



**Dave Yost**  
Ohio Auditor of State



# OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE FIGHTING FRAUD

## Public Integrity Assurance Team

Special Investigations • Special Audits

The Auditor of State's **Public Integrity Assurance Team (PIAT)** promotes clean, ethical government; exposes corruption and wrongdoing where it exists; and assists law enforcement and prosecutors in the pursuit of justice.

PIAT is a group of experienced forensic auditors, investigators and attorneys with the expertise to take a case from an initial complaint through conclusion.



**Use Our Mobile App**  
Ohio Stops Fraud



**Call the Hotline**  
1-866-Fraud-OH  
1-866-372-8364



**Email Your Tip**  
fraudOhio@ohioauditor.gov



**Send a Letter**  
88 E. Broad St. PO #1140  
Columbus, OH 43215



**PUBLIC INTEGRITY  
ASSURANCE TEAM**

**Contact PIAT**  
**614-372-8364**  
fraudOhio.com  
fraudOhio@ohioauditor.gov  
88 E. Broad St. 5th floor  
Columbus, OH 43215



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## How we investigate fraud and compliance

**1. We receive a tip:** Each year, the Auditor of State's Office receives hundreds of tips regarding suspected fraud and non-compliance of laws in government. These tips come from public employees, concerned citizens and state auditors who find suspicious activity in the course of a routine financial audit. Tips or complaints may be reported through our website, mail or our fraud hotline.

**2. We evaluate the tip:** The Special Audit Task Force — a group of auditors and investigators led by Auditor Yost — evaluates tips and either sends them to PIAT for further review, or refers them to other local, state or federal government offices, prosecutors and law enforcement agencies.

**3. A special audit or investigation begins:** A special audit is a limited-scope examination of financial records and other information designed to investigate allegations of fraud, theft or misappropriation of funds. They can be stand-alone examinations or conducted during the course of a regular financial audit. Special investigators may be involved to gather information that is not readily available during the regular audit.

**4. Case leads to prosecution:** Once fieldwork has been completed, the office works with county or federal prosecutors to determine the next steps. Prosecutors may work independently or request the help of a special prosecutor from PIAT.

## Notable cases involving PIAT

**Village of Mt. Sterling:** Former Mt. Sterling village administrator Joseph Johnson was found to have stolen \$724,000 from the village. He made numerous personal purchases of vehicles, trailers and equipment, among other things, using a village credit card which nobody else at the village was aware they had. He also made large transfers of funds from the village bank accounts to his personal bank account. Johnson pleaded guilty before the Madison County Common Pleas Court and was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

**Franklin County Court of Appeals Judge:** In February 2017, Judge Tim Horton pleaded to a Bill of Information charging him with three misdemeanor counts involving misuse of campaign funds and the filing of false financial reports. Judge Horton was given a six-month suspended jail sentence, one year of community control, a \$1,000 fine, and was ordered to pay \$2,065 to the Mid-Ohio Foodbank. Horton also was ordered to participate in Alcoholics Anonymous, and serve 100 hours community service and 10 consecutive days in the Franklin County Jail.

**STAR Community Justice Center:** PIAT collaborated with the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) to conduct a joint investigation, revealing that the executive director, deputy director and several other employees had misused STAR funds. After completing the special audit, 14 findings for recovery (FFR) were issued against 11 STAR employees totaling \$20,090.