



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

City of Chicago

Joseph M. Ferguson
Inspector General

180 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 2000
Chicago, Illinois 60601
Telephone: (773) 478-7799
Fax: (773) 478-3949

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CONTACT: (773) 478-0534
Jonathan Davey

IGO Releases Review of City Residency Waivers

The City of Chicago Office of Inspector General (IGO) released a report today on the City's policy and process for issuing residency waivers for employees.

For some years, the City has granted temporary waivers to the residency requirement for City employees. A recent IGO investigation prompted the IGO to review the waiver process, the City's residency ordinance (MCC 2-152-050), and relevant administrative rules. From our analysis, the IGO concluded that any form of residency waiver constitutes a violation of the Residency Ordinance. More specifically, the IGO concluded the ordinance neither permits exceptions, nor delegates to the DHR Commissioner (or any other City official) the discretion or authority to issue waivers. Accordingly, the IGO recommended that absent an amendment to the ordinance to permit such waivers DHR and the Office of the Mayor immediately discontinue their practice of granting waivers.

The IGO further recommended that in the event DHR and the Department of Law determine some form of waiver is lawful under the existing ordinance, or the ordinance was amended to permit waivers, DHR clarify relevant personnel rules and procedures and ensure that all DHR employees and human resources liaisons are properly trained on the residency requirement and waiver procedures.

In her response to the IGO report, DHR Commissioner Soo Choi stated that DHR would no longer grant residency waivers. The Commissioner further noted that in the event the residency ordinance was amended to permit waivers, DHR would make necessary changes to the City's Personnel Rules and any other relevant policies and procedures to ensure that all DHR employees and departmental HR Liaisons were properly trained.

"Chicago's residency requirement for City employees has a long, complicated, and occasionally controversial history," said Inspector General Joe Ferguson. "This office receives dozens of complaints annually concerning allegations of City employees and officials residing outside of City limits in violation of the Residency Ordinance. Our findings and the Administration's response serve to simplify and clarify the residency requirement, and bring it fully within the dictates of the City's own law."

The original report and response from DHR can be found online at the IGO [website](#).

The IGO is charged by ordinance with promoting economy, efficiency, effectiveness and integrity in the operations of the City government. In our continuing effort to be fully responsive to the City's challenges and supportive of the efforts of the Mayor and City Council in meeting those challenges, the IGO welcomes any suggestions or comments on our reports, or suggestions of City programs to review.

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