



TO: Iris Martinez, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County
Tiffany Brooks, Chief of Staff
Jim Dasakis, Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO)
Alvin Portis, General Counsel
Anthony Nguyen, Inspector General (IG)

FROM: Dana Andrews, Director of Compliance, (DOC) 

RE: DOC First Semi-Annual Report 2024

DATE: July 15, 2024

In accordance with Article V, Section B of the Employment Plan (EP) of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County (Clerk's Office), the following is the DOC's First Semi-Annual Report (Report) for 2024.

The IG acted as interim DOC starting July 15, 2023 until December 4, 2023, when a DOC started. The IG agreed to assist and bring the DOC up to speed on the EP and the Clerk's Office's policies and procedures. However, the DOC resigned effective February 1, 2024 due to being appointed a judicial position. The IG again became the Interim DOC while the Clerk's Office offered the position to other validated and ranked applicants.

The current DOC started employment with the Clerk's Office on February 26, 2024, and has had the pleasure of working with individuals who are committed to continued compliance with the Employment Plan and Supplemental Policies Manual (SPM). This Report summarizes DOC activity between February 26, 2024 and June 30, 2024, unless otherwise noted.

Violations of EP

Violations of the EP and/or Supplemental Policies Manual (SPM) were reported or discovered during this time period. They will be addressed specifically below. The DOC received additional complaints of discrimination and political activity. The alleged discrimination involved a candidate who interviewed for and was subsequently not selected for a position based on age. Evidence gathered concluded that HR followed the General Hiring Process and there was no evidence that any EP violations had occurred. The complaint, along with evidence gathered by the DOC, was forwarded to the OIG for resolution. The DOC received an incident report of possible political activity, in conference with the Ethics Office and the OIG, an investigation is currently underway.

Unlawful Political Discrimination (UPD)

One complaint of UPD was filed. Because the accused was not an employee, and in consultation with the Inspector General, the complaint was turned over to the General Counsel for further investigation/inquiry.

Political Contacts

No political contacts were reported to the current DOC during this reporting period.

Employment Plan Training

Between January 16, 2024 and June 30, 2024, 17 Employment Plan training sessions were performed in person by Training and Development with new employees during New Hire Orientation. 117 employees were trained. Supervisors received annual EP training electronically through LMS.

Other Training

Between January 23, 2024 and June 30, 2024, 39 supervisors received Supervisor and Interviewer Training and Probationary Performance Evaluation Training required by the EP. Newly hired HR staff also received required training as required by the EP.

Policies

No additional EP or Handbook policies were finalized during this reporting period.

Employment Plan

No amendments to the EP were proposed during this reporting period.

Posted Positions

The Clerk's Office posted 13 positions during this reporting period. They will be addressed individually below.

Archivist

The position was properly posted with 1 vacancy under the General Hiring Process. The DOC reviewed and verified randomization and sorting and validated 25 applications and came to agreement with HR on its validating resulting in 5 eligible candidates. The interview process occurred without issue with the DOC monitoring 5 interviews. During the Ranking Meeting, the Interview Panel ranked 5 candidates. The top ranked candidate accepted the position. No issues were identified with this sequence.

Assistant Operations Manager

The position was properly posted with 1 vacancy under the General Hiring Process. This sequence should be addressed further in the next DOC's Report.

Bond Manager

The position was properly posted with 1 vacancy under the General Hiring Process. The DOC reviewed and verified randomization and sorting and validated 36 applications and came to agreement with HR on its validating resulting in 15 eligible candidates. The interview process occurred without issue with the DOC monitoring 7 interviews. During the Ranking Meeting, the Interview Panel ranked 5 candidates. The top ranking candidate declined the position, and the next ranking candidate accepted the position. No issues were identified with this sequence.

Desktop Support Technician

The position was properly posted with 1 vacancy under the General Hiring Process. This sequence should be addressed further in the next DOC's Report.

Financial Clerk

The position was properly posted with 17 vacancies under the Entry Level Bargaining Unit Process. The DOC reviewed and verified randomization and sorting. The DOC randomly validated applicants out 461 applications and came to agreement with HR on its validation resulting in 218 eligible candidates. Conditional offers of employment were made directly from

the Validated Eligibility List and 15 candidates have accepted the position. Any issues with the remainder of this sequence should be addressed further in the next DOC's Report.

IT Security Analyst

The position was properly posted with 1 vacancy under the General Hiring Process. The DOC reviewed and verified randomization and sorting and validated 36 applications and came to agreement with HR on its validating resulting in 10 eligible candidates. The interview process occurred without issue with the DOC monitoring 7 interviews and the Ranking Meeting, where the Interview Panel ranked 4 candidates. The top ranking candidate accepted the position. No issues were identified with this sequence.

Office Clerk (Record Center)

The position was properly posted with 94 vacancies under the Entry Level Bargaining Unit Process. The DOC reviewed and verified randomization and sorting. The DOC randomly validated applicants out 844 applications and came to agreement with HR on its validation resulting in 336 eligible candidates. Conditional offers of employment will be made directly from the Validated Eligibility List. Any issues with the remainder of this sequence should be addressed further in the next DOC's Report.

Operations Manager

The position was properly posted with 8 vacancies under the General Hiring Process. The DOC reviewed and verified randomization and sorting. The DOC randomly validated applicants out 208 applications and came to agreement with HR on its validation resulting in 67 eligible candidates. Any issues with the remainder of this sequence should be addressed further in the next DOC's Report.

Payroll Analyst

The position was properly posted with 1 vacancy under the General Hiring Process. The DOC reviewed and verified randomization and sorting and validated 17 applications and came to agreement with HR on its validation resulting in 6 eligible candidates. The interview process occurred without issue with the DOC monitoring 4 interviews and the Ranking Meeting, where the Interview Panel ranked 1 candidate. The top ranked candidate declined the position. The position was properly reposted. The DOC reviewed and verified randomization and sorting and validated 43 applications and came to agreement with HR on its validation resulting in 13 eligible candidates. The interview process occurred without issue with the DOC monitoring 9 interviews and the Ranking Meeting, where the Interview Panel ranked 1 candidate. The top ranked candidate declined the position. No issues were identified with this sequence.

Platform Administrator

The position was properly posted with 1 vacancy under the General Hiring Process. This sequence should be further addressed in the next DOC's report.

Senior Accountant

The position was properly posted with 1 vacancy under the Actively Recruited Position Hiring Process. The DOC validated 14 applications and came to agreement with HR on its validation resulting in 5 eligible candidates. The DOC monitored the Application Review Panel Meeting where the panel agreed to interview 4 of the eligible candidates. The interview process occurred without issue with the DOC monitoring 4 interviews and the Ranking Meeting, where the Interview Panel ranked one candidate. This candidate accepted the position. No issues were identified with this sequence.

Senior Security Investigator

The position was properly posted with one vacancy under the General Hiring Process. The DOC validated 8 applications and came to an agreement with HR on its validation resulting in 4 eligible candidates. Any issues with the remainder of this sequence should be addressed further in the next DOC's Report.

Server Administrator

The position was properly posted with 2 vacancies under the General Hiring Process. The DOC reviewed and verified randomization and sorting and validated 39 applications and came to an agreement with HR on its validation, resulting in 9 eligible candidates. The interview process occurred without issue with the DOC monitoring 6 interviews and the Ranking Meeting, where the Interview Panel ranked 3 candidates. The top 2 ranked candidates accepted the position. No issues were identified with this sequence.

Lateral Transfers

Three lateral transfer opportunities were posted for Circuit Court Clerk (2024-L1), Office and Financial Clerk (2024-L2), and Court Clerk Trainer (2024-L3).

2024-L1 Circuit Court Clerk (*January 8, 2024 – January 15, 2024*). 17 applications were submitted, 1 of which was a duplicate, and 5 of which were submitted by employees who did not hold the correct title, resulting in 11 eligible candidates. 11 eligible candidates were offered the lateral transfer, solely based on seniority, with 7 employees accepting offers. No issues were identified with this sequence, and the posting file is complete.

2024-L2 Financial and Office Clerk. 54 applications were submitted, 8 of which were duplicates, 3 of which were submitted by probationary employees, and 1 of which was submitted by an employee who did not hold the correct title, resulting in 42 eligible candidates. 42 eligible candidates were offered the lateral transfer, solely based on seniority, with 30 employees accepting offers. No issues were identified with this sequence, and the posting file is complete.

2024-L3 Court Clerk Trainer. 6 applications were submitted. All 6 candidates were eligible and offered the lateral transfer, solely based on seniority, with 1 employee accepting offers. No issues were identified with this sequence, and the posting file is complete.

Promotions

Two promotional opportunities were posted for Circuit Court Clerk (2024-P1) and Court Clerk Trainer (2024-P2).

2024-P1 Circuit Court Clerk (*January 30, 2024 – February 5, 2024*). 139 applications were submitted, 19 of which were duplicates, and 35 of which were submitted by employees who did not meet the minimum qualifications for the position, resulting in 85 eligible candidates. 75 eligible candidates were offered the promotion, solely based on seniority, with 44 employees accepting offers. No issues were identified with this sequence, and the posting file is complete.

2024-P2 Court Clerk Trainer. 27 applications were submitted, 1 of which was a duplicate, 5 of which were submitted by employees who did not meet the minimum qualifications for the position, and 1 of which did not hold the correct title, resulting in 20 eligible candidates. 4 eligible candidates were offered the promotion, solely based on seniority, with 3 employees accepting offers. No issues were identified with this sequence, and the posting file is complete.

Exempt List

The following change was proposed by the Clerk's Office to be made to the Exempt List:

Former Title

Business Process Reengineering &
Quality Control Associate

New Title

Chief Deputy Clerk, Courtroom Management

Consistent with the EP, the Clerk's Office provided notice to the DOC with the required rationale and position descriptions. After review and comment, the DOC raised no objection to the change.

Exempt Hiring

Two Shakman exempt employees were appointed, including Deputy General Counsel (January 29, 2024) and Chief Deputy Clerk (February 11, 2024), with the approval of previous DOC, Yolanda Sayre and interim DOC, Anthony Nguyen.

Executive Assistant Hiring

No Executive Assistants were appointed during this time period.

Ineligible for Hire/Rehire List

On April 23, 2024, HR updated its Ineligible for Hire/Rehire List and sent out notifications to 22 impacted individuals. The DOC reviewed pertinent documents regarding the 17 individuals who did not appeal and recommended the removal of 3 of them from the List. As of the date of this Report, 5 appeals were received and hearings have been scheduled. This should be addressed further in the next DOC's Report.

Position Descriptions

The DOC reviewed and provided feedback on the Intern position description during this time. Consistent with the EP, the Clerk's Office welcomed feedback and proposed revisions from the DOC.

Probationary Performance Evaluations

For probationary periods ending March 25, 2024, HR sent the reminder to supervisors on March 12, 2024. The majority of employees were timely evaluated. **In violation of the SPM, one employee's evaluation was completed prior to review and approval by CHRO and DOC.**

For probationary periods ending May 6, 2024, HR sent the reminder to supervisors on April 22, 2024. All employees were timely evaluated.

For probationary periods ending May 20, 2024, HR sent the reminder to supervisors on May 2, 2024. One employee was timely evaluated pursuant to policy. **In violation of the SPM, one employee was evaluated one (business) day prior to the expiration of the probationary period. Additionally, the supervisor incorrectly completed the Notice of Employment Action (NEA).**

For probationary periods ending June 18, 2024, HR sent the reminder to supervisors on June 4, 2024. The majority of employees were timely evaluated. **In violation of the SPM, one employee was evaluated less than 7 days prior to the expiration of the probationary period. Additionally the CDC/ACDC failed to provide the required NEAs to HR.**

The DOC and have HR agreed to request that supervisors provide a meeting invitation - include Zoom and/or MS Teams link - to HR and DOC to allow for monitoring as needed and increase compliance.

Reclassification

The Clerk's Office processed one reclassification that was active under the review of the previous DOC, Yolanda Sayre. Operational justification indicated that the employee had been performing the duties on a daily basis for a period of approximately 3 years. The justified request was approved by the CHRO.

Notices of Employment Action

The majority of NEAs are being sent to the DOC in a timely manner. **The DOC recommends that HR continue to remind supervisors that NEAs must be submitted to HR on a timely basis in accordance with the EP.**

Other Recommendations

- HR remind CDC (or designee) to quality control check performance evaluations, and supplemental documents, prior to submission to HR and the DOC for review.
- HR continue to develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for both the General Hiring and Actively Recruited Position processes. SOPs will help provide consistent practices with regard to the following: Veteran's Preference, validation, interviewing, and Application Review Panel meetings.

Conclusion

The DOC looks forward to the continued cooperation of Clerk Martinez and her senior staff to maintain compliance. As the DOC continues to work collaboratively with HR in its effectuation of all employment actions, is confident that the Clerk's Office will continue to operate without any unlawful political discrimination or political influence in its employment decisions.

The DOC appreciates HR's diligence and hard work. The HR team is committed to the EP and works to provide the highest level of customer service to Clerk's Office employees and constituents.