

## **Statement of the Baltimore City OIG Advisory Board:**

The Baltimore City Office of the Inspector General (OIG) promotes accountability and efficiency in City government by identifying and preventing fraud, waste, abuse, and misconduct. This mission depends on the Inspector General's independence and timely access to the records required for effective oversight.

In 2022, Baltimore voters strengthened this independence by restructuring the OIG Advisory Board into an eleven-member body of primarily City residents, charged with appointing the Inspector General, conducting performance reviews, and approving the OIG budget.

The Board was recently informed that the OIG received two hundred pages of redacted financial records related to a MONSE youth program and that Baltimore City Information Technology (BCIT) paused the OIG's access to certain online City records after identifying that access as "unauthorized." Without taking a position on any asserted privilege, the Board notes that delays or limitations in relevant access—regardless of their cause—can hinder timely and thorough investigations.

Effective oversight requires the OIG to have appropriate access to financial records, communications, contracts, and system data. Interruptions in this access can:

- Slow investigations
- Make patterns of concern more difficult to detect
- Affect public confidence in City operations
- Shift oversight from preventative to reactive; and
- Limit the Inspector General's performance and the Board's ability to evaluate it

The Board encourages continued collaboration among City agencies to ensure that the OIG can conduct the mandate entrusted to it by Baltimore's voters.