

Fraud, Waste and Abuse Hotline

Leon County strives to be a responsible steward of the community's resources, and a government that citizens trust and believe in. Consistent with these goals, the County promotes honesty, efficiency and ethics in its operations, and has established a hotline that employees and the public may use to report credible information about suspected fraud, waste, abuse or ethical misconduct occurring within Leon County Government.

How to Report Allegations - There are two ways to report suspected abuse through the hotline:

- **Call – Fraud Hotline at (850) 606-5304**
- **Mail - Leon County Fraud, Waste, Abuse & Misconduct Hotline, 301 South Monroe Street, 5th Floor Leon County Courthouse, Tallahassee, Florida 32301.**

What Information to Submit: Provide as much detail as possible. You do not need to provide your name.

- Describe your concern. Be as specific as possible.
- Provide the names of all individuals involved, including other witnesses. Include their phone number and address if known. If they are a County employee, include workplace information. If they are a County contractor, include the name of the company.
- Give the dates and times the incident(s) occurred and where it/they happened.
- State whether there is any supporting documentation such as a license plate or County vehicle number, address, invoice, purchase order, or check numbers, or other document numbers. Copies of the supporting documentation can be mailed to:
 - Leon County Fraud, Waste, Abuse & Misconduct Hotline, 301 South Monroe Street, 5th Floor Leon County Courthouse, Tallahassee, Florida 32301.
- If you do not wish to remain anonymous, provide your name, email address, phone number, your mailing address, and the best way to reach you.

Privacy and Other Considerations - In filing report, please consider the following.

- If anonymity is not important to you, you may identify yourself.
- You may remain anonymous and calls made to this hotline are not traced. However, there may be circumstances during the course of the investigation in which a caller's identity becomes apparent and calls may be subject to public records request.
- If you anonymously report suspected abuse, but provide information that may identify you, such as your name, email address or phone number, Leon County can protect your identity only as far as the Florida Public Records Act allows. Leon County cannot guarantee complete confidentiality because: (1) identification may be necessary to allow law enforcement officials to investigate or respond effectively to the report; (2) identification may be required by law; or (3) the person accused of the violations may be entitled to the information as a matter of legal right in disciplinary proceedings.
- Investigations are only initiated upon receipt of credible information alleging an act of fraud, waste, abuse or ethical misconduct within Leon County Government.
- The hotline provides Leon County employees an additional tool to report fraudulent, abusive or unethical behavior, and does not limit other reporting methods available to employees. Leon County prohibits retaliatory actions against its employees who, in good faith, call or send mail to the hotline. Internal staff concerns and disciplinary action should be addressed through County management and/or human resources' grievance procedures.

General Definitions of Fraud, Waste, Abuse and Ethical Misconduct

- **Fraud** is defined by the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners in their Fraud Manual as: “Any intentional or deliberate act to deprive another of property or money by guile, deception, or other unfair means.” Fraud refers to, but is not limited to, any dishonest or fraudulent act to include forgery or alteration of any document; misappropriation of funds, supplies, etc.; improper handling or reporting of money or financial transactions; profiting by self or others as a result of inside knowledge; destruction or intentional disappearance of records, furniture, fixtures or equipment; accepting or seeking anything of material value from vendors or persons providing services or materials to the County for personal benefit; and/or any similar or related irregularity.
- **Waste** refers to the needless, careless, or extravagant expenditure of County funds, incurring of unnecessary expense, or misuse of County resources or property.
- **Abuse** refers to the intentionally wrongful or improper use of County resources that can include the excessive or improper use of one’s position, in a manner contrary to its rightful or legally intended use.
- **Ethical Misconduct** refers to instances when public officials and government employees conduct their duties in a manner which is not impartial; use their public office for personal gain; or when their private interests are in conflict with their public duties. Detailed information regarding the State's code of ethics for public officers and employees can be found in Florida Statute Chapter 112. The following actions are prohibited by the Board’s personnel policy, the Board’s Code of Ethics (Policy No. 03-05) and Florida law:
 - The solicitation or acceptance by any County employee of any gift, loan, favor, reward, or service that would cause a reasonably prudent person to be influenced in the discharge of official duties, or that is based upon any understanding that the action and/or judgment of the official or employee "would be influenced thereby."
 - A County employee from transacting business on behalf of the County with any agency in which either the employee or a member of the employee's immediate family has a "material interest."
 - A County employee from accepting compensation to influence any action in his/her official capacity with the County.
 - A County employee from using his/her position to secure a special privilege, benefit, or exemption for him/herself or others.
 - A County employee from holding any employment or contractual relationship with any business entity or any agency which is subject to the regulation of, or is doing business with, Leon County Government.
 - A County employee from disclosing or using information not available to the general public for his/her personal gain or for the gain of any other person or business entity.