

Council Substitute for House Bill No. 165

An act relating to agency inspectors general; amending s. 20.055, F.S.; providing definitions; requiring agency inspectors general to comply with certain principles and standards; requiring an inspector general to submit findings of audits and investigations to specified persons or entities if such findings are not exempt from disclosure; requiring responses to findings within 20 working days; requiring agencies under the Governor to notify the Chief Inspector General of inspector general appointments and terminations; prohibiting agency staff from preventing or prohibiting the inspector general from initiating, carrying out, or completing any audit or investigation; requiring audits to be conducted in accordance with the current International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing; requiring the inspector general of each state agency to report certain written complaints to the agency head, and for agencies under the Governor, to the agency head and the Chief Inspector General; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 20.055, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

20.055 Agency inspectors general.—

(1) For the purposes of this section:

(a) “State agency” means each department created pursuant to this chapter, and also includes the Executive Office of the Governor, the Department of Military Affairs, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Office of Insurance Regulation of the Financial Services Commission, the Office of Financial Regulation of the Financial Services Commission, the Public Service Commission, the Board of Governors of the State University System, and the state courts system.

(b) “Agency head” means the Governor, a Cabinet officer, a secretary as defined in s. 20.03(5), or an executive director as defined in s. 20.03(6). It also includes the chair of the Public Service Commission, the Director of the Office of Insurance Regulation of the Financial Services Commission, the Director of the Office of Financial Regulation of the Financial Services Commission, and the Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court.

(c) “Individuals substantially affected” means natural persons who have established a real and sufficiently immediate injury in fact due to the findings, conclusions, or recommendations of a final report of a state agency inspector general, who are the subject of the audit or investigation, and who do not have or are not currently afforded an existing right to an independent review process. Employees of the state, including career service, probationary, other personal service, Selected Exempt Service, and Senior Management Service employees, are not covered by this definition. This definition

also does not cover former employees of the state if the final report of the state agency inspector general relates to matters arising during a former employee's term of state employment. This definition does not apply to persons who are the subject of audits or investigations conducted pursuant to ss. 112.3187-112.31895 or s. 409.913 or which are otherwise confidential and exempt under s. 119.07.

(d) "Entities contracting with the state" means for-profit and not-for-profit organizations or businesses having a legal existence, such as corporations or partnerships, as opposed to natural persons, which have entered into a relationship with a state agency as defined in paragraph (a) to provide for consideration certain goods or services to the state agency or on behalf of the state agency. The relationship may be evidenced by payment by warrant or purchasing card, contract, purchase order, provider agreement, or other such mutually agreed upon relationship. This definition does not apply to entities which are the subject of audits or investigations conducted pursuant to ss. 112.3187-112.31895 or s. 409.913 or which are otherwise confidential and exempt under s. 119.07.

(2) The Office of Inspector General is hereby established in each state agency to provide a central point for coordination of and responsibility for activities that promote accountability, integrity, and efficiency in government. It shall be the duty and responsibility of each inspector general, with respect to the state agency in which the office is established, to:

(a) Advise in the development of performance measures, standards, and procedures for the evaluation of state agency programs.

(b) Assess the reliability and validity of the information provided by the state agency on performance measures and standards, and make recommendations for improvement, if necessary, prior to submission of those measures and standards to the Executive Office of the Governor pursuant to s. 216.0166(1).

(c) Review the actions taken by the state agency to improve program performance and meet program standards and make recommendations for improvement, if necessary.

(d) Provide direction for, supervise, and coordinate audits, investigations, and management reviews relating to the programs and operations of the state agency, except that when the inspector general does not possess the qualifications specified in subsection (4), the director of auditing shall conduct such audits.

(e) Conduct, supervise, or coordinate other activities carried out or financed by that state agency for the purpose of promoting economy and efficiency in the administration of, or preventing and detecting fraud and abuse in, its programs and operations.

(f) Keep such agency head informed concerning fraud, abuses, and deficiencies relating to programs and operations administered or financed by the state agency, recommend corrective action concerning fraud, abuses, and

deficiencies, and report on the progress made in implementing corrective action.

(g) Ensure effective coordination and cooperation between the Auditor General, federal auditors, and other governmental bodies with a view toward avoiding duplication.

(h) Review, as appropriate, rules relating to the programs and operations of such state agency and make recommendations concerning their impact.

(i) Ensure that an appropriate balance is maintained between audit, investigative, and other accountability activities.

(j) Comply with the General Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspector General as published and revised by the Association of Inspectors General.

(3)(a) The inspector general shall be appointed by the agency head. For agencies under the direction of the Governor, the appointment shall be made after notifying the Governor and the Chief Inspector General in writing, at least 7 days prior to an offer of employment, of the agency head's intention to hire the inspector general.

(b) Each inspector general shall report to and be under the general supervision of the agency head and shall not be subject to supervision by any other employee of the state agency. The inspector general shall be appointed without regard to political affiliation.

(c) An inspector general may be removed from office by the agency head. For agencies under the direction of the Governor, the agency head shall notify the Governor and the Chief Inspector General, in writing, of the intention to terminate the inspector general at least 7 days prior to the removal. For state agencies under the direction of the Governor and Cabinet, the agency head shall notify the Governor and Cabinet in writing of the intention to terminate the inspector general at least 7 days prior to the removal.

(d) The agency head or agency staff shall not prevent or prohibit the inspector general ~~or director of auditing~~ from initiating, carrying out, or completing any audit or investigation.

(4) To ensure that state agency audits are performed in accordance with applicable auditing standards, the inspector general or the director of auditing within the inspector general's office shall possess the following qualifications:

(a) A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with a major in accounting, or with a major in business which includes five courses in accounting, and 5 years of experience as an internal auditor or independent postauditor, electronic data processing auditor, accountant, or any combination thereof. The experience shall at a minimum consist of audits of units of government or private business enterprises, operating for profit or not for profit; or

(b) A master's degree in accounting, business administration, or public administration from an accredited college or university and 4 years of experience as required in paragraph (a); or

(c) A certified public accountant license issued pursuant to chapter 473 or a certified internal audit certificate issued by the Institute of Internal Auditors or earned by examination, and 4 years of experience as required in paragraph (a).

(5) In carrying out the auditing duties and responsibilities of this act, each inspector general shall review and evaluate internal controls necessary to ensure the fiscal accountability of the state agency. The inspector general shall conduct financial, compliance, electronic data processing, and performance audits of the agency and prepare audit reports of his or her findings. The scope and assignment of the audits shall be determined by the inspector general; however, the agency head may at any time direct the inspector general to perform an audit of a special program, function, or organizational unit. The performance of the audit shall be under the direction of the inspector general, except that if the inspector general does not possess the qualifications specified in subsection (4), the director of auditing shall perform the functions listed in this subsection.

(a) Such audits shall be conducted in accordance with the current International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing as ~~and subsequent Internal Auditing Standards or Statements on Internal Auditing Standards~~ published by the Institute of Internal Auditors, Inc., or, where appropriate, in accordance with generally accepted governmental auditing standards. All audit reports issued by internal audit staff shall include a statement that the audit was conducted pursuant to the appropriate standards.

(b) Audit workpapers and reports shall be public records to the extent that they do not include information which has been made confidential and exempt from the provisions of s. 119.07(1) pursuant to law. However, when the inspector general or a member of the staff receives from an individual a complaint or information that falls within the definition provided in s. 112.3187(5), the name or identity of the individual shall not be disclosed to anyone else without the written consent of the individual, unless the inspector general determines that such disclosure is unavoidable during the course of the audit or investigation.

(c) The inspector general and the staff shall have access to any records, data, and other information of the state agency he or she deems necessary to carry out his or her duties. The inspector general is also authorized to request such information or assistance as may be necessary from the state agency or from any federal, state, or local government entity.

(d) At the conclusion of each audit, the inspector general shall submit preliminary findings and recommendations to the person responsible for supervision of the program function or operational unit who shall respond to any adverse findings within 20 working days after receipt of the preliminary tentative findings. Such response and the inspector general's rebuttal to the response shall be included in the final audit report.

(e) At the conclusion of an audit in which the subject of the audit is a specific entity contracting with the state or an individual substantially affected, if the audit is not confidential or otherwise exempt from disclosure by law, the inspector general shall, consistent with s. 119.07(1), submit the findings to the entity contracting with the state or the individual substantially affected, who shall be advised in writing that they may submit a written response within 20 working days after receipt of the findings. The response and the inspector general's rebuttal to the response, if any, must be included in the final audit report.

(f)(e) The inspector general shall submit the final report to the agency head and to the Auditor General.

(g)(f) The Auditor General, in connection with the independent postaudit of the same agency pursuant to s. 11.45, shall give appropriate consideration to internal audit reports and the resolution of findings therein. The Legislative Auditing Committee may inquire into the reasons or justifications for failure of the agency head to correct the deficiencies reported in internal audits that are also reported by the Auditor General and shall take appropriate action.

(h)(g) The inspector general shall monitor the implementation of the state agency's response to any report on the state agency issued by the Auditor General or by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability. No later than 6 months after the Auditor General or the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability publishes a report on the state agency, the inspector general shall provide a written response to the agency head on the status of corrective actions taken. The Inspector General shall file a copy of such response with the Legislative Auditing Committee.

(i)(h) The inspector general shall develop long-term and annual audit plans based on the findings of periodic risk assessments. The plan, where appropriate, should include postaudit samplings of payments and accounts. The plan shall show the individual audits to be conducted during each year and related resources to be devoted to the respective audits. The Chief Financial Officer, to assist in fulfilling the responsibilities for examining, auditing, and settling accounts, claims, and demands pursuant to s. 17.03(1), and examining, auditing, adjusting, and settling accounts pursuant to s. 17.04, may utilize audits performed by the inspectors general and internal auditors. For state agencies under the Governor, the audit plans shall be submitted to the Governor's Chief Inspector General. The plan shall be submitted to the agency head for approval. A copy of the approved plan shall be submitted to the Auditor General.

(6) In carrying out the investigative duties and responsibilities specified in this section, each inspector general shall initiate, conduct, supervise, and coordinate investigations designed to detect, deter, prevent, and eradicate fraud, waste, mismanagement, misconduct, and other abuses in state government. For these purposes, each inspector general ~~state agency~~ shall:

(a) Receive complaints and coordinate all activities of the agency as required by the Whistle-blower's Act pursuant to ss. 112.3187-112.31895.

(b) Receive and consider the complaints which do not meet the criteria for an investigation under the Whistle-blower's Act and conduct, supervise, or coordinate such inquiries, investigations, or reviews as the inspector general deems appropriate.

(c) Report expeditiously to the Department of Law Enforcement or other law enforcement agencies, as appropriate, whenever the inspector general has reasonable grounds to believe there has been a violation of criminal law.

(d) Conduct investigations and other inquiries free of actual or perceived impairment to the independence of the inspector general or the inspector general's office. This shall include freedom from any interference with investigations and timely access to records and other sources of information.

(e) At the conclusion of each investigation in which the subject of the investigation is a specific entity contracting with the state or an individual substantially affected as defined by this section, and if the investigation is not confidential or otherwise exempt from disclosure by law, the inspector general shall, consistent with s. 119.07(1), submit findings to the subject that is a specific entity contracting with the state or an individual substantially affected, who shall be advised in writing that they may submit a written response within 20 working days after receipt of the findings. Such response and the inspector general's rebuttal to the response, if any, shall be included in the final investigative report.

~~(f)~~(e) Submit in a timely fashion final reports on investigations conducted by the inspector general to the agency head, except for whistle-blower's investigations, which shall be conducted and reported pursuant to s. 112.3189.

(7) Each inspector general shall, not later than September 30 of each year, prepare an annual report summarizing the activities of the office during the immediately preceding state fiscal year. The final report shall be furnished to the agency head. Such report shall include, but need not be limited to:

(a) A description of activities relating to the development, assessment, and validation of performance measures.

(b) A description of significant abuses and deficiencies relating to the administration of programs and operations of the agency disclosed by investigations, audits, reviews, or other activities during the reporting period.

(c) A description of the recommendations for corrective action made by the inspector general during the reporting period with respect to significant problems, abuses, or deficiencies identified.

(d) The identification of each significant recommendation described in previous annual reports on which corrective action has not been completed.

(e) A summary of each audit and investigation completed during the reporting period.

(8) The inspector general in each agency shall provide to the agency head, upon receipt, all written complaints concerning the duties and responsibilities in this section or any allegation of misconduct related to the office of the inspector general or its employees, if received from subjects of audits or investigations who are individuals substantially affected or entities contracting with the state, as defined in this section. For agencies solely under the direction of the Governor, the inspector general shall also provide the complaint to the Chief Inspector General.

~~(9)~~(8) Each agency inspector general shall, to the extent both necessary and practicable, include on his or her staff individuals with electronic data processing auditing experience.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2008.

Approved by the Governor June 17, 2008.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 17, 2008.