

Office of the Inspector General *Annual Report FY 23*

November 7, 2023





Message from the Inspector General

We are proud to publish the 2023 Annual Report for the Georgia Office of the State Inspector General (OIG). This report outlines our mission and responsibilities, provides statistics for complaints and investigations, and highlights several notable criminal and administrative investigations handled from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023.

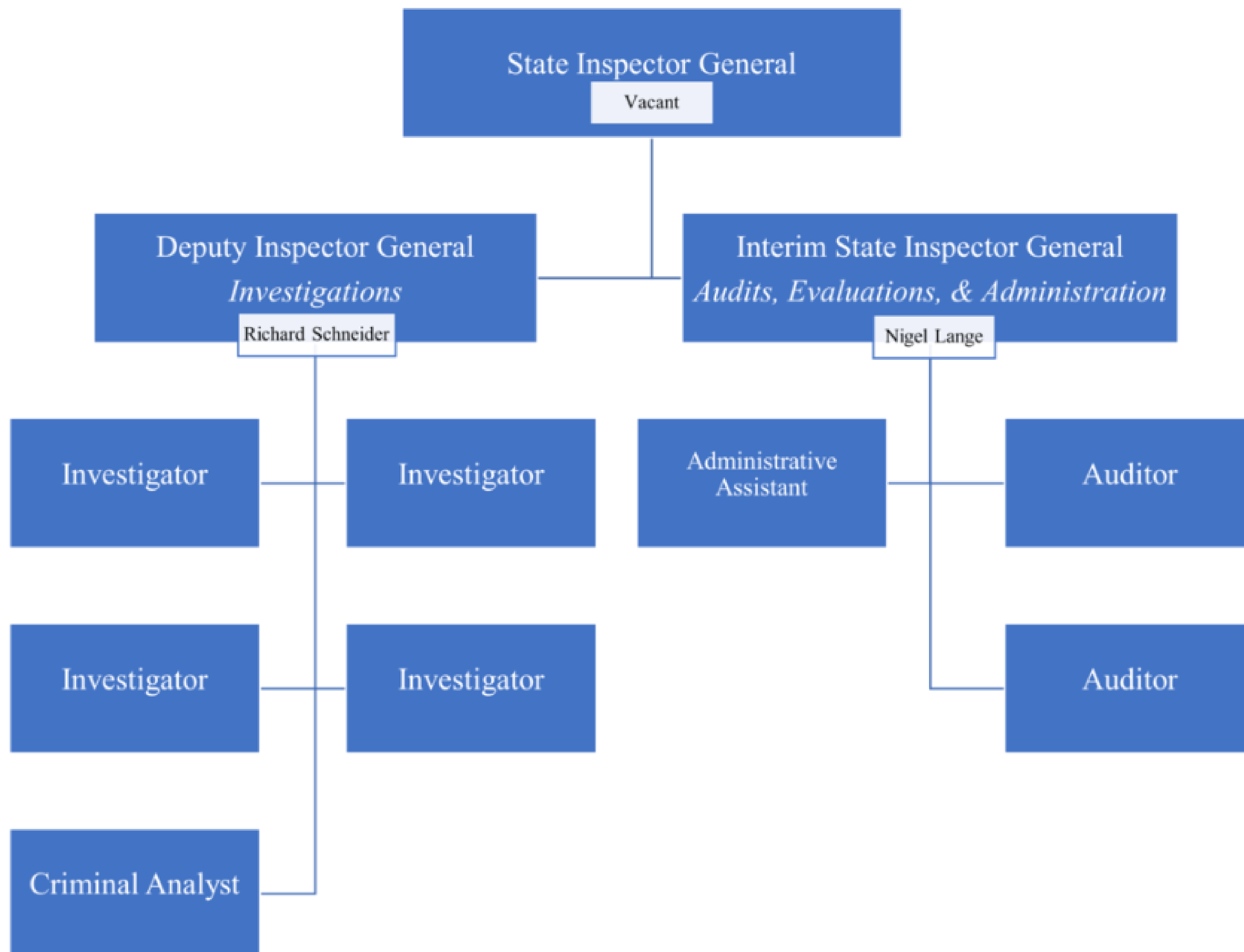
The Office was established on January 13, 2003, by Executive Order and was tasked with the prevention and detection of fraud, waste, abuse, and corruption within the Executive Branch of State Government. In 2019, OIG was further tasked by Executive Order to provide oversight of sexual harassment investigations. In 2021, an Executive Order established the Code of Ethics for Executive Branch officers and employees and empowered OIG to investigate ethical violations. On March 29, 2023, Senate Bill 59 was signed into law by Governor Brian Kemp, creating statutory law enforcement authority for The Office.

While our focus is always on improving the efficiency of our operations, the office underwent significant transformation as we made our legislative push and then transitioned to become a law enforcement agency during this reporting period. Notwithstanding, the quality and quantity of our work did not diminish. OIG presented several significant cases for indictment, the most noteworthy of which involved numerous individuals who fraudulently received unemployment benefits whilst being active State Government employees.

We continue to take our mandate very seriously and strive to fulfill our mission during the upcoming year with greater efficiency and effectiveness due to our newly granted authority. We hope that public confidence in State Government will continue to improve as the result of our endeavors.

Respectfully,

Nigel Lange
Interim Inspector General





OIG Mission:

The Office of the Inspector General promotes transparency and accountability in a sexual harassment free state government.

Fraud, Waste, Abuse, & Corruption

OIG investigates fraud, waste, abuse, and corruption in the executive branch. In addition, OIG conducts administrative reviews to promote effective controls, better agency policies and procedures, and identify opportunities for improved efficiency. OIG is also responsible for investigating violations of the State Code of Ethics, as well as the administration of the Statewide Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy.

Complaints Received 	FY 21: 179	Investigations Opened 	FY 21: 32	Active Investigations at Year End 	FY 21: 42
	FY 22: 327		FY 22: 36		FY 22: 26
	FY 23: 587		FY 23: 21		FY 23: 30

OIG reviews complaints and allegations to determine whether the matter falls under our jurisdiction and if there are sufficient facts to initiate an investigation. If so, we open an investigation. Many allegations we receive fall outside our jurisdiction, including concerns regarding personnel/management issues, county government matters, and private industry concerns. OIG refers these complaints to a more appropriate investigative entity when possible.

OIG regularly conducts training programs for state employees about the detection and prevention of fraud.

Number of Employees Trained



FY21
997

FY22
805

FY23
789

Fiscal Value

FY 21

FY 22

FY 23

Financial Impact of Investigations

\$11,347,812

\$9,011,342

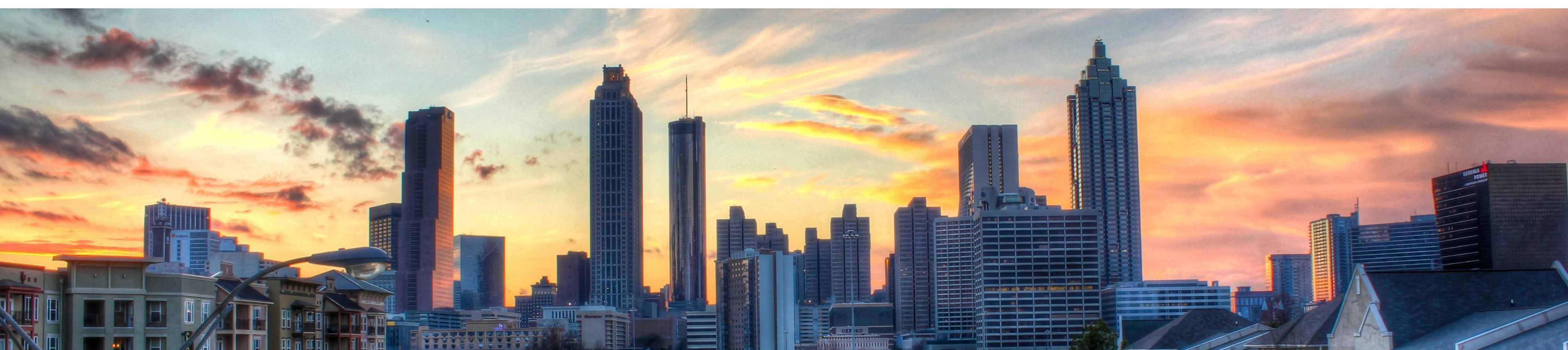
\$8,904,031

OIG Annual Budget

\$1,351,189

\$1,390,752

\$1,547,478





Investigative Highlights

OIG closed 9 cases in FY 23 and worked with approximately 31 different executive branch agencies to address the allegations, which included conflicts of interest, grant fraud, benefit fraud, fuel card theft, billing schemes, payroll schemes, check tampering, and violations of the Statewide Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy. OIG's investigations resulted in employee terminations and resignations, policy and procedure changes, reimbursements to the State, and criminal charges.

OIG led and participated in several significant investigations in FY 23. Some of these investigations were coordinated with other investigative agencies such as the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and various federal offices of inspectors general. Cases involving criminal activity were referred to the Department of Justice, the Georgia Attorney General's Office, and local District Attorney's Offices. Notable examples include:

Former State Agency Division Director and Coconspirators Indicted on Bribery and Racketeering Charges for Fraudulent Contracts

COREY ALSTON, 45, of Florida, TOYAO ANDREWS, 49, of South Carolina, QUINTON TATE, 41, of Georgia, and SHAWN WILLIAMS, 60, of South Carolina, were indicted by a DeKalb County Grand Jury on June 27, 2023, for violations of Georgia's Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act, Bribery, Conspiracy to Defraud the State, Theft by Taking, Theft by Receiving Stolen Property, and Theft by Deception. The charges are related to the individuals' roles in the execution of multiple fraudulent contracts with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

Between 2017 and 2019, former DCA Housing Assistance Division (HAD) Director SHAWN WILLIAMS ("WILLIAMS") and former DCA employee TOYAO ANDREWS ("ANDREWS"), who is WILLIAMS' cousin, initiated a criminal RICO conspiracy to defraud DCA by taking and receiving money from DCA by using WILLIAMS' position to create and approve contracts for cleaning services for a DCA office which was duplicative of services provided by the existing landlord. WILLIAMS and ANDREWS conspired to contract DCA with "Polished Resources, LLC", a company owned and operated by ANDREWS and other members of their families. Ultimately, ANDREWS and WILLIAMS exploited WILLIAMS' procurement authority granted by DCA to unlawfully take \$64,170 of DCA's funds.

In 2019, COREY ALSTON ("ALSTON") expanded and led the criminal RICO conspiracy to defraud DCA by unlawfully taking and receiving money from DCA for a non-existent web product, providing false statements to DCA leadership, and paying bribes to State employees. ALSTON conspired with WILLIAMS using her procurement authority to enter and approve a contract for the development of a web product and to falsely affirm the completion, delivery, and use of the non-existent web product.

ALSTON conspired with ANDREWS to obtain authorization of IT Professional Network, Inc. ("ITPN") as an authorized State vendor and to draft, submit, and obtain payment of ITPN invoices from DCA. ALSTON furthered the conspiracy by using ANDREWS' cleaning company to funnel bribes to WILLIAMS and ANDREWS. ALSTON brought QUINTON TATE ("TATE") into the conspiracy for his knowledge and expertise in developing the web product. Once the company owned and controlled by ALSTON was denied recognition as an authorized vendor, the conspirators used TATE'S business, ITPN, as the contracting party through which they unlawfully funneled State Funds. The contract with ITPN ultimately resulted in a loss to DCA of \$120,000.



Nonprofit Food Service CEO Pleads Guilty to False Claims of Providing Over \$800,000 in Meals for Low-Income Children

Dawn Eggleston, CEO of nonprofit Our Daily Bread, Inc., has plead guilty to one count of Criminal Attempt to Commit a Felony for her role in a scheme to claim over \$800,000 in fraudulent reimbursements for meals to low-income children that were not provided as reported.

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is a federally-funded and state-administered program that feeds nutritious meals to children in low-income areas when schools are closed for summer vacation. In Georgia, the program feeds children free of charge through sponsors that utilize sites approved by the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL). SFSP provides an estimated 5-6 million meals a summer for approximately 82,000 children each day in the State.

In 2017, Our Daily Bread, Inc., provided SFSP meals at 177 different locations from Brunswick to Albany encompassing most of Southern Georgia. After routine evaluations at multiple sites, DECAL administrators suspected that CEO Dawn Eggleston had misrepresented the total number of meals actually served. Subsequent surveillance by the Office of the State Inspector General and other investigating agencies confirmed that Eggleston regularly inflated the meal counts, and that Eggleston submitted a fraudulent reimbursement in the amount of \$831,354 for July 2017. As a result of this investigation, DECAL rejected the reimbursement request.

On May 22, 2023, Eggleston plead guilty and was sentenced to five years of probation under the supervision of the Department of Community Supervision and a \$3,600 fine. Eggleston was also ordered to complete 300 hours of community service.

Three Indicted in Gwinnett County for Racketeering involving Multiple Cyber Fraud Schemes

UGOCHINYERE ANAZODO, 44, of Atlanta, DOMINIQUE BEAULIEU, 44, of Atlanta, and WILLY OBENA, 44, of Orlando, were recently indicted on two counts of Racketeering.

ANAZODO was also charged with one count of Theft by Taking and one count of Money Laundering.

According to the charges contained in the indictment and other public records: The defendants are alleged to have participated in a criminal enterprise with the purpose of obtaining and laundering the stolen proceeds of cyber fraud schemes. Specifically, the defendants are alleged to have engaged in a Business Email Compromise (BEC) scam targeting the Georgia Department of Transportation and a romance scam targeting a private citizen.

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) and the Office of the Inspector General worked in tandem to investigate this matter.



Former State of Georgia employee sentenced to five years in federal prison for stealing \$1.3 million earmarked for citizens with disabilities

Former Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency counselor Karen C. Lyke (formerly known as Karen C. Gregory) has been sentenced to five years in prison for forging educational records and creating fake students with non-existent disabilities and illnesses in an elaborate, multi-year scheme to steal more than \$1.3 million.

“The State of Georgia trusted Lyke to serve some of its most vulnerable citizens – Georgians with significant disabilities and illnesses,” said U.S. Attorney Ryan K. Buchanan. “Driven by greed more than integrity, Lyke betrayed that trust and masterminded a complex scheme to invent fake students with non-existent disabilities through forging medical, educational, and financial records. Based on her sophisticated conspiracy, Lyke cheated taxpayers out of more than \$1.3 million.”

“Lyke abused her trusted counselor position to line her own pockets, and for that she will spend time in prison,” said Keri Farley, Special Agent in Charge of FBI Atlanta. “This sentencing should serve as a message that the FBI and our partners will not tolerate anyone driven by personal greed to steal American tax payer money that should be going to those who need it.”



FY 2023 was the fourth full fiscal year of the Sexual Harassment Prevention Program.

Complaints
Reported to OIG
= 106



OIG Conducted 2
Impartial
Investigations

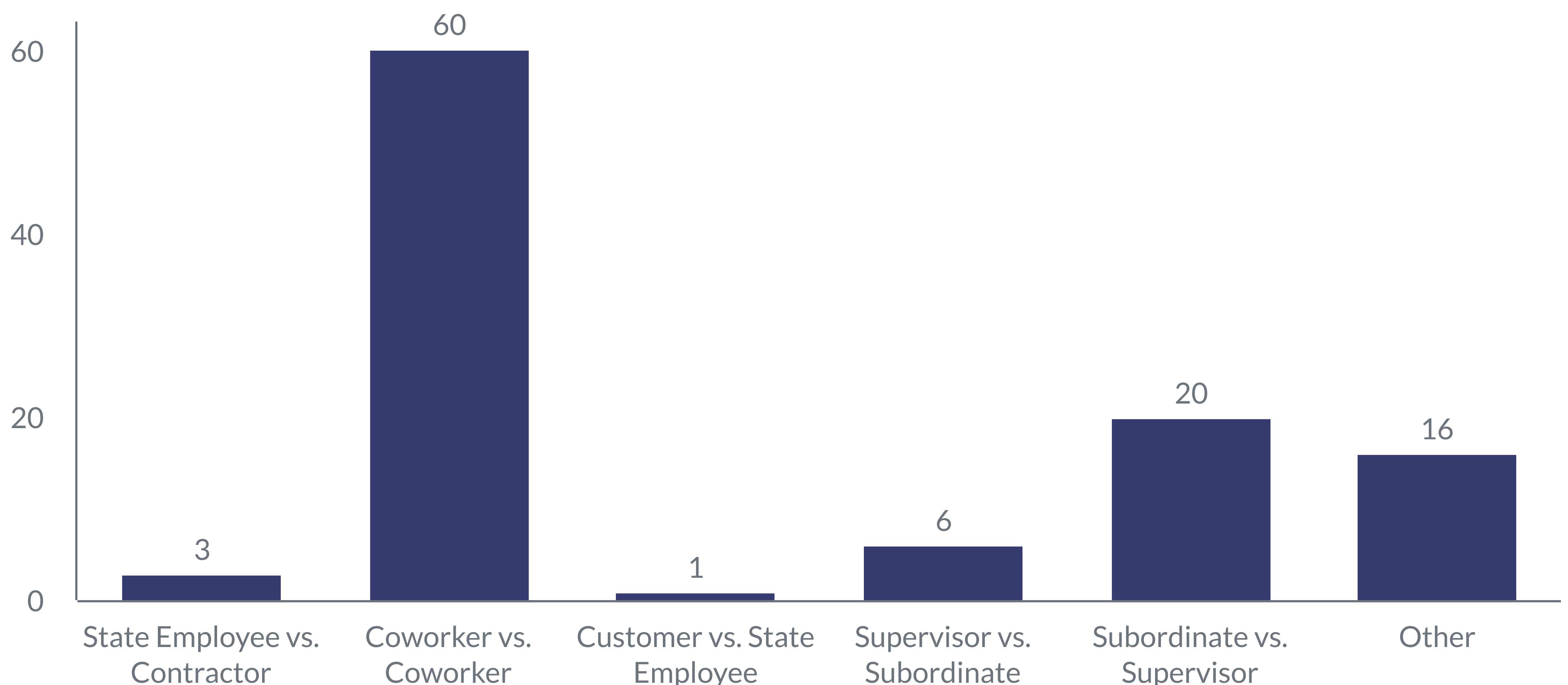
Sexual harassment complaints are reported to OIG via an online webform either by executive branch agency personnel who have received a report of sexual harassment or by an employee who has been subjected to sexual harassment but does not feel comfortable reporting to their agency.

Once an investigation has concluded, each agency reports their findings to OIG. A sustained finding means that the investigation revealed sufficient evidence to support the conclusion that the act(s) complained of occurred, that it was committed by the respondent, and that it constitutes a violation(s) of the Statewide Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy

32%

% of Closed Complaints with a Sustained Allegation
-21% from FY22

Relationship of Parties: Complainant vs. Respondent



Report Fraud, Waste, or Abuse



Website:

oig.georgia.gov

Email:

ig@oig.georgia.gov

Mailing Address:

2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive
SW, 1102 West Tower
Atlanta, GA 30334