

Dept of Commerce: Office of Inspector General

List of investigations closed in 2017

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February 6, 2018

VIA E-MAIL

Russ Kick
P.O. Box 36914
Tucson, AZ 85740-6914
Russkick@gmail.com

RE: FOIA Request No. DOC-OIG-2018-000552

Dear Mr. Kick:

This letter is regarding your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, tracking number DOC-OIG-2018-000552 received by the Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General (OIG) on January 7, 2018, in which you seek “[a] list of the Office of Inspector General’s investigations that were closed in 2017. I request that this list contain the subject matter of each investigation.”

A search of records maintained by the OIG has located fourteen (14) pages that are responsive to your request. We have reviewed these pages under the terms of FOIA and have determined that the pages may be released to you as follows:

- Fourteen (14) pages must be withheld in part under FOIA exemption (b)(6), 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(6), which protects information in personnel, medical or similar files, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, as well as FOIA exemption (b)(7)(C), 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(7)(C), which protects law enforcement information, the disclosure of which could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.
- Additionally, one (1) of the fourteen (14) pages must also be withheld in part under FOIA exemption (b)(5), 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(5), which protects inter-agency and intra-agency records that would not be available by law to a party other than an agency in litigation with the agency, including documents that are subject to the deliberative process privilege.

For your information, Congress excluded three discrete categories of law enforcement and national security records from the requirements of FOIA. See 5 U.S.C. § 552(c) (2006 & Supp. IV 2010). This response is limited to those records that are subject to the requirements of FOIA. This is a standard notification to all OIG requesters and should not be taken as an indication that excluded records do, or do not, exist.

You have the right to appeal this determination. An appeal must be received within ninety (90) calendar days of the date of this response letter. Address your appeal to the following office:

Counsel to the Inspector General
U.S. Department of Commerce
Office of Inspector General, Office of Counsel
14th and Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Room 7898C
Washington, D.C. 20230

An appeal may also be sent by e-mail to FOIA@oig.doc.gov, by facsimile (fax) to 202-501-7335, or by FOIAonline, if you have an account in FOIAonline, at <https://foiaonline.regulations.gov/foia/action/public/home#>.

The appeal should include a copy of the original request and this letter. In addition, the appeal should include a statement of the reasons why you believe that the determination was in error. The appeal letter, the envelope, the e-mail subject line, and the fax cover sheet should be clearly marked "Freedom of Information Act Appeal." The e-mail, fax machine, FOIAonline, and Office of Counsel mailbox are monitored only on working days during normal business hours (8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday). FOIA appeals posted to the e-mail box, fax machine, FOIAonline, or the Office of Counsel mailbox after normal business hours will be deemed received on the next normal business day. If the 90th calendar day falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal public holiday, an appeal received by 5:00 p.m., Eastern Time, the next business day will be deemed timely. An appeal received after the 90-day limit will not be considered.

If you have any questions or concerns or would like to discuss any aspect of your request, you may contact the analyst who processed your request, Laura Main, by telephone at (202) 482-5992 or by email at foia@oig.doc.gov. You may also contact me, the OIG FOIA Public Liaison at:

Jennifer Piel
U.S. Department of Commerce
Office of Inspector General, Office of Counsel
14th and Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Room 7898C
Washington, D.C. 20230
Telephone at (202) 482-5992; email at foia@oig.doc.gov

In addition, you may contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration to inquire about the FOIA mediation services they offer. The contact information for OGIS is as follows:

Office of Government Information Services
National Archives and Records Administration
8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS
College Park, Maryland 20740-6001
E-mail at ogis@nara.gov
Telephone at (202) 741-5770; toll free at 1 (877) 684-6448; facsimile at (202) 741-5769

Sincerely,

Jennifer Piel
FOIA Officer

Enclosures

**Investigations Closed in CY 2017
[FOIA Request - DOC-OIG-2018-000552]**

Date Closed	Case ID	Narrative
01/03/2017	17-0073-P	On [REDACTED], the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) Office of Inspector General (OIG) received information that [REDACTED], who was an employee of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Organization (USPTO) at the time, had excessively used the Internet with [REDACTED] USPTO-provided computer and Internet connection and may have viewed child pornography. DOC OIG's investigation revealed that [REDACTED] viewed adult pornographic images on [REDACTED] USPTO-issued computer during work hours but did not...
01/04/2017	16-0489-I	DOC OIG received an allegation from the FBI that [REDACTED] may have been granted a loan from an EDA Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) to demolish a building in Kokomo, IN and falsely certified that the work was completed to receive the funds while the building remained in an untouched condition. DOC OIG's investigation determined that although [REDACTED] was offered the loan, it was not ultimately issued to [REDACTED] and the allegation was unsubstantiated.
01/04/2017	16-1122-I	A DOC OIG investigation was opened into allegations that a Census employee had outside employment [REDACTED] was not reporting while receiving workers' compensation. The allegation was unsubstantiated.
01/13/2017	13-0620-I	OIG closed an investigation into allegations that an employee of the United States Census Bureau (Census) carried contraband into the federal correctional institution (FCI) in [REDACTED] while visiting an inmate. OIG's investigation substantiated the allegation. During an interview with DOC OIG Special Agents, the Census employee admitted to bringing two plastic bags containing tobacco when visiting an inmate on [REDACTED]. The employee dropped one bag by accident in the...
01/13/2017	13-0885-I	DOC OIG received an allegation from ITA that a company submitted false statements to the government during the course of an ITA antidumping investigation, and that a rival company gained knowledge of the false statements through illegal use of computer systems. The investigation found that a former employee of the company that provided false statements obtained, on [REDACTED] own, information regarding [REDACTED] former employer and provided it to the rival company; the former employee did so in a foreign...
01/13/2017	15-0789-I	The OIG Hotline received a complaint alleging that a Supervisory [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, used [REDACTED] federal position to advocate for two private consulting firms where the employee had previously worked. OIG found that the employee, without an official purpose, wrote and sent a letter on NOAA letterhead to the

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		██████████ Planning Department endorsing the archeological work of two private consulting firms, where the...
01/13/2017	16-0463-I	This investigation was initiated after proactive efforts by the DOC OIG revealed indicators of workers' compensation fraud (exaggerating injuries) by the claimant. The allegations of fraud were unable to be substantiated.
01/17/2017	16-0454-I	On January 13, 2017, OIG closed an investigation into allegations that that EDA selected several candidates for SES positions over other candidates who were more qualified. The OIG investigated and determined that there was insufficient evidence to substantiate any findings of personal favoritism, preselection, or other improper bias in the selection process. The case was closed without further action.
01/17/2017	14-0877-I	On 1/17/2017 Office of Inspector General (OIG) closed an investigation into allegations that the ██████████ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) ██████████ sold copies of a book ██████ authored at conferences hosted by the American Society for Quality (ASQ) and the International Organization for Standardization (IOS); that the ██████████ traveled on government time and money to attend the conferences; and...
01/25/2017	16-0172-I	On January 23, 2017, the OIG closed an investigation into allegations involving a conflict of interest involving a ██████████ at the USPTO Patent Trial and Appel Board. The complaint alleged that a USPTO employee was practicing before the USPTO, and identified 20 trademark applications that listed the employee as the ██████████. The OIG found that the employee submitted over 30 trademark applications as the ██████████ on behalf of individual and corporate entities while employed...
02/02/2017	16-0401-P	On October 25, 2016, OIG closed an investigation into allegations involving alleged preferential treatment in a ██████████ appointment of a neighbor to the position ██████████. OIG's investigation did not uncover evidence that the appointment violated applicable personnel practices. Therefore, the allegations were unsubstantiated and the case was closed without further action.
02/02/2017	16-0031-I	A DOC OIG investigation was opened into allegations that an EDA grantee provided loans using EDA grant money to local businesses based on false statements/claims on applications and funds requests, that loan funds were allowed to be used for ineligible activities and impermissible purposes, and that the EDA grantee improperly reported default rates to EDA. The allegations were unsubstantiated.

02/02/2017	13-1138-I	On January 31, 2017, OIG closed an investigation into allegations that a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) employee had undue influence over decisions made by the ██████ of the National Geodetic Survey (NGS) that would seemingly benefit a private company that the employee owned. The OIG investigation did not uncover any evidence that the employee had undue influence or any improper relationship with the ██████ of NGS. While the OIG investigation did not substantiate...
02/02/2017	16-1155-W	On February 2, 2017, OIG closed an investigation into allegations of retaliation by an employee's supervisors. OIG's investigation did not uncover evidence to indicate that the employee's supervisors retaliated against the employee in violation of federal whistleblower statutes. Therefore, the allegations were unsubstantiated and the case was closed without further action.
02/02/2017	16-0765-I	On October 5, 2016, OIG closed an investigation into allegations involving alleged interference with the review of potential prohibited personnel actions. OIG's investigation did not uncover evidence that anyone, including the subjects, ordered the reviewer to change ██████ findings in connection with the review of potential prohibited personnel actions. Therefore, the allegations were unsubstantiated and the case was closed without further action.
02/08/2017	14-0153-I	In August 2015, the OIG released an investigative report revealing that a senior Department official misused government computer equipment, which was used to view and/or store pornographic material, among other issues. The OIG's investigation revealed a troubling pattern of conduct that was abusive of government resources and evidenced a disregard for conservation of such resources, as well as misconduct by the senior official in response to the OIG's investigation. The senior...
02/14/2017	15-0029-I	On July 11, 2016, OIG closed an investigation that arose from a request from the United States Attorney's Office, Central District of California (USAO/CDCA), to join an investigation that was being conducting into alleged false claims by a company. The allegation was that the company, knowingly and falsely claimed to be an 8(a)-certified small business entity. This was brought to the attention of the USAO/CDCA through a civil qui tam filing. Our investigation confirmed that the company was...
02/14/2017	17-0411-P	N/A. We did not investigate this matter. We are referring it to OS as an "N" referral.
02/15/2017	16-1010-P	Following OIG's receipt of information from NOAA in response to an H referral, this P case was opened to determine if further investigation was warranted. Further investigation was deemed to not be warranted.

02/22/2017	15-0732-I	On February 17, 2017, OIG closed an investigation into allegations that a PTO employee was using [REDACTED] government-issued computer and USPTO's bandwidth to access pornography. OIG substantiated the allegations and the matter was referred to USPTO for administrative action. The investigation was closed without further action.
03/02/2017	14-0990-I	On January 27, 2017, the OIG closed an investigation into whether the USPTO has a prevalent and persistent problem with time and attendance abuse in its patent examiner ranks. The OIG conducted a minute-by-minute review of the claimed work hours for 94 percent of USPTO patent examiners to determine whether the evidence supported work performance. Over a 15-month period (August 10, 2014, through November 28, 2015), the OIG found that approximately 8,400 examiners claimed 288,479 unsupported...
03/02/2017	14-0361-I	A U.S. Representative and several associates, including the CEO of an organization that received a grant from NOAA, were convicted of participating in a racketeering conspiracy and other crimes, including bribery; conspiracy to commit mail, wire, and honest services fraud; mail fraud; falsification of records; bank fraud; making false statements to a financial institution; and money laundering. The case involved five schemes, two of which involved NOAA grant funds. In one of the schemes, the...
03/10/2017	13-0703-I	On April 19, 2013, USAO WDPA requested DOC OIG initiate an investigation into allegations of antidumping by AmeriSource. USAO WDPA received a qui tam action and was actively engaged in pursuing the matter involving AmeriSource knowingly avoiding antidumping fees for Chinese-imported goods and making false statements to the ITA. DOC OIG entered into a joint investigation with CBP and HSI. On September 24, 2015, AmeriSource submitted a proposal offer to USAO WDPA in which AmeriSource would...
03/16/2017	14-0524-I	On April 14, 2014, the OIG Hotline received a confidential complaint alleging a NOAA employee stole/abused travel funds. The complainant specifically alleged that the NOAA employee did official travel in [REDACTED] to a conference that was paid for by a private sponsor; the sponsor made a payment directly to the NOAA employee, rather than to the government, and the NOAA employee used the money for "personal reasons." OIG's investigation found that the NOAA employee did take two...
03/16/2017	16-1562-P	On February 17, 2017, OIG closed an investigation that arose from a complaint from a former employee of an economic development district (which receives partial funding from the EDA) into the alleged embezzlement by a company of funding from a state Department of Commerce. The allegation was that the company knowingly embezzled state funding by defaulting on a

		contractual agreement between the company and the economic development district by failing to repay a \$100,000.00 loan to the district....
03/16/2017	17-0307-P	In March 2017, the OIG closed an investigation it had opened into allegations that certain USPTO employees acted improperly in connection with a trademark matter because they were subject to the influence of an [REDACTED] who once worked at USPTO. The OIG opened its investigation under the incorrect understanding that the [REDACTED] in question may have had a conflict of interest because [REDACTED] once worked on the trademarks at issue as a USPTO employee before representing a client in connection with...
03/16/2017	17-0346-W	In March 2017, the OIG closed a preliminary investigation into whistleblower-reprisal allegations raised by an employee of a private company that had entered into a joint venture partnership with NTIS. After a review of relevant documents, the OIG determined that it had no authority to investigate this matter pursuant to the National Defense Authorization Act ("NDAA"), 41 U.S.C. Section 4712, because the company employing complainant was not a contractor to the government. ...
03/17/2017	17-0014-P	In March 2017, OIG closed an investigation involving allegations received from NOAA OLE that a grantee was instructing an employee to alter time sheets and submit false information to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) in order to receive payment for work that was ineligible under the grant terms; the employee was then fired by the grantee after reporting this to NOAA OLE. OIG's investigation determined it did not have jurisdiction in this matter as the grant was...
03/17/2017	16-1553-P	On March 17, 2017 OIG closed a case involving a possible Conflict of Interest. The DOC OIG initiated this investigation in September 2016 based on DOC OIG audit findings that a former EDA employee served as both a voting member on an [REDACTED] Committee for a grant and the decision authority for the grant as the [REDACTED], overturning the previous [REDACTED] decision to not award the grant, and then quit soon after, raising red flags for bribery...
03/17/2017	16-0483-I	On March 17, 2017, the OIG closed an investigation into allegations of conflict of interest between a NOAA contractor and NOAA employee. No conflict of interest between the contractor and employee was found, but the investigation determined the NOAA contractor solicited business for [REDACTED] company using [REDACTED] government email on at least two occasions. The matter was referred to NOAA for action. In response, NOAA wrote a letter to the contractor requiring the contractor to submit a corrective...

03/22/2017	12-0497-I	On March 17, 2017, OIG closed an investigation into grant fraud involving EDA revolving loan funds (RLFs). Two officials who worked for an organization that administered an EDA RLF were convicted and sentenced for misappropriating RLF funds. One official was sentenced to 18 months of imprisonment and 2 years of supervised release and ordered to pay \$233,000 in restitution. The other official was sentenced to one day of imprisonment and 3 years of supervised release and ordered to pay a...
03/27/2017	16-0110-I	In March 2017, the DOC OIG closed an investigation into alleged conflicts of interest (18 U.S.C. 208) and violations of the FAR subparts 37.104 and 7.5 for Personal Services Contracting and Inherently Governmental Duties. The investigation unsubstantiated the alleged conflicts of interest violation and substantiated the violations of FAR subparts 37.104 and 7.5. A NOAA SES employee appointed a subcontractor as the Program Manager over the program that employed [REDACTED] contract. In doing so, the...
03/27/2017	16-1265-I	In March 2017, the DOC OIG closed an investigation into allegations of public corruption of city officials involving an EDA Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). The investigation revealed that the RLF was poorly managed by the contractor the city hired to oversee it and that no criminal actions had taken place. The city had ended its contract with the company that managed the RLF and was working to correct the issues. The allegations were not substantiated and the investigation was closed without...
03/27/2017	16-0893-I	In March 2016, the DOC OIG closed an investigation into alleged duplicate funding to the recipient of a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) contract and false certifications of HUBZone qualification. The investigation revealed there was no duplicate funding and the company did not certify that it was HUBZone. The allegations were not substantiated and the investigation was closed without further action.
03/29/2017	15-0076-I	In March 2017, the OIG closed an investigation into whether an examiner (Examiner) committed at least 730 hours of time and attendance abuse, resulting in the payment of approximately \$25,500 for hours not worked in FY 2014 alone. The investigation found that the number of Examiner A's unsupported hours in FY 2014 amounted to approximately 43 percent of the total hours that Examiner A certified for the fiscal year. Examiner A resigned rather than speak to investigators. After the case was...
03/31/2017	16-0327-W	On March 31, 2017, the OIG closed an investigation into a NWS employee's allegation that s/he was retaliated against for raising various concerns regarding management and/or for reporting certain IT-security related issues. The complainant alleged that was retaliated against via negative

		comments and/or ratings on [REDACTED] most recent performance review and via decision to lock the area in which she works (notwithstanding the fact that [REDACTED] has access to the key). The OIG determined to close the...
03/31/2017	16-0063-I	On 31 March 2017, OIG closed a case involving concerns regarding Census's recruiting, selection, promotion, and performance management practices as they relate to Senior Executive Service (SES) and Scientific or Professional (ST) positions. The OIG found insufficient evidence to warrant further review of all but three of the complainant's allegations regarding Census's purported recruiting, selection, promotion, and performance management practices as they relate to Senior...
03/31/2017	15-1508-I	On March 31, 2016, OIG closed an investigation into allegations (1) that a NOAA supervisor intentionally failed to accurately record leave time in [REDACTED] time and attendance reports and (2) that, during a period of time in which one of the supervisor's employees was required to telework pursuant to a reasonable accommodation agreement, the employee had been unable to perform any of [REDACTED] job duties because the supervisor failed to ensure that the employee had a functioning, government-issued...
03/31/2017	16-0693-I	On March 31, 2017, the OIG closed an investigation into allegations that a former USPTO employee shared confidential contractor information [REDACTED] learned while at USPTO with competitor of that contractor. The OIG found insufficient evidence to warrant further review of the allegation. While the evidence showed that the former USPTO employee may have shared the contact information of some of the contractor's employees with the competitor, the OIG found that, even if true, this conduct would...
03/31/2017	17-0014-W	On March 31, 2017, OIG closed an investigation into allegations that officials at the [REDACTED] terminated the complainant in retaliation for [REDACTED] reports of alleged grant fraud to NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement in violation of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The OIG investigation found that the [REDACTED] received no federal funds during the period of time in question, therefore this matter fell outside the scope of the OIG's investigative authority...
04/06/2017	16-0849-I	On April 6, 2017, OIG closed an investigation into allegations involving price-fixing on the 2016 Ford Focus RS by Ford automobile dealers in the Charlotte, NC area. The allegations were not substantiated and the investigation was closed without further action.
04/10/2017	17-0023-P	On April 10, 2017, OIG closed a case into the allegation that a [REDACTED] for the National Water Center contracted out a task of project management process to a firm that has neither training nor prior experience needed for the project. The complainant also alleged [REDACTED] of an

		FTE at the National Water Center, was hired by the contractor despite the fact that [REDACTED] had no experience or qualification to work on this matter. After an initial review of the case as a preliminary...
04/10/2017	16-1455-I	On April 10, 2017, OIG closed an investigation into allegations that the [REDACTED] of a regional Fishery Management Council had engaged in improper lobbying activities. The OIG investigated and determined that the subject's alleged lobbying activities did not violate any laws, rules, regulations or Department policies, and that the subject had received approval from NOAA's Office of General Counsel to engage in the alleged lobbying activities. The case was closed without...
04/12/2017	16-1364-I	In April 2017, the DOC OIG closed an investigation regarding allegations that a NOAA employee committed travel voucher fraud by not indicating meals were provided at certain conferences, and that the same employee also awarded grants to a company for which the employee sat on the board of directors. The DOC OIG's investigation determined the allegations were unsubstantiated. The employee properly indicated meals provided on travel vouchers, was not involved in the awarding of grants to...
04/13/2017	16-0886-I	On April 13, 2017, the OIG closed an investigation into allegations that a NOAA employee misused government UPS accounts to mail fraudulent checks. The OIG investigation did not uncover any evidence of criminal activity in connection with the employee, the matter was provided to NOAA management for their review and appropriate action, and the case was closed without further action.
04/13/2017	15-0194-I	In [REDACTED], a USPTO employee was removed from service for improper conduct that was identified as part of a DOC OIG investigation. This investigation involved allegations that an employee of the USPTO conspired to buy goods that were purchased with stolen credit card numbers from home improvement stores and then ship the merchandise via [REDACTED] shipping company to West Africa. This investigation also involved allegations that the individual operated [REDACTED] personal business while on government...
04/13/2017	12-1077-I	On April 13, 2017 OIG closed an investigation into an ITA employee. OIG's initial role in this case was to support the investigation of suspected abuse initiated by DSS, which found insufficient evidence to prove the employee [REDACTED]. However, the DSS investigation established a finding of [REDACTED] on [REDACTED] part, and found the employee made several false statements to their investigators. Further investigation by the OIG revealed the employee...

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04/20/2017	16-0922-I	On April 20, 2017, OIG closed an investigation into allegations regarding a letter with a suspected forged signature of an International Trade Administration (ITA) official and misappropriation of ITA logos. It alleged that this company may have used forged signatures of ITA officials and misappropriated ITA logos as part of an effort to establish its credentials with the Belarus government. The allegations were partially substantiated, and OIG determined that the letter was fraudulent. ...
04/20/2017	16-1577-W	On April 18, 2017, the OIG closed an investigation into allegations that a supervisor at FirstNet retaliated against one of [REDACTED] employees for making protected disclosures to the OIG and EEOC. The supervisor was alleged to have retaliated by placing the complainant on a PIP, denying the complainant's request for reasonable accommodation, and terminating the complainant's employment with FirstNet. The OIG determined that there is insufficient evidence to establish a whistleblower...
04/25/2017	14-0408-I	In June 2015, the OIG issued an investigative report finding that the Census Bureau, in attempting to recruit top talent to fill a critical position at the agency, failed to adhere to several rules and regulations related to federal contracting and recruiting. Specifically, the OIG found: (1) the Census Bureau's acceptance of voluntary services from a contractor implicated the Anti-Deficiency Act; (2) the Census Bureau did not comply with Department policies by receiving services from...
04/27/2017	16-1161-I	In April 2017, DOC OIG closed an investigation into allegations that a NIST [REDACTED] ordered a NIST [REDACTED] to amend a vehicle accident report to remove one party's possible negligence in the accident. DOC OIG's investigation determined the allegation was unsubstantiated. Although the subject did order the amendment in the accident report, it was under the scope of [REDACTED] duties and authority to do so.
04/27/2017	17-0336-P	In April 2017, DOC OIG closed an investigation into allegations that an EDA grant recipient misused grant funds. Through database checks and coordination with EDA, it was revealed that EDA had never awarded a grant to the subject or had any contact with [REDACTED] or any of [REDACTED] business entities. An interview of the complainant revealed no information confirming that the subject received a grant or other money from EDA. Based on these facts, the allegation is unsubstantiated.
04/28/2017	14-0278-I	On April 28, 2017, the OIG closed an investigation into an allegation that NOAA's Earth Systems Research Laboratory (ESRL or Laboratory) was wasting government funds through a practice of "rehiring" ESRL retirees via third-party contractors and Cooperative Institutes (CIs) to perform the same or similar duties at "closely the same pay rate, part-time, and sometimes for years." According to the complaint, ESRL rehired "[r]egular" retirees, employees who retired...
05/03/2017	16-0990-I	In light of USAO declination and subject's retirement, referring to NOAA for review and action.

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05/04/2017	16-0991-I	On May 3, 2017, the OIG closed a case regarding allegations of an improper conflict of interest that had been partially substantiated by NOAA as part of an H referral. In light of the USAO declination and the subject's reassignment, the OIG referred the matter back to NOAA for review and action.
05/05/2017	17-0066-P	On May 4, 2017, the OIG closed an investigation into allegations of misconduct by a Senior Official involving private dinners at [REDACTED] home and the use of [REDACTED] private airplane for government travel. The OIG did not evidence of misconduct by the Senior Official in either of these two activities. As such, the allegations were not substantiated and the investigation was closed without further action.
05/12/2017	16-0996-W	On May 11, 2017, the OIG closed an investigation into allegations that two [REDACTED] assigned to the Department of Commerce (DOC) Office of Security (OSY), Investigations and Threat Management Division (ITMD), retaliated against an employee for making protected disclosures. OIG did not substantiate the complainant's allegations of whistleblower retaliation.
05/22/2017	16-1421-I	In May 2017, the DOC OIG closed an investigation into allegations of grant fraud involving (a) a city [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] not meeting the matching funds requirement on a NOAA grant; (b) the [REDACTED] administering and performing work on the grant; and (c) using NOAA funds for improper purposes. The investigation revealed that NOAA (a) waived the matching fund requirement; (b) approved the city's grant [REDACTED] participation as both the [REDACTED] who managed...
05/22/2017	16-1367-P	On January 12, 2017, OIG closed an investigation into allegations that a senior Census Bureau employee had been viewing sexually explicit material online and conducting searches utilizing terms consistent with child pornography. The OIG investigation established that the Census employee had been conducting inappropriate searches online, but no images of pornography or child pornography were discovered. The case was declined for prosecution by the DOJ and referred for administrative action. On...
05/23/2017	16-1530-P	Conflict of Interest: USPTO OGL and Employee Relations reported that a patent examiner (GS-[REDACTED]) "filed an RCE request in a patent application, in which [REDACTED] is the sole named inventor/applicant, after becoming employed by the USPTO" and that "it does not appear that [REDACTED] has assigned [REDACTED] rights." Note: No casework conducted--AUSA declined and we referred to USPTO for inquiry.
05/23/2017	17-0624-P	Conflict of Interest. A complainant alleged that a patent examiner (GS-[REDACTED]) "appears to be both an [REDACTED] at USPTO and [REDACTED]" Note: Once AUSA declined we referred this matter to USPTO for inquiry.

06/16/2017	17-0677-P	On June 16, 2017, the OIG closed an investigation into a possible violation of financial conflict-of-interest rules by the ██████████ International Trade involving ██████ participation in biotechnology matters while owning an interest in a biotechnology fund. The OIG did not uncover evidence of misconduct by the ██████████ in connection with ██████ participation in the biotechnology matters . As such, the allegation was unsubstantiated and the investigation was closed...
06/23/2017	17-0324-P	On June 22, 2017, OIG closed an investigation into allegations involving workers' compensation fraud. The DOC workers' compensation program referred a matter in which they believed a claimant may have been exaggerating ██████ injuries. The OIG investigation did not uncover evidence of fraud in connection with the complaint and the case was closed without further action.
06/27/2017	17-0873-P	On June 26, 2017, the OIG closed an investigation into allegations that a contractor was receiving kickbacks from a subcontractor. DOJ declined prosecution of this matter on June 14, 2017, and the matter was referred to OS on June 26, 2017, to conduct an administrative inquiry into the allegations raised.
06/27/2017	14-0415-I	On June 27, 2017, the OIG closed an investigation into allegations that a now-former Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) ██████ engaged in excessive government travel and/or failed to obtain the proper approvals for ██████ travel. It was also alleged that employees of the NWFSC engaged in various misconduct including miscoding purchases, engaging in split purchase card transactions, and permitting outside entities to use NWFSC facilities without charge. The allegations were generally...
07/10/2017	15-1389-I	On July 7, 2017 OIG closed an investigation into the improper awarding of contracts involving an NOAA employee. The allegations were not substantiated and the investigation was closed without further action.
07/20/2017	16-0361-I	On July 20, 2017, the OIG closed an investigation into a possible misconduct involving the promotions of three individuals in the Office of Facilities and Environmental Quality and involving the hiring of another individual in the Office of Space and Building Management. The OIG's investigation uncovered insufficient evidence to substantiate the allegations of misconduct in connection with the promotions or the hiring. As such, the allegations were unsubstantiated and the investigation...
07/20/2017	17-0527-P	On July 20, 2017, the DOC OIG closed an investigation into allegations that an unknown individual or individuals was/were impersonating a DOC Office of Acquisition Management (OAM) and sending fake RFQs for IT supplies and equipment to various businesses using a doc-gov.us email

		address, which is not affiliated with the DOC. The investigation confirmed that 63 different businesses received the scam, found it suspicious, and contacted the DOC to report it. Only one business sent a partial order...
07/21/2017	15-1118-I	15-1118: On July 20, 2017, OIG closed an investigation involving a review of the policies, practices, and procedures concerning the Foreign National Researcher program at NIST. The review was conducted jointly between the Office of Investigations and Office of Audit and Evaluation. The (B)(5) [REDACTED]
07/21/2017	13-0301-I	In July 2017, OIG closed an investigation into the alleged misuse of NOAA/NMFS grant funds. The OIG investigation revealed questionable costs and was referred to NOAA for administrative action and review. NOAA's review resulted in no recovery of questionable costs; however both recipient organizations have been designated high-risk and are required to complete corrective actions.
08/11/2017	17-0967-P	On August 11, 2017, OIG closed a preliminary investigation into allegations that: ITMD obtains Special Deputation from USMS to conduct protection for the Secretary of Commerce but uses it to conduct investigations; ITMD sent an agent overseas in an undercover status without following protocol, and perhaps in excess of their authority, resulting in detention of the agent; and ITMD's cases target persons primarily of a particular ancestry. The allegations were determined to be generally unsubstantiated; however OIG expressed some concerns to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration about deputation documents and authority oversight.
08/17/2017	17-0569-P	On February 17, 2017, OIG staff met with a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) employee who alleged contracting improprieties by [REDACTED] of the NOAA [REDACTED]. The complainant alleged an improper relationship between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], a prominent NOAA contractor; the complainant stated that [REDACTED] had noticed a pattern in which [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] ...
10/02/2017	17-0781-P	On September 24, 2017, OIG closed an investigation into allegations that an expert report commissioned by the FDIC-OIG had potentially been leaked to the press after a search warrant had been executed in a federal multi-agency operation. The OIG investigation determined that no BIS resources were utilized to transmit the report outside of the agency. DOJ was satisfied with the investigative steps taken and advised that the allegation was unsubstantiated, based on the results of the...

10/02/2017	15-0080-I	On October 2, 2017, a contractor employee complained that its employer, ██████████, failed to pay the Complainant and other contractor employees for accrued vacation time when the contract ended, and that this violated federal law because ██████████ billed the government for this cost. The investigation expanded to include allegations that NOAA's contracts for acquisition support services violated certain contracting rules and regulations. Allegations also arose regarding a...
10/04/2017	17-0240-P	On October 4, 2017, the OIG closed an investigation into allegations by a qui tam relator that an IT services company overcharged the USPTO in the performance of a computer maintenance contract by invoicing offsite rates for its personnel in 2013 after they had been relocated onsite at the USPTO. The U.S. Attorney's Office (USAO) in Alexandria, VA was considering intervening in the matter and requested assistance. The OIG investigation did not uncover any evidence of criminal activity in...
10/10/2017	17-0013-I	On October 4, 2017, the OIG closed an investigation into allegations that a senior NOAA employee had been viewing child pornography on ████████ work-issued computers. The OIG investigation established the presence of pornographic images and pirated movies, but not the presence of child pornography. The case was declined for prosecution by the DOJ and referred for administrative action. On June 28, 2017, NOAA presented the employee with a proposal for a thirty-day suspension without pay. On July 5,...
10/10/2017	17-1043-P	In October 2017, the OIG closed a preliminary investigation into a company alleged to have falsely reported the country of origin for steel pipe the company imported into the United States. The complainant was anonymous, and based partially on a consultation with the International Trade Administration, there was insufficient information to proceed with the investigation.
10/16/2017	14-0860-I	On July 22, 2014, our office initiated an investigation into allegations received from the Social Security Administration OIG concerning an employee's fabricated military orders from the Idaho State National Guard. The employee falsely stated the employee was obligated to serve and ordered for duty and provided fabricated orders to the employer, DOC's Economic Development Administration. The investigation also revealed that the employee made misrepresentations to various federal...
10/16/2017	15-1775-I	On October 15, 2015, DOC OIG initiated an investigation into an employee who was alleged to have placed ineligible dependents on the employee's health insurance coverage. After an initial review of the allegation it was determined that the potential loss amount and lack of investigative

		resources did not merit additional investigation. Additionally, the United States Attorney's Office concurred with the decision not to investigate.
10/17/2017	14-0505-I	On September 22, 2017, OIG closed an investigation into environmental stewardship on a NOAA research vessel. NOAA disciplined █████ employees. They issued █████ Letters of Reprimand and █████ Letters of Administrative Censure, all related to the failure to treat bilge water before discharge and failure to properly record the discharges. In addition, NOAA concurred with our recommendations to improve their operations and ensure accountability and compliance with rules and regulations,...
11/06/2017	15-0937-I	In November 2016, the OIG provided the Department with a report finding that a senior departmental official returned from an international business trip using a foreign airline in violation of the Fly America Act, 49 U.S.C. 40118. The Department disputed that a violation took place, asserting that it was a matter of necessity for this official to return to the United States on the flight that █████ took because of █████ level of seniority. Nonetheless, the Department required several officials...
12/11/2017	17-1053-P	On December 11, 2017, the OIG closed an investigation regarding allegations of financial improprieties at MBDA Minority Business Centers. The OIG found the allegations to be unsubstantiated.
12/11/2017	15-1606-I	On December 11, 2017, the OIG closed an investigation regarding alleged improprieties at a Fishery Management Council. The OIG partially substantiated the allegations, but did not find any evidence of bad faith or knowing misconduct.

*This list excludes case ID 18-0256-I, which was closed on 11/30/17 for administrative purposes, as the matter was reopened under case ID 18-0256-X due to sensitive nature of allegations.

**Source: CMS Advanced Search of CY 2017 Closed Investigations (SAR Narrative)