Introduced 10·05·2026
Public Hearing 10·19·2026
Council Action 10·30·2026
Executive Action
Effective Date

County Council of Howard County, Maryland

2026 Legislative Session

Legislative Day No.

Bill No. 69 -2026

Introduced by: Deb Jung

SHORT TITLE: Inspector General – Custodian of Howard County Government Public Records

TITLE: AN ACT designating the Inspector General as a custodian of Howard County Government public records; revising the duties of the Inspector General; and generally relating to the Office of Inspector General.

Introduced and read first time Oct 5, 2026. Ordered posted and hearing scheduled.

By order Michelle Harrod
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

Having been posted and notice of time & place of hearing & title of Bill having been published according to Charter, the Bill was read for a second time at a public hearing on Oct 19, 2026.

By order Michelle Harrod
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

This Bill was read the third time on Oct 30, 2026 and Passed ___, Passed with amendments ___, Failed X.

By order Michelle Harrod
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

Sealed with the County Seal and presented to the County Executive for approval this 30 day of October, 2026 at 5:00 a.m./p.m.

By order Michelle Harrod
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

Approved by the County Executive _____, 2026

Calvin Ball, County Executive

NOTE: [[text in brackets]] indicates deletions from existing law; TEXT IN SMALL CAPITALS indicates additions to existing law; ~~Strike-out~~ indicates material deleted by amendment; Underlining indicates material added by amendment.

LEG2669

Section 1. Be It Enacted *by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland, that the Howard County Code is amended as follows:*

By adding:

Title 22 - "General Provisions."

Subtitle 12. - "Office of the Inspector General."

Section 22.1203. - "Powers, duties, and responsibilities."

New Subsection (b). – "Custodian of records"

By amending:

Title 22 - "General Provisions."

Subtitle 12. - "Office of the Inspector General."

Section 22.1203. - "Powers, duties, and responsibilities."

Renumbered Subsection (d). – "Duties and Responsibilities"

Title 22 – General Provisions

Subtitle 12. – Office of the Inspector General

Section 22.1203. – Powers, duties and responsibilities

(a) *Head of Office.* The Inspector General shall supervise and direct the Office of the Inspector General.

(B) *CUSTODIAN OF RECORDS.* PURSUANT TO §4-101(D)(2) OF THE GENERAL PROVISIONS ARTICLE OF THE ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND, THE INSPECTOR GENERAL IS AUTHORIZED TO HAVE PHYSICAL CUSTODY AND CONTROL OF HOWARD COUNTY GOVERNMENT PUBLIC RECORDS.

[[(b)**]]** (C) *Powers*. The Inspector General has the following powers to accomplish the intent of this Subtitle:

(1) The right to obtain full and unrestricted access to all records and files maintained by all officials, agents and employees of the County and all offices, departments, institutions, boards, commissions, courts and corporations and other agencies thereof, shall at all times be open to the inspection of the Inspector General where necessary for the conduct of the Inspector General;

(2) The authority to administer oaths or affirmations and take testimony relevant to any inquiry or investigation undertaken pursuant to this Subtitle;

(3) The right of access to the head of any public entity or external entity receiving County funds or benefits when necessary for purposes related to the work of the Inspector General; and

(4) Subject to paragraph (d) of this Section, the power to require County employees to cooperate with the Inspector General's investigations.

[[(c)]] (D) *Duties and Responsibilities*. The Office of the Inspector General shall:

(1) Evaluate, investigate, inspect, and monitor the activities and records of the County Government, external entities, and individuals receiving County funds for, but not limited to, contracts, procurements, grants, agreements, and other financial or programmatic arrangements undertaken by or on behalf of the County Government; or any other function, activity, policy, procedure, process, or operation conducted by County Government, external entities, or individuals receiving County funds or benefits;

(2) Conduct investigations;

(3) Provide information and evidence that relates to criminal acts to appropriate law enforcement, administrative, and prosecutorial agencies;

(4) Receive and investigate complaints from any source or upon its own initiative concerning alleged fraud, waste, and abuse;

(5) Conduct joint investigations with County Auditor;

(6) Initiate review of, and make recommendations to the County Executive and County Council to promote efficiency, accountability, compliance, and integrity in County government;

(7) Establish written policies and procedures to guide functions and processes conducted by the Office;

(8) Meet with the Inspector General Advisory Board at least twice a year to review completed investigations and advisory letters, the annual budget request, and other relevant, non-operational matters;

(9) Meet with the County Council annually; **[[and]]**

(10) ACT AS A CUSTODIAN OF HOWARD COUNTY GOVERNMENT PUBLIC RECORDS; AND

([[10]]11) Do all things necessary to carry out the functions in this subtitle including, without limitation, issuing citations for any violation of Section 22.1203(d).

[[(d)**]]** (E) *Discipline and Penalty Provisions*. County employees who fail or refuse to cooperate with the Inspector General shall be subject to the discipline provisions of Title 1, Subtitle 1 of this Code or provisions of any applicable collective bargaining agreement. Alternatively, and in addition to and concurrent with all other remedies, the Inspector General may enforce the provisions of Section 22.1203(d) with civil penalties pursuant to Title 24, "Civil Penalties" of this Code. An employee who engages in the following commits a Class A violation:

(1) Withholding or refusing to respond to a request for documents or information under this Section within the timeframe agreed upon by all parties;

(2) Giving false or misleading information in connection with any report, study, or investigation under this Section; or

(3) Retaliating or threatening to retaliate against any person for filing a complaint with the Inspector General, furnishing information, or cooperating in any investigation, inspection, or review under this Section.

[[(e)**]]** (F) *Subpoenas*. The Inspector General may issue a subpoena to require:

(1) Any person to appear under oath as a witness; or

(2) The production of any information, document, report, record, account, or other material.

(3) Subpoenas issued by the Inspector General may be judicially enforced.

Section 2. And Be It Further Enacted *by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland that this Act shall become effective 61 days after its enactment.*

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, having been approved by the Executive and returned to the Council, stands enacted on _____, 2026.

_____
Michelle R. Harrod, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, having been passed by the yeas and nays of two-thirds of the members of the Council notwithstanding the objections of the Executive, stands enacted on _____, 2026.

_____
Michelle R. Harrod, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, having received neither the approval nor the disapproval of the Executive within ten days of its presentation, stands enacted on _____, 2026.

_____
Michelle R. Harrod, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, not having been considered on final reading within the time required by Charter, stands failed for want of consideration on _____, 2026.

_____
Michelle R. Harrod, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, having been disapproved by the Executive and having failed on passage upon consideration by the Council stands failed on _____, 2026.

_____
Michelle R. Harrod, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, the withdrawal of which received a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Council, is withdrawn from further consideration on _____, 2026.

_____
Michelle R. Harrod, Administrator to the County Council