

To: Highline Community College Employees
From: Executive Director of Human Resources
Subject: Provisions of RCW 42.40 "Whistleblower"

All employees of Highline Community College are encouraged to report "improper governmental actions" to the State Auditor. "Improper governmental action" means any action by an employee that violates state law, abuses authority, wastes public funds, or endangers public health or safety. "Improper governmental action" does NOT include personnel actions involving employee grievances and related complaints.

Highline Community College recognizes the importance and value of employees reporting governmental misconduct without fear of retaliation or reprisal, and supports the reporting of misconduct to the State Auditor as outlined below.

A whistleblower is entitled to protection from reprisal or retaliatory action. The Whistleblower Act prohibits anyone from using his or her office or authority to interfere or attempt to interfere with an employee filing a complaint or providing information. "Whistleblower" includes an employee who provides information to the State Auditor during the course of an investigation, as well as the employee who makes the original report. If a whistleblower believes he or she has been the subject of such action, the whistleblower may file a claim with the Washington Human Rights Commission. The Commission will investigate the claim and take appropriate action.

A copy of the State Auditor's Policy Regarding the Disclosure and Investigation of State Employee Misconduct may be obtained by contacting the State Auditor's Office at the address below. That policy contains greater detail regarding the provisions of the Act as well as the process for handling complaints.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES:

An employee may report improper governmental action within one year by filing written notification of such action to the State Auditor, including a description of the improper action, the name of the employee(s) involved, the agency and any other details necessary to conduct an investigation. The notification should be signed; however, complaints may be filed anonymously. The whistleblower's name will be held in strict confidence. Telephone calls will not be accepted. An employee is likewise encouraged to bring the impropriety to the attention of the College President so that the College can promptly remedy the situation.

The address for the State Auditor is:

State Auditor's Office Division of Audit
Attention: Whistleblower Program Manager

PO Box 40031
Olympia, WA 98504-0031

If the employee who has reported the improper governmental action wishes to be informed of the results of the State Auditor's investigation, he or she must include a name, address and telephone number in the original whistleblower letter.

The Human Resources Executive Director is required to provide all Highline Community College employees, on an annual basis, a summary of the Whistleblower Act and the procedures for reporting.

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