

County of Santa Cruz Whistleblower Program Annual Report

January 1, 2024, Through December 31, 2024

Key Statistics and Reporting Details

Report Volume

In calendar year 2024, the Whistleblower Hotline received 28 new reports.

Eleven reports were carried over from the January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023 period and were not included in the total of 28 received in calendar year 2024. One report was under review as of December 31, 2023, and is still in review as of December 31, 2024. The rest of the reports that carried over were under review as of December 31, 2023, and have since been resolved as unfounded (2) and out of scope (8).

Report Intake Channel and Informant Confidentiality Level

Out of the 28 total reports received, 11 (39 percent) were entered via voicemail, 12 (43 percent) were entered using the online form, and 5 (18 Percent) were received by letter.

Of the 28 total reports, 10 (36 percent) did not indicate their confidentiality level, 6 (21 percent) were entered as confidential, 7 (25 Percent) were entered anonymously, and 5 (18 percent) were entered with no restrictions.

Report Classifications and Resolutions

Seventeen (71 percent) of the 24 reports closed as of December 31, 2024, were classified as out of scope of the Whistleblower Hotline. This can include general inquiries or reports that do not fall under County jurisdiction. In some cases, the Whistleblower Hotline Staff will forward out of scope reports to an appropriate authority if enough information is given and it is relevant to that authority's oversight. Out of the 12 out of scope reports closed by December 31, 2024, 9 reports were referred to the appropriate authorities.

The 9 reports that were within scope and labeled as either fraud, waste, or abuse were all referred to the appropriate authorities as detailed below:

Authority to Which Report was Referred	Allegation	Results
Health Services Agency; Personnel	Violation of County policy by a County employee.	Unfounded
Health Services Agency	Wasteful activity by a County vendor.	Unfounded
Sheriff's Office; District Attorney	Violation of County policy by a County employee.	Unfounded
Personnel	Violation of County policy by a County employee.	Unfounded
Parks, Open Space & Cultural Services	Wasteful activity by a County vendor.	Open, in review
Parks, Open Space & Cultural Services	Violation of County policy by a County employee.	Open, in review
Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector	Fraudulent activity by a County resident.	Indeterminable
Human Services Department	Fraudulent activity by a County resident.	Unfounded
Human Services Department	Fraudulent activity by a County resident.	Unfounded
Community Development and Infrastructure	Violation of County policy by a County employee.	Open, in review