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News Release

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Illinois Department of Labor Reaches Settlement in Equal Pay Act Case Involving Culinary Company

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL) reached a settlement with Metz Culinary Management, LLC (Metz) following an investigation into alleged violations of the Illinois Equal Pay Act of 2003, including unlawful requests for job applicants’ salary history and retaliation against an employee who raised concerns about those practices.

Metz, a dining services provider with multi-state operations, was awarded a contract to operate dining services at an Illinois college. Before the contract took effect, Metz representatives asked the college’s dining center workers to provide copies of their pay stubs and hung signs directing the workers – who were still employed by the prior vendor – to bring their pay information to onsite Metz meetings.

The Illinois Equal Pay Act prohibits employers from requesting or requiring applicants’ current or prior wage or salary history as a condition of being interviewed for employment or being (or considered to be) employed or compensated.

IDOL’s investigation found that Metz told workers it could not process them as employees, or inform them of their pay, until they gave Metz their pay stubs. The Department also substantiated an employee claim about unlawful retaliation by Metz after the employee raised concerns about its practices.

“Workers cannot be required to disclose their salary history to obtain employment or fair pay,” **said Illinois Department of Labor Director Jane Flanagan.** “Illinois law protects workers from these practices and from retaliation when they exercise their rights.”

IDOL and Metz reached a settlement that requires Metz to pay \$18,000 in penalties to IDOL for violations of the Illinois Equal Pay Act.

The agreement does not affect any individual claims that applicants and workers may pursue against Metz under the Illinois Equal Pay Act.

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