

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

CITY OF BALTIMORE



Isabel Mercedes Cumming

Inspector General

Investigative Report Synopsis

OIG Case # 26-0002-I

Issued: August 12, 2026



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
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City Hall, Suite 635
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202



August 12, 2026

Dear Citizens of Baltimore City,

The mission of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) is to independently promote accountability, efficiency, and integrity in City government, as well as to independently investigate complaints of fraud, financial waste, and abuse. The following synopsis is a condensed version of the full report provided to City management officials and does not contain all investigative information. The investigation's review of correspondence for this investigation was completed before the City's removal of the OIG's direct access to records, files, and communications on February 6, 2026.

The OIG received a complaint in July 2025 regarding the conditions at the homeless shelters operated by a MOHS Contractor (Contractor 1): the former Fairfield Inn, former Holiday Inn Express, and former Sleep Inn. The complaint alleged that residents' grievances were not being addressed and raised concerns about the condition of the buildings, food quality, and the lack of functioning laundry equipment, bedding, soap, and toilet paper. The complaint also alleged poor ventilation in the buildings as well as mold growth and pest infestations.

The OIG conducted site visits to the former Fairfield Inn, former Holiday Inn Express, and former Sleep Inn, documenting conditions of the sites. The OIG also reviewed resident complaints and documentation concerning conditions at the homeless shelters, including a May 2025 mold test at the former Sleep Inn. The OIG also received photos showing mushrooms growing in a room within the Sleep Inn as well as a DGS work order to investigate fungal growth. Former MOHS employees said the situation in the homeless shelters was "critical" and described witnessing pest, mold, and plumbing issues.

The OIG recommends creating a comprehensive oversight program to ensure proper ventilation and moisture control within homeless shelters to prevent mold growth. The OIG recommends creating a comprehensive maintenance contract that covers the specific needs of the homeless shelters and clears up any confusion between MOHS and any maintenance contractors. The contract does not appear to address services such as carpet replacement. The OIG also recommends providing more on-site MOHS support and strengthening contract management of city contractors and city-owned properties.

BACKGROUND

According to former Mayor's Office of Homeless Services (MOHS) employees, the Sleep Inn and Suites (Sleep Inn) located at 332 N. Front Street, Fairfield by Marriott Inn & Suites Baltimore Downtown/Inner Harbor (Fairfield Inn) located at 101 S. President Street, and the Holiday Inn Express (Holiday Inn) located at 221 N. Gay Street were used as emergency homeless shelters during the COVID-19 pandemic. In July 2024, the City announced that it had purchased the Sleep Inn and the Holiday Inn, utilizing American

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Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding¹. In September 2024, the City entered into contracts with the Contractor 1 to operate the Sleep Inn as a family homeless shelter and the Holiday Inn as a men's homeless shelter for Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25). MOHS oversees Contractor 1 and a contractor that provides maintenance services at the Holiday Inn and Sleep Inn (Contractor 2).

The contracts with Contractor 1 cover the operation of the buildings as homeless shelters, daily meals for each resident, as well as various case management services to assist residents with securing housing outside of the shelter. The Contractor 1's contracts do not cover maintenance of the building, but the FY25 men's shelter contract section 7.13.4. states that "The Provider shall enter maintenance requests into the City's online maintenance portal "Archibus" within forty-eight (48) business hours." The investigation did not reveal evidence that Contractor 1 was provided with access to Archibus.

In February 2024, the City entered into a contract with Contractor 2 to provide building management/maintenance services at the Sleep Inn and Holiday Inn. The contract states that Contractor 2 would provide beds, linens, towels, and toiletries. The contract also states that they are responsible for room cleaning, pest control services, trash and recycling services, as well as maintenance for the following building systems:

- Elevators
- Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning
- Plumbing and boiler
- Electrical
- Fire alarm and suppression
- Laundry

The initial contract period from March 29, 2024, to December 31, 2024, was valued at \$3,200,000.00. In April 2025, the contract was extended through June 30, 2025, and \$870,000.00 in funding was added. The first amendment also included a change to Subsection II(E) of the Agreement, replacing it with the following:

"E. The Contractor shall pay all expenses of operating, maintaining, and services of the Facilities, with the exception of any security provided to the Facilities, the cost and expense of which shall be borne exclusively by the City, and the exception of unforeseen repairs to the Facilities in excess of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00), the cost and expense of which shall be separately negotiated by the Parties and addressed in a future Amendment to this Agreement in accordance with Section J below. Expenses incurred by the Contractor in connection with this Agreement and the operations of the Facilities shall be borne by the Contractor and shall in no event be charged to MOHS. The Contractor agrees to use diligence and commercially reasonable efforts within its business judgment to ensure that the actual costs of managing, maintaining and operating the Facilities are kept to a minimum. The Contractor shall procure cost-effective, quality services, labor, equipment, and supplies for the management and operation of the Facilities in accordance with the terms of this Agreement. The Contractor shall be responsible for the day-to-day oversight of the foregoing, and ensure that all such services, labor, equipment, and supplies are provided by qualified companies that are not compensated above competitive market rates for any applicable services, labor, equipment, and supplies."

¹ More information available: <https://www.baltimorecity.gov/homeless/news/city-of-baltimore-cuts-ribbon-on-newly-acquired-hotels-slated-to-help-efforts-to-address-homelessness>

METHODOLOGY

The OIG conducted site visits at three homeless shelters, the former Fairfield Inn, former Holiday Inn Express, and former Sleep Inn. The OIG also interviewed current and former MOHS personnel to better understand how the homeless shelters operate.

The OIG spoke with employees of multiple companies that provide services at Baltimore City homeless shelters. The OIG also reviewed homeless shelter resident grievances, email correspondence, City contract documents, and internal government documents related to the homeless shelters. The majority of documents and information obtained in this investigation occurred before the City removed the OIG's direct access on February 6, 2026.

OIG INVESTIGATION

Reported Issues

Individuals familiar with living conditions in the Sleep Inn reported that residents were being exposed to mold, untreated sewage, and pest infestations. A resident stated that they believed there were numerous code violations occurring. It was alleged that residents have had adverse health effects due to bed bugs and mold exposure. One individual reported that the heating and cooling units in the rooms contained mold (Figure 1) and that mold grew in the bathrooms due to lack of ventilation. Another individual sent videos showing dark water backing up in their tub at the Sleep Inn (Figure 2 – screenshot of video).

Figure 1: Growth inside heating/cooling unit at the Sleep Inn



Figure 2: Tub drain backing up



Individuals said that there was an on-site maintenance person at the Sleep Inn who would handle repairs, mold issues, and pest infestations. An individual said that they would not hire professional services when there was a bed bug outbreak, which allowed them to spread throughout the facility. One individual said that the ventilation fans in the restrooms did not work throughout the building, which allowed moisture to build up in rooms, creating an environment where mold could grow. Individuals stated that the Sleep Inn experienced

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issues with broken laundry facilities and a lack of clean linens. A resident stated that some sheets were dirty, bloody, and appeared to be from a hospital.

Individuals said that they felt that Contractor 1 had retaliated against residents who had spoken out about poor conditions in the shelters, and that they had removed residents improperly. One individual said that Contractor 1 should have more counselors, and another stated that they had a high turnover rate with its case management team, which impacted residents. Individuals expressed that they did not believe the City was providing enough services for residents in homeless shelters and that some residents have spent years in a shelter. Individuals also expressed concerns about the resident grievance process and said that Contractor 1 had discarded grievances and did not pass them along to MOHS.

A Director for Contractor 1 told the OIG that Contractor 1 and its employees resolve grievances in accordance with MOHS policy and that they have their own grievance documentation process separate from MOHS. The Director for Contractor 1 stated that they were unaware of any Contractor 1 employees destroying grievances. They explained that MOHS picked up the paper grievance from a locked box and that MOHS could receive grievances directly via QR code.

They explained that Contractor 1 employees are ServSafe certified, they rely on a vendor to provide meals. The Director stated that resident food complaints were usually related to a lack of variety. They explained that the maintenance vendor is responsible for the upkeep of the building as well as providing linens and towels to residents. The Director stated that Contractor 2 did not share the same sense of urgency as Contractor 1 when it came to fixing certain issues. The Director said that they did not have that issue with the maintenance contractor for the Fairfield Inn shelter.

A MOHS employee told the OIG that there are only two MOHS employees who regularly visit the ten City-funded homeless shelters. They claimed that five employees would be sufficient to monitor all ten shelters. The Contractor 1 Director said that having a dedicated person to ensure the facility and service providers' day-to-day needs were being met would improve operations. They opined that this is the best way to have a real-time understanding of what is happening. The Contractor 1 Director said there could be a liaison to facilitate or expedite when health and safety issues need to be addressed. The OIG asked the Contractor 1 Director whether MOHS was aware of the maintenance issues; they replied that MOHS was fully aware of all maintenance issues going on.

Former MOHS employees reported that the situation at the homeless shelters was "critical" and "horrific" and that most resident grievances were related to shelter conditions. The former employees reported observing bed bugs, mold, non-functioning elevators, and a lack of hot water. One former MOHS employee said that residents were getting sick due to mold exposure in the Sleep Inn, and none of the rooms had adequate ventilation. They alleged that none of the ventilation fans in the restrooms were functional and said the in-unit HVAC units often leaked, and the filters had not been cleaned. A former MOHS employee stated that they had the Sleep Inn fumigated due to a bed bug infestation and Contractor 2 had been attempting to resolve the issue by spraying chemicals in affected rooms. The former MOHS employee stated that other shelters have regularly scheduled pest services.

When asked about Contractor 2's performance, a former MOHS employee stated that they seemed to "try to

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cut corners.” They said that in January 2025, Contractor 2 hired a new building manager, and that response times got longer and conditions worsened. The former MOHS employee stated they had discussions with MOHS leadership concerning the maintenance contract issues and that MOHS Leadership acknowledged that Contractor 2 was not doing a good job. The OIG learned that Contractor 2 recently brought in a new building manager to help facilitate the maintenance of the building.

Mold and Mushrooms

Former MOHS employees claimed that Contractor 2 would handle mold remediation in-house, which consisted of painting over the mold. Contractor 2 had mold testing completed in several rooms soon after confirming that multiple rooms had elevated levels of mold spores compared to the outdoor mold levels. The employee alleged that MOHS and Contractor 2 did not want to test all the rooms due to the cost, and that a lot of the rooms would have mold present.

The OIG was able to obtain the mold report dated July 3, 2025, for the testing conducted at the Sleep Inn on July 1, 2025, by a full service environmental analytical laboratory. The mold report showed that three of six rooms tested had an elevated amount of mold spores compared to the outside environment. The OIG reviewed correspondence showing that Department of General Services (DGS) employees were requested to assist with mold evaluations at the Sleep Inn. The OIG spoke with a DGS employee familiar with the Sleep Inn who stated that mold was present in some of the rooms they saw. They said that the mold was likely caused by poor ventilation or moisture buildup in the rooms. The DGS employee said that during these visits, the employee was accompanied by MOHS staff and staff from Contractor 2 responsible for the maintenance and noted that they argued about the condition and issues with the room conditions.

On October 8, 2025, the OIG received multiple pictures of mushrooms growing in rooms at the Sleep Inn (Figure 3). The OIG located a DGS work request related to mushroom growth in the Sleep Inn.

Figure 3: Pictures of Mushrooms Growing in the Sleep Inn



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Grievance Process

Individuals familiar with the MOHS grievance process said that residents can submit grievances via an online QR code or by physically placing a grievance in a designated, locked mailbox at a shelter. MOHS employees are responsible for regularly retrieving grievances and properly documenting them.

The OIG reviewed the resident grievance policy detailed in MOHS' Shelter Standards of Care Policy and spoke with multiple individuals knowledgeable about the process. The MOHS grievance policy classifies grievances as Level 1, Level 2, or Level 3. Grievance level is not determined by severity of the grievance; each grievance begins as a Level 1. Level 1 and Level 2 reviews are conducted by the shelter service providers, with Level 1 conducted by a Program Manager and Level 2 by the Executive Director.

If a complainant is satisfied after their Level 1 review, the grievance is resolved; if not, it progresses to a Level 2 review. If the complainant is satisfied after the Level 2 review, the grievance is resolved, and if not, it is upgraded to a Level 3 review.

MOHS personnel conduct Level 3 grievance reviews, during which MOHS employees determine how to resolve a grievance. The determination made by the MOHS representative is final. MOHS told the OIG, "In 2025, 352 grievances were submitted, with 347 being Level 1 or 2 and resolved by the providers and not MOHS. MOHS received 5 Level 3 grievances by 3 unduplicated clients."

MOHS classifies grievances into the following categories: Facility Conditions, Staff Conduct/Communication, Program/Service Delivery, Interpersonal Conflict, Health & Wellbeing, Rules/Policy, and Other, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: MOHS' chart for grievances

Facility	Facility Conditions	Staff Conduct / Communication	Program/Service Delivery	Interpersonal Conflict	Health & Well-Being	Rules/Policy	Other	Total	Unduplicated Clients
WHRC	9	37	4	115	0	1	5	171	54
Fairfield Inn	3	23	7	30	3	0	1	67	41
Holiday Inn Express	5	14	5	21	1	0	0	46	24
Sleep Inn	5	12	7	4	5	2	0	35	22
Sarah's Hope	8	11	4	8	0	1	1	33	13
NEST	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	30	97	27	178	9	4	7	352	154

A MOHS employee familiar with the grievance process said it functioned well and that most grievances

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stemmed from interpersonal conflicts within the shelter. Multiple individuals stated that only MOHS has access to the locked grievance box and that shelter providers have never had access to them.

Contracts and Management

Contractor 1 has been the shelter services provider at the Holiday Inn and Sleep Inn since the City acquired the properties with their contract starting in September 2024. Contractor 2 has had the maintenance contract for the Holiday Inn and Sleep Inn and has been responsible for the maintenance of both buildings since March 2024.

On January 22, 2025, MOHS issued a Request for Proposal solicitation to get a new contract for Shelter Property Management at the Sleep Inn and the Holiday Inn. MOHS employees confirmed there have been disputes with Contractor 2 concerning for what each of them were responsible. The first contract amendment added language to address the cost of unforeseen repairs.

Holiday Inn and Sleep Inn Site Visits - September 18, 2025

On September 18, 2025, the OIG conducted site visits at the Holiday Inn and the Sleep Inn. The OIG was accompanied by multiple MOHS employees, and personnel from Contractor 1 and Contractor 2.

The OIG observed several unoccupied rooms as well as common areas. Both buildings had multiple repair projects ongoing during the visit. Both buildings had Contractor 1 employees stationed throughout the building, at the entrances, on each floor, and inside the elevators. Contractor 1 employees were observed knocking on residents' doors and conducting wellness checks.

The OIG observed the food storage area of both buildings, which appeared to have adequate cold food storage. The Contract 1 Director advised that Contractor 2 performs all maintenance for both buildings unless there is a major building issue. Their responsibility is to run the shelter and case management programs within, and they do not get involved in building management.

Sleep Inn

On the first floor in the rear of the building, trash bags were sitting in carts in the hallway not far from residents' rooms. There was a strong odor in the area. Multiple rooms on the first floor were being used for storage, containing mattresses. On the third floor, there was a leak that had been recently repaired, drywall had been cut from the wall, and pipes and insulation were exposed. A section of the ceiling on the second floor appeared to be water damaged. Contractor 2 personnel stated that it was caused by the recently repaired leak on the third floor.

The ventilation fans in the restrooms of each room did not appear to be on and did not turn on when flipping the switches. Agents noted that the temperature was significantly hotter in the hallways than in the individual rooms. On the roof of the building, the switch to what appeared to be the main HVAC system was in the off position (Figures 5&6). The fifth floor laundry room was poorly ventilated with no exhaust fan in use as both machines ran. Upon entering the room, it was noticeably humid with condensation building on the window

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(Figure 7). When asked if the exhaust fan was operational a Contractor 2 employee stated that the fan was operational and currently running. Agents noted that the fan was not running.

Figure 5: Roof system at the Sleep Inn



Figure 6: Roof System set in Off position



Figure 7: Sleep Inn laundry room condensation



The OIG observed multiple vacant rooms with the carpets removed. A Contractor 2 employee said the most time-consuming part of his job was when residents moved out, and the room needed repairs.

Holiday Inn

The OIG toured the basement, the kitchen area, the dining area, parts of the mezzanine, some laundry facilities, and the first and fifth floors. MOHS and Contractor 1 personnel reported that most rooms in the Holiday Inn were occupied. OIG agents toured vacant room 512 and found what appeared to be water stains on the ceiling.

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OIG Agents asked a Contractor 2 employee about a bubble in the paint found in the bathroom; they advised that it was previously fixed (Figure 8). OIG Agents noted that when the Contractor 2 employee touched the bubble, it appeared to move. The employee perforated the bubble, peeled, and removed a portion of the paint. It appears portions of the ceiling around the bubble were also affected and led to an additional bubble above the bathroom door. OIG Agents noted that laundry facilities on the fifth floor were humid and had bowed ceiling tiles.

Figure 8: Water damage Holiday Inn Room 512



MOHS Director Response

On October 1, 2025, the MOHS Director emailed the OIG concerning the September 18th site visit at the Holiday Inn and the Sleep Inn. The Director included five pictures (Figure 9) taken at the Sleep Inn that showed completed repairs and areas of the hotel that had been cleaned. They also attached a copy of a “Minimum Habitability Standards for Emergency Shelters” checklist that was completed on September 24, 2025. Multiple standards on the checklist are listed as “deficient”. All the items marked deficient appear to have been reinspected on September 29, 2025, and were changed to “approved”. Each check that is switched from deficient to approved is dated September 29, 2025.

Figure 9: Photos that MOHS Director provided for Sleep Inn repairs September 2025



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Fairfield Inn Site Visit - October 9, 2025

On October 9, 2025, the OIG conducted a site visit at the Fairfield Inn and Suites. The OIG was accompanied by the Contractor 1 Director, MOHS personnel, and an employee of the contractor responsible for maintenance at the Fairfield Inn (Contractor 3). The OIG toured the first level, including the kitchen area and common areas, as well as the second, third, fourth, and fifth floors, and the resident laundry facilities located on the second floor.

The OIG toured vacant rooms 257 and 457. The air units in both rooms were functioning upon the OIG's arrival. The air unit in room 257 appeared to have speckled black dots within the vents (Figure 10). Various bugs were observed in the room, including those caught in traps and in the window dressings (Figure 11). A pest control box was found on the third floor.

Figure 10: A/C unit in Room 257



Figure 11: Pests in vacant Room 257



Airflow was felt and seemed functional throughout the building. There were no apparent signs of ongoing repairs. The resident laundry facilities on the second floor appeared to have working airflow; however, the resident laundry room was noted as slightly humid.

MOHS Director

The OIG spoke with the MOHS Director regarding the conditions at former hotels converted to homeless shelters. The Director said that facility conditions were a concern and that the former hotels are unique to the City's portfolio stating that DGS did not have the capacity to handle the 24-hour operation of a homeless shelter.

They told the OIG that when the initial maintenance contract expired and was rebid, they did not receive any bids. The Director described difficulty hiring qualified technicians and the 24-hour operation as things that impacted shelter maintenance. They said that facility maintenance concerns are generally communicated between the homeless shelter service provider and the contracted maintenance vendor with MOHS stepping in when discrepancies arose. The Director said that the MOHS Emergency Services Manager was responsible for overseeing the homeless shelters

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The Director said the mold and major facilities issues became known to her around June 2025, when they received a call regarding a major plumbing issue at the Sleep Inn. They said that they toured the facilities along with Department of General Services personnel and the shelter maintenance vendor, which brought about additional concerns.

After which they developed a plan to address maintenance issues and then re-inspect the building. MOHS developed a facilities maintenance checklist, and the service provider brought in a maintenance team from their other facilities to assist.

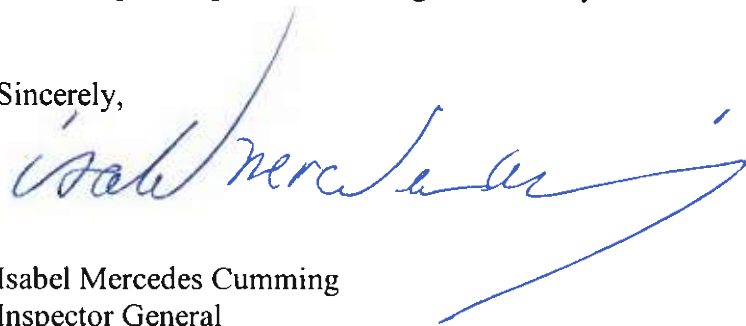
The Director described the time since the City purchased the Holiday Inn and Sleep Inn as a learning experience. They said that hotels were not designed for long-term occupancy and that MOHS was learning to adapt the former hotels to better serve as homeless shelters. The Director said that they were currently removing the carpet in all rooms of the Sleep Inn and replacing it with a more mold-resistant material.

INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS

The OIG could not verify all complaint allegations received concerning shelter conditions. The OIG found evidence to support the complaint allegations that elevated mold levels were present in the Sleep Inn and observed signs of disrepair in the building. The mold report from July 3, 2025, confirmed that multiple rooms had elevated levels of mold spores.

The OIG recommends creating a comprehensive oversight program to ensure proper ventilation and moisture control within homeless shelters to prevent mold growth. The OIG recommends creating a comprehensive maintenance contract that covers the specific needs of the homeless shelters and clears up any confusion between MOHS, the provider, and any maintenance contractors. The current contract does not appear to address services such as carpet replacement. The OIG also recommends providing more on-site MOHS support and strengthening contract management of city contractors and city-owned properties.

Sincerely,



Isabel Mercedes Cumming
Inspector General

CC: Hon. Brandon M. Scott, Mayor of Baltimore City
Hon. Zeke Cohen, Baltimore City Council President
Hon. Bill Henry, Baltimore City Comptroller
Honorable Members of the Baltimore City Council
Hon. Ebony Thompson, Baltimore City Solicitor

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