

IN THE EXECUTIVE ETHICS COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

In re: LARODDICA WHITE,) OEIG Case #12-01662

OEIG AMENDED FINAL REPORT (REDACTED)

Below is an amended final summary report from an Executive Inspector General. The General Assembly has directed the Executive Ethics Commission (Commission) to redact information from this report that may reveal the identity of witnesses, complainants or informants and “any other information it believes should not be made public.” 5 ILCS 430/20-52(b).

The Commission exercises this responsibility with great caution and with the goal of balancing the sometimes-competing interests of increasing transparency and operating with fairness to the accused. In order to balance these interests, the Commission may redact certain information contained in this report. The redactions are made with the understanding that the subject or subjects of the investigation have had no opportunity to rebut the report’s factual allegations or legal conclusions before the Commission.

The Commission received this amended final report from the Governor’s Office of Executive Inspector General (“OEIG”) and a response from the agency in this matter. The Commission, pursuant to 5 ILCS 430/20-52, redacted the final report and mailed copies of the redacted version and responses to the Attorney General, the Governor’s Executive Inspector General and to Laroddica White at her last known addresses.

The Commission reviewed all suggestions received and makes this document available pursuant to 5 ILCS 430/20-52.

FINAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

In August and September 2012, the Office of Executive Inspector General (OEIG) received three complaints alleging that Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) Caseworker Laroddica White was improperly selling DHS client information and benefits. The complaints generally alleged that Ms. White:

- obtained DHS database information and sold it to a company;
- searched DHS database information for social security numbers, addresses, and telephone numbers and sold that information to a repossession company called “M. Ellis Repossession” or “ML Ellis Enterprises;”
- sold food stamp benefits to friends and family, including Michael Ellis; and
- used DHS “link card” benefits for her own personal use.

After receiving the above allegations, including those relating to Ms. White obtaining social security numbers, the OEIG opened this investigation.

I. PARALLEL CRIMINAL AND OEIG INVESTIGATIONS

A. OEIG Referral to the Illinois State Police

Shortly after opening this investigation, and in light of the serious nature of the allegations, the OEIG referred this matter to the Illinois State Police (ISP).¹ The OEIG later learned that after conducting its investigation, the ISP referred its investigative findings to the Cook County State's Attorney's Office for prosecution.

B. OEIG's Investigation and Referral to the Cook County State's Attorney's Office

While the ISP was conducting its criminal investigation, OEIG investigators nevertheless continued their administrative investigation of Ms. White with the understanding that, because of issues relating to *Garrity v. State of N.J.*,² they would not interview Ms. White until after the ISP criminal investigation was complete. Separately, the OEIG also referred certain allegations it uncovered relating to Ms. White obtaining social security numbers to the Cook County State's Attorney's Office.

C. The OEIG Investigation Proceeds after the Criminal Investigation Concludes

On December 3, 2014, the ISP informed the OEIG that it had concluded its investigation and also informed the OEIG that the Cook County State's Attorney Office declined to approve criminal charges.

On December 4, 2014, after being informed that the ISP concluded its investigation, the OEIG obtained the ISP investigative file³ and continued its administrative investigation. As part

¹ On August 22, 2012, the OEIG also referred certain allegations to the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services' Inspector General.

² *Garrity v. State of N.J.*, 385 U.S. 493 (1967), is a U.S. Supreme Court case which prohibits self-incriminating statements obtained during certain investigations from being used in a subsequent criminal prosecution.

³ A review of the ISP's file reveals that ISP interviewed Ms. White on December 19, 2012. After being advised of her *Miranda* rights, which she waived, Ms. White told the ISP, among other things, that:

- she knew Michael Ellis because the two had a child together and had an "on and off relationship[;]"
- "she searched and viewed [Mr.] Ellis' public aid case while at work[;]"
- "she told [Mr.] Ellis his 18 year old daughter, [T.E.], could be added to his case file even though [she] did not reside with [Mr.] Ellis[;]"
- she "asked a co-worker, [Employee 1], to add [T.E.] to [Mr.] Ellis' public aid case when she knew this was not the proper protocol or procedure to follow[;]"
- she "believed [Mr.] Ellis qualified for DHS public aid because he did not have a steady monthly income, although she had knowledge in 2008 Ellis received a \$500,000 settlement from a wrongful death suit of one of his children, he received \$1,000 a month from a rental property in Chicago Heights, and he owned a repossession company ML Ellis Enterprises, LLC[;]" and
- she "searched and viewed [Mr.] Ellis' case file to check if [T.E.] was removed after her . . . birthday . . ."

of its investigation, OEIG investigators contacted Ms. White and scheduled to interview her on January 9, 2015. The following is a summary of the information the OEIG obtained during the course of its investigation.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Illinois Department of Human Services

The Illinois Department of Human Services is a State agency which provides a variety of services and State benefits to Illinois residents. According to DHS's website, the agency's mission is "[t]o assist our customers to achieve maximum self-sufficiency, independence and health through the provision of seamless, integrated services for individuals, families and communities."⁴

DHS refers to individuals who receive its services or benefits as clients. DHS employees have access to personal information of DHS clients through a number of databases that can be accessed through the DHS computer system. One of the databases that can be accessed by DHS caseworkers is referred to as the State of Illinois SSA State On-line Query (SOLQ) database.⁵ SOLQ allows DHS staff to access Social Security Administration records regarding benefits and other personal information.

B. DHS Caseworker Laroddica White

In August 2006, Laroddica White began working at DHS as an Office Assistant. In January 2010, she was promoted to the position of Human Services Caseworker, and has remained in that position since then. Ms. White's timesheets reflect that during the time period relevant to this investigation, she was assigned to the South Suburban Office. As of January 21, 2015, Ms. White's monthly salary was about \$5,162 or about \$61,944 per year.

Ms. White is responsible for, among other things, determining eligibility for benefits, and providing DHS clients with public assistance services. In order to fulfill her responsibilities as a caseworker, Ms. White has access to numerous databases, including SOLQ, a database containing DHS client information including, among other things, social security numbers and the *current addresses* of DHS clients.

C. Relevant DHS Policies and Illinois Administrative Code Provisions

Ms. White's access to information regarding DHS clients was governed by certain policies and laws that:

The ISP's investigative report does not contain any analysis or conclusions regarding the propriety of Ms. White's statements or behavior. Nevertheless, nothing in the OEIG's report is intended to prohibit DHS from taking disciplinary action relating to statements or conduct Ms. White admitted to during her ISP interview. Moreover, the fact that the OEIG is not making its own findings relating to this conduct will not prevent the OEIG from taking future action regarding Ms. White.

⁴ About DHS, *available at* <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=27897> (last accessed January 29, 2015).

⁵ SOLQ is a restricted Social Security Administration (SSA) database which is available to select DHS workers through a data sharing agreement between DHS and the SSA.

- prohibit DHS employees from using State resources, including State-owned computers and software, for personal gain or other purposes not related to State business.⁶ In fact, the unauthorized use of State resources “may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge;”⁷
- require DHS client information to be kept confidential and only be used to administer assistance programs.⁸ Moreover, DHS policy and the Illinois Administrative Code make clear that this requirement extends to information obtained from SOLQ;⁹
- prohibit the use of DHS client information for personal or commercial purposes.¹⁰ DHS policy also makes clear that this prohibition extends to information obtained from SOLQ;¹¹ and
- make clear that an “employee holds a position of public trust and is expected to conduct . . . herself in a responsible, professional manner, refraining from conduct which could adversely affect the confidence of the public. An employee who violates the public trust or fails to conduct . . . herself in a professional manner may be subject to discipline up to and including discharge.”¹²

III. INVESTIGATION

A. Laroddica White and Michael Ellis Associations

Given the allegation that Ms. White obtained DHS database information and sold that information to “M. Ellis Repossession” or “ML Ellis Enterprises,” investigators sought to determine whether she had any association with Michael Ellis. A review of documents relating to Ms. White and Mr. Ellis, revealed, among other things, that Mr. Ellis:

- is Laroddica White’s former boyfriend;¹³ and
- owns a vehicle repossession business named ML Ellis Enterprises LLC (ML Ellis Enterprises).

B. Michael Ellis’ Contracts and Other Vehicle Repossession Documents

⁶ DHS Employee Handbook, p. V-2, V-7, V-12 (rev. 4/1/2009); Administrative Directive 01.03.01.020 Computer Security, Confidentiality, and Audit Controls; Administrative Directive 01.03.01.010 Internet Access (In Non-School Setting).

⁷ Administrative Directive 01.03.01.010 Internet Access (In Non-School Setting). On May 6, 2009, Ms. White signed a certification page stating that she had been issued an updated copy of the DHS Employee Handbook and was bound by its policies.

⁸ DHS Employee Handbook, p. V-2; *see also*, Ill. Admin. Code tit 89, § 102.30(a), which states, “For the protection of clients, any information about a client or case is confidential and shall be used only for purposes directly related to the administration of the assistance programs.”

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ Ill. Admin. Code tit 89, §§ 102.30(b), 102.30(b).

¹¹ DHS WAG 22-14-03-c; DHS PM 22-14-03-c.

¹² DHS Employee Handbook, p. V-1.

¹³ Records also show that Ms. White and Mr. Ellis are the parents of a child.

Investigators obtained and reviewed contracts between Mr. Ellis and Illinois Title Loans dated March 23, 2010, and April 20, 2011. Per the terms of the contracts, Mr. Ellis was to be paid \$100 to \$360 for performing various vehicle repossession services.¹⁴ Investigators also obtained and reviewed documents authorizing Mr. Ellis to perform repossession services and other documents he completed, which confirmed that he did perform repossession services for Illinois Title Loan from 2010 to 2012.

C. Laroddica White’s SOLQ Inquiries and Comparison of Documents

Investigators obtained and reviewed documents reflecting Ms. White’s use of the SOLQ database system in 2010, 2011, and 2012. The documents included the details of each of Ms. White’s SOLQ inquiries, including:

- the name and social security number of each individual she queried; and
- the date and time of each of her inquiries.

In other words, documents investigators reviewed allowed them to determine who Ms. White queried from the SOLQ database and when she made her queries.

Investigators then compared Ms. White’s SOLQ inquiries with Illinois Title Loan documents authorizing Mr. Ellis to perform repossession services. This comparison revealed that on 28 occasions, Ms. White ran SOLQ inquiries of individuals for whom Mr. Ellis had repossession authorizations.¹⁵ Further, investigators found Ms. White had run many of those 28 SOLQ inquiries within days or weeks of the date Mr. Ellis was issued the relevant repossession authorization. In fact, 25 of the 28 SOLQ inquiries were run within one month of Mr. Ellis’ repossession authorization.

The below chart reflects the initials of the current/former DHS client whose car was authorized to be repossessed, the date of the relevant repossession authorization given to Mr. Ellis, the date of the relevant SOLQ inquiry by Ms. White (between 2010 and 2012), and the number of days between the repossession authorization and Ms. White’s SOLQ inquiry.

| | <u>Current/Former DHS Client</u> | <u>Date of Repossession Authorization</u> | <u>Date of Ms. White’s SOLQ Inquiry</u> | <u>Days between Repo. Auth. & SOLQ Inquiry</u> |
|----|--------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| 1. | <i>N. N.</i> | 01/12/2012 | 01/12/2012 | 0 |
| 2. | <i>T. H.</i> | 05/06/2010 | 05/07/2010 | 1 |
| 3. | <i>P. A.</i> | 06/16/2011 | 06/17/2011 | 1 |
| 4. | <i>J. J.</i> | 09/27/2011 | 09/28/2011 | 1 |
| 5. | <i>K. S.</i> | 11/08/2011 | 11/09/2011 | 1 |
| 6. | <i>P. H.</i> | 02/14/2012 | 02/15/2012 | 1 |

¹⁴ On October 19, 2012, Illinois Title Loans terminated its contract for with ML Ellis Enterprises.

¹⁵ The 28 relevant SOLQ inquiries relate to 27 individuals, as two of the inquiries were for the same DHS client—J.H. In order to confirm the identity of these 27 individuals, investigators independently obtained the social security numbers of the 27 individuals using information from Mr. Ellis’ repossession authorizations and then confirmed that the numbers matched those listed in SOLQ.

| | | | | |
|-----|--------------|------------|------------|-----|
| 7. | <i>J. S.</i> | 05/04/2012 | 05/05/2012 | 1 |
| 8. | <i>S. G.</i> | 10/05/2011 | 10/07/2011 | 2 |
| 9. | <i>S. R.</i> | 12/14/2011 | 12/16/2011 | 2 |
| 10. | <i>A. L.</i> | 08/13/2012 | 8/15/2012 | 2 |
| 11. | <i>R. E.</i> | 12/09/2011 | 12/12/2011 | 3 |
| 12. | <i>Z. B.</i> | 12/13/2011 | 12/16/2011 | 3 |
| 13. | <i>K. H.</i> | 03/25/2010 | 03/29/2010 | 4 |
| 14. | <i>A. H.</i> | 01/19/2012 | 01/23/2012 | 4 |
| 15. | <i>L. L.</i> | 05/11/2011 | 05/17/2011 | 6 |
| 16. | <i>J. W.</i> | 08/16/2011 | 08/23/2011 | 7 |
| 17. | <i>D. K.</i> | 03/21/2012 | 03/29/2012 | 8 |
| 18. | <i>J. C.</i> | 01/05/2012 | 01/17/2012 | 12 |
| 19. | <i>D. J.</i> | 11/15/2011 | 11/28/2011 | 13 |
| 20. | <i>T. S.</i> | 05/17/2012 | 05/31/2012 | 14 |
| 21. | <i>J. H.</i> | 10/11/2011 | 10/26/2011 | 15 |
| 22. | <i>E. B.</i> | 06/14/2010 | 07/07/2010 | 23 |
| 23. | <i>T. J.</i> | 11/28/2011 | 12/22/2011 | 24 |
| 24. | <i>B. J.</i> | 12/29/2010 | 01/25/2011 | 27 |
| 25. | <i>J. H.</i> | 10/11/2011 | 11/09/2011 | 29 |
| 26. | <i>A. M.</i> | 09/20/2011 | 10/27/2011 | 37 |
| 27. | <i>B. H.</i> | 12/29/2010 | 04/04/2011 | 96 |
| 28. | <i>D. L.</i> | 12/04/2010 | 03/22/2011 | 108 |

The OEIG's review of Mr. Ellis' repossession documents also revealed that after Ms. White ran the above SOLQ inquiries for each of the current or former DHS clients, Mr. Ellis successfully repossessed vehicles from 12 of the above-named individuals. In fact, 10 of those repossessions occurred within 11 days after Ms. White ran the SOLQ inquiry.

Investigators then reviewed DHS attendance records for Ms. White, which confirmed that she was present at work at the South Suburban DHS local office at the day and time each of the above 28 SOLQ inquiries were made. Investigators also obtained Ms. White and Mr. Ellis' telephone records for certain periods in 2010 and 2011. The records indicated that during the periods reviewed, Ms. White and Mr. Ellis communicated by phone or text message on a regular basis.¹⁶

D. OEIG Interview of [Employee 2]

¹⁶ Although the phone records investigators reviewed did not include the dates of all the above-listed 28 SOLQ inquiries, the records did reveal that Ms. White and Mr. Ellis exchanged telephone calls or text messages on the dates of 15 of the SOLQ inquiries.

OEIG investigators interviewed [Employee 2] twice.¹⁷ [Employee 2] said he has been employed by DHS [identifying information redacted], and used the SOLQ database for about 20 years.

According to [Employee 2], the SOLQ database can be accessed by DHS caseworkers to help determine the amount of benefits to be provided to the client. [Employee 2] said that the legitimate DHS use of SOLQ is to determine eligibility and make redeterminations for DHS benefits. [Employee 2] said that if a client was inactive or assigned to a different local office than the DHS caseworker making the inquiry, there typically would not be a legitimate reason for that DHS caseworker to run a SOLQ inquiry on the particular DHS client.¹⁸

In any event, [Employee 2] said he could determine whether a SOLQ inquiry was made for a legitimate purpose by comparing a specific SOLQ inquiry to information listed in the DHS Public Aid Client Information System (PACIS) for that particular client. In light of this statement, investigators asked [Employee 2] to review Ms. White's 28 SOLQ database inquiries and asked him whether any of the 28 inquiries were made for a legitimate DHS purpose. After his review, [Employee 2] informed investigators that for at least 14 of those inquiries, there was no legitimate DHS purpose because those 14 inquiries were either for individuals who did not have active DHS cases at the time of inquiry or for individuals assigned to different DHS offices than Ms. White's office. With respect to the remaining 14, [Employee 2] said he could not make a determination based on the limited information he had access to at the time of the interview.

E. OEIG Interview of Laroddica White

On January 9, 2015, OEIG investigators interviewed Ms. White regarding, among other things, her relationship with Michael Ellis, her involvement in ML Ellis Enterprises, and her use of the SOLQ system.

1. Association with Michael Ellis and Knowledge of ML Ellis Enterprises

Laroddica White told investigators that Michael Ellis was her former boyfriend and that they had a son. She also said that she and Mr. Ellis are currently friends and co-parents. Ms. White stated that as co-parents, she and Mr. Ellis communicate daily, most often by phone.

Ms. White also stated that she was familiar with ML Ellis Enterprises and that it was Mr. Ellis' vehicle repossession company. Investigators presented Ms. White with invoices and other documents bearing ML Ellis Enterprise's letterhead that had been found in her work desk. Upon review of the documents, she acknowledged making edits to them, including one edit in which she crossed out "\$300" for "Involuntary Recovery," and above it, wrote "\$360."

2. Ms. White Used SOLQ to Assist Michael Ellis

¹⁷ [Employee 2] was interviewed on July 31 and October 30, 2014.

¹⁸ [Employee 2] later said that he was aware of only one rare, but legitimate reason a caseworker would make a SOLQ inquiry on an inactive DHS client, which was to determine whether a client was overpaid benefits.

During her interview, Ms. White was asked if she used any DHS computers or databases to help Mr. Ellis with his repossession business. Initially, Ms. White denied conducting any such activity. Specifically, she stated that she would help Mr. Ellis locate individuals but only by using the internet on her home computer or cell phone.

In light of Ms. White's denials, the OEIG proceeded to show her a couple examples of SOLQ inquiries she made as well as copies of repossession orders both of which reflected the name of the same person (DHS client). In addition, investigators also showed Ms. White timesheets and phone records for relevant days, and informed her that certain documents revealed that when she ran a SOLQ inquiry, that particular client's DHS case had been inactive for years. After being shown these documents and listening to the evidence the OEIG had gathered, Ms. White's union representative requested to take a break from the interview for the purpose of conferring with Ms. White.

Upon returning from the break, Ms. White was asked again about her use of SOLQ. This time, unlike her initial denials, Ms. White admitted that she had used the SOLQ database to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles. When asked for more details on how she accomplished this task, Ms. White told OEIG investigators that:

- she would attempt to find information about individuals for whom Mr. Ellis was attempting a repossession by using her DHS computer to access SOLQ, if she could not find it on her personal computer or phone;
- Mr. Ellis would show her repossession authorizations or give them to her, and while she was at work, she would use the name listed on his repossession authorization to search for the individual in SOLQ;
- she would sometimes use an individual's social security number to search for information in SOLQ; and
- after she located an individual in the SOLQ database, she would write the address down and either call Mr. Ellis' cell phone to give him the address or text him asking that he call her.

Ms. White was not sure what length of time she had verified addresses for Mr. Ellis using the SOLQ system, but said that she had done this during the time he repossessed vehicles for Illinois Title Loans, which started in 2010.¹⁹

Ms. White was also unsure how many times she had made inquiries into SOLQ for Mr. Ellis, but agreed it was more than 10 times, although she could not provide a specific number. Ms. White also said that Mr. Ellis did not pay her for the information she provided him.

Investigators informed Ms. White that the OEIG had documents reflecting numerous instances in which she ran a SOLQ inquiry for an individual who was named on one of Mr. Ellis' repossession authorizations. When asked if she was using SOLQ to assist Mr. Ellis, and not for DHS business, for each of her SOLQ inquiries of individuals named in one of Mr. Ellis' repossession authorizations, Ms. White replied, "Possibly." Finally, Ms. White acknowledged

¹⁹ As stated above, documents obtained from Illinois Title Loans indicate that Mr. Ellis repossessed vehicles for Illinois Title Loans from March 23, 2010, until October 19, 2012.

that using DHS equipment for non-DHS business and using DHS client information for non-DHS purposes violated DHS policies.

IV. ANALYSIS

The OEIG's Investigation revealed that Laroddica White's use of the DHS computer and in particular her use of the SOLQ database for non-DHS purposes violated multiple categories of laws, rules and policies, as set forth in greater detail below.

A. Laroddica White Improperly Used State Resources for Non-State Business

DHS policies prohibit employees from using State resources, including State-owned computers and software, for personal gain or other purposes not related to State business.²⁰ Violation of these policies may result in discipline up to and including discharge.²¹ As a DHS caseworker, Ms. White had access to the DHS computer system and other various databases such as SOLQ, which allow caseworkers to view and obtain confidential information such as social security numbers, addresses, and other private information. Although information in the SOLQ database is necessary to conduct DHS business, it is not public information and DHS policies make clear that DHS employees must not use DHS computers or the databases they access for non-DHS purposes. The importance of this responsibility entrusted to caseworkers cannot be overstated.

The investigation in this case revealed that on multiple occasions, Ms. White used her DHS computer to access the SOLQ database to obtain or verify addresses for Mr. Ellis' repossession company, not DHS business. In fact, DHS records reveal that on at least 28 instances, Ms. White made a SOLQ inquiry for a person that was also named on a repossession order given to Mr. Ellis by Illinois Title Loans. In 14 of those inquiries, [Employee 2] found no legitimate work purpose for Ms. White's SOLQ inquiry. Telephone records also reveal that Ms. White and Mr. Ellis were in constant communication, including the same days on which she made 15 of the 28 SOLQ inquiries.

Further, Ms. White admitted to OEIG investigators that she used her DHS computer to make SOLQ inquiries for Mr. Ellis' repossession business and not for any valid DHS purpose. Although Ms. White was not sure how many times she assisted Mr. Ellis in this manner, she admitted that it was probably over 10 and stated that if the name on the SOLQ inquiry matched a repossession order, the inquiry was "possibly" done for Mr. Ellis.

Based on investigators' review and analysis of repossession authorizations, DHS records, phone and other records, and Ms. White's admissions the OEIG concludes that Ms. White ran at least 28 SOLQ inquiries in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess the vehicles of current and former DHS clients.

²⁰ DHS Employee Handbook, p. V-2, V-7, V-12 (rev. 4/1/2009); Administrative Directive 01.03.01.020 Computer Security, Confidentiality, and Audit Controls; Administrative Directive 01.03.01.010 Internet Access (In Non-School Setting).

²¹ Administrative Directive 01.03.01.010 Internet Access (In Non-School Setting).

Thus, the allegation that Ms. White violated provisions of the DHS Employee Handbook and DHS Administrative Directives²² on each of the 28 instances when she conducted a SOLQ inquiry for non-DHS related reasons is **FOUNDED**.

B. Laroddica White Improperly Accessed and Disclosed Current and Former DHS Client Information for Non-DHS Business

DHS policies, as well as provisions within the Illinois Administrative Code, mandate that DHS clients' information must be kept confidential and may only be used to administer assistance programs.²³ Not only is this general principle clearly set out in multiple DHS policies, policies specifically addressing use of the SOLQ system state, “[a]ny information obtained from SOLQ is confidential and **may only be used to process cash, medical and food stamp benefits.**”²⁴ (emphasis added).

As shown by the evidence described above, including Ms. White's admissions, she admittedly accessed the SOLQ system more than 10 times in order to provide information to Mr. Ellis' repossession company. In other words, Ms. White did not deny that she accessed confidential DHS client information for a reason other than to “process cash, medical and food stamp benefits.” In fact, she obtained the information in order to obtain addresses for Mr. Ellis' repo business. Based upon the above, the OEIG concludes that Ms. White accessed the SOLQ system on at least 28 occasions, each of which was in clear violation of DHS policies, and also violated the trust of current and former DHS clients who should not have to fear that personal information provided to DHS would be used in an unauthorized manner.

Thus, the allegation that Ms. White violated provisions of the DHS Employee Handbook, DHS policies relating to the SOLQ database, and Illinois Administrative Code,²⁵ on each of the 28 above-described occasions is **FOUNDED**.

C. Laroddica White Improperly Used DHS Client Information For Personal and Commercial Purposes

The Illinois Administrative Code prohibits the use of DHS client information for personal or commercial purposes.²⁶ As previously detailed, the evidence discovered by the OEIG's investigation, including Ms. White's admissions, revealed that she accessed the SOLQ system on at least 28 occasions in order to obtain or verify addresses for Mr. Ellis' repossession company. As the above chart showed, many of Ms. White's SOLQ searches were run within days or weeks

²² DHS Employee Handbook, p. V-2, V-7, V-12 (rev. 4/1/2009); Administrative Directive 01.03.01.020 Computer Security, Confidentiality, and Audit Controls; Administrative Directive 01.03.01.010 Internet Access (In Non-School Setting).

²³ DHS Employee Handbook, p. V-2; *see also* Ill. Admin. Code tit 89, § 102.30(a), which states, “For the protection of clients, any information about a client or case is confidential and shall be used only for purposes directly related to the administration of the assistance programs.”

²⁴ DHS WAG 22-14-03-c; *see also* DHS PM 22-14-03-c; Ill. Admin. Code tit 89, §§ 10.230(a), 102.30(a).

²⁵ DHS Employee Handbook, p. V-2; DHS WAG 22-14-03-c; DHS PM 22-14-03-c; Ill. Admin. Code tit 89, §§ 10.230(a), 102.30(a).

²⁶ Ill. Admin. Code tit 89, §§ 10.230(b), 102.30(b).

of Mr. Ellis obtaining a repossession authorization. Moreover, Ms. White admitted she would find and provide DHS client information to Mr. Ellis because he was attempting a repossession.

Ms. White's use of DHS client information for personal and commercial reasons, namely, to benefit Mr. Ellis and his repo business, was entirely improper. DHS clients provide confidential information so they can obtain assistance from DHS. However, Ms. White took advantage of her position as a caseworker and used DHS client information not to help DHS clients, but for personal and commercial purposes.

Thus, the allegation that Ms. White violated provisions Illinois Administrative Code²⁷ on each of the 28 above-described occasions is **FOUNDED**.

D. Laroddica White Engaged in Unprofessional Conduct that Violated the Public's Trust

DHS policy requires employees to conduct themselves in a responsible and professional manner and to not engage in any behavior that could adversely affect or violate public trust.²⁸ As detailed above, the OEIG's investigation revealed that Ms. White used the SOLQ database on numerous occasions to access confidential information and then provided that information to Mr. Ellis to assist his repossession business. Indeed, Ms. White admitted that she would attempt to find information for Mr. Ellis and that she knew her conduct violated DHS policy.

The OEIG finds that Ms. White's conduct was unprofessional and wholly inappropriate. Ms. White's flagrant misuse of DHS client information violated the public trust placed in her by DHS clients. DHS and its clients trusted Ms. White to conduct herself in a professional manner and use confidential information to assist DHS clients. Instead, Ms. White violated that trust by using DHS client information for her own purposes.

In addition, it appears Ms. White searched SOLQ to assist Mr. Ellis during State time. While it was not clear how many of her searches were conducted during work hours instead of a break, it is apparent that Ms. White acted unprofessionally when she used State time for purposes other than State business.

Thus, the allegation that Ms. White violated provisions DHS Employee Handbook²⁹ on each of the 28 above-described occasions is **FOUNDED**.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of its investigation, the OEIG issues the following findings:

Laroddica White's Improper Use of State Resources for Non-State Business in Violation of: a) DHS Employee Handbook, p. V-2, V-7, V-12 (rev. 4/1/2009); b) Administrative Directive 01.03.01.020 Computer Security, Confidentiality, and

²⁷ Ill. Admin. Code tit 89, §§ 10.230(b), 102.30(b).

²⁸ DHS Employee Handbook, p. V-1.

²⁹ DHS Employee Handbook, p. V-1.

Audit Controls; and c) Administrative Directive 01.03.01.010 Internet Access (In Non-School Setting)

- **FOUNDED** – On March 29, 2010, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of K.H. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On May 7, 2010, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of T.H. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On July 7, 2010, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of E.B. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On January 25, 2011, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of B.J. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On March 22, 2011, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of D.L. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On April 4, 2011, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of B.H. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On May 17, 2011, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of L.L. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On June 17, 2011, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of P.A. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On August 23, 2011, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of J.W. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On September 28, 2011, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of J.J. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On October 7, 2011, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of S.G. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.

- **FOUNDED** – On October 26, 2011, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of J.H. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On October 27, 2011, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of A.M. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On November 9, 2011, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of J.H. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On November 9, 2011, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of K.S. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On November 28, 2011, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of D.J. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On December 12, 2011, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of R.E. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On December 16, 2011, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of Z.B. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On December 16, 2011, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of S.R. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On December 22, 2011, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of T.J. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On January 12, 2012, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of N.N. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On January 17, 2012, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of J.C. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.

- **FOUNDED** – On January 23, 2012, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of A.H. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On February 15, 2012, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of P.H. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On March 29, 2012, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of D.K. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On May 5, 2012, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of J.S. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On May 31, 2012, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of T.S. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On August 15, 2012, Ms. White misused state resources in violation of DHS policies when she used her DHS computer and ran a SOLQ inquiry of A.L. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.

Laroddica White’s Improper Access and Disclosure of Current and Former DHS Client Information for Non-DHS Business in Violation of: a) DHS WAG 22-14-03-c; b) DHS PM 22-14-03-c; and c) Ill. Admin. Code tit 89, §§ 10.230(a), and 102.30(a)

- **FOUNDED** – On March 29, 2010, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of K.H. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
- **FOUNDED** – On May 7, 2010, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of T.H. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
- **FOUNDED** – On July 7, 2010, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of E.B. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
- **FOUNDED** – On January 25, 2011, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal

- information of B.J. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
- **FOUNDED** – On March 22, 2011, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of D.L. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
 - **FOUNDED** – On April 4, 2011, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of B.H. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
 - **FOUNDED** – On May 17, 2011, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of L.L. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
 - **FOUNDED** – On June 17, 2011, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of P.A. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
 - **FOUNDED** – On August 23, 2011, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of J.W. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
 - **FOUNDED** – On September 28, 2011, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of J.J. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
 - **FOUNDED** – On October 7, 2011, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of S.G. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
 - **FOUNDED** – On October 26, 2011, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of J.H. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
 - **FOUNDED** – On October 27, 2011, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal

- information of A.M. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
- **FOUNDED** – On November 9, 2011, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of J.H. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
 - **FOUNDED** – On November 9, 2011, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of K.S. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
 - **FOUNDED** – On November 28, 2011, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of D.J. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
 - **FOUNDED** – On December 12, 2011, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of R.E. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
 - **FOUNDED** – On December 16, 2011, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of Z.B. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
 - **FOUNDED** – On December 16, 2011, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of S.R. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
 - **FOUNDED** – On December 22, 2011, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of T.J. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
 - **FOUNDED** – On January 12, 2012, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of N.N. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
 - **FOUNDED** – On January 17, 2012, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal

information of J.C. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.

- **FOUNDED** – On January 23, 2012, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of A.H. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
- **FOUNDED** – On February 15, 2012, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of P.H. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
- **FOUNDED** – On March 29, 2012, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of D.K. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
- **FOUNDED** – On May 5, 2012, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of J.S. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
- **FOUNDED** – On May 31, 2012, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of T.S. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.
- **FOUNDED** – On August 15, 2012, Ms. White violated DHS policies and the Illinois Administrative Code when she improperly accessed and disclosed personal information of A.L. from SOLQ for purposes not related to administering assistance programs.

Laroddica White's Improper Use of DHS Client Information for Personal and Commercial Purposes in Violation of: Ill. Admin. Code tit 89, §§ 10.230(b), 102.30(b)

- **FOUNDED** – On March 29, 2010, Ms. White improperly accessed and used DHS client information of K.H. for personal and commercial purposes in violation the Illinois Administrative Code.
- **FOUNDED** – On May 7, 2010, Ms. White improperly accessed and used DHS client information of T.H. for personal and commercial purposes in violation the Illinois Administrative Code.

- **FOUNDED** – On July 7, 2010, Ms. White improperly accessed and used DHS client information of E.B. for personal and commercial purposes in violation the Illinois Administrative Code.
- **FOUNDED** – On January 25, 2011, Ms. White improperly accessed and used DHS client information of B.J. for personal and commercial purposes in violation the Illinois Administrative Code.
- **FOUNDED** – On March 22, 2011, Ms. White improperly accessed and used DHS client information of D.L. for personal and commercial purposes in violation the Illinois Administrative Code.
- **FOUNDED** – On April 4, 2011, Ms. White improperly accessed and used DHS client information of B.H. for personal and commercial purposes in violation the Illinois Administrative Code.
- **FOUNDED** – On May 17, 2011, Ms. White improperly accessed and used DHS client information of L.L. for personal and commercial purposes in violation the Illinois Administrative Code.
- **FOUNDED** – On June 17, 2011, Ms. White improperly accessed and used DHS client information of P.A. for personal and commercial purposes in violation the Illinois Administrative Code.
- **FOUNDED** – On August 23, 2011, Ms. White improperly accessed and used DHS client information of J.W. for personal and commercial purposes in violation the Illinois Administrative Code.
- **FOUNDED** – On September 28, 2011, Ms. White improperly accessed and used DHS client information of J.J. for personal and commercial purposes in violation the Illinois Administrative Code.
- **FOUNDED** – On October 7, 2011, Ms. White improperly accessed and used DHS client information of S.G. for personal and commercial purposes in violation the Illinois Administrative Code.
- **FOUNDED** – On October 26, 2011, Ms. White improperly accessed and used DHS client information of J.H. for personal and commercial purposes in violation the Illinois Administrative Code.
- **FOUNDED** – On October 27, 2011, Ms. White improperly accessed and used DHS client information of A.M. for personal and commercial purposes in violation the Illinois Administrative Code.

- **FOUNDED** – On November 9, 2011, Ms. White improperly accessed and used DHS client information of J.H. for personal and commercial purposes in violation the Illinois Administrative Code.
- **FOUNDED** – On November 9, 2011, Ms. White improperly accessed and used DHS client information of K.S. for personal and commercial purposes in violation the Illinois Administrative Code.
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- **FOUNDED** – On December 12, 2011, Ms. White improperly accessed and used DHS client information of R.E. for personal and commercial purposes in violation the Illinois Administrative Code.
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- **FOUNDED** – On August 15, 2012, Ms. White improperly accessed and used DHS client information of A.L. for personal and commercial purposes in violation the Illinois Administrative Code.

Laroddica White’s Unprofessional Conduct Violated the Public’s Trust in Violation of: DHS Employee Handbook, p. V-1

- **FOUNDED** – On March 29, 2010, Ms. White engaged in unprofessional conduct in violation of DHS policies when she ran a SOLQ inquiry of K.H. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
- **FOUNDED** – On May 7, 2010, Ms. White engaged in unprofessional conduct in violation of DHS policies when she ran a SOLQ inquiry of T.H. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.
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- **FOUNDED** – On August 15, 2012, Ms. White engaged in unprofessional conduct in violation of DHS policies when she ran a SOLQ inquiry of A.L. in order to help Mr. Ellis repossess vehicles.

Based upon the OEIG’s investigation and findings, we recommend that DHS terminate Laroddica White for her multiple and continued misuse of state resources and disclosure of confidential information in violation of DHS policies, administrative directives, and the provisions of the Illinois Administrative Code.

No further investigative action is needed and this case is considered closed.

Date: **January 30, 2015**

Office of Executive Inspector General
for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor
69 W. Washington Street, Ste. 3400
Chicago, IL 60602

Ryan Donaldson
Assistant Inspector General

Jim Kosik
Investigator



Bruce Rauner, Governor

100 South Grand Avenue, East • Springfield, Illinois 62762
401 South Clinton Street • Chicago, Illinois 60607

February 26, 2015

Via e-mail to Joshua I. Grant, Deputy Inspector General, on behalf of:

Ricardo Meza

Executive Inspector General

Office of the Executive Inspector General for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor

69 West Washington Street, Suite 3400

Chicago, Illinois 60602

RE: Response to OEIG Complaint Number 12-01662

Dear Executive Inspector General Meza:

This letter responds to the Final Report for complaint number 12-01662. The Report detailed *inter alia* improper computer access, improper disclosure of information, improper use of state resources, and violations of various statutes and Department policies. The Report recommended employment termination for the subject, Laroddica White.

The Department is implementing the recommendation. As you know, the Collective Bargaining Agreement specifies a process for discipline, including termination. Accordingly, a pre-disciplinary meeting is currently scheduled for March 2, 2015. At that meeting the charges, their basis and proposed action will be shared with Ms. White. She will be afforded a rebuttal period and possibly several review periods, before any final action can be taken. As you probably know, the process could take some time for resolution. The Department will provide you updates as the process moves along.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Robert J. Grindle, DHS' Ethics Officer.

Regards,

Gregory M. Bassi
Acting Secretary



Bruce Rauner, Governor

100 South Grand Avenue, East • Springfield, Illinois 62762
401 South Clinton Street • Chicago, Illinois 60607

March 18, 2015

Via e-mail to Joshua Grant, Deputy Inspector General, on behalf of:

Ricardo Meza

Executive Inspector General

Office of the Executive Inspector General for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor

69 West Washington Street, Suite 3400

Chicago, Illinois 60602

RE: Response to OEIG Complaint Number 12-01662

Dear Executive Inspector General Meza:

This letter updates a response previously submitted to your office in response to the Final Report for complaint number 12-01662. The Report recommended employment termination for Laroddica White. As previously explained, a pre-disciplinary meeting was held on March 2, 2015. As a result of that meeting, Ms. White resigned effective March 16, 2015. This now closes the matter.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Robert J. Grindle, DHS' Ethics Officer.

Regards,

Gregory M. Bassi
Acting Secretary