



## ASSOCIATION OF INSPECTORS GENERAL

524 West 59th Street, 53334HH  
New York, NY, 10019  
212-237-8001

### OPEN LETTER TO THE BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL

April 6, 2026

100 North Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

#### **Re: Restoring direct access to government records for Baltimore City Inspector General**

Honorable Mayor and Members of the Baltimore City Council:

The Association of Inspectors General (AIG) is an independent, nonpartisan 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that represents thousands of members working in hundreds of offices of inspector general (OIG) across all 50 states, U.S. territories and internationally. For 30 years, AIG has worked to advance government integrity and accountability, and to promote excellence among OIGs, including publishing and promoting the Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspector General (AIG Green Book)—widely recognized as the industry standard of principles and best practices for OIGs at every level of government.

AIG has been closely following recent challenges to the legally mandated authority of OIGs across the state of Maryland, including the alarming steps taken in Baltimore City to deny or severely limit the Baltimore City OIG's longstanding direct access to government records, including records involving the use of public funds. These actions are very concerning as they severely hinder the Baltimore City OIG's capacity to promote efficiency and accountability through evidence-based investigations, as it was established to perform on behalf of the City's residents.

**For offices of inspectors general to administer independent and fair oversight in a manner worthy of the public's trust, they must have direct access to government records that reveal how government agencies have transacted business or exercised authority on behalf of the taxpayers they represent. AIG supports the proposed effort to designate the Baltimore City OIG as a custodian of records and restore the office's access to Baltimore City government records.**

Direct access to government records is necessary for OIGs to thoroughly and accurately fulfill their core oversight functions. That includes access to materials that may otherwise be privileged from disclosure to third parties. Inspectors general are required to maintain the confidentiality of protected materials as part of their investigative protocols against the risk of inappropriate public disclosure of privileged or confidential information.

Inspectors general exist to provide independent, objective oversight and to promote accountability, transparency, and integrity in government. In service of those goals, the AIG Green Book provides that IGs should be placed in a statutory structure to “allow it to exercise independence in fact and appearance from operations, programs, policies, and procedures over which the OIG has authority.” The Green Book further provides that “[f]actors external to the OIG can restrict the efforts or interfere with the OIGs [sic] ability to form independent and objective opinions and conclusions,” and specifically includes “[i]nterference with OIG access to documents or individuals necessary to perform OIG work” among examples of external impairments to IG independence.

Anyone interested in promoting government transparency and efficiency should be concerned whenever official records are shielded from oversight based on the assertion of privilege. When government agencies deny access to their records from the legislatively created body established to oversee them, they implicitly send the message that their use of public authority – conferred by the taxpayers they represent – is beyond *anyone’s* review. Further, the denial of government documents and records from inspector general oversight ignores the fact that OIGs are embedded within the government agencies that they oversee—inspectors general are intended to have access to confidential records and materials that can be safeguarded from waivers of privilege or disclosure of confidential material.

**Based on our 30-year history of establishing and promoting OIG quality standards and best practices, AIG encourages the Baltimore City Council to designate the Baltimore City OIG a custodian of records and work to immediately restore the OIG’s access to the government records it needs to continue to provide independent and effective oversight on behalf of Baltimore taxpayers.**

AIG has the experience and expertise in providing guidance to government stakeholders on these complex issues and, as a nonpartisan and nonprofit organization, stands ready upon request to provide counsel or recommendations related to the proposed charter amendment and to support Baltimore City Council members in this effort.

Sincerely,



Will Fletcher, President

Association of Inspectors General