



April 15, 2024

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
QUARTERLY REPORT (2024Q1)

Dear Honorable Clerk Iris Martinez, Executive Staff, and all the residents whom we serve:

This report is written in accordance with the best practices prescribed by the Association of Inspector Generals (AIG) Green Book, to apprise you of the activities of the Clerk of the Circuit Court (CCC) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) during the period beginning January 1, 2024, through March 31, 2024 (Q1).

OIG Q1 Complaints

The OIG had 42 open cases pending at the beginning of Q1: 1 reopened case from 2022Q2, 1 case from 2022Q4, 14 cases from 2023Q1, 10 cases from 2023Q2, and 6 cases from 2023Q3 and 10 cases from 2023Q4. 18 of the 42 cases were closed and one was changed to a Management Inquiry (MI). In Q1, the OIG closed a total of 24 cases: 4 cases were administratively closed, and 20 case files were closed via summary report.

During Q1, the OIG received a total of 185 complaints through the OIG telephone hotline, mail, web, email, fax, direct report, and the QR Code Customer Service Survey. Of the 185 complaints, 25 complaints came from employee complainants and 160 came from non-employee complainants. Out of the 185 complaints, 165 were classified as MIs, and 20 opened as case files investigated by the OIG.

Of the 246 cases active during Q1 (cases and MIs), 191 were closed, leaving 55 pending at the end of the quarter.

OIG Summary Reports

During 2024Q1, the OIG closed 24 total case files with 20 closed as summary reports. The following is a general description of the cases closed via summary report, the OIG's findings, and basis for the findings.

CF 22-06-280 – The OIG closed CF 22-06-280 on January 30, 2023, as an administrative closure due to lack of jurisdiction since the individual was no longer a CCC employee after being terminated in 2021. However, the individual had since been rehired and the OIG reopened the case to conduct a further investigation. At this time, this case will not be summarized. This case is part of a larger scale investigation involving numerous cases and will be discussed at a later stage.

CF 23-03-098 – The OIG investigated two financial clerks who were allegedly negligent and mismanaged bond transactions the week of November 7, 2022, when the Shakman-exempt managers were on leave. When the exempt managers returned, they conducted an audit of the week's transactions and found that the register did not balance and the money was short \$1,600. An investigation discovered that the alleged missing money was due to an accounting error, but more importantly the OIG found that the bond room was disorganized, the bond receipts and money received transactions were not properly processed on a daily basis, the financial clerks had to wait for management to provide register access to input bond transactions, their transactions were made under the name of the manager who signed them into the register, not their own, and management did not reconcile the bond transactions daily. To prevent future mismanagement of bond transactions the Executive Staff created the End of the Day Cashiering Policy; to establish bond transaction procedures and staff accountability.

CF 23-03-113 – At this time, this case will not be summarized. This case is part of a larger scale investigation involving numerous cases and will be discussed at a later stage.

CF 23-03-126 – At this time, this case will not be summarized. This case is part of a larger scale investigation involving numerous cases and will be discussed at a later stage.

CF 23-07-302 – A Shakman-exempt manager wrote an incident report stating that a court clerk may be falsifying timekeeping records by submitting inaccurate time correction forms to management. The exempt manager stated that the court clerk submitted a correction form stating they clocked in using the time clocks located on the southside of the office, which had signs indicating they were inoperable. The OIG found that the court clerk failed to follow orders to use the correct timeclocks to clock in and submitted inaccurate correction forms.

CF 23-07-308 – An incident occurred during a meeting held by the Shakman-exempt manager in their office to address an altercation between two union employees. During the meeting, a manager in attendance became agitated and attempted to leave the meeting; when the exempt manager directed the manager to stay, the manager returned and aggressively slammed the door. After this meeting, the exempt manager held a second meeting with the manager to discuss the manager's behavior. The manager continuously yelled and cursed, then abruptly left the meeting. The exempt manager and another exempt manager stated the manager yelled, cursed, and was disruptive. The OIG issued the manager an interview notification but the manager retired before being interviewed. The OIG sustained

a finding that the manager violated the Workplace Violence Policy by screaming, using profanity, and slamming doors.

CF 23-08-356 – The OIG received an email from Labor Relations requesting an investigation into allegations made by a Maywood court clerk regarding the lack of training, lack of order and preparation, and poor work environment in Maywood. The complainant stated that they felt uncomfortable with the training they received from the accused because the accused was in the process of learning how to train others while they trained them. Further, the court clerk claimed that the accused threatened them, spoke to them condescendingly, and yelled at them in front of other people. The complainant claimed that the accused left them alone in a courtroom after only three weeks of training. The complainant also accused management of treating them unfairly by assigning them other clerks' backlogs, removing them from their courtroom, and failing to do anything about the complaints of poor training. The OIG reviewed court clerk evaluations, incident reports, memorandums, and training documents. The allegations against the accused and management were found non-sustained. Some of the allegations made were based on assumptions rather than facts. The complainant's evaluations had comments about their excessive backlog and the need to willingly follow instructions from the administration and court clerk trainers. Assistance and support were available for all the court clerks and none of the court clerks were left alone until after management approved them to be alone, which was after thirty days. The OIG recommended that management meet with the court clerks and court clerk trainers regarding issues they may have regarding training, shortages, backlog, and rotation schedules. Management should explain the avenues that court clerks can take to get information and how to properly prepare and organize themselves for court. Management should explain the evaluation and rotation schedule process for court clerks. A big issue found from this complaint was that Maywood continues to be understaffed leaving employees with a lot of work. The OIG further recommended increasing Maywood staff sooner than later to help alleviate several of these issues and additional direction to use any available options and resources to reduce the amount of backlog that occurs.

CF 23-08-361 – The OIG received two complaints by Teamsters Local 700 regarding a manager. Complainants accused the manager of giving orders that were unrelated to their job duties and that the accused's personality and voice are angry and hostile. The complainants claimed that the majority of the employees had negative experiences with the accused: yelling at customers and coworkers, giving incorrect instructions on policies and procedures, and changing processes on how work should be completed. However, several other employees did not categorize the manager's conduct as yelling, but rather that the accused is a straightforward person and uses a tone of authority when giving instruction. Of all employees interviewed, only one employee had issues with the accused but they could not give any supporting evidence to their allegations. Further, none of the interviewees' statements corroborated any of the complainants' allegations. The allegations of misconduct by the manager are non-sustained.

CF 23-09-401 – A manager alleged that an office clerk made sexual comments about a friend who came to the office to visit the manager. The manager stated the office clerk would often make sexual comments in the office in the presence of other employees, such as referring to men they were attracted to as "Papi Chulo", often commented on how they liked Nigerian and Hispanic men and flirted with most of the men that come to the counter. During the interview the manager stated that a Shakman-exempt manager and other employees thought the actions and comments of the office clerk were a joke. The manager recalled three incidents alleging the office clerk flirted with men. The office clerk denied

the allegations that they flirted with men. The exempt manager stated they never received complaints about the office clerk, but the manager and the office clerk made numerous accusations against one another. The Executive Assistant stated they did not recall the office clerk making any sexual comments. The allegations of sexual harassment were non-sustained.

CF 23-10-452 – An employee had created a hostile and intimidating work environment by throwing paper and hitting the complainant in the head, pushing/shoving the complainant twice and denying to help at the work counter when the complainant requested their help and instead went on break to intentionally leave them to fend for themselves. Several employees – including managers – acknowledged witnessing the above conduct and thus the allegations of workplace violence were sustained.

CF 23-11-481 – This investigation focused on whether the alleged actions of a financial clerk, such as yelling and slamming doors, violated CCC policies. The OIG found the clerk's behavior, including disrespect towards coworkers as well as supervisory staff and refusal to follow instructions, lacked professionalism. An additional altercation took place outside the office building between the financial clerk and an office clerk, which involved a heated argument and the exchange of derogatory remarks. CCC policies prohibit altercations, abusive language, negligence, and behavior contrary to the office's interests. The OIG found no evidence of physical threats or violence; however, the workplace violence policy forbids verbal or physical altercations. The OIG found both clerks violated CCC policies. The OIG recommended corrective action, such as counseling to address these issues, re-training, or disciplinary measures to ensure employees' respectful and productive work environment.

CF 23-11-486 – The OIG received an incident report that alleged an office clerk was under the influence while in the workplace. Employees around the accused began complaining of a urine smell. When it was time to go home, the accused, was off-balance, bumped into things, fell backwards, and had to be assisted out of the building by a Cook County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) Deputy Sheriff. The OIG observed camera footage, interviewed employees, inspected physical evidence, and obtained CCSO incident reports and body worn camera footage. The accused's desk was searched and an empty plastic water bottle smelled of vodka and a blue tarp covered in urine was found. All interviewed individuals smelled alcohol and urine on the accused, and witnessed the accused slurring their words, having difficulty walking, and standing that day. The OIG sustained allegations that the accused was under the influence while at work. The Shakman-exempt manager, being a supervisor is held to a higher standard of conduct than other employees, neglected their duties of promptly notifying their superiors of their employees' concerns regarding the accused and for failing to facilitate the performance of their employees therefore, the OIG sustained findings against the exempt manager.

CF 23-11-496 – The OIG received an incident report regarding a clerk rushing to the timeclock through a narrow hallway and ran into the shoulder of another clerk. The OIG found the clerk violated the workplace violence policy.

CF 23-11-503 – Several office clerks alleged another office clerk was discriminating against them and creating a hostile work environment. The OIG found that the office clerk showed hostility towards other office clerks, belittling and ridiculing their efforts while at work. The office clerk also discriminated against and insulted a disabled employee.

CF 23-12-555 – The OIG received a complaint from the Idaho Department of Corrections (IDOC) of an employee who may have abused their position while having an intimate relationship with one of their inmates. The OIG found that the employee used CCC property (envelope) to send K3 spice, a synthetic marijuana substance to a penal institution. The employee resigned after being scheduled for an interview. The OIG sustained findings of CCC policy violations and turned the investigation to the Federal Bureau of Investigations for prosecution.

CF 24-01-010 – A court clerk received two disturbing anonymous text messages from unknown numbers. The court clerk had recently been promoted and moved from one courthouse to another. The court clerk provided their personal cell phone number to various employees and colleagues for work purposes only. The phone numbers from which the message came were unable to be traced. The court clerk had not received further messages since. The OIG’s findings were inconclusive.

CF 24-01-011 – The OIG investigated an alleged familial relationship between a manager and an office clerk subordinate within the same department. After a thorough investigation, it was determined that the office clerk was not asking for preferential treatment instead asking not to be placed with a group of employees due to bullying (investigated under a separate case). Although there was no evidence of the manager providing preferential treatment, the manager is held to a higher standard of conduct than other employees are and was expected to report their familial relationship to their supervisor. The OIG found both the manager and the office clerk failed to report their familial relationship.

CF 24-01-012 – The OIG received an anonymous complaint from two employees alleging that they overheard an Shakman-exempt manager make a racist comment while in a meeting with two other exempt managers. They stated they heard the statement through a wall while they each shared a pair of AirPods, listening to “Live Listen”, and through music they were listening to. The complainants provided two audio recordings, but the recordings failed to bring context to the alleged comment. The complainants themselves also stated that the comment was made during a conversation about non-minority employees and work schedules, thus making the alleged comment seem out of context and random. Based on the recordings and the complainants’ statements about the conversations surrounding the alleged comment was made, the OIG believes the complainants likely misheard the statement but then validated each other’s belief of what they thought they heard. The OIG found the allegations to be inconclusive.

CF 24-02-082 – The OIG received an incident report from a Shakman-exempt manager regarding a complaint they received by email from a court clerk, who stated they were racially discriminated against by an employee of the Chief Judge Office (CJO). Another exempt manager held a meeting with the court clerk the next day to discuss the allegation. During the meeting, the court clerk recalled three incidents that occurred between them and the OCJ employee, but never stated they were racially discriminated against. The exempt manager believed the incidents were caused by “personality clashes” between the court clerk and the CJO employee. Furthermore, the exempt manager asked the employee if they were discriminated against by the OCJ employee, and the employee replied “No”. During the meeting, the exempt manager also learned that the employee had unauthorized appliances in the jury room and it was requested that the court clerk be reassigned due to poor work performance. The exempt manager instructed the court clerk to remove their appliances from the jury room, had the court clerk

reassigned, and directed another exempt manager to provide the court clerk with additional training. During their OIG interview, the employee recalled one incident that occurred between them and the OCJ employee; but did not say it was discriminatory. Furthermore, the employee could not recall the other two incidents they detailed during the exempt manager meeting and the court clerk could not recall if they stated to the exempt manager that they were discriminated against. Based on the preponderance of the evidence it was determined that the court clerk violated the CCC policy against making false discrimination accusations.

CF 24-02-085 – The OIG received an email from a Shakman-exempt manager who assisted and received various emails from a complainant, a member of the public. The complainant stated that they were visiting the Daley Center and would like a named office clerk not to be near them. The complainant noted that they had a relationship with the office clerk that did not end well due to the office clerk physically hurting them. The complainant provided the OIG with videos, pictures, text messages, and evidence of Zelle payments from the office clerk to the complainant. The office clerk denied having an intimate relationship, dining out, or providing financial support to the complainant even after presenting evidence to them showing otherwise. Furthermore, the office clerk denied having a conversation or bringing the complainant down to talk with the exempt manager about the complainant’s case, contradicting what the exempt manager told the OIG. The office clerk was found to be insubordinate for not being honest during their interview even after being presented evidence contradicting their statements.

OIG Projects

New Director of Compliance

In December 2023, the Clerk’s Office hired a DOC, but resigned in January 2024. In February, a new DOC was hired and quickly took on the role’s responsibilities and the IG resumed his role at full capacity.

AIG Certification

The Deputy Inspector General and an Investigator attended the Association of Inspectors General training in March and became a Certified Inspector General and Certified Inspector General Inspector/Evaluator, respectively.

OIG Team

The OIG is composed of an Inspector General, Deputy Inspector General, four Inspector General Investigators, and an Executive Assistant. The four investigators are certified by the AIG as Certified Inspector General Investigators; the Inspector General and Deputy Inspector General are certified as Certified Inspector Generals. Six team members of the OIG are members of the AIG IL and the National Chapter.

Thank you for your time and attention, feel free to reach out with any concerns or questions.

Respectfully,



Anthony Linh Nguyen
Inspector General

CC: Tiffany Brooks, Chief of Staff
Hon. Judge Gloria Chevere, Senior Policy Advisor
Jim Dasakis, Chief Human Resource Officer
Alvin Portis, General Counsel