <p>In general, employees may disclose information to anyone, including non-governmental audiences, unless the information is classified or specifically prohibited by law from release.</p> <p>However, if the information is classified or specifically prohibited by law from release, it may only be shared with OIG, OSC, or a designated agency official.</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Censorship related to scientific research or analysis (scientific integrity) | |
| <p>U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps Officers</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violation of any law or regulation, including those prohibiting rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, or unlawful discrimination; • Gross mismanagement; • Gross waste of funds; • Abuse of authority; • Substantial and specific danger to public health or safety; or • A threat by another member of the Service or Federal Government employee that indicates a determination or intent to kill or cause serious bodily injury to members of the Service or civilians, or damage to military, Federal, or civilian property. • Censorship related to scientific research or analysis (scientific integrity) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of Congress; • Office of Inspector General; • Person or organization within the officer's chain of command; • Member of an HHS audit, inspection, investigation, or law enforcement organization; • Court martial proceeding; • Person or organization designated by regulation or administrative procedures to receive such communications (see Commissioned Corps Directive 121.06). |
| <p>Contractors and Grantees</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gross mismanagement of a Federal contract or grant; • Gross waste of Federal funds; • Abuse of authority relating to a Federal contract or grant; • Substantial and specific danger to public health or safety; or • Violation of a law, rule, or regulation related to a Federal contract or grant (including competition for or negotiation of a contract). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of Congress or a representative of a committee of Congress; • Office of Inspector General; • Government Accountability Office; • A Federal employee responsible for contract or grant oversight or management at the relevant agency; • An authorized official of the Department of Justice or other law enforcement agency; • A court or grand jury; |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Censorship related to scientific research or analysis (scientific integrity) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A management official or other employee of the contractor, subcontractor, or grantee who has the responsibility to investigate, discover or address misconduct. |
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| Other Information for Potential Whistleblowers | + |
| Whistleblower Protection Coordinator Program | + |
| Employee Nondisclosure Agreements | + |

[Determine if I'm eligible to report whistleblower retaliation >](https://oig.hhs.gov/eligibility.asp) (https://oig.hhs.gov/eligibility.asp)