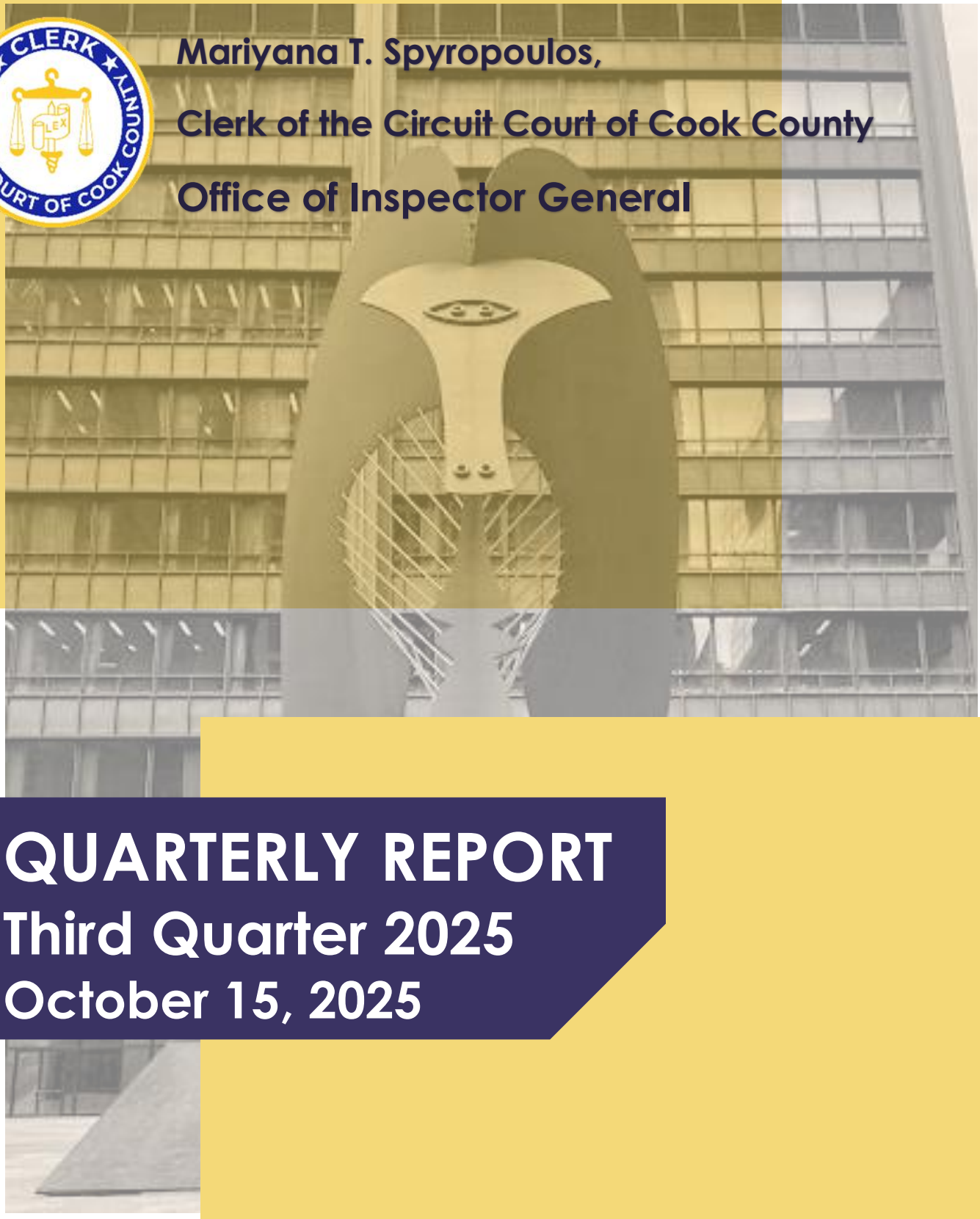

Mariyana T. Spyropoulos,

Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County

Office of Inspector General

QUARTERLY REPORT

Third Quarter 2025

October 15, 2025

To the Honorable Clerk Mariyana Spyropoulos, the Executive Staff, employees of the Clerk's Office, and all residents whom we serve:

Enclosed for your review is the public report on the operations of the activities of the Office of Inspector General (OIG) of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County (Clerk's Office) for July 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025.

OIG's mission is to promote economy, effectiveness, efficiency, and integrity in the operation of the Clerk's Office. To this end, OIG works to detect, deter, and prevent corruption, fraud, waste, mismanagement, and misconduct in the operation of the Clerk's Office, with integrity and professionalism. OIG conducts investigations and issues summary reports of investigations with findings and recommendations for corrective action.

Year over year, the overall OIG investigative case load has increased by 28%, reflecting higher engagement and outreach from employees. The OIG hopes this trend signals that employees place trust in the OIG to conduct impartial, thorough, and fair investigations into their complaints. Going forward, the OIG hopes to maintain stakeholder trust.

Despite the increased workload, the OIG closed 32% of its active investigations in Q3. While this is a lower percentage than the 48% of active investigations OIG closed in Q2, the OIG closed one additional investigation in Q3 than in Q2. The OIG hopes to further improve efficiency in Q4 with additional streamlined processes and procedures.

The increase in total intake in Q3 indicates that more customers are interacting with our channels, but the composition of that feedback signals the need for targeted action to address underlying issues, improve service quality, and rebuild customer confidence in the coming quarter. In Q3, there appears to be a notable shift in customer feedback: the OIG received 18% more complaints than in Q2 and 38% fewer compliments. This shift suggests growing customer dissatisfaction or potential service delivery challenges that warrant closer review.

Moving into Q4, the OIG remains focused on strengthening integrity, responsiveness, and transparency across operations. Currently planned improvements include enhanced visitor security measures through access controls to the OIG offices; comprehensive website update that improves content, structure and usability; and updates to the online complaint form to clarify questions to help gather more specific and actionable information.

OIG is committed to continuously improving policies and processes, promoting integrity, and being responsive to public submissions and internal operations. To that end, OIG has evaluated and issued recommendations regarding policies involving evidence rooms, evidence transport, and bond rooms, among others. OIG will actively continue this work moving forward.

In Q4, OIG will continue to strive for the highest levels of excellence as established by the AIG. OIG plans to publish its Rules and Regulations, update its website, and ensure that OIG staff continues to engage in professional development, training, and education to better serve the taxpayers of Cook County.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Respectfully,

Katarina Durcova
Inspector General

CC: Michael Ciaccio, Chief of Staff
James Chandler, General Counsel
Chad Gearig, Chief Human Resources Officer

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I | INTAKES

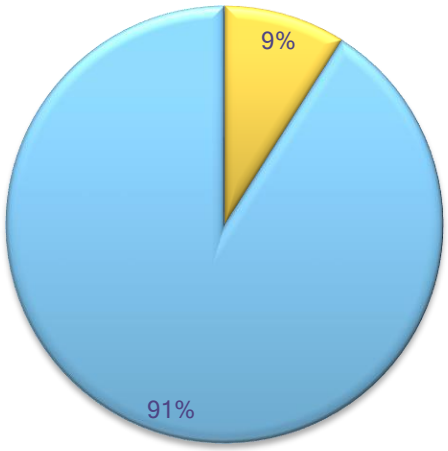
1 | Submissions Received this Quarter

OIG receives submissions through the OIG telephone hotline, mail, web, email, fax, direct report, and a QR code customer service survey (CSS). OIG categorizes submissions into management inquiries (MIs) and case files (CFs). CF is a submission that falls within OIG's jurisdiction and based on preliminary review, warrants further investigation. MI is a submission that does not result in an OIG investigation. MI may be a complaint, inquiry, or a compliment. OIG refers MIs to the appropriate external agencies or internal departments for resolution. OIG follows up on referrals to internal departments to ensure that any complaints or inquiries were resolved. Additionally, OIG forwards any compliments to the Personnel Services Department for inclusion in the employee's file.

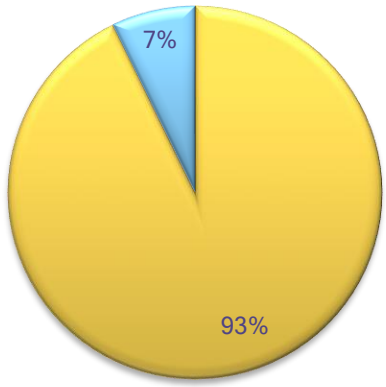
During Q3, OIG received a total of 222 submissions through the OIG telephone hotline, mail, web, email, fax, direct report, and the QR Code Customer Service Survey.

Of the 222 total submissions, OIG classified 206 as MIs, and 16 as CFs. Over 90% of submissions came from non-employees.

Submission Source



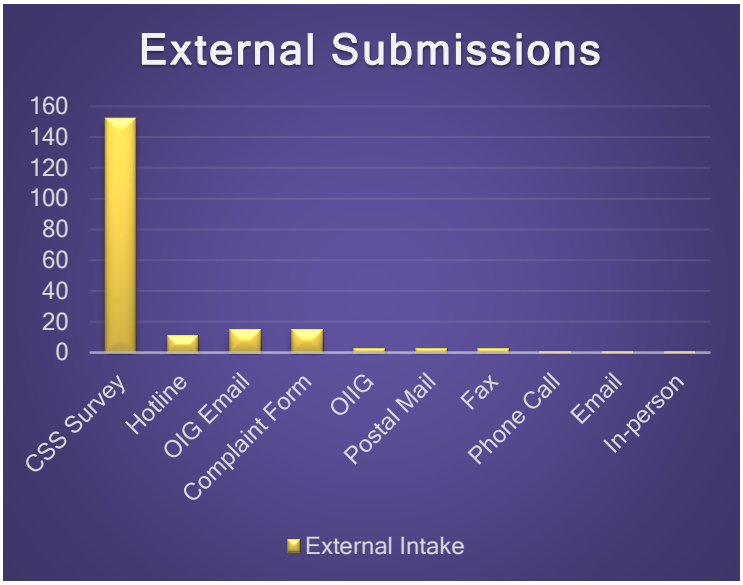
Submission Classifications



2 | Intake Sources

During Q3, OIG received 202 submissions from external sources. Of these 202 external submissions, OIG received 152 submissions via the Customer Service Survey, 11 from the confidential hotline, 15 from the OIG email, 15 from the online complaint form, three from the Office of the Independent Inspector General (OIIG), three via mail, three via fax, and one each via direct phone call, referred email, and in-person.

OIG received 20 submissions from employees. Employees most often used email to submit new complaints to the OIG. OIG received two in-person complaints from employees, and one via OIG email and the Customer Service Survey. OIG combined duplicate submissions from more than one source into a single MI.



3 | Pending Cases at the Beginning of Q3

At the beginning of Q3, the OIG had 30 active cases pending resolution: 22 CFs and 8 MIs. Of the 22 pending CFs, eight were from Q1 2025, and 14 were from Q2 2025. By the end of Q3, 10 of the 22 pending CFs were closed and all 8 of the pending MIs were closed.

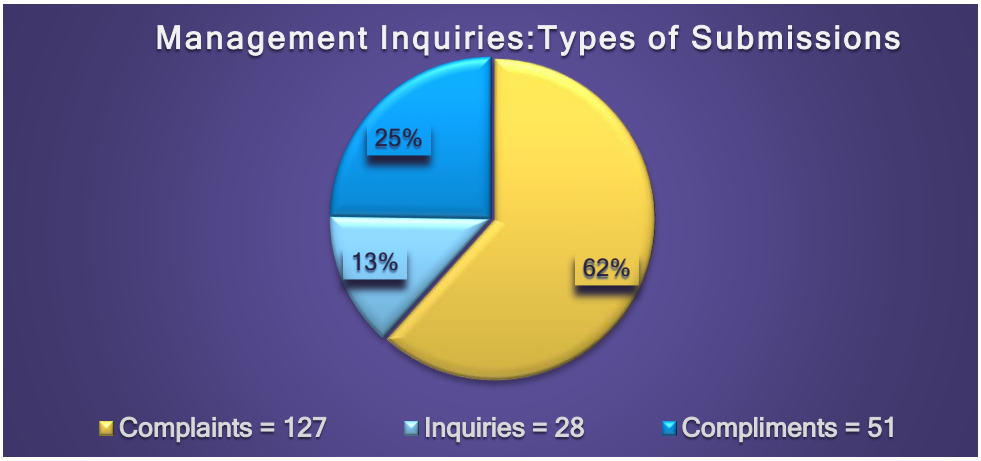
At the end of Q3, four CFs from Q1 and eight CFs from Q2 remained open.

4 | Total Active Cases in Q3

Of the 252 active cases during Q3, OIG classified 214 as MIs and 38 as CFs. OIG closed 206 of the 214 MIs and 14 of the 38 CFs. At the end of Q3, there were 24 pending CFs and 8 pending MIs.

5 | Management Inquiries: Types of Submissions

OIG classifies management inquiries into one of three categories: complaints, inquiries, or compliments. Of the 206 MIs closed during Q3, OIG classified 127 as complaints, 28 as inquiries, and 51 as compliments.

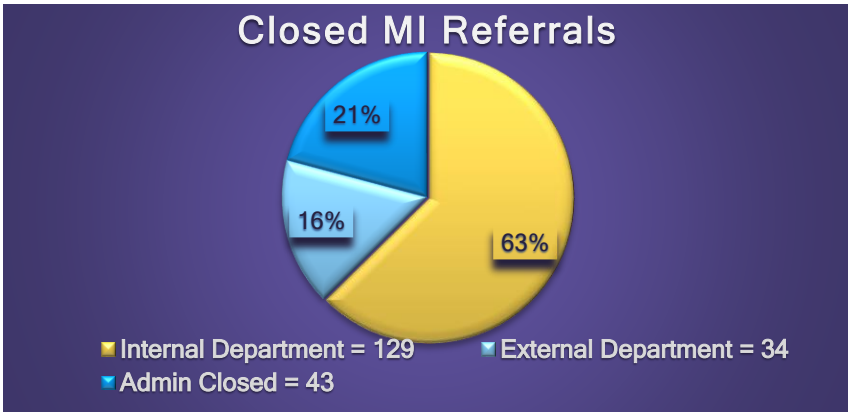


6 | Complaints: Categories

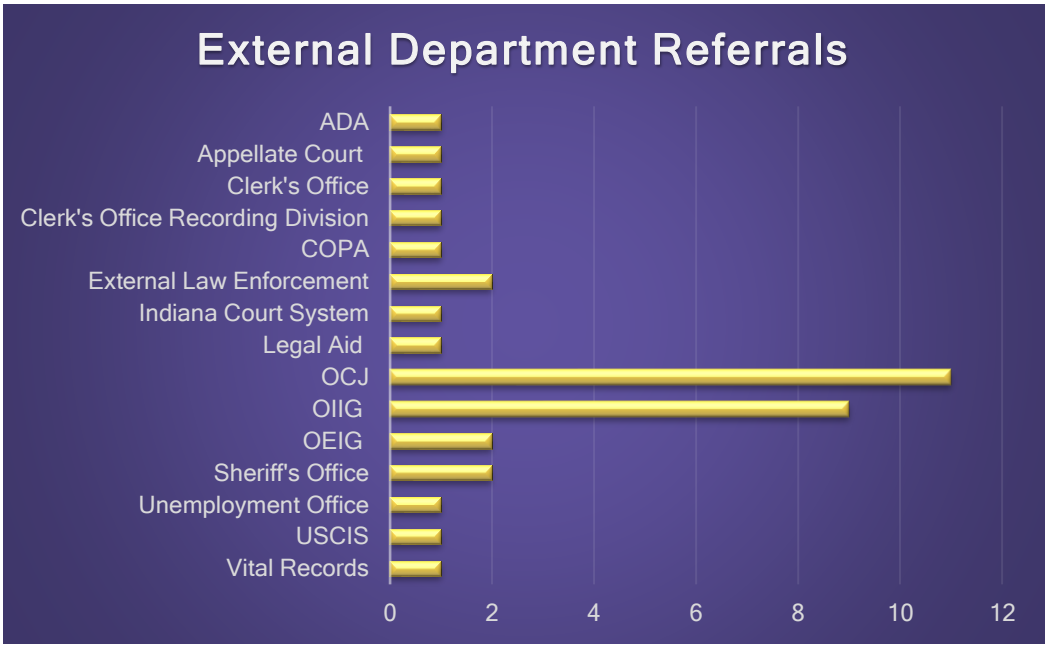
Of the 127 **complaints**, OIG classified 55 as internal department complaints and referred 30 to external agencies. The remaining 42 submissions could not be classified because they were incomplete, incoherent, contained incorrect information or lacked contact information for follow-up.

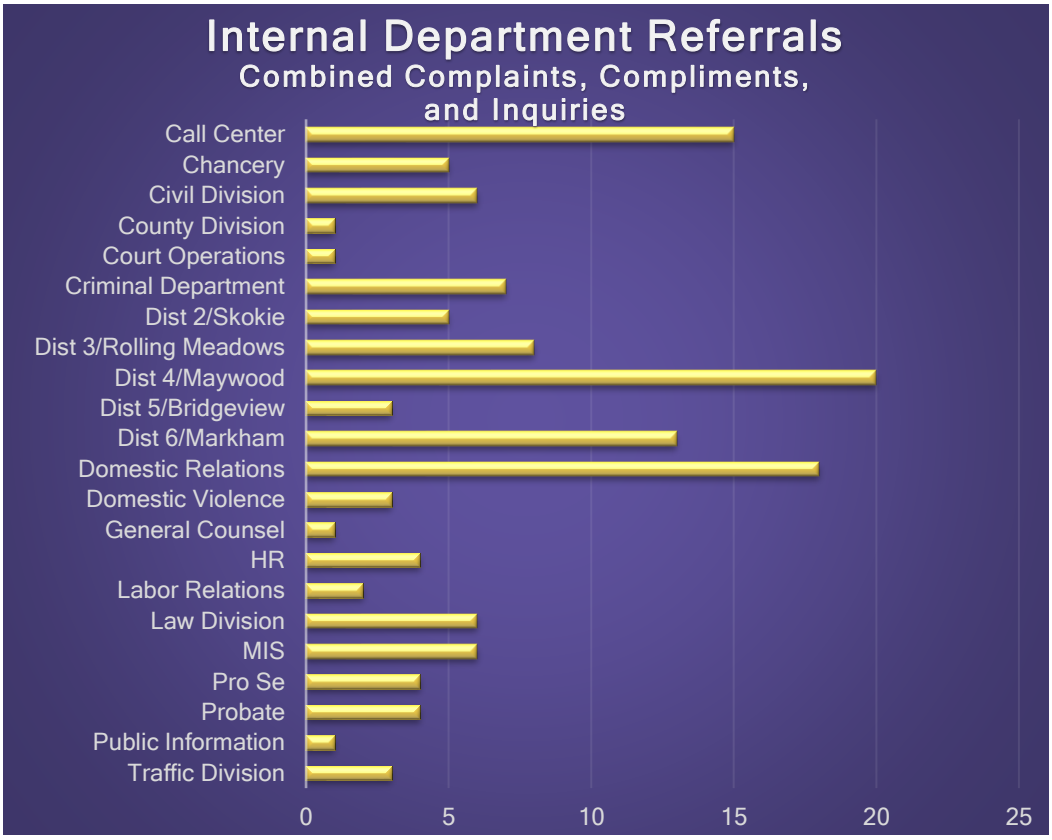
7 | Referrals

Of the total 206 MIs closed during Q3, OIG referred 129 to internal departments, 34 to external agencies, and administratively closed 43.[1]



[1] Note: Some submissions were referred to more than one department.

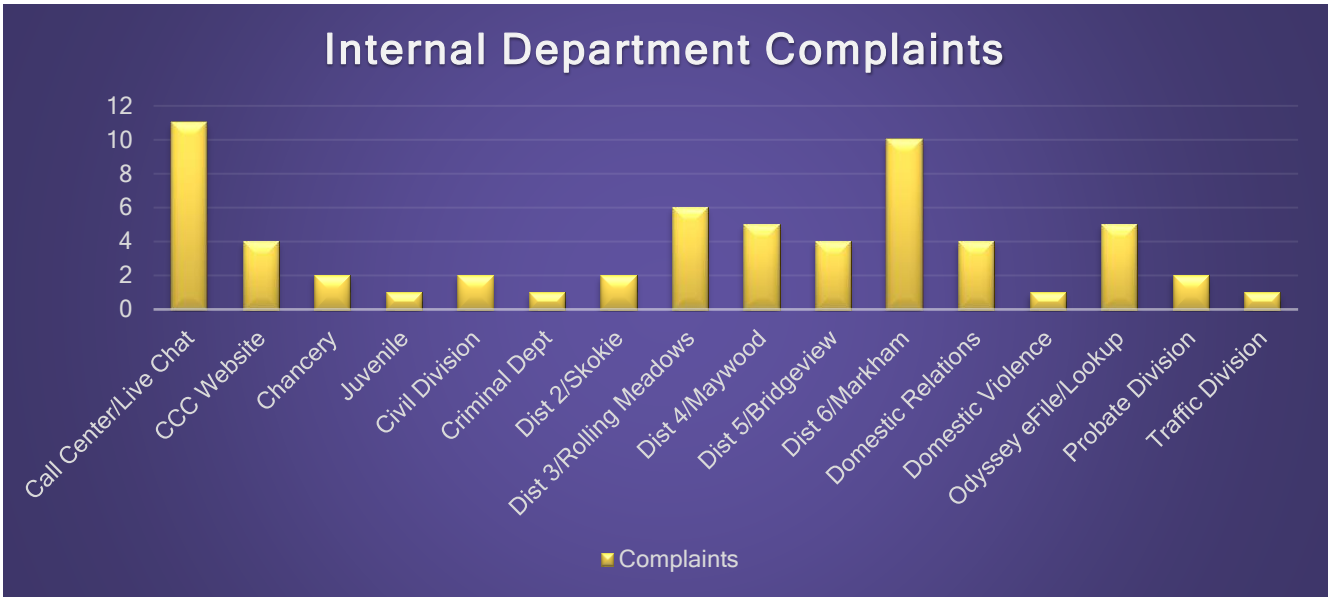

External Department Referrals
ADA
Appellate Court
Clerk's Office
Clerk's Office Recording Division
COPA
External Law Enforcement
Indiana Court System
Legal Aid
OCJ
OIIG
OEIG
Sheriff's Office
Unemployment Office
USCIS
Vital Records
0
2
4
6
8
10
12


Internal Department Referrals
Combined Complaints, Compliments, and Inquiries
Call Center
Chancery
Civil Division
County Division
Court Operations
Criminal Department
Dist 2/Skokie
Dist 3/Rolling Meadows
Dist 4/Maywood
Dist 5/Bridgeview
Dist 6/Markham
Domestic Relations
Domestic Violence
General Counsel
HR
Labor Relations
Law Division
MIS
Pro Se
Probate
Public Information
Traffic Division
0
5
10
15
20
25

8 | Complaints: Internal Department Breakdown

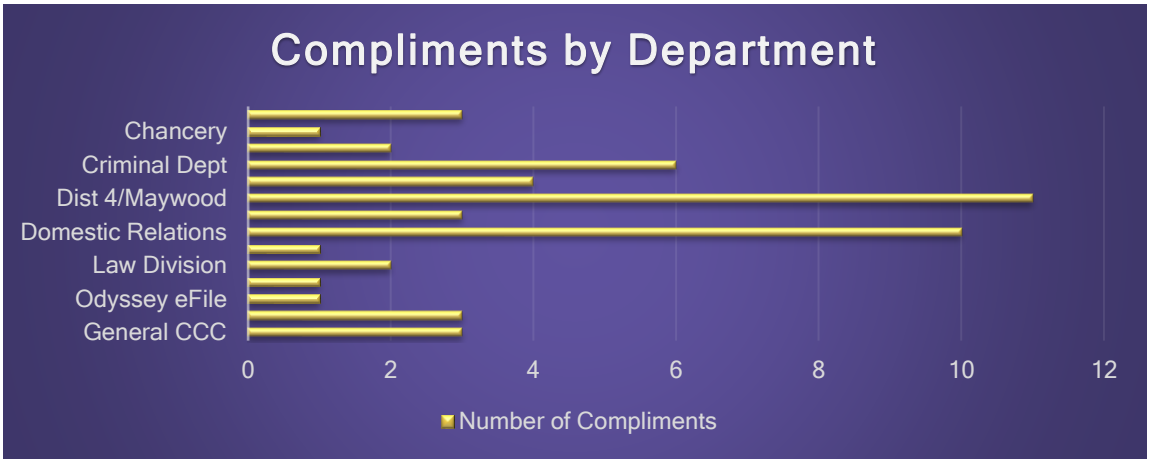
Of the 127 complaints received, the OIG logged 55 as pertaining to internal departments. The OIG shared the complaints with the internal department(s) it preliminarily determined would be best equipped to resolve or address the issues in the complaint.

OIG logged 11 as pertaining to the Call Center and Live Chat, 10 to District 6/Markham, six to District 3/Rolling Meadows, five each to District 4/Maywood and regarding Odyssey Case Lookup and eFile, four each to District 5/Bridgeview, Domestic Relations, and regarding the Clerk's Office website. The OIG referred 2 each to Chancery, Civil, and District 2/Skokie. Finally, The OIG logged 1 each as pertaining to Child Protection and Juvenile Justice, Criminal Department, Domestic Violence, Probate, and Traffic.



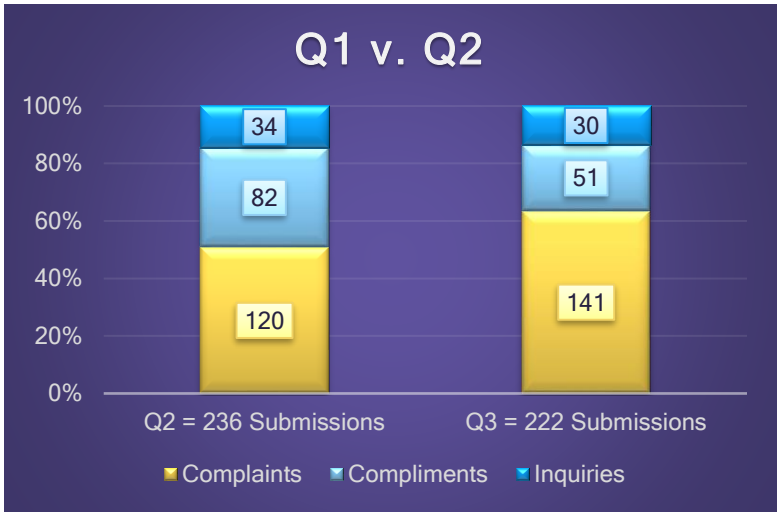
9 | Compliments: Internal Department Breakdown

Of the 51 **compliments**, internal departments with the highest number of compliments for Q3 included **District 4/Maywood** (11 compliments), **Domestic Relations** (10 compliments), and the **Criminal Department** (6 compliments).



10 | Intake: Q2 v. Q3

In Q3, overall submissions (MIs and CFs) decreased by approximately 6% from Q2, from 236 to 222 total submissions. However, overall **complaints intake increased by approximately 18%** and **compliments intake decreased by approximately 38%.** In Q2, complaints comprised about 51% of the total intake (120 of 236 submissions). In Q3, complaints rose to approximately 64% of the total intake (141 of 222 submissions). Compliments comprised about 35% of the intake in Q2 (82 of 236) and decreased to nearly 30% (51 of 222) of the total intake in Q3.

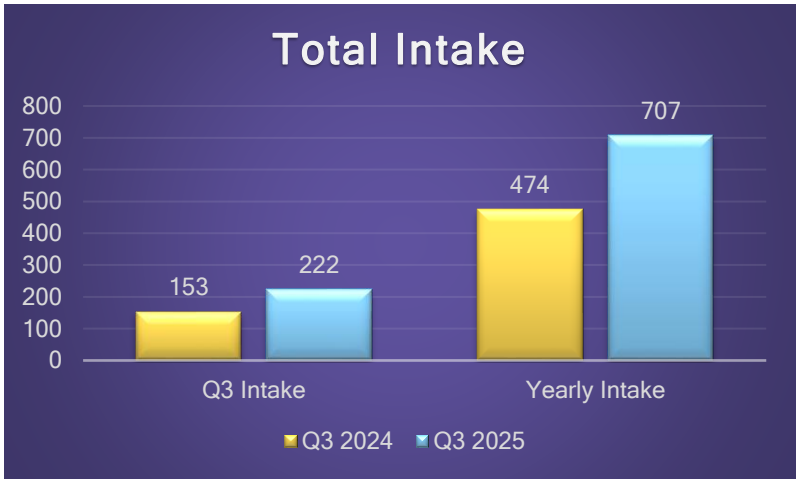


In Q3 OIG closed 12 of the 38 total active CFs (47.5%). In Q2, OIG closed 19 of the 40 total CFs (32%).

11 | Intake: 2024 v. 2025

In Q3 2025, overall intake (MIs and CFs) increased more than 45% from Q3 2024.

Year-to-date, OIG saw a nearly 50% increase in intake compared to the same period in 2024. In Q1 – Q3 2024, OIG received 474 total submissions. During the same period in 2025, OIG received 707 submissions.



II | SUMMARY REPORTS

During Q3, OIG closed 14 CFs. OIG closed 9 CFs via summary report and administratively closed the remainder. The following is a general description of the cases closed via summary report, the OIG's findings, and the basis for the findings.

CF 25-08-612

An OIG investigation established that an Office Clerk intentionally bumped into another employee while passing them in the office. Based on eyewitness accounts and review of the office layout, the OIG found that the Office Clerk had reasonable alternative routes to their destination that would have avoided contact with the employee. Additionally, the employee was stationary while the Office Clerk walked by them and bumped into them. The Office Clerk admitted that they knew the employee's location before they bumped into them. Based on the totality of the evidence, the OIG found the Office Clerk violated Section 4(B) of the Discipline Policy and Section 3(A) of the Workplace Violence Policy.

CF 25-07-517

An OIG investigation established that five office clerks engaged in a verbal altercation during a team meeting. Clerk #1 alleged that, during the verbal altercation, the four other clerks engaged in workplace violence against them by rushing toward them, threatening them, and approaching within a few feet of them. Clerk #1 reported being afraid for their life and believing that the four employees were approaching to fight them. During the investigation, the OIG discovered evidence, including surveillance video and multiple witness statements, that contradicted Clerk #1's account. The OIG concluded that Clerk #1's allegations of workplace violence were false. The OIG therefore did not sustain the allegation that the four clerks committed workplace violence, because video indicated that they did not rush toward Clerk #1 or act in a manner that could cause a reasonable fear of harm.

Lastly, the OIG did not sustain the allegation that Clerks #2 and #3 harassed and/or sexually harassed Clerk #1, because of insufficient details or corroboration to support this allegation. The OIG concluded that the five clerks violated Section 4(B) of the Discipline Policy when they engaged in the verbal altercation, and that Clerk #1 also violated Section 4(I) and (M) of the Discipline Policy for providing a false statement and Section 4(F) of the Discipline Policy for initiating and escalating the verbal altercation despite being asked to stop by management.

CF 25-06-484

An OIG investigation established that a Shakman-exempt Manager engaged in sexual harassment of multiple female employees. The OIG found that the Shakman-exempt manager, on multiple occasions, hugged and/or kissed female employees without their consent, constituting inappropriate and unwelcome physical contact in violation of workplace harassment policies.

The OIG also found that the conduct was so severe or pervasive that it created a hostile or offensive work environment. The OIG found the Shakman-exempt manager's behavior was pervasive, in that they would hug female employees daily, usually at the beginning of the workday. The OIG also found the Shakman-exempt manager's behavior was severe. As a supervisor, the Shakman-exempt manager was in a position of power over the female employees they hugged or kissed. The OIG discovered that some employees attempted to avoid the Shakman-exempt manager's physical contact and that others expressed visible discomfort when the manager initiated physical contact. Nevertheless, the Shakman-exempt manager continued with the behavior. The OIG's investigation revealed that prior corrective action and mandatory annual sexual harassment prevention training did not deter the Shakman-exempt manager's behavior.

Based on its findings, the OIG recommends more proactive intervention by supervisory staff who observe or are notified of harassing behavior. Because supervisors are often the first to receive complaints, targeted training is essential to help them recognize, address, and prevent misconduct. Early intervention by supervisors can help address inappropriate behavior before it escalates. The OIG also recommends implementation of supplementary sexual harassment training designed with interactive components, clear and practical policy guidance, and bystander-intervention skills.

CF 25-06-469

The OIG investigated allegations that an Assistant Operations Manager made threatening remarks following a dispute with a customer. Witnesses indicated that the Manager often expressed frustration, but there were no consistent accounts or corroborating witnesses establishing that threats were made. The Manager denied making the alleged comments. Given the conflicting statements and lack of corroboration, the OIG found insufficient evidence to sustain the allegation.

CF 25-06-451

The OIG investigated allegations against two Office Clerks and one Shakman-exempt manager. The OIG sustained allegations that Clerk #1 raised their voice and banged their fists on a desk during an outburst. The OIG concluded that Clerk #1 violated Section 4(B) of the Discipline Policy when they engaged in the verbal altercation. The OIG recommended anger management, interpersonal skills, professional communication, accountability, and conflict resolution training.

The OIG did not sustain a claim that the Shakman-exempt manager failed to timely intervene during the clerk's outburst. Rather, the evidence showed that the Shakman-exempt manager intervened immediately.

Additionally, the OIG found that Clerk #2 engaged in a verbal altercation with the Shakman-exempt manager in that they raised their voice and acted disrespectfully toward the manager.

During the investigation, the OIG reviewed available surveillance footage and interviewed witnesses. The OIG discovered that Clerk #2's claim that Clerk #1 approached them, pointed their finger at Clerk #1, yelled at Clerk #1, and banged both fists on the desk in front of Clerk #1, was false. The OIG found that Clerk #2's claim was contradicted by the surveillance footage and witness statements. The OIG found that Clerk #2 violated Section 4(I) and (M) of the Discipline Policy for providing a false statement, and Section 4(B) of the Discipline Policy for engaging in a verbal altercation with the Shakman-exempt manager.

CF 25-04-259

The OIG investigated a loud verbal altercation between a Financial Clerk and an Office Clerk. Surveillance footage confirmed the incident occurred, and witnesses reported that both individuals disturbed the office, raised their voices, and behaved unprofessionally. While the Clerks' conduct was disruptive, the OIG found no evidence that either employee's actions created a reasonable fear of harm or implied threat of violence. Rather, the OIG found that the clerks violated Section 4(B) of the Discipline Policy. The OIG recommended that both employees complete refresher training on respectful communication and conflict resolution.

CF 25-03-199

An OIG investigation failed to substantiate an employee's complaint that a Shakman-exempt Manager committed harassment, bullying, and created an unsafe work environment. Rather, the OIG sustained an allegation that the Shakman-exempt manager spoke loudly and used disrespectful language, raised their voice and escalated the interaction in front of other staff. However, the OIG did not sustain allegations that the supervisor created a hostile work environment, engaged in favoritism, instructed a manager to monitor the employee to find reasons to discipline them, or retaliated against the employee. The evidence did not indicate conduct based on protected characteristics, inconsistent enforcement, instruction to monitor, or a retaliatory motive. The OIG recommended that the Shakman-exempt manager complete anger-management, de-escalation, and respectful-workplace training. In addition, the OIG recommended that the supervisors in the division make consistent expectations, document directives, and apply them consistently.

CF 25-03-177

An OIG investigation established that a Court Clerk made derogatory remarks to a customer about another employee's character, competence, and professionalism in the presence of other customers. The complainant was in the process of assisting a customer when the Court Clerk approached the customer and told them that the complainant was racist and they should try to get the complainant fired. The OIG found that the Court Clerk's actions were unprovoked, unprofessional, and exacerbated an already tense interaction with the customer.

The OIG found insufficient evidence to sustain an allegation that the Court Clerk used a profane, gender-based slur during the incident against the complainant. The only individual

who alleged the Court Clerk made the remark was a third-party witness. Absent corroborating evidence, the OIG could not sustain the allegation. Lastly, the OIG found insufficient evidence to sustain a claim that the Court Clerk made additional derogatory comments the following day.

The OIG recommended the Court Clerk should route any necessary work communications with the complainant through a supervisor or designated channel; complete training in anti-harassment/anti-retaliation, de-escalation, customer service, respectful workplace/civility, and bystander awareness; complete an anger-management course; and strictly follow confidentiality rules regarding employee disciplinary information.

CF 25-02-046

An OIG investigation found insufficient evidence that a Financial Clerk misappropriated a $575.00 bond purportedly dropped off by a law enforcement officer in a Clerk's Office bond room. After reviewing surveillance footage and other evidence, the OIG found insufficient evidence to establish by a preponderance of the evidence that the alleged funds were delivered to the bond room. Accordingly, the allegation was not sustained. During the investigation, the OIG discovered that for approximately two months, multiple supervisory employees of the Clerk's Office failed to assist a law enforcement officer in procuring a follow-up court date for a defendant.

To uphold the integrity of the Clerk's Office and its mission, the OIG identified improvements to bond room protocols and surveillance mechanisms to ensure that funds received were always accounted for and secured. To that end, the OIG made several recommendations including, but not limited, to the placement of money counters; implementation of dual-verification and improvement of receipt practices; enhancement of intake and chain of custody procedures; and periodic audits.