



Office of the Washington State Auditor
Pat McCarthy

Whistleblower Investigation Report

Department of Social and Health Services

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**Office of the Washington State Auditor
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June 30, 2025

Bea Rector, Acting Secretary
Department of Social and Health Services

Report on Whistleblower Investigation

Attached is the official report on Whistleblower Case No. 25-001 at the Department of Social and Health Services.

The State Auditor's Office received an assertion of improper governmental activity at the Department. This assertion was submitted to us under the provisions of Chapter 42.40 of the Revised Code of Washington, the Whistleblower Act. We have investigated the assertion independently and objectively through interviews and by reviewing relevant documents. This report contains the results of our investigation.

If you are a member of the media and have questions about this report, please contact Assistant Director of Communications Adam Wilson at (564) 999-0799. Otherwise, please contact Assistant Director for State Audit and Special Investigations Jim Brownell at (564) 999-0782.

Sincerely,

Pat McCarthy, State Auditor
Olympia, WA

cc: Governor Bob Ferguson
Andrew Colvin, Disclosure & Ethics Administrator
Kate Reynolds, Executive Director, Executive Ethics Board
Erin Anderson, Special Investigations Program Manager

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WHISTLEBLOWER INVESTIGATION REPORT

Assertion(s) and Results

Our Office received a whistleblower complaint asserting a Program Specialist 3 (Subject) is taking time off working without submitting paid leave. The complaint further asserted the subject is accumulating flex hours that he did not actually work.

We found no reasonable cause to believe an improper governmental action occurred.

Background

The Department of Social Health Services Mobile Office has eight Mobile Office trucks deployed throughout the state, working to assist underserved areas. These vehicles allow the Department to provide services in areas that may not have Department “brick-and-mortar” offices nearby. Each Department Mobile Office is staffed by specialists who determine people’s eligibility for state and federal medical, cash and food assistance programs.

The Subject works within the Mobile Community Services Office (MCSO) as a Program Specialist 3. Staff within the MSCO Department can use the software Barcode, an electronic database that stores client records.

About the Investigation

We received a whistleblower complaint asserting the Subject was using state resources for private gain by failing to submit leave for time not worked.

To determine whether an improper governmental action occurred, we obtained the following documentation from the Department for the period of July 2023 through July 2024:

- Position description
- Time and leave summaries
- Official work schedule and duty station
- Travel records
- Mobile community service event calendar
- Barcode activity reports
- Computer log on/log off reports

We reviewed the Subject’s time worked for the period of July 2023 through July 2024 by analyzing the following information:

- Timesheet hours (beginning and end)
- Leave usage (if applicable)
- Log in and log out of computer system and Barcode system
- Barcode event ID (times)
- MCSO event date and times

During our analysis, we noted computer login and logout times were consistent with timesheet hours. We identified days when the Subject flexed his schedule to accommodate weekend work events, such as taking off a Tuesday if they knew they were working Saturday. The Subject's position allows for a flexible working schedule as necessary to avoid working overtime (more than 40 hours a week). We noted the Subject's daily working hours were the same as their timesheet and leave usage for the investigative period. We found no instances of the Subject failing to submit leave or not logging onto the computer during their daily scheduled working hours.

We observed instances when there were no Barcode entries on a given day. We interviewed the Subject's supervisor who said the Subject has multiple job duties they conduct outside Barcode, such as driving the mobile vehicle to and from events, prepping the vehicle, and regular maintenance. Furthermore, the Subject is responsible for advertising materials, planning future events, maintaining the email server list, preparing and printing event materials, and stocking the materials into the vehicle for events. They also work the events and prepare event and maintenance reports. The supervisor also said the MCSO schedule is determined about a month in advance, so the Subject schedules many events for a future time. The supervisor also said the Subject flexes his time as needed, but does not often. This is not tracked formally, but aligned with what we found during our analysis.

During our interview with the Subject, he said he does not use Barcode every day since he has many other job duties outside of the Barcode system. He said he only works in Barcode when he is preparing a report or determining client eligibility at an event.

Based on our analysis of the Subject's time and computer activity, we found no reasonable cause to believe the improper governmental action occurred.

State Auditor's Office Concluding Remarks

We thank Department officials and personnel for their assistance and cooperation during the investigation.

WHISTLEBLOWER INVESTIGATION CRITERIA

We came to our determination in this investigation by evaluating the facts against the criteria below:

RCW 42.52.160 Use of persons, money, or property for private gain - (1) No state officer or state employee may employ or use any person, money, or property under the officer's or employee's official control or direction, or in his or her official custody, for the private benefit or gain of the officer, employee, or another.

WAC 292-110-010(1) and (3) – Use of state resources - (1) Statement of principles. All state employees and officers are responsible for the proper use of state resources, including funds, facilities, tools, property, and their time. This section does not restrict the use of state resources as described in subsections (2) and (3) of this section.