



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

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NEWS RELEASE

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OIG Finds County Emergency Procurements Didn't Follow Policy

Rockville, Maryland – Montgomery County Maryland Inspector General Megan Davey Limarzi announced today the release of a new Office of the Inspector General (OIG) report, [*Food Security and Emergency Procurements*](#), OIG Publication #23-09, detailing the results of the OIG's review of Montgomery County's use of emergency procurements to address food insecurity as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The review was initiated in furtherance of the OIG's mission to prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse in government activities; and propose ways to increase the legal, fiscal, and ethical accountability of County government departments and County-funded agencies.

The County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) spent approximately \$23 million in emergency procurements to fund efforts to combat food insecurity. Emergency procurements carry an elevated risk of fraud, waste, and abuse due to less stringent review and approval requirements. Many of the controls and safeguards governing traditional procurements do not apply to emergency procurements, thereby allowing for less competition, scrutiny, and documentation. Although the use of emergency procurements is necessary and appropriate in certain circumstances, it is critical that the county maintains and follows processes that balance the competing interests of meeting unexpected needs while ensuring the integrity of public resources. In conducting this review, the OIG noted that most emergency procurements were extended for multiple years and questioned whether the underlying exigency had subsided enough to allow for a traditional contracting process.

The OIG report details 4 major findings, most notably that DHHS did not always comply with County regulations when requesting emergency procurements and that mandated published County reports underreported at least \$5 million in emergency food procurements. The OIG made 6 recommendations aimed at strengthening compliance with regulations, improving processes, and furthering transparency.

The full report can be found at

<https://montgomerycountymd.gov/OIG/Resources/Files/PDF/IGAActivity/FY2023/OIG23-009.pdf>

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