

Burlington creating whistleblower program for city employees to report wrongdoing

The program is expected to start in April after an online portal is created.



By [Craig Campbell](#) Burlington Post

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City of Burlington employees will have a whistleblower program in place next spring to confidentially report issues of wrongdoing.

The Hamilton Spectator file photo

The City of Burlington plans to launch an employee whistleblower program in April 2026.

The new program will allow city staff to confidentially report allegations of wrongdoing within municipal departments to the city auditor and human resources department.

With approval of a \$13,000 annual budget increase to the Office of the City Auditor for 2026, a procurement process will soon begin for a service provider to host an online whistleblower reporting portal. The goal is to award the contract in January.

An information report to the city's audit committee states the human resources department identified the need for a whistleblower policy.

"Similar policies are in place in most mid-sized and large municipalities," the report states.

Interviews were conducted with senior city staff from Barrie, Brampton and Calgary to receive advice and lessons learned from their whistleblower policies.

“The purpose of the whistleblower policy is to establish procedures for employees to report allegations of wrongdoing within the City of Burlington when there is a fear of reprisal,” the report states. “This policy will also provide protection from reprisal to employees who report wrongdoing in Good Faith.”

Pamela Forward, president of the [Whistleblowing Canada Research Society](#), said the concept of “Good Faith” has no place in a policy aiming to facilitate reporting of wrongdoing.

“The only thing that is important is the evidence,” Forward stated in an email. “This is an escape hatch that allows organizations to distract from the real issue by focusing on the motivation of the whistleblower and not the real issue.”

She said there has been little research in Canada on whistleblowing – which her organization hopes to change. It is planning a research conference in May 2026 to support growing interest of academics in the subject.

Forward said available research focuses on federal and provincial governments rather than municipalities, but she is aware most large cities have whistleblowing programs.

She said that lack of research means less knowledge of how to create a system that encourages and facilitates safe disclosures and prevents retaliation.

Forward said research on businesses with whistleblower programs shows effective systems save money, because there is less litigation, fewer mental health issues, less reputational damage and more productivity.

Maciej Jurczyk, Burlington’s city auditor, said the program is designed specifically for city employees to report workplace concerns when they have a fear of reprisal.

“At this time the program is designed only for city employees (not for the general public, vendors etc.) and there are no plans presently to expand it beyond this scope,” Jurczyk stated in an email.

According to [the information report](#), all staff complaints will be received by the city auditor and chief human resources officer.

The auditor will determine whether to formally investigate a complaint, refer it to human resources for investigation, or close it with no further action.

The city’s chief administrative officer will confidentially inform city council of whistleblower program investigations, and the auditor will report an annual summary of reports received, and investigations conducted, to the audit committee.

Jurczyk said the auditor’s annual summary report will be a public report and contain a summary of complaints and investigations. The whistleblower policy allows the CAO to inform city council of investigations in a manner the CAO deems appropriate, either publicly or in a closed meeting.

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