



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax-Collector

Subject: Santa Cruz Whistleblower Hotline Activity Report for Calendar Year 2024

Meeting Date: May 6, 2025

Formal Title: Accept and file the report on Whistleblower Hotline activity for calendar year 2024

Recommended Actions

Accept and file this report on the Whistleblower Hotline activity for calendar year 2024.

Executive Summary

Pursuant to the Santa Cruz County Policies and Procedures Manual section VII 700, the attached schedule provides statistical information on the 2024 calendar year Whistleblower Hotline activity and summarizes the Hotline reports received during the year.

Discussion

As stated in Title VII, Section 700 of the County's Policy and Procedures Manual, the County's Whistleblower Hotline is established to accept reports of illegal, fraudulent, and wasteful activity by Santa Cruz County government employees, residents, vendors, or contractors. Reports relating to violations of County personnel policies are referred to the Personnel Department and the applicable department and do not fall under the scope of the Hotline. Reports relating to building code or zoning violations are accepted and referred to the Planning Department; however, they will not be investigated unless they include reporting party contact information.

The Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office reviews reports submitted to the Whistleblower Hotline. Except as described above, reports are investigated by the Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office or forwarded to the applicable department head for investigation, as the Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office deems appropriate.

Reports are confidential and can be made in English by calling the Whistleblower Hotline at 831-454-3333 or in Spanish at 831-454-3339, by submitting an online report through the Hotline reporting website that can be accessed on the County's webpage, or by mailing a letter to 701 Ocean Street, Room 100. Reports can be made anonymously. If a report is forwarded to a department head for investigation, the Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax-Collector's Office requests a status response from the department within 60 days and resolution within six months.

The Whistleblower Hotline has become a successful addition to the County's internal

controls, due in part to the willingness of County departments and other agencies to investigate and communicate their findings.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact.

Strategic Initiatives

Operational Plan - Operational Excellence

Submitted By:

Edith Driscoll, Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector

Recommended By:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.