Office of the County Auditor
Mary Modelski
County Auditor
69 West Washington, Suite 840 ● Chicago, Illinois 60602 ● (312) 603-1500

January 27, 2022

The Honorable Toni Preckwinkle, President
And Board of Cook County Commissioners
118 N. Clark Street, Room 537
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Dear President Preckwinkle and Board of Commissioners:

The Office of the Cook County Auditor has conducted an audit of the Onboarding and Offboarding Process for the Bureau of Human Resources in accordance with the *Cook County Auditor Ordinance.* Our fieldwork was conducted from December 2020 to July 2021.

The overall objective of our audit was to review the policies, procedures, and related internal controls over the Onboarding and Offboarding process. In October 2019, the Bureau of Human Resources implemented their *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* for the hiring agencies of the Offices Under the President. They have also drafted an *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* for Offices Under the President that has not yet been issued. The scope of our work entailed testing support documentation for former employees and interviewing new hires, including transfers to Offices Under the President from Fiscal Year 2020, as well as reviewing the Onboarding and Offboarding Program Resource Guides for internal controls.

The audit report contains four recommendations for the Onboarding process and one recommendation for the Offboarding process. The Executive Summary of our report provides an overview of the audit.

The Office of the County Auditor has provided weekly status reports to management and emailed the draft report on December 3, 2021, for managements validation and comments. Having received no comments or feedback, we appreciate the time and cooperation the Bureau of Human Resource staff extended to Della Hernandez during our audit.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Modelski
County Auditor

CC: Velisha Haddox, Bureau Chief of Human Resources
    Simone McNeil, Deputy Bureau Chief-Director of Exempt Administration

$ Fiscal Responsibility **💡** Innovative Leadership **◎** Transparency & Accountability **📋** Improved Services

COOK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY AUDITOR

Onboarding and Offboarding Process

Internal Audit Report

Report Date: December 3, 2021

Issued By:

Mary Modelski, County Auditor

Audit Conducted By:
Della Hernandez, Field Auditor V
Julie Stack, Audit Supervisor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of the County Auditor has completed an audit of the Onboarding and Offboarding process of the Bureau of Human Resources for Offices Under the President. The overall objective of our audit was to review the policies, procedures, and related internal controls over the Onboarding and Offboarding process. The audit was performed to ensure the current policies and procedures for onboarding new employees had been implemented. Additionally, to ensure proper internal controls were in place in the draft version of the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* for effectively separating employees from Offices Under the President. This was accomplished by gathering, reviewing, and testing relevant supporting documentation. As well as, conducting interviews of the Bureau of Human Resources staff responsible for the Onboarding and Offboarding process to reach a conclusion on each of our audit objectives.

We conducted this audit in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. These standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient and appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions, based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis. Our fieldwork was conducted from December 2020 through July 2021. We looked at data from Fiscal Year 2020.

Management was presented and asked to respond to five recommendations. The Bureau of Human Resources should:

Onboarding:
- Develop and train upon an internal written Policy and Procedure Manual for the staff members in the Bureau of Human Resources. Including all the steps and procedures for each section of the Bureau Human Resources, such as: Workforce Strategy, Personnel Services, the Bureau of Human Resources Information Systems and Compliance. Additionally, communicate all steps involved to publicize the Bi-Weekly Reports in Legistar, as required by the Cook County Bureau of Human Resources Ordinance.
- Update the *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* to include policies and procedures to monitor Offices Under the President to ensure they are in compliance with these guidelines. Also, provide periodic training for Offices Under the President on these updated guidelines so they can adequately and consistently onboard their new employees.
- Establish a process to run employee status reports for Offices Under the President on a quarterly basis: new hires, rehires, transfers and terminations and verify the accuracy of such reports prior to release. Compliance should be educated on how to create and post the Employment Action Reports on a quarterly basis.
- Work with the Bureau of Technology to correct the error message from the approval flows in the Bureau Human Resources Self Service System.

Offboarding:
- Finalize, distribute, and educate appropriate individuals on the *Offboarding Program Resource Guideline*. Also, the Bureau of Human Resources should work with the Bureau of Technology to include in this guide a current procedure document stating the proper steps to deactivate former employees in all County systems.

Please refer to the Recommendations section for more details along with, management's response, corrective action plans and estimated completion dates.

BACKGROUND

The Bureau of Human Resources is responsible for the onboarding and offboarding of employees from Offices Under the President. The Bureau of Human Resources is not responsible for the hiring at Cook County hospitals or elected official offices such as the States Attorney, County Clerk, etc., as those offices have their own Human Resource departments. The Bureau of Human Resources has four sections that are pertinent to this audit for the onboarding process: Workforce Strategy, Personnel Services, Human Resources Information Systems and Compliance.

Workforce Strategy begins the process with the review of the job description and works with the hiring department to finalize it, they then create an electronic job posting for the position. When the position closes, Workforce Strategy extracts a list of candidates, presents it to Compliance for review of minimum qualifications and once certified by Compliance share it with the hiring department. Although Section VJ of the Employment Plan states that the Workforce Strategist should validate minimum qualifications, we found Compliance actively engaged in this task. Candidates are then scheduled by the hiring department to be interviewed. After all the interviews are complete, scoring sheets are sent back to Workforce Strategy to tabulate the scores, and a list of candidates are presented to the hiring department to rank candidate(s). If the hiring department ranks a candidate, Workforce Strategy makes an offer of employment to the chosen candidate and notifies the hiring department of the acceptance and prepares the hiring packet to hand off to Personnel Services. Once the hiring packet is received by Personnel Services, they contact the candidate to schedule screenings and/or background checks, submit hiring documents for signatures and organizes a start date. Once all the hiring documentation has been properly completed, Human Resources Information Systems has the responsibility of entering new hires in the EBS system which creates the employee identification number. Compliance is responsible for maintaining the Quarterly Employee Action Reports on the County website per the Employment Plan section IV.B, version eight which was amended on August 20, 2021. These reports contain information about the Bureau of Human Resource actions such as hires, terminations, promotions, rehires and transfers. Compliance provides transparency to the public, by posting which departments these actions derive from with job titles, effective dates, if it was a Shakman Exempt or Shakman Non-Exempt position and if it was an emergency hire.

The Bureau of Human Resources completed their *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* in October 2019, for Offices Under the President. The hiring process is governed largely by the Cook County Employment Plan. The Employment Plan has set general principles that govern the County's hiring and employment policies and procedures. It applies to current employees of the County as well as all applicants and candidates. There are three main areas in the Bureau of Human Resources that are responsible for the Onboarding process: Preboarding, Onboarding and Offboarding.

The Preboarding process begins once an employee has accepted an offer of employment with the Cook County Offices Under the President.
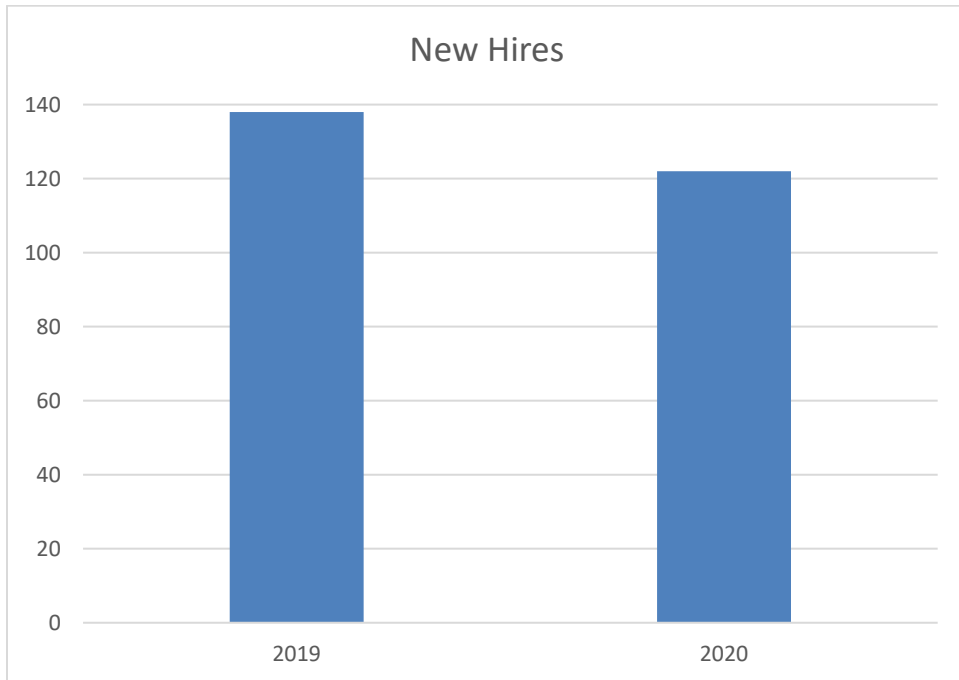
Onboarding begins on the employee's first day and may continue through the first year of employment. It requires the successful collaboration of the Bureau of Human Resources, Bureau of Technology, Budget and
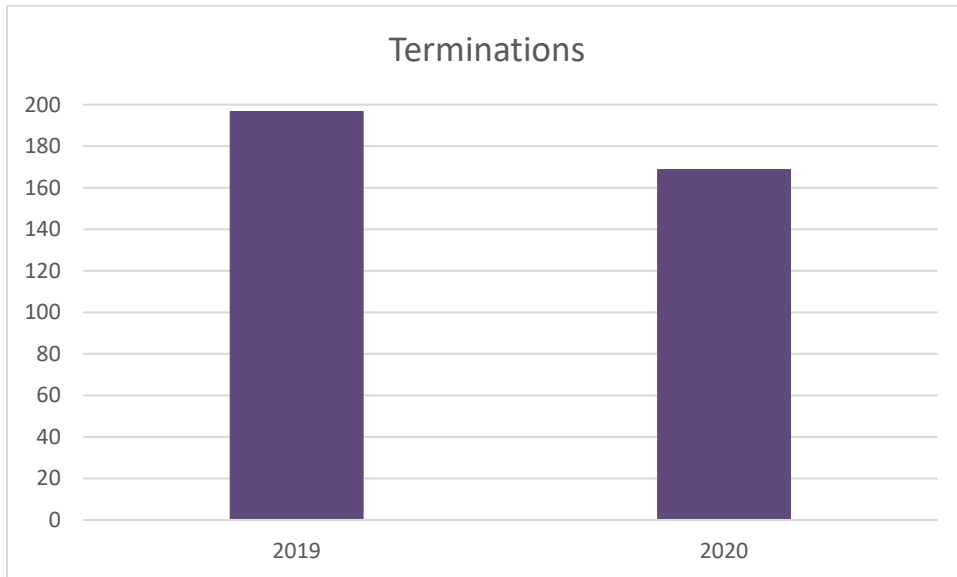
Management Services, Facilities Management, Risk Management, and the Hiring Department to complete the hiring process.

Offboarding is facilitated by the Bureau of Human Resources and similarly requires the cooperation of other Bureaus and Departments to effectively complete each part of the process. The Bureau of Human Resources and Offices Under the President work together to efficiently execute the successful separation of an employee. The Offboarding begins with the termination process which can be voluntary or involuntary. If voluntary, the soon-to-be former employee will, preferably, provide a 10 days' notice of resignation days prior to their last day of employment, but on occasions, only provide a last-minute notice. The department the employee is separating from will then begin to organize an Exit Interview with their soon-to-be former employee to discuss outstanding projects/work and provide a separation package. These separation packages contain information on how to continue your medical benefits (COBRA), post-employment restrictions, termination summaries, Illinois Department of Employment Security information, and a resource guide. Departments will also review the Employee Inventory Checklist to begin the verification of assets for collection on their last day of employment. The termination department will also communicate the separation with the Bureau of Human Resources and the Bureau of Technology so that they are aware and can begin their offboarding tasks. If it is an involuntary termination which could be an employee dismissal for cause and/or other legal reasons, then it is a management-initiated separation and this process is approved and governed by the Employment Plan, Supplemental Policies, Cook County Personnel Rules, and any applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). The Offboarding process ensures a smooth transition for Offices Under the President and separating employees. As of the release of this audit report, the Bureau of Human Resources has a draft of an *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* but has not issued it as an official guide for Offices Under the President.

The following bar graphs show the number of new hires, transfers, and terminations for fiscal years 2019 and 2020:

The Office of the County Auditor attempted to retrieve data for the last five fiscal years to provide a visual analysis on the trend of hirings and terminations but could not due to data from 2018 and prior being from another system and was not converted properly into EBS. Terminations include resignations, retirements, and involuntary terminations.

New Hires

Year	Value
2019	~138
2020	~122

Transfers

Year	Value
2019	~134
2020	~89

Terminations

Year	Value
2019	~197
2020	~169

AUDIT SCOPE AND OBJECTIVE

The scope and objectives of this audit were designed to determine if the Bureau of Human Resources properly implemented their new *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* for Offices Under the President. As well as, to determine if internal controls are in place in the drafted *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* for effectively separating employees from Offices Under the President. The scope of our work entailed new hires, including transfers to Offices Under the President, and former employees for Fiscal Year 2020. The audit objectives were the following:

Onboarding:

- To determine if the current policies and procedures for the onboarding process have been implemented for Offices Under the President.
- To assess the effectiveness of the pre-employment screenings to detect anomalies, determine suitability and eligibility for open positions.
- To ensure the hiring departments have properly established their new employees in all aspects of technology and internal controls.
- To assess the effectiveness of the program in ensuring that the new employees understand their new jobs and all related expectations.

Offboarding:

- To determine if internal controls are in place in the drafted *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* for effectively separating employees from Offices Under the President.
- Ensure that network and system accesses are properly terminated on a timely basis for the separating employees.
- Ensure that the departments are retrieving physical assets in a timely manner such as, but not limited to, laptops, identification cards, and keys and proxy cards.
- Ensure that the proper exiting paperwork and/or notifications are submitted to the respected areas for a complete termination of the employees.

The following procedures were performed to assess these objectives:

Onboarding:

- Interview of new hires to determine if the new *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* is being utilized by the randomly selected hiring departments.
- Randomly tested new hire personnel folders for proper hiring documentation.
- Interviewed the supervisors/managers, and administrative assistants to determine if they were being properly set-up with workstations such as a desk with a phone, personal computers and/or laptops, supplies, email, keys (if applicable), and keycards. As well as, determined if the hiring department had communicated expectations and had a plan to execute the new hire's training.
- Interviewed new hires to learn of their onboarding experience and how they became acclimated to their new role to ensure they were properly set-up per the *Onboarding Program Resource Guide.*

Offboarding:

- Interviewed and reviewed documentation to verify departments were offboarding terminated/retired/transferred employees appropriately.
- Interviewed those responsible for requesting former employees to be deactivated in all County systems. Traced copies of Bureau of Technology portal tickets of former employees to confirm requests were submitted and completed.
- Interviewed those responsible and/or were familiar with the retrieval of assets. Requested evidence of checklists that were implemented by terminating department to ensure the collection of County assets was completed.
- Requested copies of separation packages presented to terminated employees from the randomly selected departments to ensure existence.

AUDIT RESULTS

Based on our analysis and evaluation of the internal controls over the Onboarding and Offboarding processes, we have reached the following conclusions on our audit objectives:

Onboarding:

- Nine out of the 10 Offices Under the President that were tested, were either not aware of the new Bureau of Human Resources *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* or were not following them. Seventeen out of 17 personnel files tested did not have the appropriate documentation in the files.
- One out of the 13 new hires that were tested were not properly set-up in a timely basis with an employee identification proxy card.
- Based on our interviews and surveys, 13 employees out 14 felt they understood their new job responsibilities and all related expectations.

Offboarding:

- Internal controls in the drafted *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* should be updated to include monitoring by the Bureau of Human Resources for effectively separating employees from Offices Under the President.
- The 2016 Information Technology User Offboarding Policy is outdated and 10 out of the 18 former employees that were tested were not properly deactivated in all County systems.
- One out of the 18 former employees' assets were not completely collected. The department could not collect an employee identification proxy card because it was lost.
- Fifteen out of the 18 terminated employees that were tested, were not properly offboarded.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Onboarding

Recommendation #1:

The Bureau of Human Resources has developed an *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* for all the hiring departments for Offices Under the President to follow, we found that the Bureau of Human Resources Workforce Strategy, Human Resources Information Technology and Compliance did not have internal written policies and procedures for their staff members to follow. Personnel Services does have their own Standard Operating Procedure Manual, but it does need to be updated to include the current Fingerprinting process. The current Fingerprinting process is an interim process, due to the COVID pandemic. Since it has been in effect for almost two years, policies and procedures should be updated to reflect the process. There is no complete policy and procedures manual inclusive of all sections in the Bureau of Human Resources to help guide the staff from beginning to end and to properly monitor each open position and/or candidate. The hiring process was segregated by each section under the Bureau of Human Resources. Without written policies and procedures for the staff to follow:

- Personnel Services does not have a routing system to begin the onboard process for new candidates. Workforce Strategy sends an email to three Personnel Services employees to be processed by one of the three, which can cause redundancy and time wasted if the same candidate is being processed inadvertently by all three Personnel Services employees.
- Candidates' sensitive information should be secured throughout the day and locked up at the end of the business day by the Information Records Coordinator.
- Excel reports, such as Tracker, used to track open positions contained errors and/or omissions which could have been detected if reviewed by a supervisor.
- New hire personnel files sampled for proper hiring documentation, were missing, i.e., the I-9 form, signed orientation attendance form, reference check form and transcripts.
- Documentation submitted by Workforce Strategy and/or Personnel Services to the Human Resources Information Systems section was found to contain errors which caused delays to entering information into County systems.
- Documentation was found to not be maintained in a consistent format; some is paper other records are in an electronic format.

- Evidence of management monitoring and/or oversight of the recruiting/hiring process did not appear to be present.
- The combination to the file room lock had not been changed in 10+ years.
- Hiring department head signatures did not appear to be obtained on necessary documentation in a timely manner.
- The hiring process appears to take three to eleven months.

We recommend that the Bureau of Human Resources develop a comprehensive internal procedure manual inclusive of all their current recruiting/hiring processes for all sections. These manuals should include the current step-by-step instructions and timeframes for the staff to follow. The procedures manual should also include instructions on how to:

- Prepare the Tracker database to include all required fields.
- Management's review and approval requirements of Tracker's key data elements.
- Tools to use to aid in tracking timelines to move forward with each stage of processes.
- Expand the "Checklist for Processing County Employees Under the President" for full verification of documentation that is passed on to another process/phase. The checklist should show the tasks performed, by who and when. Also, deadlines as to when Personnel Services must submit proxy cards and when hiring departments must provide check routes. It should be signed and dated by the Analyst responsible for that candidate/new hire to ensure that it is correct and complete. Documentation pertaining to new hires should also be kept in electronic form and placed in a secured and backed up network location.
- Include in the manual, job titles as to whom should have access to the file room along with the process of obtaining the access code.
- The access code to the file room should be changed when individuals terminate or at least on an annual basis and included as a written policy.

Upon completion and approval of the manual by the Bureau of Human Resource Management, staff should be trained on its contents and such portion of the manual applicable to outside departments should be also educated on its contents that pertains to their area.

Management Response

The Office of the County Auditor recommended that the Bureau of Human Resources develop a comprehensive internal procedure manual inclusive of all our current recruiting/hiring processes for all sections. We considered the recommendation and concluded that the Bureau of Human Resources is currently compliant with the spirit of the recommendation. The *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* and *Hiring Process Resource Guide* outline the roles of Workforce Strategy, Personnel Services, the Compliance Office and Training and Development to a sufficient level for each division to understand how their role differs and compliments other divisions' roles in the onboarding process. Please note that Training and Development is a critical part of the onboarding process but was excluded without explanation from the audit. As such, our response will not include information about the division.

The Office of the County Auditor represented that the Bureau of Human Resources Workforce Strategy Division and Compliance Office do not have internal written policies and procedures for their staff members to follow.

In fact, Workforce Strategy, Personnel Services and the Compliance Office follow the requirements of the Cook County Employment Plan, Cook County Employment Plan Supplemental Policies, Background Check Policy, Drug and Alcohol Policy, the Cook County Personnel Rules and a plethora of Standard Operating Procedures ("SOPs") detailing the internal processes in the respective divisions. Human Resources Information Systems does not have or require the creation of separate internal procedures because they do not have a decision-making role in the onboarding process. Human Resources Information Systems data enters information from completed forms into Oracle EBS and uses Oracle instructional guides as a resource. Personnel Services will add the interim fingerprinting process, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, to its existing SOPs. The Office of the County Auditor also indicated that there is no complete policy and procedures manual to properly monitor each open position and/or candidate. Please note that Hiring Departments monitor their respective open positions and determine when there is an operational need to fill. Additionally, ATAS tracks candidate submission of applications through disposition.

In making the recommendation for the Bureau of Human Resources to develop a comprehensive internal procedure manual inclusive of all our current recruiting/hiring processes for all sections, the Office of the County Auditor made several assertions that the Bureau of Human Resources will address individually below.

1. **Office of the County Auditor –** Personnel Services does not have a routing system to begin the onboard process for new candidates. Workforce Strategy sends an email to three Personnel Services employees to be processed by one of the three, which can cause redundancy and time wasted if the same candidate is being processed inadvertently by all three Personnel Services employees.

   Bureau of Human Resources Response – Personnel Services is a small division that consists of three employees. Emails include all team members to ensure that the onboarding process is not delayed and that there is no work stoppage if an employee is absent. The Personnel Services team members communicate with each other concerning which candidates they are processing to ensure there is no redundant work.

2. **Office of the County Auditor –** Candidates' sensitive information should be secured throughout the day and locked up at the end of the business day by the Information Records Coordinator.

   Bureau of Human Resources Response – Candidates' onboarding information is securely locked in a cabinet at the end of the business day. During the workday, information may be on a desk as it is being reviewed prior to being filed.

3. **Office of the County Auditor –** Excel reports, such as Tracker, used to track open positions contained errors and/or omissions which could have been detected if reviewed by a supervisor.

   Bureau of Human Resources Response – The applicable divisions have been directed to double check their entries as human error is prone to occur on spreadsheets.

4. **Office of the County Auditor –** New hire personnel files sampled for proper hiring documentation, were missing, i.e., the I-9 form, signed orientation attendance form, reference check form and transcripts.

   Bureau of Human Resources Response – The Bureau of Human Resources strives to ensure that all required documents are included in employees' personnel files. However, there are instances when employees who attend orientation, fail to return the signed orientation attendance forms even after

Training and Development has reminded them that the forms are outstanding. Depending on the vacancy filled, a transcript would not be required if the position did not require a degree to meet the Minimum Qualifications. In those instances, a high school diploma or GED certificate would suffice. Occasionally, when the Bureau of Human Resources contacts professional references, they do not respond. The Bureau does not penalize candidates for the lack of response. Accordingly, the document would not be included in the personnel file. Also, some, but not all employees have letters of recommendation which are included in employees' personnel files. Please note that it is recommended that I-9 forms be kept separately from personnel files. As such, I-9 forms, which have a short retention period, are maintained separately.

5. **Office of the County Auditor –** Documentation submitted by Workforce Strategy and/or Personnel Services to the Human Resources Information Systems section was found to contain errors which caused delays to entering information into County systems.

   Bureau of Human Resources Response – Workforce Strategy and Personnel Services strive to provide accurate information to Human Resources Information Systems. In instances when mistakes were made due to human error, they were quickly rectified before any important dates were missed.

6. **Office of the County Auditor –** Documentation was found to not be maintained in a consistent format; some is paper other records are in an electronic format.

   Bureau of Human Resources Response – Before the COVID-19 pandemic, many records were maintained exclusively in paper format. Since the pandemic, due to hybrid work schedules, records have been maintained in paper and electronic formats. We continuously endeavor to move all records to electronic format.

7. **Office of the County Auditor –** Evidence of management monitoring and/or oversight of the recruiting/hiring process did not appear to be present.

   Bureau of Human Resources Response – Please note that the Office of the County Auditor did not provide the Bureau of Human Resources with support or evidence for this statement. Management closely monitors and provides oversight of the recruiting/hiring process. The Personnel Services manager monitors processes for Personnel Services; the Director of Human Resources Information Systems for Human Resources Information Systems; the Compliance Officer for the Compliance Office; and the Assistant Deputy Director - Human Resources, in the interim, for Workforce Strategy. The Deputy Bureau Chief/Director of Exempt Administration monitors the overall process, except for the Compliance Office which is independent. The Office of the Independent Inspector General also monitors the Shakman Exempt hiring process.

8. **Office of the County Auditor –** The combination to the file room lock had not been changed in 10+ years.

   Bureau of Human Resources Response – A limited number of relevant positions in the Bureau of Human Resources requiring access to the file room have the combination to the file room lock. The suite in which the file room is located is behind a door with a keypad lock. The keypad lock code is changed whenever an employee leaves BHR by resignation, termination or retirement. BHR will create an SOP including this information and detail which positions will have access to the file room.

9. **Office of the County Auditor** – Hiring department head signatures did not appear to be obtained on necessary documentation in a timely manner.

    Bureau of Human Resources Response – As you are aware, the onboarding process involves the cooperation of different bureaus and departments who have competing priorities. Department Heads sign necessary documentation, the requisition and justification/decision to hire, at their first opportunity. The Bureau of Human Resources follows up with Department Heads for signatures, but ultimately, does not control when they sign a document. Without additional details from the Office of the County Auditor, we are unsure of the full scope of documents that were not signed in a timely manner.

10. **Office of the County Auditor –** The hiring process appears to take three to eleven months.

    Bureau of Human Resources Response – Ninety days is the average time to fill a position. However, there are limited exceptions to the average timeframe that require additional time to fill a vacancy. For example, there are instances when positions need to be reposted because no applicants applied during the original posting period and times when Hiring Departments need to delay the interview process.

As explained above, the *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* and *Hiring Process Resource Guide* outline the roles of Workforce Strategy, Personnel Services, the Compliance Office and Training and Development to sufficiently comply with the spirit of the Office of the County Auditor's recommendation. Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads contributed to the creation of the *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* and were trained on it prior to implementation in 2019. The *Hiring Process Resource Guide* was recently amended and training will be provided upon request to Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads. The individual divisions do not require detailed step-by-step instructions of the other division's processes since their onboarding functions are distinct. They require enough information to understand how their functions fits into the overall process. Where appropriate, the Cook County Employment Plan includes timelines for the hiring process. It is difficult to set strict timelines outside of the Cook County Employment Plan since many of the Bureau of Human Resources onboarding functions are directly tied to steps in other Bureaus and Departments for which the Bureau of Human Resources does not have jurisdiction. Please note that Personnel Services creates proxy cards upon the request of Hiring Departments and is not involved with check routes.

Estimated Completion Date

Information on the Tracker will be checked for accuracy, the file room SOP will be completed and the interim fingerprinting process will be incorporated into the Personnel Services SOP by April 4, 2022.

Recommendation #2:

Our office tested nine departments that contained 14 new hires for the onboarding process against the *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* to determine whether the departments implemented it or at least followed some-type of consistent process for their new hires. Of these 14 new hires, 11 of them were conducted through surveys to expand our testing and the last three were tested through interviews and documentation. Of these 14 new hires, only three were properly onboarded. Additionally, the 14 new hires, there were two transfers hired from outside of the Offices Under the President where there was no documentation pertaining to the disciplinary history required per the Employment Plan. Here are some of the tasks that the hiring departments did not complete for their new employees:

- Send employee a welcome email.
- Send an email to the department about the new employee.
- Set-up meetings with critical employees that the new employee must meet.
- Set-up new employee's workstation.
- Provide policies and procedures.
- Assigning a first work assignment.
- Assigning a buddy/mentor.
- Training.
- Follow-up meetings with their supervisor/manager.

Once the hiring department receives notice from the Bureau of Human Resources that their candidate has successfully cleared the necessary steps and confirmed a start date, the hiring department must prepare for their arrival. The *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* that the Bureau of Human Resources implemented in October 2019 and located on their website, provides the hiring departments with these important steps. It contains checklists, forms, training plans, templates, etc. to assist new hire transitioning into the office surroundings and become acclimated to their new role in an efficient and timely manner to start on their first day.

In addition, we recommend that the Bureau of Human Resources inform Offices Under the President that there is an *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* on their website to assist with properly onboarding their new employees. Also, the Bureau of Human Resources should provide a training on this guide as soon as possible with annual trainings thereafter. To ensure that the hiring departments are following this guide, the Bureau of Human Resources should:

- Request the hiring departments submit the completed checklists of their new employee. These checklists should be verified for completion and that they contain the signatures of their director, immediate supervisor, and the new employee.
- The Bureau of Human Resources should place these checklists in the new hire's personnel folder. The Bureau of Human Resource Chief should review and sign that they verified the hiring departments have properly implemented the onboarding process.
- The Bureau of Human Resources should contact the new employee and their immediate supervisor at least one month after the new hire's start date to "check-in" on how the new hire is doing and to address any concerns or questions that may have been raised.
- Ensure proper disciplinary history inquiry is done for employee transfers from outside the Offices Under the President and place those documents in their personnel file folder for reference purposes.

Management Response

The Office of the County Auditor recommended that the Bureau of Human Resources inform Offices Under the President that there is an *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* on our website to assist with properly onboarding their new employees. Also, the recommendation included for the Bureau of Human Resources to provide a training on the guide as soon as possible with annual trainings thereafter. The Bureau of Human Resources considered the Office of the County Auditor's recommendation and concluded that it is mostly compliant with the recommendation. The Bureau of Human Resources will post an annual *Onboarding Program*

Resource Guide training on the Learning Management System and will use that opportunity to remind Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads that the guide is on our website.

In 2019, the *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* was issued by the Bureau of Human Resources to Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads. With the rollout of the *Onboarding Program Resource Guide*, the Bureau of Human Resources provided training and held meetings to obtain Bureau Chiefs' and Department Heads' feedback. The Bureau of Human Resources walked through each step of the process with the Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads. Now, the Bureau of Human Resources provides the guide to Department Heads and managers when they receive a new hire.

The Bureau of Human Resources would like to have seen a higher number of candidates onboarded in accordance with the *Onboarding Program Resource Guide*, however, we acknowledge that the Guide is permissive and not a mandate for Bureaus and Departments. Therefore, Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads have discretion concerning how to orient their new employees, whether it is completely in compliance with the Guide or somewhat deviates. The tasks that the Departments did not complete for their new employees are managed at the departmental level, pursuant to the *Onboarding Program Resource Guide*, and as such, the Bureau of Human Resources recommends for the Departments to be monitored and audited separately. Also, please note that discipline imposed outside of Offices under the President ("OUP") would not be considered in OUP. Only OUP Bureaus, Departments and Dependent Agencies are subject to the Cook County Employment Plan.

The Office of the County Auditor made several recommendations for the Bureau of Human Resources to ensure that Hiring Departments are following the *Onboarding Program Resource Guide*. Collectively, the recommendations are more appropriate to implement at a Hiring Department level since the Bureau of Human Resources has limited interaction with new employees after New Employee Orientation, facilitated by Training and Development. The Bureau of Human Resources orientation provides a high-level overview of County operations, rights and responsibilities and is uniform for all new employees. We actively seek feedback from new employees on the effectiveness of the program. Hiring Departments are responsible for orienting new employees on the specifics of the Department's operations, ordering equipment and following up to ensure that employees are well adjusted. As such, Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads can create separate files to maintain appropriate checklists and verify that employees are properly oriented. The Bureau of Human Resources recommends for the Bureau Chief or Department Head to contact the new employee and their immediate supervisor to see how they are adjusting. We think this would be more impactful as new employees' interaction with the Bureau of Human Resources is limited after orientation. The Hiring Department should work to build a rapport with the new employee.

Estimated Completion Date

The *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* training will be completed by the end of 2022*.*

Recommendation #3:

At the time of testing, it was found that the Quarterly Employee Action Reports had not been published on the Bureau of Human Resource website since the first quarter of 2019. These postings did not take place due to the position responsible for this task had not been filled until June of 2020. The Employment Plan states that these Quarterly Employee Action Reports should be posted on a quarterly basis. This caused the Bureau of Human Resources to be non-compliant with a County Ordinance that pertains to the Employment Plan; *Chapter 44*

Human Resources, Article II, Sec.44-47. Additionally, lack of availability of these reports does not provide transparency into hiring actions of Offices Under the President. Additionally, we also found the Biweekly reports were not all publicized in Legistar. We were unable to determine why the Bureau of Human Resources did not publish the Biweekly reports in Legistar.

Our office revisited the Bureau of Human Resources website under *Compliance and Information Reports* in October 2021 and saw that the Quarterly Employee Action Reports had been posted up to the 2nd Quarter of 2021 which ended June 2021.

Also, the Bureau of Human Resources Management Information Systems was not able to produce a report identifying the total number of new hires, transfers, rehires and terminations for Offices Under the President for the last five fiscal years. Currently, there are no procedures requiring the Bureau of Human Resources Information Systems to maintain and/or update these reports for verification and/or confirmation. Due to the conversion of EBS in 2018, such information was comingled with database corrections, updates, budget adjustments, increases, etc., for all the departments in the County and for every employee who had these updates/changes. Thereby, hindering the Bureau of Human Resources from seeing any trends, patterns, or critical positions within Offices Under the President.

We recommend that the Bureau of Human Resources include a procedure in the internal Policy and Procedure Manual stating the steps of how to publicize the Bi-Weekly Reports in Legistar. Also, Compliance should be educated on how to create and post the Quarterly Employee Action Reports. Historical reports should be gathered and published to bring the Bureau of Human Resources into compliance with the County Ordinance.

We also recommend the Bureau of Human Resources run the new hire, termination, rehire, and transfer reports for all Offices Under the President on a quarterly basis. The Bureau Chief should review them for completeness and approve them.

Management Response

The Office of the County Auditor recommended that the Bureau of Human Resources include a procedure in the internal Policy and Procedure Manual stating the steps of how to publicize the Bi-Weekly Reports in Legistar. Also, it was recommended for the Compliance Office to be educated on how to create and post the BHR Quarterly Employment Action Reports and for the Bureau of Human Resources to run the new hire, termination, rehire, and transfer reports for all Offices Under the President on a quarterly basis. The Bureau of Human Resources considered the Office of the County Auditor's recommendations and concluded that it is compliant with the spirit of the recommendations.

The procedures for how to publicize reports in Legistar are appropriately captured in the Board Office's Legistar Training Manual. The process is under the jurisdiction of the Board Office and is uniform regardless of who publicizes reports on Legistar. Please note that the Office of the County Auditor did not ask the Bureau of Human Resources questions about publicizing reports on Legister to inform their recommendation. Additionally, the Compliance Office is aware of the process for creating and posting Quarterly Employment Action Reports. Pursuant to the Employment Plan, Quarterly Reports are included within the General Principles and Responsibilities of BHR. The Compliance Office will continue to work with Human Resource Information Systems to review the Reports for accuracy and to ensure that they are comprehensive. Currently, Human Resources Information Systems does run the BHR Quarterly Employment Action Report which includes new hires,

terminations, rehires, and transfers for Offices under the President. The Deputy Bureau Chief/Director of Exempt Administration and the Compliance Office review the Reports for completeness and approves them.

Human Resources Information Systems, the Bureau of Technology and the Compliance Office have worked to refine and optimize the BHR Quarterly Employment Action Report. Major system challenges were resolved and specifications for the refined Report were approved in May of 2021. As the Office of the County Auditor acknowledged, BHR's website has been updated to include Reports for Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 of 2021. The Report for Quarter 3 of 2021 is currently being reviewed. The Reports reflect the total number of hires, promotions, transfers, and terminations by department, including Emergency hires and Shakman Exempt positions. Please note that the County went from JD Edwards E1 to Oracle which was a County-Wide implementation. Certain data remains in JD Edwards E1 and is accessible as needed. When Human Resources Information Systems is unable to provide a report, the Bureau of Technology is requested to have someone with Database access prepare the Report.

The Bi-Weekly Reports not being publicized in Legistar is a longstanding practice. Every Bi-Weekly report is on Legistar and the worksheets, with details, are available to download by those who have access to Legistar. Members of the public can see that the Bi-Weekly Report is a board agenda item along with a summary of what the report entails. Members of the public cannot see the worksheets. Please note that the governing ordinance does not require such publication.

Estimated Completion Date

Absent any system or database issues, the BHR Quarterly Employment Action Report for Quarter 3 of 2021 should be uploaded by the end of the year.

Recommendation #4:

Due to a system error in the Human Resources Self Service System, new hires cannot be approved properly in Workflow by the Workforce Strategy Analysts. The Human Resources Information System Transaction Specialist enters new hires in the Self-Service System for Offices Under the President and Workflow should then move the candidate through an established process. When a new hire is entered, Workflow is getting a system error that does not allow the Workforce Strategy Analysts to approve the transaction, so the Transaction Specialist must manually enter the new hire data into EBS. When entering the data into EBS, the Transaction Specialist has to go into eight different screens instead of just one screen with the Self-Service System. This causes the transaction to bypass the Workforce Strategy Analysts approval process, as they are the only one authorized to approve these transactions in Workflow. The Bureau of Human Resources reported they reached out to the Bureau of Technology about this issue, the Bureau of Technology stated that they could not see the system error on their end and told them that it was a "browser issue".

We recommend the Bureau of Human Resources continue to work with the Bureau of Technology to correct this system error in Self Service. In the meantime, the Transaction Specialist should communicate on a weekly basis the new hires that were bypassed so that Workforce Strategy Analysts are aware of them.

Management Response

The Office of the County Auditor recommended that the Bureau of Human Resources continue to work with the Bureau of Technology to correct a system error in Oracle Self-Service that prevents Workforce Strategy Analysts

from properly approving new hires in Workflow. The Office of the County Auditor also recommended for the Transaction Specialist to communicate on a weekly basis the new hires that were bypassed so that Workforce Strategy Analysts are aware of them. The Bureau of Human Resources considered the recommendations and will adopt the recommendation to continue working with the Bureau of Technology to rectify the system error.

The Bureau of Human Resources originally submitted a Cherwell Ticket to the Bureau of Technology in December of 2019 and again more recently for the issue to be identified and resolved. The error is occasionally generated during the new hire workflow and prevents the flow from successfully passing the new hire information from Oracle Self-Service into the JAVA screens. The Transaction Specialist self-monitors this error and performs JAVA data entry when it is received. The process remains seamless. The Bureau of Human Resources declines to adopt the second recommendation because it would not add value to notify Workforce Strategy when the error is received, unless entry of the employee using JAVA cannot occur. Thus far, JAVA has been 100% successful with data entry.

Estimated Completion Date

Ongoing. The Bureau of Human Resources completed the action of submitting a Cherwell Ticket and will await the Bureau of Technology's resolution of the issue.

Offboarding

Recommendation #1:

We have tested 18 former employees against the draft of the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide*. Of the 18, three were offboarded properly. These three former employees came from the same department using their own department's policies and procedures, which aligned with the Bureau of Human Resources guide. Also, one department did not collect an investigator's badge due to employee reporting it lost. Also, we found separation packages were not given to eight employees nor does the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* include instructions as to what to include in the separation package.

We recommend the Bureau of Human Resources include in their *Offboarding Program Resource Guide*:

- Require the offboarding departments to submit all checklists to ensure that offboarding is complete for their former employee. The checklists should be completed, signed, and dated by the person responsible for ensuring the tasks on the checklists are complete as well as the soon-to-be former employee. The Bureau of Human Resources should place these checklists in the former employee's personnel file for reference.
- Place in the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* separation packages information on how to continue your medical benefits (COBRA), post-employment restrictions, termination summaries, Illinois Department of Employment Security information, and a resource guide.
- Include a procedure in the Offboarding Program Resource Guide that user departments request for the Bureau of Technology evidence that the former employee(s) system access has become deactivated. Such evidence should be placed in the former employee's personnel file.
- Work with the Bureau of Technology to develop a process to recover assets that were not and/or could not be collected.

Once the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* has been finalized and published on their website, the Bureau of Human Resources should communicate to the Offices Under the President that there is an *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* on their website. Also, the Bureau of Human Resources should provide training on the guide's contents and establish annual refresher trainings thereafter.

<u>Management Response</u>

The Office of the County Auditor made several recommendations concerning the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* which will be addressed individually below. When the Bureau of Human Resources was notified that the Office of the County Auditor intended to audit the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide,* we thought that it was premature because we planned to issue the Guide in the near future. As a result of the Office of the County Auditor's decision to proceed with auditing the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide*, the Bureau of Human Resources delayed implementation awaiting results of the audit. As such, the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* has yet to be finalized and has not been shared for implementation with Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads. Therefore, Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads are using their own internal procedures to offboard employees. Currently, when an employee requires offboarding, Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads contact the Bureau of Human Resources to request separation packets. The Bureau of Human Resources then compiles the required separation packet documents and forwards them to Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads. When the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* is finalized, the Bureau of Human Resources will follow the same implementation process used to issue the *Onboarding Program Resource Guide*. The Guide will be placed on the Bureau of Human Resources website; it will be emailed to Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads with a note that it is also on the Bureau of Human Resources website; and a training will be conducted. The training will be placed on the Learning Management System to ensure that it is easily accessible. Please see the Office of the County Auditor's recommendations below with responses from the Bureau of Human Resources.

1. **Office of the County Auditor –** Require the offboarding departments to submit all checklists to ensure that offboarding is complete for their former employee. The checklists should be completed, signed, and dated by the person responsible for ensuring the tasks on the checklists are complete as well as the soon-to-be former employee. The Bureau of Human Resources should place these checklists in the former employee's personnel file for reference.

   Bureau of Human Resources Response – Offboarding is within the jurisdiction of departments and as such, the checklists should remain in the Terminating Departments. The various checklists are quick reference documents tailored for the Terminating Department and other departments to ensure that they are complying with their respective roles in the offboarding process. The checklists do not contain information about a former employee that would need to be placed in their personnel file or requires the employee's signature. The Terminating Departments do sign the checklists. Please note that employees sign the Employee Inventory Checklist and pursuant to the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide*, upon completion, the Employee Inventory Checklist will be forwarded to the Bureau of Human Resources.

2. **Office of the County Auditor –** Place in the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* separation packages information on how to continue your medical benefits (COBRA), post-employment restrictions, termination summaries, Illinois Department of Employment Security information, and a resource guide.

Bureau of Human Resources Response – The separation package was revised to include the above referenced information. The separation package will not be included in the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* as to ensure that Terminating Departments directly ask the Bureau of Human Resources for the most recent version of the package because the contents are subject to change.

3. **Office of the County Auditor –** Include a procedure in the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* that user departments request for the Bureau of Technology evidence that the former employee(s) system access has become deactivated. Such evidence should be placed in the former employee's personnel file.

   Bureau of Human Resources Response – The important task of ensuring that former employees' system access is deactivated is included in the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide;* however, the actual process and procedure resides in the Bureau of Technology. The Bureau of Technology has a mechanism by which to track all requests submitted to the Bureau, including requests to deactivate system access, through Cherwell tickets. When a request to deactivate system access is submitted to the Bureau of Technology, the requestor will receive an email confirmation that the task was completed. The Bureau of Human Resources does not find that including such evidence that the task was completed is appropriate to include in a former employee's personnel file because personnel files include evidence of employment actions.

4. **Office of the County Auditor –** Work with the Bureau of Technology to develop a process to recover assets that were not and/or could not be collected.

   Bureau of Human Resources Response – The Terminating Department is responsible for recovering former employees' assets and completing the Employee Inventory Checklist to the extent employees have not returned such assets. Departments are advised to report any unreturned County equipment as stolen to the proper authorities.

Estimated Completion Date

Not applicable. Please see the section above titled Management Response for a complete explanation.

Date: February 18, 2022

To: Mary Modelski
                 County Auditor, Office of the County Auditor

From: Velisha L. Haddox (VLH)
                 Bureau Chief, Bureau of Human Resources

Subject: Bureau of Human Resources Response to the Onboarding and
                 Offboarding Internal Audit Report

_____

The purpose of this communication is to provide a formal response to the Office of the County Auditor's Onboarding and Offboarding Process Internal Audit Report, dated December 3, 2021. Please see your office's recommendations and the Bureau of Human Resources' responses immediately below.

Onboarding

Recommendation #1:

The Bureau of Human Resources has developed an *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* for all the hiring departments for Offices Under the President to follow, we found that the Bureau of Human Resources Workforce Strategy, Human Resources Information Technology and Compliance did not have internal written policies and procedures for their staff members to follow. Personnel Services does have their own Standard Operating Procedure Manual, but it does need to be updated to include the current Fingerprinting process. The current Fingerprinting process is an interim process, due to the COVID pandemic. Since it has been in effect for almost two years, policies and procedures should be updated to reflect the process. There is no complete policy and procedures manual inclusive of all sections in the Bureau of Human Resources to help guide the staff from beginning to end and to properly monitor each open position and/or candidate. The hiring process was segregated by each section under the Bureau of Human Resources. Without written policies and procedures for the staff to follow:

- Personnel Services does not have a routing system to begin the onboard process for new candidates. Workforce Strategy sends an email to three Personnel Services employees to be processed by one of the three, which can cause redundancy and time wasted if the same candidate is being processed inadvertently by all three

Personnel Services employees.

- Candidates' sensitive information should be secured throughout the day and locked up at the end of the business day by the Information Records Coordinator.
- Excel reports, such as Tracker, used to track open positions contained errors and/or omissions which could have been detected if reviewed by a supervisor.
- New hire personnel files sampled for proper hiring documentation, were missing, i.e., the I-9 form, signed orientation attendance form, reference check form and transcripts.
- Documentation submitted by Workforce Strategy and/or Personnel Services to the Human Resources Information Systems section was found to contain errors which caused delays to entering information into County systems.
- Documentation was found to not be maintained in a consistent format; some is paper other records are in an electronic format.
- Evidence of management monitoring and/or oversight of the recruiting/hiring process did not appear to be present.
- The combination to the file room lock had not been changed in 10+ years.
- Hiring department head signatures did not appear to be obtained on necessary documentation in a timely manner.
- The hiring process appears to take three to eleven months.

We recommend that the Bureau of Human Resources develop a comprehensive internal procedure manual inclusive of all their current recruiting/hiring processes for all sections. These manuals should include the current step-by-step instructions and timeframes for the staff to follow. The procedures manual should also include instructions on how to:

- Prepare the Tracker database to include all required fields.
- Management's review and approval requirements of Tracker's key data elements.
- Tools to use to aid in tracking timelines to move forward with each stage of processes.
- Expand the "Checklist for Processing County Employees Under the President" for full verification of documentation that is passed on to another process/phase. The checklist should show the tasks performed, by who and when. Also, deadlines as to when Personnel Services must submit proxy cards and when hiring departments must provide check routes. It should be signed and dated by the Analyst responsible for that candidate/new hire to ensure that it is correct and complete. Documentation pertaining to new hires should also be kept in electronic form and placed in a secured and backed up network location.
- Include in the manual, job titles as to whom should have access to the file room along with the process of obtaining the access code.
- The access code to the file room should be changed when individuals terminate or at least on an annual basis and included as a written policy.

Upon completion and approval of the manual by the Bureau of Human Resource Management, staff should be trained on its contents and such portion of the manual applicable to outside departments should be also educated on its contents that pertains to their area.

Management Response

The Office of the County Auditor recommended that the Bureau of Human Resources develop a comprehensive internal procedure manual inclusive of all our current recruiting/hiring processes for all sections. We considered the recommendation and concluded that the Bureau of Human Resources is currently compliant with the spirit of the recommendation. The *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* and *Hiring Process Resource Guide* outline the roles of Workforce Strategy, Personnel Services, the Compliance Office and Training and Development to a sufficient level for each division to understand how their role differs and compliments other divisions' roles in the onboarding process. Please note that Training and Development is a critical part of the onboarding process but was excluded without explanation from the audit. As such, our response will not include information about the division.

The Office of the County Auditor represented that the Bureau of Human Resources Workforce Strategy Division and Compliance Office do not have internal written policies and procedures for their staff members to follow.

In fact, Workforce Strategy, Personnel Services and the Compliance Office follow the requirements of the Cook County Employment Plan, Cook County Employment Plan Supplemental Policies, Background Check Policy, Drug and Alcohol Policy, the Cook County Personnel Rules and a plethora of Standard Operating Procedures ("SOPs") detailing the internal processes in the respective divisions. Human Resources Information Systems does not have or require the creation of separate internal procedures because they do not have a decision-making role in the onboarding process. Human Resources Information Systems data enters information from completed forms into Oracle EBS and uses Oracle instructional guides as a resource. Personnel Services will add the interim fingerprinting process, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, to its existing SOPs. The Office of the County Auditor also indicated that there is no complete policy and procedures manual to properly monitor each open position and/or candidate. Please note that Hiring Departments monitor their respective open positions and determine when there is an operational need to fill. Additionally, ATAS tracks candidate submission of applications through disposition.

In making the recommendation for the Bureau of Human Resources to develop a comprehensive internal procedure manual inclusive of all our current recruiting/hiring processes for all sections, the Office of the County Auditor made several assertions that the Bureau of Human Resources will address individually below.

1. **Office of the County Auditor –** Personnel Services does not have a routing system to begin the onboard process for new candidates. Workforce Strategy sends an email to three Personnel Services employees to be processed by one of the three, which can cause redundancy and time wasted if the same candidate is being processed inadvertently by all three Personnel Services employees.

   Bureau of Human Resources Response – Personnel Services is a small division that consists of three employees. Emails include all team members to ensure that the onboarding process is not delayed and that there is no work stoppage if an employee is absent. The Personnel Services team members communicate with each other concerning which candidates they are processing to ensure there is no redundant work.

2. **Office of the County Auditor –** Candidates' sensitive information should be secured throughout the day and locked up at the end of the business day by the Information Records Coordinator.

Bureau of Human Resources Response – Candidates' onboarding information is securely locked in a cabinet at the end of the business day. During the workday, information may be on a desk as it is being reviewed prior to being filed.

3. **Office of the County Auditor –** Excel reports, such as Tracker, used to track open positions contained errors and/or omissions which could have been detected if reviewed by a supervisor.

    Bureau of Human Resources Response – The applicable divisions have been directed to double check their entries as human error is prone to occur on spreadsheets.

4. **Office of the County Auditor –** New hire personnel files sampled for proper hiring documentation, were missing, i.e., the I-9 form, signed orientation attendance form, reference check form and transcripts.

    Bureau of Human Resources Response – The Bureau of Human Resources strives to ensure that all required documents are included in employees' personnel files. However, there are instances when employees who attend orientation, fail to return the signed orientation attendance forms even after Training and Development has reminded them that the forms are outstanding. Depending on the vacancy filled, a transcript would not be required if the position did not require a degree to meet the Minimum Qualifications. In those instances, a high school diploma or GED certificate would suffice. Occasionally, when the Bureau of Human Resources contacts professional references, they do not respond. The Bureau does not penalize candidates for the lack of response. Accordingly, the document would not be included in the personnel file. Also, some, but not all employees have letters of recommendation which are included in employees' personnel files. Please note that it is recommended that I-9 forms be kept separately from personnel files. As such, I-9 forms, which have a short retention period, are maintained separately.

5. **Office of the County Auditor –** Documentation submitted by Workforce Strategy and/or Personnel Services to the Human Resources Information Systems section was found to contain errors which caused delays to entering information into County systems.

    Bureau of Human Resources Response – Workforce Strategy and Personnel Services strive to provide accurate information to Human Resources Information Systems. In instances when mistakes were made due to human error, they were quickly rectified before any important dates were missed.

6. **Office of the County Auditor –** Documentation was found to not be maintained in a consistent format; some is paper other records are in an electronic format.

    Bureau of Human Resources Response – Before the COVID-19 pandemic, many records were maintained exclusively in paper format. Since the pandemic, due to hybrid work schedules, records have been maintained in paper and electronic formats. We continuously endeavor to move all records to electronic format.

7. **Office of the County Auditor –** Evidence of management monitoring and/or oversight of the recruiting/hiring process did not appear to be present.

    Bureau of Human Resources Response – Please note that the Office of the County Auditor did not provide the Bureau of Human Resources with support or evidence for this statement. Management closely monitors

and provides oversight of the recruiting/hiring process. The Personnel Services manager monitors processes for Personnel Services; the Director of Human Resources Information Systems for Human Resources Information Systems; the Compliance Officer for the Compliance Office; and the Assistant Deputy Director - Human Resources, in the interim, for Workforce Strategy. The Deputy Bureau Chief/Director of Exempt Administration monitors the overall process, except for the Compliance Office which is independent. The Office of the Independent Inspector General also monitors the Shakman Exempt hiring process.

8. **Office of the County Auditor –** The combination to the file room lock had not been changed in 10+ years.

    Bureau of Human Resources Response – A limited number of relevant positions in the Bureau of Human Resources requiring access to the file room have the combination to the file room lock. The suite in which the file room is located is behind a door with a keypad lock. The keypad lock code is changed whenever an employee leaves BHR by resignation, termination or retirement. BHR will create an SOP including this information and detail which positions will have access to the file room.

9. **Office of the County Auditor –** Hiring department head signatures did not appear to be obtained on necessary documentation in a timely manner.

    Bureau of Human Resources Response – As you are aware, the onboarding process involves the cooperation of different bureaus and departments who have competing priorities. Department Heads sign necessary documentation, the requisition and justification/decision to hire, at their first opportunity. The Bureau of Human Resources follows up with Department Heads for signatures, but ultimately, does not control when they sign a document. Without additional details from the Office of the County Auditor, we are unsure of the full scope of documents that were not signed in a timely manner.

10. **Office of the County Auditor –** The hiring process appears to take three to eleven months.

    Bureau of Human Resources Response – Ninety days is the average time to fill a position. However, there are limited exceptions to the average timeframe that require additional time to fill a vacancy. For example, there are instances when positions need to be reposted because no applicants applied during the original posting period and times when Hiring Departments need to delay the interview process.

As explained above, the *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* and *Hiring Process Resource Guide* outline the roles of Workforce Strategy, Personnel Services, the Compliance Office and Training and Development to sufficiently comply with the spirit of the Office of the County Auditor's recommendation. Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads contributed to the creation of the *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* and were trained on it prior to implementation in 2019. The *Hiring Process Resource Guide* was recently amended and training will be provided upon request to Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads. The individual divisions do not require detailed step-by-step instructions of the other division's processes since their onboarding functions are distinct. They require enough information to understand how their functions fits into the overall process. Where appropriate, the Cook County Employment Plan includes timelines for the hiring process. It is difficult to set strict timelines outside of the Cook County Employment Plan since many of the Bureau of Human Resources onboarding functions are directly tied to steps in other Bureaus and Departments for which the Bureau of Human Resources does not have jurisdiction. Please note that Personnel Services creates proxy cards upon the request of Hiring Departments and is not involved with check routes.

Estimated Completion Date

Information on the Tracker will be checked for accuracy, the file room SOP will be completed and the interim fingerprinting process will be incorporated into the Personnel Services SOP by April 4, 2022.

Recommendation #2:

Our office tested nine departments that contained 14 new hires for the onboarding process against the *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* to determine whether the departments implemented it or at least followed some-type of consistent process for their new hires. Of these 14 new hires, 11 of them were conducted through surveys to expand our testing and the last three were tested through interviews and documentation. Of these 14 new hires, only three were properly onboarded. Additionally, the 14 new hires, there were two transfers hired from outside of the Offices Under the President where there was no documentation pertaining to the disciplinary history required per the Employment Plan. Here are some of the tasks that the hiring departments did not complete for their new employees:

- Send employee a welcome email.
- Send an email to the department about the new employee.
- Set-up meetings with critical employees that the new employee must meet.
- Set-up new employee's workstation.
- Provide policies and procedures.
- Assigning a first work assignment.
- Assigning a buddy/mentor.
- Training.
- Follow-up meetings with their supervisor/manager.

Once the hiring department receives notice from the Bureau of Human Resources that their candidate has successfully cleared the necessary steps and confirmed a start date, the hiring department must prepare for their arrival. The Onboarding Program Resource Guide that the Bureau of Human Resources implemented in October 2019 and located on their website, provides the hiring departments with these important steps. It contains checklists, forms, training plans, templates, etc. to assist new hire transitioning into the office surroundings and become acclimated to their new role in an efficient and timely manner to start on their first day.

In addition, we recommend that the Bureau of Human Resources inform Offices Under the President that there is an Onboarding Program Resource Guide on their website to assist with properly onboarding their new employees. Also, the Bureau of Human Resources should provide a training on this guide as soon as possible with annual trainings thereafter. To ensure that the hiring departments are following this guide, the Bureau of Human Resources should:

- Request the hiring departments submit the completed checklists of their new employee. These checklists should be verified for completion and that they contain the signatures of their director, immediate supervisor, and the new employee.
- The Bureau of Human Resources should place these checklists in the new hire's personnel folder. The Bureau of Human Resource Chief should review and sign that they verified the hiring departments have properly implemented the onboarding process.
- The Bureau of Human Resources should contact the new employee and their immediate supervisor at least one month after the new hire's start date to "check-in" on how the new hire is doing and to address any concerns or questions that may have been raised.

- Ensure proper disciplinary history inquiry is done for employee transfers from outside the Offices Under the President and place those documents in their personnel file folder for reference purposes.

Management Response

The Office of the County Auditor recommended that the Bureau of Human Resources inform Offices Under the President that there is an *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* on our website to assist with properly onboarding their new employees. Also, the recommendation included for the Bureau of Human Resources to provide a training on the guide as soon as possible with annual trainings thereafter. The Bureau of Human Resources considered the Office of the County Auditor's recommendation and concluded that it is mostly compliant with the recommendation. The Bureau of Human Resources will post an annual *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* training on the Learning Management System and will use that opportunity to remind Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads that the guide is on our website.

In 2019, the *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* was issued by the Bureau of Human Resources to Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads. With the rollout of the *Onboarding Program Resource Guide*, the Bureau of Human Resources provided training and held meetings to obtain Bureau Chiefs' and Department Heads' feedback. The Bureau of Human Resources walked through each step of the process with the Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads. Now, the Bureau of Human Resources provides the guide to Department Heads and managers when they receive a new hire.

The Bureau of Human Resources would like to have seen a higher number of candidates onboarded in accordance with the *Onboarding Program Resource Guide*, however, we acknowledge that the Guide is permissive and not a mandate for Bureaus and Departments. Therefore, Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads have discretion concerning how to orient their new employees, whether it is completely in compliance with the Guide or somewhat deviates. The tasks that the Departments did not complete for their new employees are managed at the departmental level, pursuant to the *Onboarding Program Resource Guide*, and as such, the Bureau of Human Resources recommends for the Departments to be monitored and audited separately. Also, please note that discipline imposed outside of Offices under the President ("OUP") would not be considered in OUP. Only OUP Bureaus, Departments and Dependent Agencies are subject to the Cook County Employment Plan.

The Office of the County Auditor made several recommendations for the Bureau of Human Resources to ensure that Hiring Departments are following the *Onboarding Program Resource Guide*. Collectively, the recommendations are more appropriate to implement at a Hiring Department level since the Bureau of Human Resources has limited interaction with new employees after New Employee Orientation, facilitated by Training and Development. The Bureau of Human Resources orientation provides a high-level overview of County operations, rights and responsibilities and is uniform for all new employees. We actively seek feedback from new employees on the effectiveness of the program. Hiring Departments are responsible for orienting new employees on the specifics of the Department's operations, ordering equipment and following up to ensure that employees are well adjusted. As such, Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads can create separate files to maintain appropriate checklists and verify that employees are properly oriented. The Bureau of Human Resources recommends for the Bureau Chief or Department Head to contact the new employee and their immediate supervisor to see how they are adjusting. We think this would be more impactful as new employees' interaction with the Bureau of Human Resources is limited after orientation. The Hiring Department should work to build a rapport with the new employee.

Estimated Completion Date

The *Onboarding Program Resource Guide* training will be completed by the end of 2022.

Recommendation #3:

At the time of testing, it was found that the Quarterly Employee Action Reports had not been published on the Bureau of Human Resource website since the first quarter of 2019. These postings did not take place due to the position responsible for this task had not been filled until June of 2020. The Employment Plan states that these Quarterly Employee Action Reports should be posted on a quarterly basis. This caused the Bureau of Human Resources to be non-compliant with a County Ordinance that pertains to the Employment Plan; *Chapter 44 Human Resources, Article II, Sec.44-47.* Additionally, lack of availability of these reports does not provide transparency into hiring actions of Offices Under the President. Additionally, we also found the Biweekly reports were not all publicized in Legistar. We were unable to determine why the Bureau of Human Resources did not publish the Biweekly reports in Legistar.

Our office revisited the Bureau of Human Resources website under Compliance and Information Reports in October 2021 and saw that the Quarterly Employee Action Reports had been posted up to the 2nd Quarter of 2021 which ended June 2021.

Also, the Bureau of Human Resources Management Information Systems was not able to produce a report identifying the total number of new hires, transfers, rehires and terminations for Offices Under the President for the last five fiscal years. Currently, there are no procedures requiring the Bureau of Human Resources Information Systems to maintain and/or update these reports for verification and/or confirmation. Due to the conversion of EBS in 2018, such information was comingled with database corrections, updates, budget adjustments, increases, etc., for all the departments in the County and for every employee who had these updates/changes. Thereby, hindering the Bureau of Human Resources from seeing any trends, patterns, or critical positions within Offices Under the President.

We recommend that the Bureau of Human Resources include a procedure in the internal Policy and Procedure Manual stating the steps of how to publicize the Bi-Weekly Reports in Legistar. Also, Compliance should be educated on how to create and post the Quarterly Employee Action Reports. Historical reports should be gathered and published to bring the Bureau of Human Resources into compliance with the County Ordinance.

We also recommend the Bureau of Human Resources run the new hire, termination, rehire, and transfer reports for all Offices Under the President on a quarterly basis. The Bureau Chief should review them for completeness and approve them.

Management Response

The Office of the County Auditor recommended that the Bureau of Human Resources include a procedure in the internal Policy and Procedure Manual stating the steps of how to publicize the Bi-Weekly Reports in Legistar. Also, it was recommended for the Compliance Office to be educated on how to create and post the BHR Quarterly Employment Action Reports and for the Bureau of Human Resources to run the new hire, termination, rehire, and transfer reports for all Offices Under the President on a quarterly basis. The Bureau of Human Resources considered the Office of the County Auditor's recommendations and concluded that it is compliant with the spirit of the recommendations.

The procedures for how to publicize reports in Legistar are appropriately captured in the Board Office's Legistar Training Manual. The process is under the jurisdiction of the Board Office and is uniform regardless of who publicizes reports on Legistar. Please note that the Office of the County Auditor did not ask the Bureau of Human Resources questions about publicizing reports on Legister to inform their recommendation. Additionally, the Compliance Office is aware of the process for creating and posting Quarterly Employment Action Reports. Pursuant to the Employment Plan, Quarterly Reports are included within the General Principles and Responsibilities of BHR. The Compliance Office will continue to work with Human Resource Information Systems to review the Reports for accuracy and to ensure that they are comprehensive. Currently, Human Resources Information Systems does run the BHR Quarterly Employment Action Report which includes new hires, terminations, rehires, and transfers for Offices under the President. The Deputy Bureau Chief/Director of Exempt Administration and the Compliance Office review the Reports for completeness and approves them.

Human Resources Information Systems, the Bureau of Technology and the Compliance Office have worked to refine and optimize the BHR Quarterly Employment Action Report. Major system challenges were resolved and specifications for the refined Report were approved in May of 2021. As the Office of the County Auditor acknowledged, BHR's website has been updated to include Reports for Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 of 2021. The Report for Quarter 3 of 2021 is currently being reviewed. The Reports reflect the total number of hires, promotions, transfers, and terminations by department, including Emergency hires and Shakman Exempt positions. Please note that the County went from JD Edwards E1 to Oracle which was a County-Wide implementation. Certain data remains in JD Edwards E1 and is accessible as needed. When Human Resources Information Systems is unable to provide a report, the Bureau of Technology is requested to have someone with Database access prepare the Report.

The Bi-Weekly Reports not being publicized in Legistar is a longstanding practice. Every Bi-Weekly report is on Legistar and the worksheets, with details, are available to download by those who have access to Legistar. Members of the public can see that the Bi-Weekly Report is a board agenda item along with a summary of what the report entails. Members of the public cannot see the worksheets. Please note that the governing ordinance does not require such publication.

Estimated Completion Date

Absent any system or database issues, the BHR Quarterly Employment Action Report for Quarter 3 of 2021 should be uploaded by the end of the year.

 Recommendation #4:

Due to a system error in the Human Resources Self Service System, new hires cannot be approved properly in Workflow by the Workforce Strategy Analysts. The Human Resources Information System Transaction Specialist enters new hires in the Self-Service System for Offices Under the President and Workflow should then move the candidate through an established process. When a new hire is entered, Workflow is getting a system error that does not allow the Workforce Strategy Analysts to approve the transaction, so the Transaction Specialist must manually enter the new hire data into EBS. When entering the data into EBS, the Transaction Specialist has to go into eight different screens instead of just one screen with the Self-Service System. This causes the transaction to bypass the Workforce Strategy Analysts approval process, as they are the only one authorized to approve these transactions in Workflow. The Bureau of Human Resources reported they reached out to the Bureau of Technology

about this issue, the Bureau of Technology stated that they could not see the system error on their end and told them that it was a "browser issue".

We recommend the Bureau of Human Resources continue to work with the Bureau of Technology to correct this system error in Self Service. In the meantime, the Transaction Specialist should communicate on a weekly basis the new hires that were bypassed so that Workforce Strategy Analysts are aware of them.

Management Response

The Office of the County Auditor recommended that the Bureau of Human Resources continue to work with the Bureau of Technology to correct a system error in Oracle Self-Service that prevents Workforce Strategy Analysts from properly approving new hires in Workflow. The Office of the County Auditor also recommended for the Transaction Specialist to communicate on a weekly basis the new hires that were bypassed so that Workforce Strategy Analysts are aware of them. The Bureau of Human Resources considered the recommendations and will adopt the recommendation to continue working with the Bureau of Technology to rectify the system error.

The Bureau of Human Resources originally submitted a Cherwell Ticket to the Bureau of Technology in December of 2019 and again more recently for the issue to be identified and resolved. The error is occasionally generated during the new hire workflow and prevents the flow from successfully passing the new hire information from Oracle Self-Service into the JAVA screens. The Transaction Specialist self-monitors this error and performs JAVA data entry when it is received. The process remains seamless. The Bureau of Human Resources declines to adopt the second recommendation because it would not add value to notify Workforce Strategy when the error is received, unless entry of the employee using JAVA cannot occur. Thus far, JAVA has been 100% successful with data entry.

Estimated Completion Date

Ongoing. The Bureau of Human Resources completed the action of submitting a Cherwell Ticket and will await the Bureau of Technology's resolution of the issue.

Offboarding

Recommendation #1:

We have tested 18 former employees against the draft of the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide*. Of the 18, three were offboarded properly. These three former employees came from the same department using their own department's policies and procedures, which aligned with the Bureau of Human Resources guide. Also, one department did not collect an investigator's badge due to employee reporting it lost. Also, we found separation packages were not given to eight employees nor does the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* include instructions as to what to include in the separation package.

We recommend the Bureau of Human Resources include in their *Offboarding Program Resource Guide*:

- Require the offboarding departments to submit all checklists to ensure that offboarding is complete for their former employee. The checklists should be completed, signed, and dated by the person responsible for ensuring the tasks on the checklists are complete as well as the soon-to-be former employee. The

Bureau of Human Resources should place these checklists in the former employee's personnel file for reference.

- Place in the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* separation packages information on how to continue your medical benefits (COBRA), post-employment restrictions, termination summaries, Illinois Department of Employment Security information, and a resource guide.

- Include a procedure in the Offboarding Program Resource Guide that user departments request for the Bureau of Technology evidence that the former employee(s) system access has become deactivated. Such evidence should be placed in the former employee's personnel file.

- Work with the Bureau of Technology to develop a process to recover assets that were not and/or could not be collected.

Once the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* has been finalized and published on their website, the Bureau of Human Resources should communicate to the Offices Under the President that there is an *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* on their website. Also, the Bureau of Human Resources should provide training on the guide's contents and establish annual refresher trainings thereafter.

<u>Management Response</u>

The Office of the County Auditor made several recommendations concerning the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* which will be addressed individually below. When the Bureau of Human Resources was notified that the Office of the County Auditor intended to audit the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide,* we thought that it was premature because we planned to issue the Guide in the near future. As a result of the Office of the County Auditor's decision to proceed with auditing the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide*, the Bureau of Human Resources delayed implementation awaiting results of the audit. As such, the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* has yet to be finalized and has not been shared for implementation with Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads. Therefore, Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads are using their own internal procedures to offboard employees. Currently, when an employee requires offboarding, Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads contact the Bureau of Human Resources to request separation packets. The Bureau of Human Resources then compiles the required separation packet documents and forwards them to Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads. When the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* is finalized, the Bureau of Human Resources will follow the same implementation process used to issue the *Onboarding Program Resource Guide*. The Guide will be placed on the Bureau of Human Resources website; it will be emailed to Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads with a note that it is also on the Bureau of Human Resources website; and a training will be conducted. The training will be placed on the Learning Management System to ensure that it is easily accessible. Please see the Office of the County Auditor's recommendations below with responses from the Bureau of Human Resources.

1. **Office of the County Auditor –** Require the offboarding departments to submit all checklists to ensure that offboarding is complete for their former employee. The checklists should be completed, signed, and dated by the person responsible for ensuring the tasks on the checklists are complete as well as the soon-to-be former employee. The Bureau of Human Resources should place these checklists in the former employee's personnel file for reference.

   Bureau of Human Resources Response – Offboarding is within the jurisdiction of departments and as such, the checklists should remain in the Terminating Departments. The various checklists are quick reference documents tailored for the Terminating Department and other departments to ensure that they are complying with their respective roles in the offboarding process. The checklists do not contain information

about a former employee that would need to be placed in their personnel file or requires the employee's signature. The Terminating Departments do sign the checklists. Please note that employees sign the Employee Inventory Checklist and pursuant to the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide*, upon completion, the Employee Inventory Checklist will be forwarded to the Bureau of Human Resources.

2. **Office of the County Auditor –** Place in the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* separation packages information on how to continue your medical benefits (COBRA), post-employment restrictions, termination summaries, Illinois Department of Employment Security information, and a resource guide.

    Bureau of Human Resources Response – The separation package was revised to include the above referenced information. The separation package will not be included in the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* as to ensure that Terminating Departments directly ask the Bureau of Human Resources for the most recent version of the package because the contents are subject to change.

3. **Office of the County Auditor –** Include a procedure in the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide* that user departments request for the Bureau of Technology evidence that the former employee(s) system access has become deactivated. Such evidence should be placed in the former employee's personnel file.

    Bureau of Human Resources Response – The important task of ensuring that former employees' system access is deactivated is included in the *Offboarding Program Resource Guide;* however, the actual process and procedure resides in the Bureau of Technology. The Bureau of Technology has a mechanism by which to track all requests submitted to the Bureau, including requests to deactivate system access, through Cherwell tickets. When a request to deactivate system access is submitted to the Bureau of Technology, the requestor will receive an email confirmation that the task was completed. The Bureau of Human Resources does not find that including such evidence that the task was completed is appropriate to include in a former employee's personnel file because personnel files include evidence of employment actions.

4. **Office of the County Auditor –** Work with the Bureau of Technology to develop a process to recover assets that were not and/or could not be collected.

    Bureau of Human Resources Response – The Terminating Department is responsible for recovering former employees' assets and completing the Employee Inventory Checklist to the extent employees have not returned such assets. Departments are advised to report any unreturned County equipment as stolen to the proper authorities.

Estimated Completion Date

Not applicable. Please see the section above titled Management Response for a complete explanation.

CC: Simone McNeil, Deputy Bureau Chief/Director of Exempt Administration