



**Mariyana T. Spyropoulos,**  
**Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County**  
**Office of the Inspector General**

**Fourth Quarter 2025**  
**January 15, 2026**

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

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Enclosed for your review is the public version of the report on the operations and activities of the Office of Inspector General (OIG) of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County (Clerk's Office) for the year of January 1, 2025, through December 31, 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.

As we move forward into 2026, here are the OIG's strategic priorities:

- Improve the Clerk's Office's administrative, managerial, and operational competencies to render it more effective in the performance of its critical record-keeping functions.
- Ensure policies, practices, and protocols strengthen Clerk's Office's financial stewardship.
- Ensure transparency, diligence, fairness, consistency, and timeliness in its investigations.

In 2026, OIG will continue to maintain its commitment to improving policies and procedures, promoting integrity, and responsiveness to the public and internal operations.

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

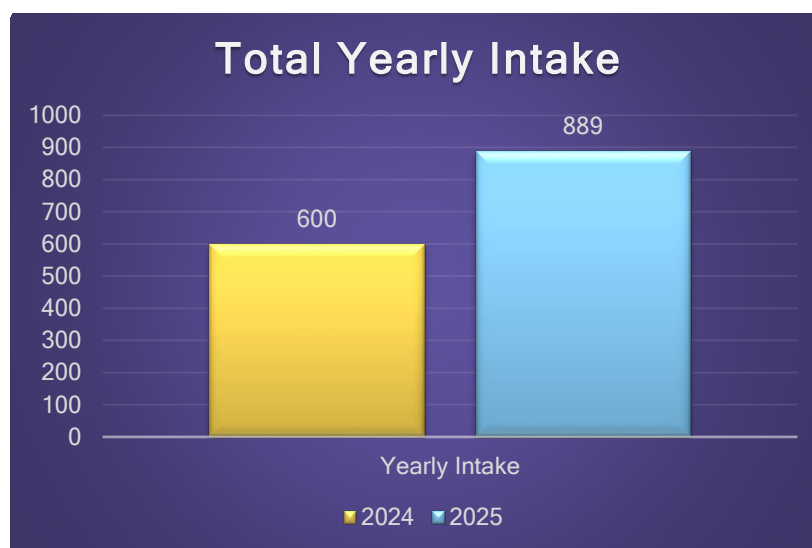
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# I | INTAKE

## 1 | Submissions<sup>1</sup> Received in 2025

During calendar year 2025, the OIG experienced a nearly 50% increase in intake activity compared to 2024, reflecting heightened engagement with oversight and advisory functions. This trend appears to signal that employees place trust in the OIG to conduct impartial, thorough, and fair investigations into their complaints. The OIG hopes to maintain stakeholder trust in 2026.



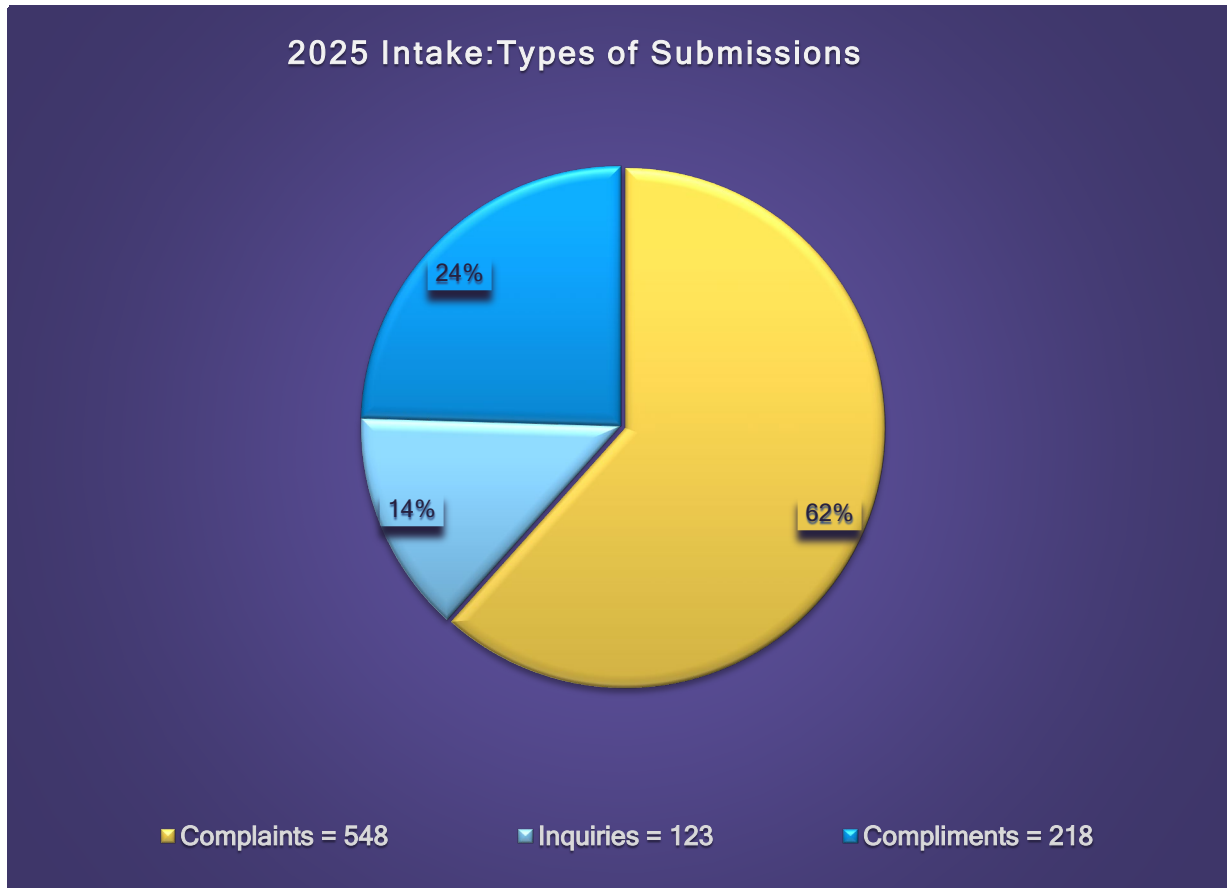
Management Inquiries accounted for much of the growth in 2025, increasing from 547 to 824 (50.6%), indicating greater reliance on the OIG for guidance and internal accountability support. Case File intake also increased from 52 to 66 (26.9%), reflecting a higher volume of matters requiring formal review. Collectively, these trends underscore the expanding role of the OIG and the importance of managing existing resources and capacity to effectively manage growing workload demands.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

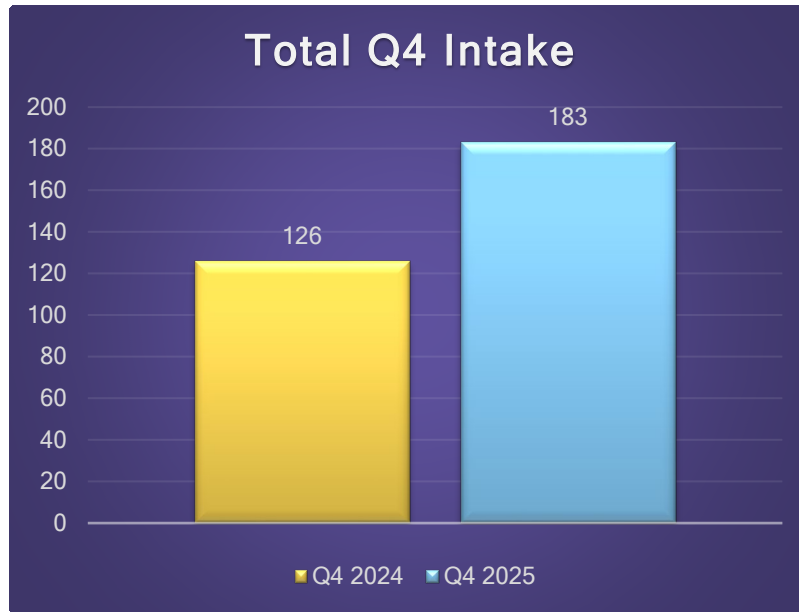
Over 60% of submissions the OIG received in 2025 were complaints (548; 61.6%), indicating continued vigilance by the public in reporting concerns and potential issues within the Clerk's Office.

Nearly a quarter of the submissions the OIG received in 2025 were compliments (218; 24.5%), reflecting acknowledgment of positive experiences and exemplary conduct by staff. The remainder of submissions the OIG received in 2025 were inquiries (123; 13.8%), demonstrating a steady demand for guidance, information, and clarification of policies or procedures.



## 2 | Submissions Received in Q4 2025

During Q4 2025, OIG received a total of 183 submissions through the OIG telephone hotline, mail, web, email, fax, direct report, and the QR Code Customer Service Survey. This reflects a 45% increase from Q4 2024.



Of the 183 total submissions, OIG opened investigations in 6 cases and classified 177 as management inquiries. Over 90% of submissions came from non-employees.<sup>2</sup>

## 3 | Intake Sources

During Q4, OIG received 169 submissions<sup>3</sup> from external sources. Of these 169 external submissions, OIG received 112 submissions via the Customer Service Survey, 21 from the OIG email, 20 from the online complaint form, 18 from the confidential hotline, five via email, one via fax, and one from the Office of the Independent Inspector General (OIIG).

## 4 | Pending Cases at the Beginning of Q4

At the beginning of Q4, the OIG had 33 active cases pending resolution: 25 CFs and 8 MIs. Of the 25 pending CFs, four were from Q1 2025, nine were from Q2 2025, and 12 were from Q3 2025. By the end of Q4, 17 of the 25 pending CFs were closed and seven of the eight pending MIs were closed. No Q1 cases remained open.

<sup>2</sup> OIG received 14 submissions from employees in Q4 2025.

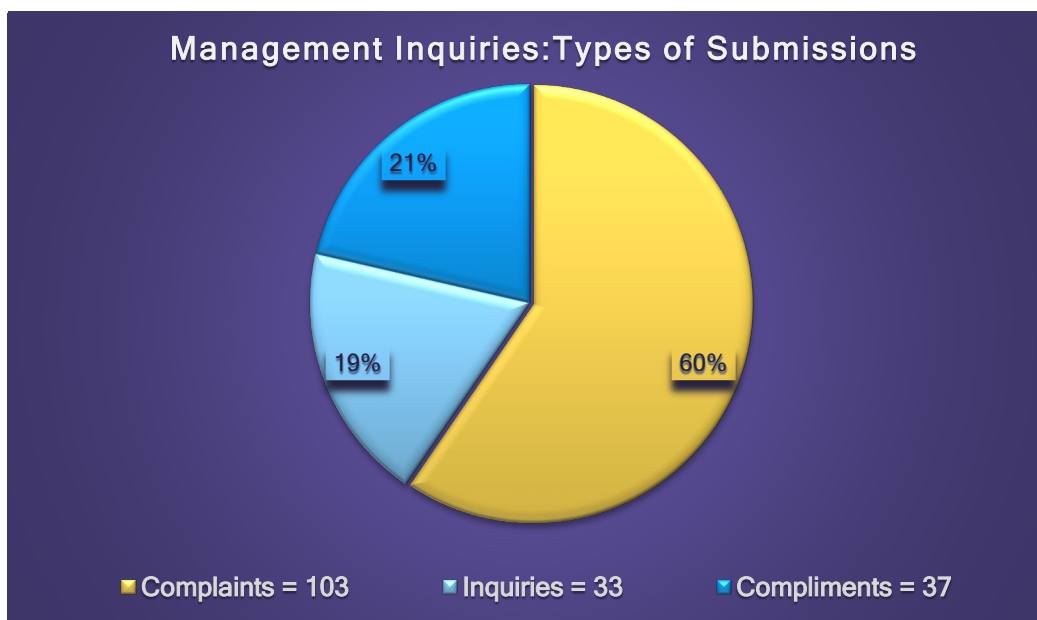
<sup>3</sup> OIG combined duplicate submissions from more than one source into a single MI.

## 5 | Total Active Cases in Q4

Of the 216 active cases during Q4, 185 were MIs and 31 were CFs. OIG closed 173 of the 185 MIs and 19 of the 31 CFs. At the end of Q4, there were 12 pending CFs and 12 pending MIs.

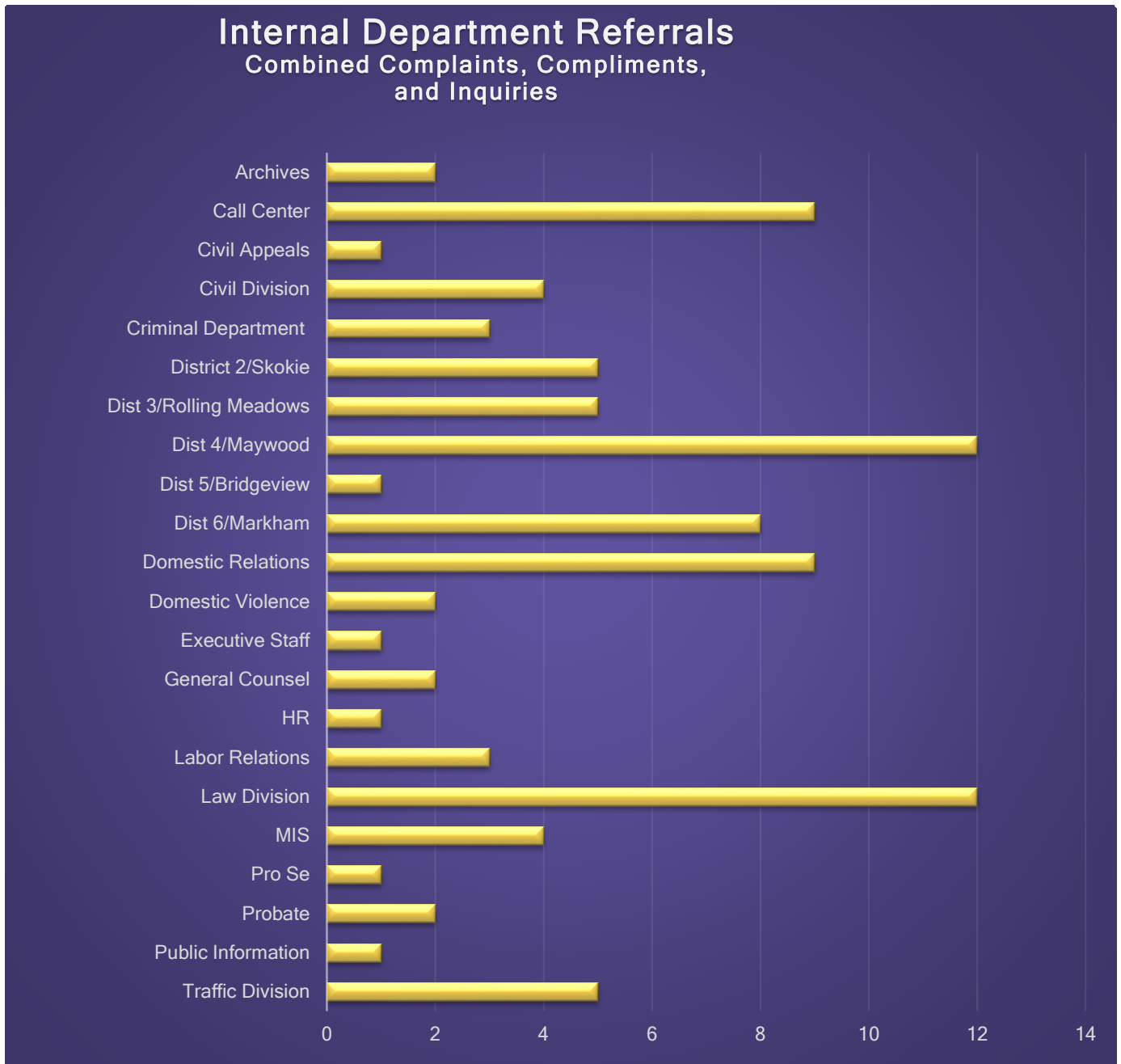
## 6 | Management Inquiries: Types of Submissions

OIG classifies management inquiries into one of three categories: complaints, inquiries, or compliments. Of the 173 MIs closed during Q4, OIG classified 103 as complaints, 33 as inquiries, and 37 as compliments.



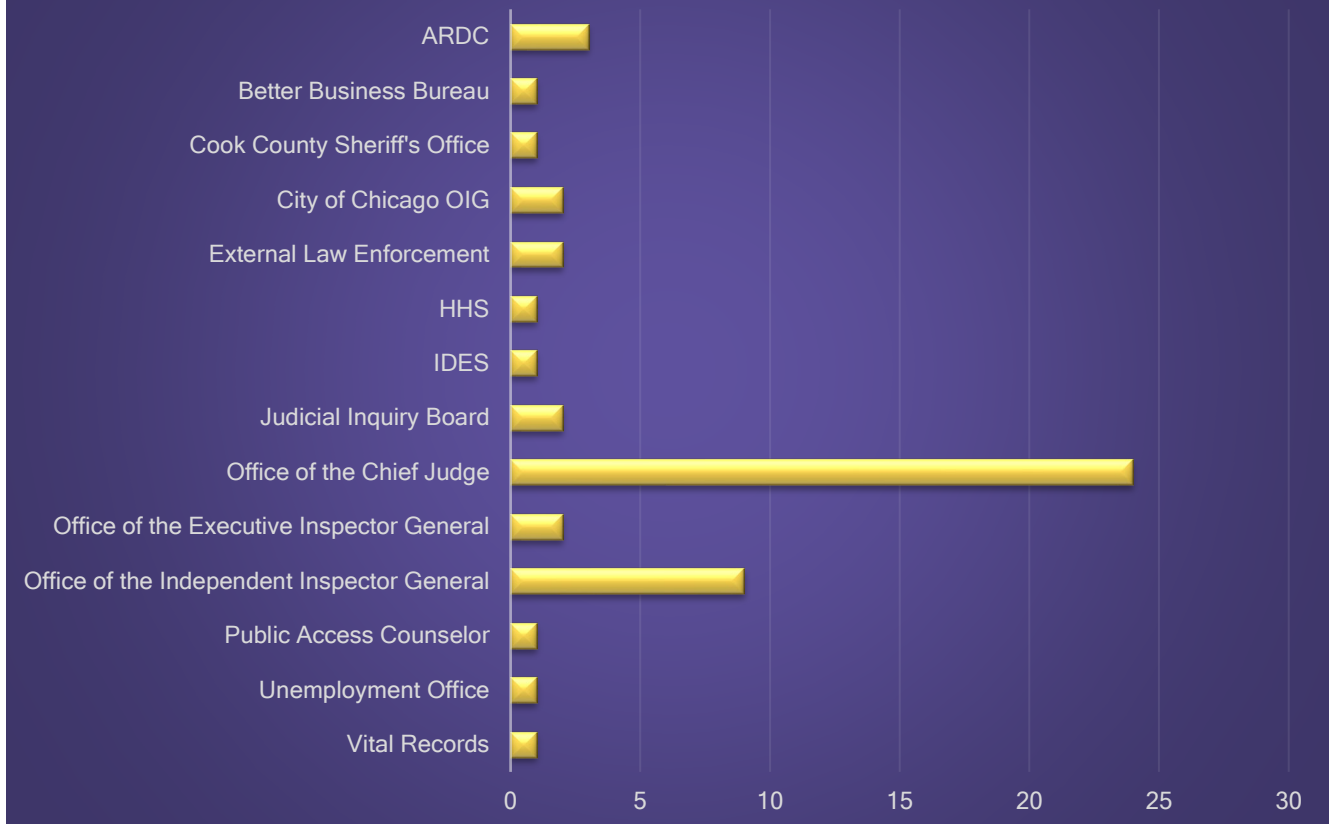
## 7 | Referrals

Of the total 173 MIs closed during Q4, OIG referred 87 to internal departments, 43 to external agencies, and administratively closed 43.<sup>4</sup>



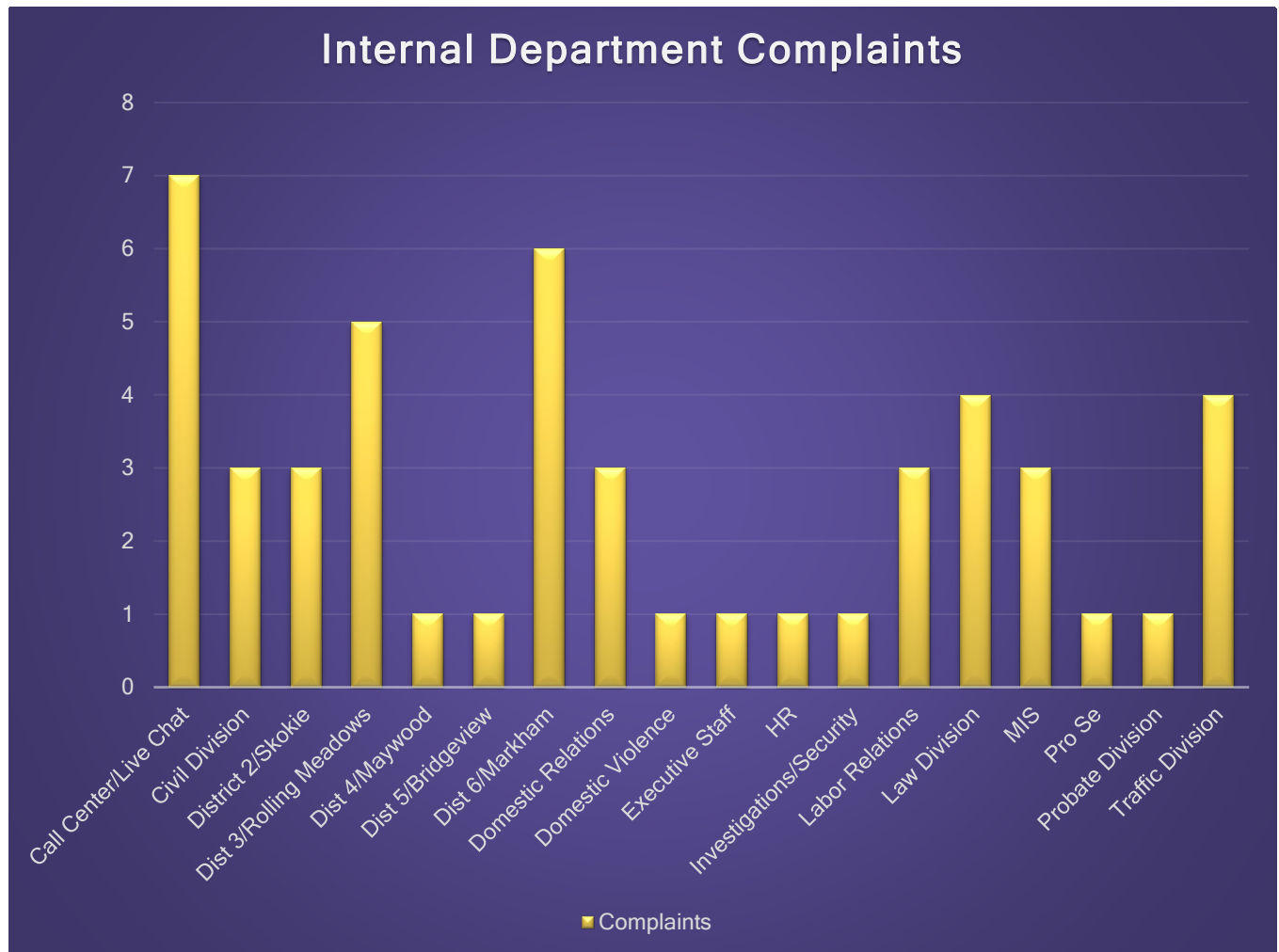
<sup>4</sup> Note: Some submissions were referred to more than one department.

## External Department Referrals



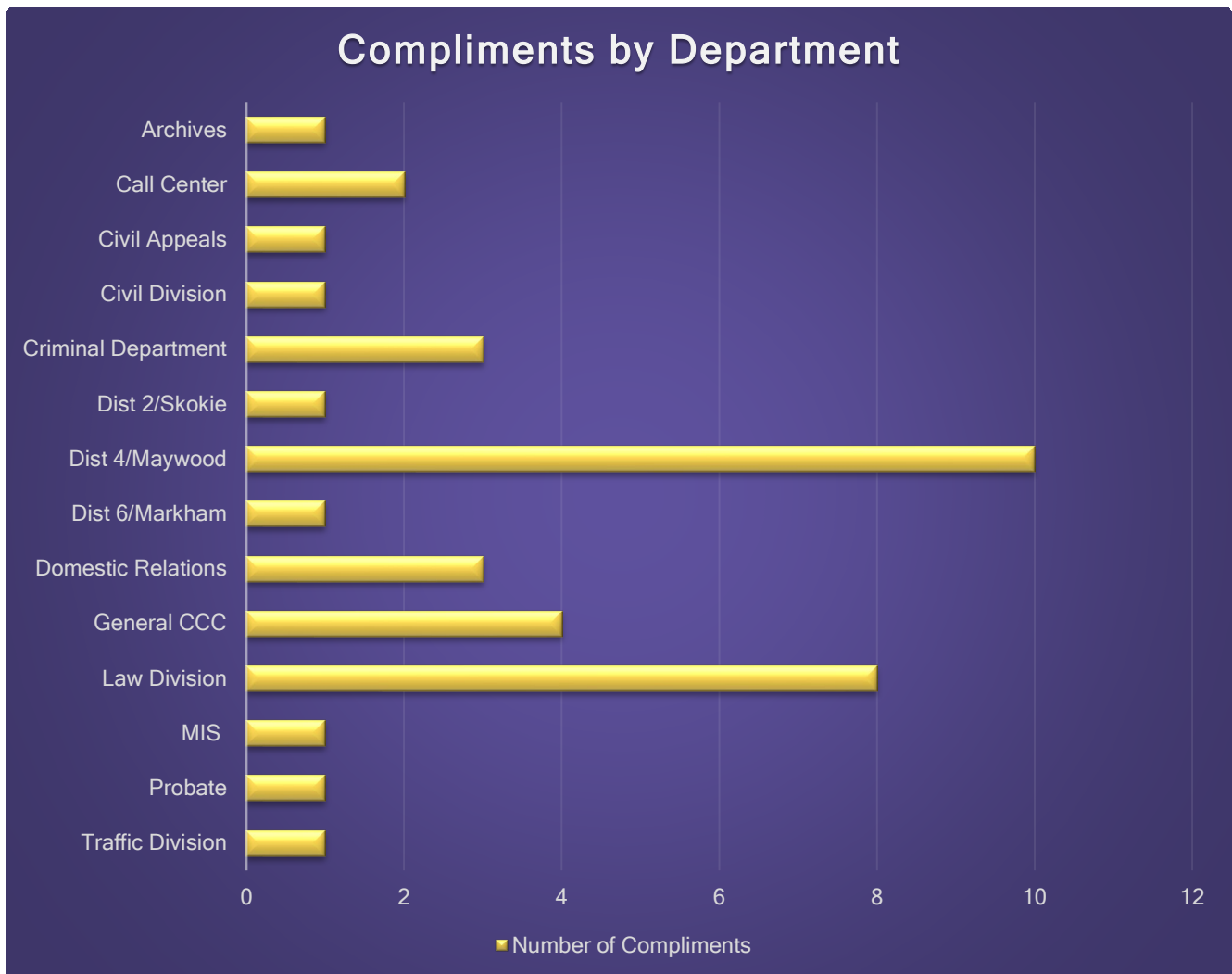
## 8 | Complaints

Of the 103 **complaints**, OIG referred 44 to internal departments it preliminarily determined would be best equipped to resolve or address the issues in the complaint. OIG referred 40 complaints to external agencies. The remaining 19 submissions could not be classified because they were either incomplete, incoherent, contained incorrect information or lacked contact information for follow-up.



## 9 | Compliments

Of the 37 compliments, internal departments with the highest number of compliments for Q4 included **District 4/Maywood** (10 compliments), **Law Division** (eight compliments), **General Clerk of the Circuit Court** (four compliments) and the **Criminal Department** and **Domestic Relations** (three compliments each).



## II | SUMMARY REPORTS

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During Q4, OIG closed 19 CFs. OIG closed 7 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 25-08-630**

An OIG investigation found that systemic failures contributed to the breakdown in the processing of 10 criminal orders of protection over the course of three weeks in one district.

During the investigation, the OIG discovered that, at the operational level, the responsible Court Clerk failed to correctly process the affected orders of protection. Specifically, the Clerk failed to properly document, copy, and distribute the affected orders of protection. Additionally, the Clerk failed to notify management that the orders of protection needed to be transmitted. The OIG found that the Clerk's failures led to the orders not being transmitted in a timely manner.

At the supervisory level, the OIG found that management failed to timely communicate and implement a change to a policy related to the processing of orders of protection. Additionally, the OIG concluded that management failed to provide sufficient oversight to ensure that the court clerk's work was complete and accurate.

The district management remedied the error the same day it was discovered. Additionally, the Administration acted immediately to implement stronger oversight, standardized processes across all districts, clarified expectations regarding management ownership, and added safeguards to ensure accurate, timely, and effective processing of criminal and civil orders of protection.

### **CF 25-07-560**

An OIG investigation reviewed allegations that a Court Clerk engaged in unwelcome conduct of sexual nature toward the complainant. Specifically, the OIG determined the Clerk approached the complainant at work, questioned their clothing, opened a garment they wore over their clothes, and looked between their legs. The OIG concluded the conduct was unwelcome, sexually based, and sufficiently severe to create a hostile or offensive work environment. The OIG therefore sustained the allegation.

Based on the evidence, the OIG found the complainant's immediate disclosure to supervisors, their distraught demeanor, and consistent narrative, which included documentation and reporting of prior boundary violations, to be credible. On the other hand, the OIG found the Clerk's explanation unconvincing and undermined by the record. Ultimately, the evidence

supported a finding that the Clerk engaged in the alleged conduct and that their conduct violated Clerk's Office policy.

To support employee safety and a professional work environment, the OIG recommended that management conduct regular morning and afternoon walkthroughs of courtrooms to increase visibility, accountability, and timely intervention. The OIG also recommended that management request routine courtesy checks by Sheriff's Office personnel in courtrooms staffed by a single clerk, including one check in the morning and one in the afternoon.

### **CF 25-07-506**

An OIG investigation failed to substantiate an employee's complaint that an Office Clerk engaged in harassment, intimidation, and racial discrimination. Neither surveillance video footage nor witness statements corroborated the complainant's account. Further, the OIG found insufficient evidence of racial discrimination against the Clerk where the OIG found the alleged offending statements were not made by them. The OIG therefore sustained no allegations against the Clerk. However, during the investigation, the OIG learned that the Clerk had multiple outbursts in the office prior to their resignation. The OIG recommended that should the Clerk be considered for employment with the Clerk's Office again, they should be assigned anger management training, emotional intelligence training, conflict resolution and communication skills training, stress management, professionalism and workplace behavior coaching.

### **CF 25-04-399**

The OIG investigated allegations that a Court Clerk deliberately misgendered an attorney during a verbal altercation. The OIG found the Clerk was aware of the attorney's preferred pronouns and deliberately misgendered the attorney while upset with them. The OIG sustained the allegation.

The OIG also investigated allegations that the Clerk discriminated against the attorney by refusing to file the attorney's motions and appearances on several days. While the OIG found that the Clerk was negligent for refusing to assist the attorney, the OIG found insufficient evidence to support a finding that the Clerk's conduct was discriminatory. The evidence established that the Clerk was out of the office on the days the filings should have been processed. The attorney discovered their unfiled motions and appearances and asked the Clerk to file them. The Clerk refused. The Clerk informed the attorney they had been absent on the relevant days, that they would not file the documents, and told the attorney to contact Clerk's Office management.

The OIG found that the Clerk's refusal to file the attorney's documents when requested violated Clerk's Office policy. The OIG concluded the refusal was unprofessional, reflected poor customer service, and constituted a failure to perform their required duties. The OIG therefore

sustained the allegation that the Clerk was negligent in their duties by refusing to file the attorney's documents.

The OIG recommended taking appropriate corrective action and providing targeted training for the Clerk, including sensitivity and respectful workplace training, anti-harassment and anti-discrimination training, anger management, interpersonal skills, professional communication, conflict resolution, and refresher customer service training. The OIG also recommended reinforcing expectations that court filings be processed timely each day and implementing routine management oversight such as regular courtroom walkthroughs and periodic desk audits to identify similar issues that could have the potential to harm litigants.

### **CF 25-04-330**

An OIG investigation found that a workplace disagreement between two Office Clerks escalated into an unprofessional verbal altercation. The OIG found by a preponderance of the evidence that the two employees engaged in a heated verbal exchange over task assignment, used confrontational language, and that their actions disrupted the workplace. Eyewitness statements established that management had to intervene to separate the employees and de-escalate the encounter.

Although the OIG found that the interaction was a verbal altercation that required immediate supervisor intervention, the evidence was insufficient to support a finding that the accused engaged in aggressive or intimidating conduct that created a reasonable fear of physical harm in violation of the Workplace Violence Policy.

The OIG recommended that this matter be resolved with employee counseling that highlights the importance of professional communication, respectful workplace interactions, and de-escalation techniques. The OIG also recommended that management reinforce clear expectations around how work is assigned so that concerns are addressed early and similar situations can be avoided in the future.

### **CF 25-03-178**

An OIG investigation failed to substantiate an employee's complaint that four Shakman-exempt Managers and two Office Clerks committed sexual harassment and retaliation. The OIG found insufficient evidence that the alleged conduct was based on sex or was sexual in nature. Nevertheless, the OIG recommended that a representative from HR follow up with the complainant to offer them EAP or other resources as deemed appropriate. Additionally, the OIG recommended HR reiterate the Clerk's Office policy against sexual harassment to all employees in the district to ensure a safe and respectful environment for everyone.

## **CF 25-01-031**

An OIG investigation found that a Clerk's Office manager behaved unprofessionally during an interaction with a member of the public by raising their voice and banging on a service window. However, the OIG could not substantiate the allegation that the manager used racial slurs during the verbal altercation. The OIG recommended that the manager be temporarily reassigned to a position with less direct customer contact and receive coaching and refresher training in customer service, conflict resolution, and de-escalation. The OIG also recommended increased management oversight to help prevent a reoccurrence. Additionally, the OIG recommended increased supervisory staffing in the district.