

HIRING & EMPLOYMENT MONITORING REPORT

THIRD QUARTER | 2024

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UPDATES

The Office of Executive Inspector General for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor (OEIG) provides this report each quarter on its hiring-related investigative and compliance work.

One of the OEIG Hiring and Employment Monitoring (HEM) Division's required functions is reviewing the qualifications of those appointed to exempt positions to ensure they meet minimum requirements. Prior to the Exempt List's filing in 2019, agencies were not required to establish or certify that appointees met minimum requirements or were qualified for the job.

On average, HEM receives about 90 exempt certifications each quarter. Each packet is reviewed by HEM staff, who confirm: the position is on the Exempt List; the position's duties are or remain exempt in nature; and the appointee is minimally qualified.

HEM reminds agencies that an

appointee's experience must be clear on the application or resume or accurately explained on the certification documentation. If agencies desire alternate experience, then the position's minimum requirements should be updated *prior* to appointment, and the requirements should not be formulated for a specific person.

HEM also reminds agencies that the certifications must be submitted to HEM *prior* to the appointee's start date, even if the appointee is moving from one exempt position to another.



HEM Compliance Reviews

Between July 1 and September 30, 2024, HEM’s work included the following.

Actions Taken During the Third Quarter 2024	Count
Hiring-related reviews opened	18
Complaints referred to HEM	13
Hiring sequences monitored	3
Desk audits completed	19
Hiring reviews transferred to the OEIG Investigative Division	0
Hiring reviews administratively closed	8
Advisories issued	24

HEM Exempt List Reviews

The following chart represents the Exempt List reviews conducted this quarter.

HEM Exempt List Reviews	Count
Exempt appointment notifications/certifications received and reviewed for positions on the Exempt List	74 (No objections)
Exempt position description clarifications received	1 (No objections)
Exempt List addition requests received this quarter	24
Exempt List addition requests approved or not objected to this quarter	16
Exempt List addition requests not approved this quarter	1
Agency withdrawal of Exempt List requests this quarter	1
Exempt List deletion requests received this quarter	4
Exempt List deletion requests approved this quarter	1
Exempt List modification requests received this quarter	2
Exempt List modification requests approved this quarter	3
Exempt List pending requests	20

Exempt List Additions and Deletions by Agency – Third Quarter 2024		
Agency/Entity	Working Title	OEIG Determination
Illinois Department of Central Management Services	Assistant Deputy Director and Public Information Officer	Approved Addition
Illinois Department of Central Management Services	Deputy Chief of Staff	Approved Addition
Illinois Department of Central Management Services	Deputy Director for Surplus Property	Approved Deletion
Illinois Department of Children and Family Services	Chief Operating Officer	Approved Addition
Illinois Department of Children and Family Services	Assistant Director, Programs and Services	Approved Addition
Illinois Department of Children and Family Services	Executive Deputy Director modified to Assistant Director, Child Protection	Approved Modification
Illinois Department of Employment Security	Manager of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility	Approved Addition
Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services	Deputy Administrator – State-Based Marketplace	Approved Addition
Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services	Agency Procurement Officer	Approved Addition
Illinois Department of Human Rights	Director of Mediation and Special Projects	Approved Addition
Illinois Department of Human Services	Human Services Reentry Director	Approved Addition
Illinois Department of Transportation	Deputy Director – Safety and Research	Approved Addition
Illinois Department of Transportation	MetroLink Safety Program Manager	Approved Addition
Illinois Department of Transportation	Safety Oversight Program Section Manager modified to CTA Safety Program Manager	Approved Modification
Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs	Deputy Chief of Staff	Approved Addition
Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs	Senior Policy Advisor	Approved Addition
Illinois State Police	Deputy Director, Division of Justice Services	Approved Addition
Illinois State Police	Assistant Deputy Director, Division of Justice Services	Approved Addition
Property Tax Appeal Board	Human Resources Director	Approved Addition
Property Tax Appeal Board	Chief Fiscal Officer/Human Resources Manager modified to Chief Fiscal Officer	Approved Modification

HEM Exempt PSC Reviews

The following chart represents the exempt personal services contract (PSC) reviews conducted by HEM this quarter pursuant to paragraph 68 of the Comprehensive Employment Plan (CEP).

HEM Exempt PSC Reviews	Count
Exempt PSCs received for review	4
Exempt PSCs approved or not objected to this quarter	4

Approved Exempt PSCs by Agency – Third Quarter 2024	
Agency/Entity	Position Title
Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation	Deputy Medical Coordinator
Illinois Department of Revenue	Audit and Tax Enforcement Program Administrator
Illinois Gaming Board	Legislative Liaison
Illinois State Police	Chief External Affairs Representative

Non-Exempt PSC Reporting

On September 23, 2024, the Illinois Department of Central Management Services (CMS) Compliance Office provided the State’s PSC Report for the second quarter of calendar year 2024. The following table summarizes this information:

Data from the State’s PSC Report – 2 nd Qtr. Of 2024	Count
State entities that submitted a PSC report to CMS	51
State entities that decreased their use of PSCs from the previous quarter	14
State entities that increased their number of PSCs	15
State entities that did not have a change in PSCs	22
State entities that reported not utilizing any PSCs	16

Political Contact Reporting

This quarter, HEM received **1** Political Contact report, summarized below.

- The Human Resources Manager at the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) reported that IEPA received a recommendation letter for an individual from an Illinois State Senator. IEPA found the individual had applied for an exempt position but could not determine if the individual had applied for any other IEPA positions.

HEM Advisories

The following chart lists out the Advisories issued this quarter that resulted in HEM finding that the agency’s selection for the position was merit-based and justifiable without any recommendations.

Advisories with No Recommendations – Third Quarter 2024			
Advisory	Agency	Position Title	Type of Review
24-HEM-0005	IDHS	Family & Community Resource Center Administrator, Region 5	Complaint Referral
24-HEM-0043	PCB	Identical in Substance (IIS) Staff Attorney	Desk Audit
24-HEM-0035	IDOR	Technical Advisor Advanced Program Specialist	Desk Audit
24-HEM-0044	HFS	Medical Data Supervisor	Desk Audit
24-HEM-0050	Lottery	Check Writing & Claims Manager	Desk Audit
24-HEM-0038	DCFS	Central Office Contract Analyst	Desk Audit
24-HEM-0048	IEPA	Bench Analysis and Support Unit Manager/Working Supervisor	Desk Audit
24-HEM-0046	IDOC	Regional Investigations Coordinators	Complaint Referral
24-HEM-0037	WCC	Lead Accountant/CPA	Desk Audit
24-HEM-0051	IDHR	Human Resources Representative	Desk Audit
24-HEM-0041	ISP	Firearms Eligibility Analyst II	Desk Audit
24-HEM-0042	CMS	Sourcing Specialist Property Management	Desk Audit

(cont'd) Advisories with No Recommendations – Third Quarter 2024			
Advisory	Agency	Position Title	Type of Review
24-HEM-0047	IDOC	Human Resources Liaison	Desk Audit
24-HEM-0040	CDB	Deputy General Counsel	Desk Audit
24-HEM-0052	IAC	Accountant Supervisor	Desk Audit
24-HEM-0039	IDES	Fraud Investigations Agent (Spanish Speaking)	Desk Audit
24-HEM-0054	DoIT	End User Computing Information Technology Services Management Administrator	Desk Audit
24-HEM-0066	DCFS	Staff Assistant	Desk Audit
24-HEM-0061	ALPLM	Volunteer Services Manager	Desk Audit
24-HEM-0064	LETSB	Police Training Specialist	Desk Audit

24-HEM-0046

One Advisory issued this quarter, 24-HEM-0046, is indicative of the depth of HEM's complaint referral reviews, even when no recommendations are made. This Advisory was based on HEM's review of two related complaints. One complaint alleged that a candidate for an Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) position, Employee A, allowed his friend and co-worker, Employee B, to sit in on Employee A's virtual interview although Employee B was scheduled to interview for the same position the following day, providing Employee B an unfair advantage over other interviewees. The complaint further stated that managers in the applicable division, including one who was an interviewer in the sequence at issue, were notified of what occurred, but did not intervene, as they wanted Employee B to get the position.

HEM reviewed three sequences that involved Employee A and B; Employee B applied to all three but only scheduled an interview for one; Employee A applied and interviewed for one. While Employee A and Employee B did not interview for the same vacancy, all three sequences used the same interview questions and ideal answers. HEM compared the answers provided by Employee A and Employee B in their respective interviews and did not find their responses to be similar.

Employee A was the selected candidate for the vacancy he interviewed for, while Employee B was neither the top-ranked nor the selected candidate in his interviewed sequence.

The second complaint referral alleged that another IDOC employee, Employee C, should not have participated in the hiring sequence for an unidentified position to which Employee A applied, because Employees A and C have a personal relationship. While the complaint did not specify the position at issue, HEM reviewed postings in SuccessFactors and located two hiring sequences within the identified division to which Employee A applied. There was no documented involvement from Employee C in either sequence. Based on its review, HEM did not make any recommendations in this Advisory, and considers the matter closed.

HEM Advisory Summaries

Advisories that included a HEM recommendation are summarized below. In some cases, HEM requested a formal response from the agency, which is also summarized.

24-HEM-0031

HEM received multiple complaint referrals alleging that the Illinois School for the Visually Impaired (ISVI), operated by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), hired an unqualified Stationary Engineer, Employee 1, that was to be supervised by his father, the ISVI Chief Stationary Engineer. In response to those complaint referrals, HEM conducted a desk audit of the sequence through which Employee 1 was hired. HEM determined that Employee 1 appeared to be qualified based on his application materials. HEM did not make any recommendations but asked IDHS to provide a response detailing the results of its investigation into the alleged familial relationship between Employee 1 and the Chief Stationary Engineer. HEM also requested IDHS's response identify: Employee 1's current direct supervisor and the extent of those supervisory duties; any involvement by the Chief Stationary Engineer in Employee 1's selection or supervision; and ISVI management's involvement in those decisions.

In IDHS's response, IDHS reported that the investigation into the familial relationship revealed that the IDHS Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and ISVI management were aware prior to Employee 1's start date that he would be reporting directly to his father. Consequently, they changed Employee 1's direct

supervisor to the ISVI Director of Student Life. DRS and ISVI management staff did not consult IDHS Central HR or Legal staff about the father/son relationship. As a result of this incident, the IDHS Bureau of Recruitment and Hiring updated the agency's pre-employment disclosure form to include a section for candidates for IDHS employment to disclose any relationships they have with current IDHS employees. IDHS also responded that this sequence utilized Standardized Hiring Plan (SHP) E, which does not include candidate interviews, and no ISVI staff were involved in the hiring decision, only IDHS Central staff.

After receiving the response, HEM met virtually with IDHS HR to discuss Employee 1's direct supervision. During that call, HEM learned that the Chief Stationary Engineer intended to retire in October 2024, and IDHS had transferred Employee 1 to the Illinois School for the Deaf (ISD) until the Chief Stationary Engineer's retirement when Employee 1 would return to ISVI.

24-HEM-0036

HEM reviewed the hiring sequence for a Trainer position at the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) in response to two complaint referrals regarding an alleged conflict of interest between an interviewer and the selected candidate for the position. HEM commended IDPH for taking swift action after IDPH also received complaints about this sequence. Ultimately, IDPH imposed a 5-day suspension against the conflicted interviewer for falsification of information on her Relationship Disclosure and Conflict of Interest Certification form (Disclosure Form).

During its review of the sequence, IDPH sought advice from CMS Compliance, and the agencies determined the sequence could proceed after removing the conflicted interviewer's scores. However, HEM recommended that if this scenario were to recur, IDPH and CMS Compliance review the scoring more closely and consider other ways the sequence may have been affected. For instance, a "conflicted" interviewer involved in scoring discussions may have had influence on the other interviewers' scores. At minimum, the initial scores should be examined to determine how the potentially advantaged candidate was initially ranked and whether the subsequent adjustments favored that candidate. While multi-member interview panels make it possible to negate one member's scores if the need arises, HEM reminded agencies that a repost may be the preferred approach.

22-HEM-0002

In response to complaint referrals alleging that an Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) employee, Employee 1, had access to interview materials for an Associate Deputy Director position in DCFS's Division of Daycare Licensing, HEM monitored an Associate Deputy Director sequence and conducted a desk audit of a Daycare Licensing Supervisor sequence. HEM compared the interview materials utilized for the Associate Deputy Director sequence to the interview materials utilized in the Daycare Licensing Supervisor sequence and found they were identical. HEM determined that Employee 1 had prior access to the interview materials utilized in the Associate Deputy Director sequence because she had been an interviewer in the Daycare Licensing Supervisor sequence.

Additionally, HEM reviewed the hiring sequences for other Daycare Licensing Supervisor vacancies to compare the interview materials and found they were all the same or substantially the same. Based on these observations, HEM also conducted a broader review of interview materials utilized by two other DCFS divisions – Child Protection and Permanency. HEM found repeated use of the same questions/preferred responses in DCFS hiring sequences such that it compromises the fairness and integrity of the selection process. As a result, while monitoring a more recent Daycare Licensing Supervisor sequence, HEM asked DCFS to prepare and use new interview questions, which DCFS did. However, DCFS proceeded to repeatedly use those interview materials thereafter and HEM found a second DCFS employee, in addition to Employee 1, who was a candidate for a position that used the same interview materials she previously had access to as an interviewer.

HEM asked DCFS to provide a response detailing its plan for proceeding further, and to explain why it represented to CMS Compliance that there was no HEM involvement in another sequence after HEM had asked DCFS to pause that sequence and use new interview materials. DCFS requested, and HEM approved, an extension until mid-October to respond to this Advisory.

24-HEM-0034

HEM conducted a desk audit of a combined hiring sequence for two Assistant Licensing Manager positions at the Illinois Gaming Board (IGB). While HEM found that the selection decisions were merit-based and justifiable, it made two recommendations – to IGB and CMS, respectively – regarding the combination of

the vacancies. While the two positions have the same classification, working title, duties, and work location, they have different position numbers. Therefore, the two vacancies were posted under different requisition numbers. After the postings closed and CMS screened the applicants, IGB combined the candidate pools and conducted a single interview sequence. However, IGB did not obtain approval from CMS Compliance to proceed in this manner. HEM recommended that going forward, IGB ensure it obtains approval from CMS before combining sequences.

In addition, HEM found that the separate screening of the two interview pools by CMS resulted in some lower-ranked applicants being invited to interview over higher-ranked applicants who were not. HEM noted it is likely this still would have occurred even if IGB had notified CMS of its plans to combine the two sequences, as CMS staff previously stated that when CMS approves a combined sequence, only the interviews are combined and everything else, including determining which applicants will be invited to interview, is handled separately. HEM noted this approach does not comport with the goal of ensuring State hiring sequences result in the selection of the most qualified candidate from the broadest possible pool. HEM recommended that if CMS is going to approve combined interview sequences in the future, CMS consider the individual applicant pools for the combined sequences together, to ensure consistent screening.

Investigative Division

The OEIG's Investigative Division typically receives over 2,500 complaints every fiscal year from members of the public, State employees, contractors, bidders, and anonymous sources. The OEIG evaluates all new complaints to determine the appropriate action, including opening an investigation, referring the allegations to the appropriate entity, or making a referral to HEM. In addition, the OEIG also has the authority to self-initiate an investigation based on information discovered in other investigations or available via public sources. Cases may also be transferred to the Investigative Division from HEM when a HEM review reveals evidence of intentional wrongdoing that requires a more in-depth inquiry or evidence of unlawful political discrimination.

Hiring-Related Complaints

For the third quarter of 2024, the OEIG received 36 hiring-related complaints. The following chart reflects the actions that were also taken with regard to hiring-related complaints during this quarter.



Hiring-Related Investigations

The following are the Investigative Division’s numbers at the close of this quarter.

Hiring-related Investigations	Count
Hiring-related investigations pending at the close of the quarter	12
Hiring-related investigations closed this quarter	4
Founded reports related to hiring issued this quarter	0
Founded reports related to hiring made available to the public this quarter	1

This quarter, the Executive Ethics Commission (EEC) made one OEIG founded report related to hiring available to the public, which is summarized below. The redacted report, as well as previous publicly released reports, are available at <https://oeig.illinois.gov>.

Case No. 22-00077A

The OEIG received a complaint alleging that a Stationary Fireman at IDOC (Employee A) submitted a CMS employment application with false information in order to receive the IDOC Stationary Fireman position.

During the investigation, the OEIG obtained various documents relating to Employee A's hire into his previous IDOC Correctional Officer Trainee and Corrections Locksmith positions. The documents revealed inconsistencies in how job duties were described by Employee A in his previous applications and in his Stationary Engineer application. The OEIG also interviewed former employers who contradicted Employee A's application statements regarding his prior experience with high-pressure stationary boilers. In his OEIG interview, Employee A acknowledged that there was a five-month discrepancy between the dates of employment listed on his Stationary Fireman and Locksmith applications, that he did not know which application was correct, and that it was possible that he did not have the two years of experience in the operation of high-pressure stationary boilers required to be a Stationary Fireman.

Based on this evidence, the OEIG determined there was reasonable cause to believe that Employee A knowingly provided false information and made knowing misrepresentations on State employment documents about his work experience, in violation of IDOC policy, the Illinois Administrative Code, and the State Code of Conduct. The OEIG recommended that IDOC discipline Employee A, up to and including discharge. In response, IDOC terminated the Employee A's employment.

HIRING-RELATED REFERENCES

OEIG Hiring & Employment Monitoring Quarterly/Annual Reports

<https://oeig.illinois.gov/hem/hem-reports.html>

The Governor's Comprehensive Employment Plan for Agencies Under the Jurisdiction of the Governor (CEP)

<https://cms.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/cms/personnel/employeeresources/documents/comprehensive-employment-plan.pdf>

CMS Exempt List

<https://cms.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/cms/documents/exemptlist-w-incumbents.pdf>

CMS Political Contact Reporting (For State Employees)

<https://ilgov.sharepoint.com/sites/CMSPoliticalContactReporting>

Personnel Code

<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=236&ChapterID=5>

OneNet Trainings

<https://onenettraining.illinois.gov/onenettraining/page.aspx>

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