

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
CITY OF BALTIMORE



Isabel Mercedes Cumming
Inspector General

Investigative
Report Synopsis

OIG Case # 24-0016-I

Issued: November 29, 2023



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
Isabel Mercedes Cumming, Inspector General
City Hall, Suite 635
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202



November 29, 2023

Dear Citizens of Baltimore City,

The mission of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) is to promote accountability, efficiency, and integrity in the City of Baltimore (City) government, as well as to investigate complaints of fraud, financial waste, and abuse. The following synopsis is a condensed version of the full report provided to City management officials and does not contain all investigative information.

The OIG received a complaint from the City's Department of Public Works (DPW) alleging that a DPW employee (DPW Employee) submitted a fraudulent job offer letter to DPW management to receive a counteroffer and negotiate a higher salary. The OIG partnered with DPW's Human Resources (HR) team to investigate the allegations.

In September 2023, DPW HR learned that the DPW Employee allegedly received an employment offer from a non-City government agency (Government Agency), and DPW was interested in matching the offer to retain the DPW Employee. DPW HR contacted the Government Agency to verify the offer letter. The Government Agency informed DPW HR that the offer letter appeared fraudulent.

The letter submitted by the DPW Employee listed an offer with an annual compensation of \$100,435 (Exhibit 1). The OIG examined the offer letter document in Adobe Acrobat (Adobe). The Adobe document showed text boxes with historical comments entered with the DPW Employee's Adobe username. The DPW Employee confirmed that the letter they provided was fraudulent and explained they had wanted a 10% pay increase.

DPW terminated the DPW Employee. The OIG learned after the termination that the City listed the DPW Employee as "eligible for rehire". DPW HR reported that it has been City practice to identify all employees as "eligible for rehire" when terminated in Workday, the City's human capital management system. Further, DPW stated that it is unaware of any criteria to explain when an employee would not be eligible for rehire.

The City's Department of Human Resources (DHR) explained that the City does not have a specific policy that determines when an employee is permanently not eligible for rehire. According to DHR, the City's Administrative Manual (AM) §205-7, *Separation and Payment at Termination*, details when an employee separates from the City in good or not good standing. DHR added that leaving the City in not good standing does not equate to a permanent ban on future City employment opportunities.

Additionally, DHR said the terminating agency should confer with DHR and the Law Department to review the termination reason and whether it merits ineligibility to rehire. However, DHR clarified that they and the Law Department provide guidance to the City agencies but do not make final decisions on rehire eligibility. According to DHR, it is the respective City agency head to make an informed decision

REPORT FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE

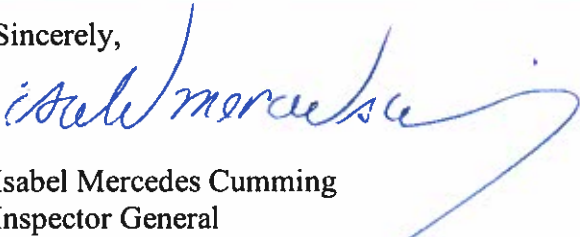
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This public synopsis is only a summary of a more comprehensive report of investigation submitted to the appropriate City management official

based on recommendations provided to them by their agency human resources representative. Lastly, DHR said they are reviewing the termination function in Workday so City agencies have a clear understanding of DHR's and the Law Department's roles in the process.

The OIG's investigation substantiated the allegation that the DPW Employee submitted a fraudulent offer letter to DPW HR, attempting to receive a higher salary. DPW's inquiries with the Government Agency regarding the validity of the employee's letter are noteworthy and demonstrate the importance of independently verifying all outside information during the employment process. Currently, the OIG recommends that City agencies seek the DHR's and Law Department's guidance for reviewing the rehire eligibility when employees are terminated due to fraudulent actions or criminal matters. The OIG recommends that DHR establish a uniform policy involving rehiring criteria.

Sincerely,



Isabel Mercedes Cumming
Inspector General

CC: Hon. Brandon M. Scott, Mayor of Baltimore City
Hon. Nick Mosby, Baltimore City Council President
Hon. Bill Henry, Baltimore City Comptroller
Honorable Members of the Baltimore City Council
Hon. Ebony Thompson, Acting Baltimore City Solicitor

Exhibits

1. Fraudulent Offer Letter