

**Mayor's Office of Neighborhood
Safety and Engagement
Response
Case #25-0046-I**



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

MEMORANDUM

TO	Isabel Mercedes Cumming, Inspector General
FROM	Stefanie Mavronis, MONSE Director
DATE	Monday, March 16, 2026
SUBJECT	Management Alert #25-0046-I

This memorandum will serve as an official response to the OIG Management Alert for Case No. 25-0046-I dated March 11, 2026. This Management Alert concerns the SideStep pilot program that ended in 2024. To reiterate, in October 2025, when MONSE received the Inspector General's prior Management Alert on the SideStep pilot program, [we indicated](#) that work was underway within the agency to update and enforce standard operating procedures for financial review and processing.

While the recent Inspector General report acknowledges that SideStep is no longer operational as of 2024, it is important to reiterate what we shared in our response to the October 2025 OIG report on the SideStep program: MONSE and the administration have utilized lessons from the limited Western District pilot to make programmatic improvements across the agency and inform program design moving forward. These lessons include improved workflows to ensure the secure and confidential transmission of protected data and stronger support of meaningful referral-based services and case management, all with the goal of preventing young, first-time offenders from committing future (and potentially more serious) offenses. With new staff and systems in place and numerous internal training sessions on subrecipient monitoring, the MONSE financial management and invoice review process is significantly stronger today than it was during the pilot program's active period, which began four years ago and concluded more than a year ago.

In the year since the conclusion of the SideStep pilot program, MONSE has worked with the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) and Baltimore Police Department (BPD) to redesign the future of this interagency youth diversion work, which is necessary to implement lessons learned, respond to changes in juvenile crime since 2022, and build out the victim support protocol and network of youth-serving providers. In summary, as MONSE has repeatedly stated, SideStep as it previously existed will not be expanded citywide.

This background is necessary to establish the context that the continued examination of the SideStep program is retrospective in nature, and any findings regarding the program no longer

reflect the current operations of MONSE or the future of this work.

Potential Fraudulent Invoices

MONSE takes evidence of fraudulent invoices, overbilling, or any other action that impacts public dollars invested in improving public safety extremely seriously. The agency is deeply concerned about the allegations raised in this report and will take every action available to recoup taxpayer funds. Unfortunately, the OIG's report provides virtually no detail about the alleged instances of overbilling that MONSE could use to review or address the concern. The report does not include the organization's name, the specific amount, the specific date, or any corresponding information, which is surprising given the OIG has referred this matter for criminal investigation. Since there is no rationale for the limited detail included in the report, it is unclear to MONSE why this information and the corresponding allegations are provided without specifics and without corresponding exhibits. The agency would like to note for the record the constraints it imposes on the agency's ability to adequately respond to the specific allegations.

In Fall 2025, MONSE began conducting an internal audit of all invoices associated with the now-concluded SideStep pilot program, which included 15 participating organizations and hundreds of corresponding invoices. This audit is ongoing, with completion expected by the end of the fiscal year. For all of our grants management efforts, we follow established protocol as a City agency in working with the City Law Department to facilitate strong oversight of our partnerships, including in those rare instances where we need to recoup funds. Through MONSE's ongoing audit of the SideStep pilot invoices, and prior to the issuance of this report, the agency identified one instance where an organization failed to provide supporting documentation to reconcile an advance payment that was made. MONSE has initiated the process to recoup these funds from the organization, in partnership with the Law Department. Due to the notable lack of detail in the OIG's report, it is unclear whether either example identified in the report relates to the instance that MONSE is already addressing or is a newly identified instance.

To that end, MONSE stands ready to partner with the Inspector General and the Law Department to recover taxpayer dollars, ensure accountability, and recoup the funds from any organization that submitted inaccurate invoices.

Case Management and Data Collection

This latest OIG report reiterates findings from earlier reports into the SideStep program regarding insufficient case management protocols, which the agency has already responded to in detail. As mentioned in [MONSE's October 2025 response](#), the agency has strengthened and improved case management standards. We have also adjusted the case management system to give DJS direct access to share records digitally and securely within the system – preventing this sensitive data from being shared via email, on physical sheets of paper, or on any individual's physical device. This also ensures that only authorized staff with approved credentials are the ones accessing the records in the system. Staff will be trained on data management expectations and the system before the next stage of this work begins. Additionally, under the future program design, MONSE will

work with DJS to monitor recidivism for all program participants, allowing both agencies to monitor participant recidivism on an ongoing basis.

Potential Breach of Juvenile Data Privacy

Regarding the finding about a potential breach of juvenile data privacy, MONSE is gravely concerned about the potential violation identified in the OIG's report. However, this is another instance where the report fails to provide relevant details that would allow the agency to clearly identify and address the concern. As similarly noted above, MONSE would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with the OIG and the Law Department on the additional details in the OIG's possession that would aid in the agency's ability to address this matter.

Nonetheless, based on the extremely limited information provided in the report, MONSE believes we have found the referenced email, in which a former MONSE employee transmitted a spreadsheet containing juvenile information via email to someone who appears to be a relative. The email in question was sent in 2023 and neither included other MONSE staff, nor were other staff made aware that this individual had sent the information to an external party. While the reason the former employee sent the data is unknown at this time, MONSE has not identified any malicious use of the data or further mishandling related to this singular email. Regardless of intent, such disclosure is completely unacceptable and violates MONSE's existing data policy, as well as State law. All MONSE employees who handle sensitive data, including this former employee, are aware of the agency's standard operating procedures concerning responsible data stewardship. In short, the violation appears to be the independent actions of a single individual, rather than a reflection of MONSE's data management procedures. MONSE and the Law Department are conducting a thorough review to ensure that any relevant data-breach notification requirements are met in the future.

Conclusion

In conclusion, MONSE takes the allegations regarding the specific findings around potentially fraudulent invoices and the potential breach of juvenile data privacy seriously and is poised to address these concerns. While these findings appear to be isolated incidents driven by individual actions that do not reflect broader systemic concerns with the agency's work, they are crucial examples of the value provided by the OIG to city agencies. While previous OIG reports have ventured into subjective assessment of the value or success of certain programs or policies, these findings identify incidents of concern that would be difficult to uncover without the assistance of an oversight partner like the OIG. For that support, MONSE is grateful for the OIG's work. The agency would now request that the OIG work directly with the agency and the Law Department to provide additional details that were omitted from the report to ensure that any organization that may have defrauded or overbilled the City is held accountable and funds can be recouped. Additionally, the agency would like to express our wholehearted support for the OIG's referral of the individual who violated the confidentiality of juvenile data to the appropriate authorities.

The agency would also like to note for the record that this report and our subsequent response were

provided under an unusually accelerated deadline. Given the important nature of the findings, the agency was happy to oblige the shorter timeframe, at least to the extent possible, when the report conspicuously lacked details that would have aided our agency's response.

In line with our shared commitment to safeguarding city resources, MONSE will continue to work in partnership with the Mayor's Office and oversight partners to ensure our policies and programs reflect best practices, uphold the highest integrity, and deliver meaningful results for Baltimore's youth and communities. Our agency will continue working towards and advocating for the legislation referenced in the report that would ensure our ability to coordinate with relevant agencies like DJS proceeds uninterrupted. We are confident that, given the isolated nature of the data-related incident outlined in this report and the improved case management protocols outlined in this and previous responses, there will be no outstanding concerns regarding MONSE's future ability to access the information necessary to facilitate our work.

Similarly, in line with the commitments outlined in Baltimore's Comprehensive Violence Prevention Plan and the Mayor's public safety priorities, MONSE will continue working diligently alongside our partners at DJS, the Mayor's Office, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders to ensure that our work to support Baltimore's young people proceeds uninterrupted.