Honorable Mariyana Spyropoulos
Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court – Cook County

Executive Order 2025 -01

ETHICS EXECUTIVE ORDER

WHEREAS, Article VII of the Cook County Code of Ordinances provides for a Code of Ethical Conduct known as the Cook County Ethics Ordinance, which sets forth the duties, responsibilities and prohibitions applicable to all officials and employees of the County; and

WHEREAS, it is the intent of the Cook County Clerk of the Circuit Court to ensure that officers and employees of the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court (CCC) comply with the Cook County Ethics Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, it is essential that public officials and their offices be independent and impartial, that governmental decisions and policies be made through proper channels, that public offices such as the CCC not be used for private gain, and that the public have confidence in the integrity of government; and

WHEREAS, the Clerk of Court is committed to the Office being a model for Ethics, Transparency and Accountability in government; and the Clerk of Court is committed to operational excellence and superior financial stewardship, leveraging public and private sector best practices; and

WHEREAS, the Clerk of Court seeks to create a culture of professionalism, inclusion, and customer-focused service to the public and all participants in the judicial system, with engaged employees who take pride in the Office being the official keeper of the record for the Cook County Circuit Court;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County hereby adopts this Ethics Executive Order ("Order") to read as follows:

In order to create excellence in the workplace, and an environment where employees and officers demonstrate integrity, respect, responsibility and accountability, employees must comply with the letter and spirit of this Order.

Employees shall objectively and securely maintain an accurate, complete, timely and accessible court record, and safely and securely collect all court fines and fees, meeting all Clerk of the Circuit Court statutory obligations.

All employees want and deserve a workplace in which they feel respected, supported and appreciated. The CCC will not tolerate harassment or discrimination of any kind particularly involving race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin, sexual orientation or disability.

This Ethics Executive Order underscores the Clerk of the Court's commitment to this Office adhering to the Cook County Ethics Ordinance;

Importantly, this Ethics Executive Order represents the Clerk of Court's strong commitment to this Office being a model in ethics in government by adding increased specificity to the ethics guidelines for employees and officers of the Office.

Section 1. Purpose and Applicability

The employees and officers of the CCC hold their positions to carry out the mission of the Office as set forth herein and under the Clerk of the Courts Act, 705 ILCS 105/0.01 et seq, the rules of the Illinois Supreme Court, applicable Administrative Orders of the Cook County Circuit Court, and applicable Cook County ordinances. Such actions are undertaken in accordance with these parameters for the benefit of the public. Employees and officers do not hold their positions to obtain unwarranted personal or private gain in the performance of their official duties.

This Order applies to all CCC employees and officers and shall supersede any prior ethics orders. The provisions of this Ethics Order apply in addition to applicable state and local laws relating to conflicts of interest and ethics including, but not limited to, the Cook County Ethics Ordinance of the Cook County Code of Ordinances, and all rules, regulations, policies and procedures of the County of Cook.

Section 2. Definitions

This Order incorporates the definitions of the words, terms, and phrases set forth in Section 2-562 of the Cook County Ethics Ordinance. In the event of a conflict between terms in Section 2-562 and those within this Order, this Order shall govern its own terms.

A violation of the Cook County Ethics Ordinance shall be considered a violation of this Order.

Whenever used in this Order, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

(a) "CCC" means Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County

(b) "County" means the County of Cook.

(c) "Economic interest" means any interest valued or capable of valuation in the monetary terms.

(d) "Employee" means an individual employed by the CCC, whether part-time or full-time or by a contract of employment. Employee also includes any individual who is paid, whether from the County treasury or pursuant to County ordinance or federal grant, for full-time services to the CCC, regardless of the nature of the relationship of such individual to the County for purposes other than this Order. For purposes of this Order, employees are not vendors or sole source contractors.

(e) "Officer" means any person employed by the CCC who is considered a Shakman-exempt employee under the terms of the CCC Employment Plan.

(f) "Political contribution" means any gift, subscription, loan, advance, deposit of money, allotment of money, or any tangible item of value given or transferred by one person to another, including in cash, by electronic transfer from one account to another, by check, by draft, through a payroll deduction or allotment plan, by pledge or promise, whether or not enforceable, or otherwise, for purposes of influencing in any way the outcome of any elections. For purposes of this definition, a political contribution does not include a loan made at market rate by a lender in its ordinary course of business.

(g) "Political fundraising committee" means any fund, organization, political action committee or other entity that for purposes of influencing in any way the outcome of any election, receives or expends money or anything of value or transfers money or anything of value to any other fund political party candidate organization, political action committee, or other entity.

(h) "Relative" means a person who is related to an employee or officer as spouse or as any of the following, whether by blood or by adoption: parent, child, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, step-daughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half-brother, half-sister, brother-in-law or sister-in-law.

Section 3. Prohibition on misuse of the Court Record

(a) Employees and officers shall use official time in an honest effort to perform official duties in a fair and responsible manner.

(b) An employee or officer of the CCC shall not use their access to court records for his or her own personal gain or for their personal interest; access to the court record will be used only to perform the duties of their position.

(c) Should an employee or officer become aware of another employee or officer accessing court records for personal gain or interest, said employee must immediately report this to their supervisor and to the Inspector General.

(d) As the official keeper of the court record, employees and officers have a duty to:

(1) protect all court records, and the privacy of those court records mandated as confidential.

(2) refrain from using or allowing its use for purposes other than those for which it is made available to the public or for purposes authorized in accordance with state law or court order or county ordinance, to carry out the purposes of the Office.

Section 4. Gift Ban

(a) No employee or officer shall solicit, accept or receive a gift in violation of Section 2-574 of the Cook County Ethics Ordinance, as interpreted in this section.

(b) No employee or officer shall accept any gifts, regardless of value or kind, from a judge, an attorney, or self-represented litigant participating in judicial proceedings.

(c) No official, officer or employee may accept or receive any gift, or multiple gifts from the same source who does business with the CCC, having an annual aggregate value of one hundred dollars ($100) or more. Does or Doing Business with the CCC means any one or any combination of sales, purchases, leases or contracts to, from or with the CCCC during the current or prior year, or an entity that is engaging in a process to obtain such business from the CCC.

(d) The provisions of (b) and (c) shall not apply to gifts from relatives of the employee or officer provided that there has been proper notification.

(e) The provisions of (b) and (c) shall not apply to gifts provided on the basis of personal friendship as set forth in Section 2-574 of the Cook County Ethics Ordinance.

(f) Any attempt to bribe or offer of a bribe for any act or failure to act within the scope of an employee's or officer's official duties within the CCC shall be promptly reported by the employee or officer to the Inspector General (IG) and the appropriate law enforcement agencies and such officer or employee shall fully cooperate and assist law enforcement agencies and personnel in investigating and prosecuting such bribe or bribery attempt.

Section 5. Limitation on Political Contributions to the Clerk of Court

It is the intent of this Order that CCC employees should be protected against any potential pressure to make a financial contribution to the Clerk or her political fundraising committee. Therefore, the Clerk and her political fundraising committee will not accept any financial contribution from a CCC employee.

Section 6. Political Activity

(a) No employee shall be hired with regard to political preference, contributions, activities or sponsorship.

(b) No employee or officer shall compel, coerce, intimidate or require any employee to make, refrain from making or solicit political contributions or to engage in any political activity.

(c) No employee or officer shall intentionally perform any prohibited political activity during any compensated time.

(d) No employee or officer shall intentionally use property or resources belonging to Cook County or the CCC in connection with any prohibited political activity.

(e) Nothing in this Article prohibits activities by an employee or officer conducted on a voluntary basis, outside of the CCC that are not prohibited by this Order.

Section 7. Disclosure of Economic Interests

(a) All employee or officer shall file all financial disclosures required under state law or county ordinance in the manner prescribed.

(b) All employee or officer shall provide proof of filing financial disclosures required in subsection (a) to the Ethics Officer.

Section 8. Nepotism

Except as otherwise required by law:

(a) Neither the Clerk of Court nor any employee or officer of the CCC may participate in any decision specifically to appoint, hire, promote, discipline or discharge a relative for any position at, for or within the CCC.

(b) Neither the Clerk of Court nor any employee or officer of the CCC may supervise a relative in the performance of the relative's official powers or duties. If, at the effective date of this Order, there is a violation of this section, the subordinate employee shall be transferred to another section or department of the CCC not under the relative's supervision.

Section 9. Prohibition on Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Harassment

Discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment in any form are strictly prohibited. Employees or officers in the CCC who believe they have been subject to discrimination, harassment or sexual harassment are encouraged to file a complaint with the Human Resource Department and the Inspector General. When an employee or officer raises a concern about alleged harassment, the Human Resources Department and/or the Inspector General shall conduct a prompt and thorough investigation.

Any form of retaliation directed against an individual who complains about discrimination, harassment or sexual harassment or who participates in any investigation concerning discrimination, harassment or sexual harassment is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

Section 10. Outside Employment

(a) It is the duty of every employee or officer of the CCC to report outside employment or activities that may conflict with the work of the CCC.

(b) Employees or officers shall not engage in outside employment or activities, including seeking or negotiating for employment, that conflict with their official duties, hours of work or responsibilities in the CCC.

Section 11. Revolving Door Rules

Any person who serves as a supervisor, manager, director, department head or officer of the CCC, is prohibited from lobbying or conducting business before the CCC for a period of one year after leaving the position.

Section 12. Ethics Officer

The Clerk of the Circuit Court shall designate an Ethics Officer who shall be responsible for the administration and enforcement of this Ethics Order except where enforcement is provided elsewhere via court order, state statute, or ordinance.

The Ethics Officer may have other duties, titles, or jobs within the CCC. The Ethics Officer shall provide a copy of this Ethics Order to all new officers and employees of the CCC and may, from time to time, provide ethics training to all employees or officers of this Office.

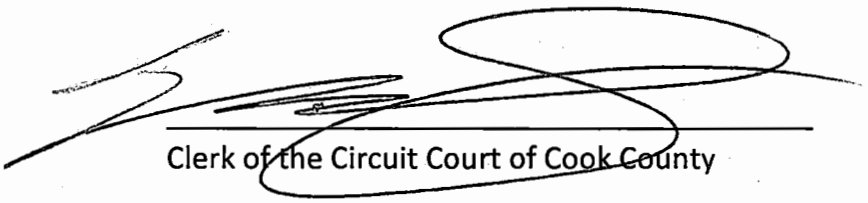
Section 13. Sanctions for Violation

Any employee or officer found to have violated any provision of this Order, or furnished false or misleading information in any investigation, hearing or inquiry held pursuant to this Order, shall be subject to employment sanctions, up to and including discharge. The provisions of this Order shall not limit the power of the Clerk of Court to otherwise discipline employees in accordance with applicable law and governing agreements.

Section 14. Severability and Effective Date

If any provision of this Order or application thereof to any person or circumstances is held unlawful or invalid, such provision is deemed severable. Such invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of the Order, which shall remain in effect.

This Order shall take effect upon its execution. This Order shall be filed with the County Clerk of Cook County. To the extent required by applicable union contract, the Order will be delayed in force and effect until requirements of notice, negotiation, and union approval are met.



Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County

4/21/25

Date