



# Summary of Investigation

## Investigation into Allegations of Whistleblower Retaliation by a Senior FirstNet Authority Official

Case No. 24-0470

Date Posted: August 28, 2025

➤ **What We Investigated** | We received complaints detailing allegations against a senior official at the First Responder Network Authority. The complaints alleged that the official retaliated against an employee after the employee's team provided information to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) in connection with an audit.

According to the complainant, their team shared records with OIG auditors, with the complainant's knowledge and support. Shortly thereafter, the official allegedly placed the complainant on administrative leave, later changing the complainant's status to full-time telework and restricting their access to Department and FirstNet Authority facilities. The official also reassigned the complainant's duties and directed the complainant to do research unrelated to their usual responsibilities. Ultimately, the official allegedly pressured the complainant to resign, suggesting that failure to do so could result in a poor performance evaluation and eventual removal from employment. The complainant asserted that these actions constituted retaliation for cooperating with OIG.

➤ **What We Found** | We found that by cooperating with OIG auditors, the complainant engaged in protected activity, or was perceived to have done so. We also found that this cooperation or perceived cooperation was a contributing factor in the senior official's decision to take the personnel actions against the complainant.

We therefore found that the complainant established a prima facie case of retaliation. This shifts the evidentiary burden to the senior official to demonstrate clearly and convincingly that the official would have taken the same actions regardless of the protected activity. We determined that the official did not meet this burden. We referred our findings to the Department in January 2025 for any appropriate action.