§ 2986. Whistleblower access and assistance program. 1. Definitions. a. "Employees of state and local authorities" means those persons employed at state and local authorities, including but not limited to: full-time and part-time employees, those employees on probation, and temporary employees.

b. "Attorney general" shall mean the attorney general of the state of New York.

c. "Whistleblower" shall mean any employee of a state or local authority who discloses information concerning acts of wrongdoing, misconduct, malfeasance, or other inappropriate behavior by an employee or board member of the authority, concerning the authority's investments, travel, acquisition of real or personal property, the disposition of real or personal property and the procurement of goods and services.

2. The director of the authorities budget office, after consultation with the attorney general, shall develop and recommend to the legislature a whistleblower access and assistance program which shall include, but not be limited to:

a. evaluating and commenting on whistleblower programs and policies by state and local authorities pursuant to paragraph (e) of subdivision one of section twenty-eight hundred twenty-four of this article;

b. establishing toll-free telephone and facsimile lines available to employees at state and local authorities;

c. offering advice regarding employee rights under applicable state and federal laws and advice and options available to all persons; and

d. offering an opportunity for employees of state and local authorities to identify concerns regarding any issue at a state or local authority.

3. Any communications between an employee and the authorities budget

office pursuant to this section shall be held strictly confidential by the authorities budget office, unless the employee specifically waives in writing the right to confidentiality, except that such confidentiality shall not exempt the authorities budget office from disclosing such information, where appropriate, to the state inspector general in accordance with section fifty-five of the executive law, or prevent disclosure to any law enforcement authority.