



# **Office of the Independent Inspector General**

## **FY2021 Budget Presentation**

**November 4, 2020**

Good afternoon Chairman Daley, Members of the Board of Commissioners and ladies and gentlemen:

Pursuant to Cook County Ordinance, the mission of the Office of the Independent Inspector General (OIIG) is to detect, deter and prevent public corruption, fraud, waste, mismanagement, unlawful political discrimination and other forms of misconduct in the operation of Cook County government. The mission scope of the OIIG also includes the Forest Preserves of Cook County and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD).

The OIIG is currently staffed with a total of 14 employees. Because of the budgetary constraints associated with the pandemic, our office withheld filling all vacancies which comprise the vacant Deputy IG position, one Investigator IV and three Investigator III positions. The current office staffing consists of one Inspector General, one Deputy Inspector General, one General Counsel, 10 Investigators and one Executive Assistant. Two of these OIIG Investigators are assigned on a full-time basis to the MWRD.

In 2019, the OIIG received a total of 700 complaints for consideration and possible investigative action. From this total, 49 (7%) related to MWRD operations. As of today (November 4, 2020), the OIIG has received \_\_\_ complaints in 2020 (\_\_\_ (\_\_\_%) MWRD related). The number of complaints and case openings in 2020 has trended upward, and it is anticipated that these numbers will continue in 2021 which has been the established pattern since the inception of the OIIG.

As you know, the OIIG process involves receiving complaints or contacts from the public, as well as government officers and employees, which are considered for investigative action. If elevated to OIIG inquiry status, the matter is assigned to an Investigator to determine whether corroborative evidence exists that may result in an upgrade of the matter to an OIIG case investigation. As of today, the OIIG has \_\_\_ active inquiries. If upgraded to an OIIG case investigation, a complete investigation of all relevant issues is undertaken which may include the conduct of additional interviews, document review, the issuance of subpoenas to collect evidence and the issuance of a summary investigative report. As of today, the OIIG has released \_\_\_ summary reports in 2020.

As we have reported recently, the OIIG has increased use of technology to continue to meet the mission of the office in light of developments related to the COVID-19 pandemic. These include adopting protocols for: the conduct of witness interviews online, supervisor approval of investigative reports, increased communication within the office, and electronic storage of case materials through the OIIG case management system. Witnesses are also afforded the opportunity to meet with OIIG Investigators via Microsoft Teams rather than meeting with an investigator in person. This office is currently implementing our strategy of removing outdated desktop computers from service in place of laptops with VPN service to allow direct access to the OIIG case management system by all OIIG staff when off-site. In consideration of these technologically supported initiatives, we are also considering the adoption of a partial remote working policy that could enable the office to reduce its real estate footprint in the future and reduce associated costs.

The OIIG budget for FY2020 was \$1,858,826. As stated above, the budgetary hold back goals put into place this year were addressed by leaving vacant positions open and reducing funding in several object accounts. The proposed FY2021 OIIG budget seeks funding in the amount of \$1,874,663, an increase of \$15,838. By maintaining a funding level consistent with FY2020, the OIIG will have the necessary funding to fill the five vacant positions and enable the office to effectively accomplish its mission. In this regard, we appreciate the support of the President's office in maintaining the funding necessary to continue to operate with a total of 19 staff members.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Office of the Independent Inspector General proposed budget for fiscal year 2021.

