



OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT INSPECTOR GENERAL

FY2017 Presentation of Proposed Budget

The mission of the OIIG is to detect and deter public corruption, fraud, waste, mismanagement, unlawful political discrimination and other forms of misconduct in the operation of Cook County government and to pursue remedial action in accordance with the OIIG enabling ordinance.

The OIIG is currently staffed with a total of 18 employees. The office now consists of the Inspector General, two Deputy Inspectors General, General Counsel, 11 investigators and one professional support staff member. With this number, the OIIG also staffs a satellite office on the campus of the John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital in support of the Health and Hospitals System.

This office recognizes the difficult financial circumstances facing Cook County government and we appreciate the necessity to achieve further budgetary reductions this fiscal year. The OIIG has met the budgetary ceiling requested of it by reducing expenditures by \$183,881. We believe that the most appropriate method available to achieve this reduction with the least impact to operations involves the elimination of funding for two recently vacated positions and reduce the professional services line item by \$43,344. The two positions being eliminated are an Investigator IV and an Administrative Assistant III position. Other line items have also been reduced to achieve the reduction. The new items in the OIIG FY2017 budget include (a) County-wide fixed expenditures, (b) the transfer of insurance costs to this budget, as well as (c) the removal of an offset of a Forest Preserve District related credit from this budget due to an accounting adjustment.

Thus far in FY 2016, this office has received 310 complaints. The OIIG has released 53 summary investigative reports that reflect 25 sustained findings along with 93 recommendations for remedial action, including those related to legislative enactment.

Also in FY 2016, the office has opened 84 case inquiries thus far. The inquiry process is the predicate investigative activity to a full OIIG investigation that involves an initial determination of corroborating evidence before a formal OIIG investigation is opened or a determination of the lack of corroboration which will result in closing the case inquiry. As such, this process has increased OIIG efficiencies and enables our office to interact with more individuals throughout Cook County government and consider more issues affecting the County.

As in years past, this office continues to dedicate significant resources to *Shakman* activities related to Cook County, the Forest Preserve District, the Health and Hospitals System (HHS) and the Recorder of Deeds. The OIIG continues to receive and investigate Post-SRO claims for Cook County and the Recorder of Deeds as well as Political Contact Logs and conducts investigations related to unlawful political activity. In FY 2016, the OIIG has received 38 complaints related to unlawful political discrimination (“UPD”). The OIIG has concluded investigations and issued findings in 7 Post-SRO claims and processed 20 Political Contact Log filings. In anticipation of the sunset of the *Supplemental Relief Order*, this office engages in monitoring of County and HHS hiring and disciplinary proceedings. This office also continues to monitor disciplinary proceedings in the Forest Preserve District. By conducting this form of oversight, the OIIG is remediating instances of non-compliance where we find them, establishing a record of compliant actions necessary for the County to achieve substantial compliance under the SRO and reducing costs for the County by performing monitoring work previously performed by Compliance Administrator. In specific terms, the OIIG has reviewed, researched and issued responses to 203 proposed Employment Plan actions and has conducted oversight of more than 300 hiring sequences and over 120 disciplinary sequences.

In 2016, the OIIG completed the transition to a new Case Management System which enables the OIIG to more effectively document and track investigations as well as retrieve a far greater amount of information than was previously possible, as well as the ability to perform link and trend analysis in support of OIIG investigations.

The OIIG has continued to initiate surveys and reviews to assess compliance with policies and procedures as well as evaluate performance levels. In 2016, the reviews that included a public statement included the Open Meetings Act Compliance management review, Bond Vendor Campaign Contribution review, the expanded review of the circumstances perpetuating a pattern of time card abuse at HHS, the Zoning Board of Appeals Conflicts of Interest Assessment and, recently, the Statement of Economic Interest Compliance review. The office will continue this area of focus in 2017 in support of increasing efficiencies in County government.

As you may recall, in 2014, the OIIG began the voluntary digital recording of subject interviews. Since the inception of this program, OIIG Investigators record subject interviews with consent that result in the generation of transcripts that are used

in the case as a matter of proof. This protocol represents a best practice for the office and has strengthened the investigatory process and has become an important tool in the litigation process as well. In 2016, the OIIG continued to consensually record subject interviews. To date in FY 2016, the OIIG has recorded 22 subject interviews with consent while 26 subjects have declined the option to record their interview. The 2016 ratio of subject consent to subject declination is consistent with past years. We are currently assessing the viability of expanding consensual recordings to other types of interviews as well.

In addition to the foregoing activities of this office, the OIIG continues to dedicate investigative resources to issues involving public corruption and official misconduct that cannot be publically outlined due to their confidential nature. While the monetary costs related to these issues are often less apparent than the results of an operational review, their fiscal impact to county operations is significant. Moreover, the intangible benefits that are born by conducting these types of investigations are very important in building the public trust in government and supporting employee morale.

This past summer, the National Association of Inspectors General held its certification institute in Chicago. Nine investigators from this office attended and received instruction on curriculum for inspectors general investigators. At the conclusion of the institute, the investigators were tested and all successfully completed the course and received professional certification as a Certified Inspector General Investigator. Currently, 14 members of this office hold this designation.

In the coming year, the OIIG will continue our work in support of the mission of the office to promote increased efficiencies, effectiveness and lawfulness in the operation of government. In connection with 2017 activities, we have planned to also focus on the following important issues:

- 1) Monitoring and related activities in support of Cook County and the Health and Hospitals System's effort to achieve substantial compliance with the terms of the *Supplement Relief Order* and transition of the Compliance Administrator's duties upon sunset of the SRO;
- 2) Increasing our outreach efforts throughout Cook County government in an effort to broaden our interactions with officials, employees, contractors,

appointees and grantees with respect to the mission of this office and their responsibilities in relation to Cook County government. This will include the training and education function of the office that we currently perform;

- 3) Apply a broader focus on vendor contracting both from the perspective of anti-trust violations as well as contract performance; and
- 4) Increased analysis of grant expenditures and measuring deliverables as well as M/WBE compliance initiatives.

Thank you for your consideration.

Patrick M. Blanchard
Independent Inspector General

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