

## Municipal Hotline

### Why audit the Municipal Hotline?

The municipal hotline was established in 1999 following *The Red Flag Commission Report*.<sup>1</sup> The hotline allows city employees and residents to anonymously report potential abuse and wrongdoing by officials, employees, and those doing business with the city. The city contracts with a vendor to answer the hotline. The Internal Auditor, who reports to the City Manager, is tasked with managing and investigating hotline reports.

For a hotline, trust and employee perceptions are critical. To be effective and build trust, management should communicate how to report unacceptable behaviors; appropriately respond to reports received to the hotline in a timely manner; and protect whistleblowers from retaliation. Management can use information obtained from the calls to monitor and track trends and to identify opportunities for improvement. The Office of the City Auditor last conducted an audit of the city's hotline in 2016.

### Audit objective

Our objective is to answer the following question:

- Is the city effectively operating the municipal hotline?

### Audit methods

We will interview staff; review current procedures; identify recommended practices; analyze aggregate data with comparable benchmarks; and review how municipal hotline reports are processed.

### Anticipated release date

We plan to issue the audit report in February 2025.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Red Flag Commission Report*, Red Flag Commission, Kansas City, Missouri, January 1997, p.4. The Red Flag Commission was established to examine the city's contract processes, procedures, and monitoring in light of a wave of public corruption prosecutions involving elected city officials and recommended the establishment of a confidential hotline.

