



Illinois Ethics Matters

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Honesty, Integrity, Service

A newsletter from the Office of Executive Inspector General for the Agencies
of the Illinois Governor

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Recent News

- The OEIG is pleased to announce that **Trevor Whalen** began as an Investigative Assistant in the Springfield office.
- In addition to the reports described below, the EEC recently released the OEIG final report in *In re: Hall (Case #15-02105)* and *In re: Mix (Case #13-02003)*. All of the OEIG's published reports can be found on both the EEC and OEIG websites.

OEIG Investigations Find Improper Payments



Two OEIG final reports made public within the last month revealed improper payments of State funds.

In re: Bruno (Case #15-00700) determined that a Department of Human Services (DHS) employee improperly approved tuition payments in violation of DHS policy. While DHS provides qualifying individuals with financial assistance for certain education expenses in order to achieve defined educational objectives, according to DHS policies regarding these education expenses, such reimbursement may not exceed the fee at a nearby community college. A DHS employee approved payment of \$20,000 when a nearby community college charged only \$5,508 for comparable training. DHS suspended the employee for 15 days and has continued to seek reimbursement of the tuition.

In re: Kushnerova (Case #13-00561) found that a licensed funeral director improperly created false invoices in order to obtain unwarranted State reimbursement for funeral expenses for her clients. In many instances, the OEIG concluded, Funeral Director Irina Kushnerova should have known that her clients did not qualify for State aid because she sold them the insurance policies that actually paid for the funerals. The OEIG recommended that the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) revoke Kushnerova's license and that DHS recoup the funds. IDFPR suspended Kushnerova's license for 30 months and levied a \$10,000 fine; recoupment efforts are ongoing by DHS.

DHS Jeopardized Funds, Failed to Oversee the Child Care Assistance Program

An OEIG investigation made public in 2014, *In re: Saterfield, et al. (Case # 09-01147)*, found that due to the lack of oversight by DHS of the Child Care Assistance Program, more than \$200,000 in overpayments were made to one child care provider. More than 50,000 of these child care providers exist in Illinois and provide services subsidized by this program.

In response to that investigation, DHS claimed in 2014 that they already initiated a new policy to reduce improper payments.

In a follow-up OEIG investigation, *In re: DHS (Case #14-01780)*, the OEIG found that DHS never actually implemented this new oversight policy. In response to the follow-up investigation, DHS reported that, "the policy will not be changed until the rule-making process completes."