



## Local Inspectors General Respond to OAG Advice Letter on MPIA

As the leaders of four local offices of inspector general who work on behalf of 2.8 million Marylanders, we write to express our profound concern regarding a recent advice letter from the Office of the Attorney General of Maryland (OAG) regarding the Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) applicability to local inspector general offices. This letter has the potential to incapacitate our offices and diminish our ability to root out fraud, waste and abuse in our respective local governments.

The MPIA governs public access to governmental records. The MPIA contains mandatory exceptions, under which the custodian of those records must deny public access to certain records. Such records include those that are routinely used in our work, including employee personnel files and financial information. On February 3, 2026, the OAG issued an advice letter opining that the MPIA and its mandatory exceptions apply to local inspectors general in the exact same way they apply to the public; regardless of local laws granting inspectors general full access to government records.

Fundamental to our work is having unrestricted access to all relevant records held by our local jurisdictions. Those records are critical to our ability to fully and capably investigate allegations of fraud, waste, abuse, and misconduct, as required by local laws. As a result of the OAG's letter, such records could be withheld from us in whole or redacted to the point that they are essentially rendered useless from an evidentiary standpoint. To be clear, once such records are in our possession, we have now, and have always had, the same responsibility as our employers – to not disclose to the public records that are otherwise protected.

We are asking the Maryland General Assembly to pass legislation that amends the MPIA to create an exemption for local inspectors general. We propose the following language be added to the MPIA:

***GP 4-301(c). Access by Local Inspectors General. Notwithstanding the required denials in Parts II and III of this subtitle, a custodian shall provide a public record to an inspector general where the inspector general is authorized by local law to demand the public record, the inspector general requires access to the public record to perform its duties, and any redisclosure by the inspector general is limited by the Act.***

We believe amending the MPIA, to include the above language, would eliminate any confusion and affirmatively provide inspectors general with the access necessary to perform our legally required duties. Furthermore, it would reinforce the State's commitment to transparency and integrity at all levels of government, which is consistent with the mission of our respective offices.

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