



# 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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## Mismanagement at CTA Results in Continued Waste

The OEIG recently issued an investigative report regarding the Chicago Transit Authority's (CTA) continued payments to employees for days not actually worked. For five years, since the beginning of the COVID pandemic up to the issuance of the OEIG's investigative report, the CTA paid over \$1,000,000 to Vault Operations (Vault) employees, primarily Money Handlers, to stay at home and not work at least two days a week. The CTA Vault unit is responsible for packaging, shipping, and processing bulk currency that is obtained from CTA's fareboxes and the Money Handler's main duty of processing fare money could only be performed at a secure facility.

In response to the COVID outbreak in March 2020, the CTA quickly recognized the need for employees to work remotely and instituted a Telework Policy that allowed an employee to work from home if approved by their Department Chief and the employee signed a Telework Agreement. The policy stated that telework was an option if the employee was "able to work from home" and the manager determined it was "operationally feasible for the employee to perform the core duties of their job away from the worksite."

Beginning March 2020, Vault employees, including the Money Handlers, worked various schedules with at least two remote days. From May 3, 2021 to early 2025, the Attendance Records reflected that Vault employees worked eight hours every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, while every Tuesday and Thursday were left blank. No Telework Agreements, existed, however, for any of the Vault employees. All witnesses agreed that the Vault staff could not perform their CTA duties while "working" remotely because no currency or other materials could be removed from the secure facility. In the words of one Money Handler interviewed by the OEIG, "there was nothing for us to do at home" and another described it as having Tuesdays and Thursdays off, even though they kept getting paid for those days. In total, from March 23, 2020 to February 1, 2025, these employees were paid \$1,129,299.12 for being remote and not working as detailed in the chart below:



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Employee	Position	Hours Listed for Remote Work	Employment Status	Total Amount Paid for Remote Days
[CTA Employee 9]	[Redacted]	5,952	Currently Employed	\$300,440.80
[CTA Employee 10]	Money Handler	4,991	Retired ([Redacted])	\$183,572.16
[CTA Employee 13]	Money Handler	4,424	Currently Employed	\$146,353.12
[CTA Employee 14]	Money Handler	3,238	Transferred out of Vault Operations (approx. [Redacted])	\$104,612.98
[CTA Employee 15]	Money Handler	2,912	Retired ([Redacted])	\$93,610.29
[CTA Employee 16]	Money Handler	2,399	Retired ([Redacted])	\$76,711.31
[CTA Employee 12]	Money Handler	2,168	Retired ([Redacted])	\$69,228.58
[CTA Employee 11]	Money Handler	2,128	Retired [Redacted]	\$67,951.30
[CTA Employee 17]	Money Handler	1,775	Currently Employed	\$49,897.02
[CTA Employee 18]	[Redacted]	1,480	Retired ([Redacted])	\$36,921.56
<b>Total</b>		<b>31,467</b>		<b>\$1,129,299.12</b>

The inability of these employees to conduct work remotely was not hidden from CTA management. Three levels of managers over the Vault unit admitted they were aware that no work was being conducted remotely. Attendance records showed no hours worked for the remote days of these employees and included a comment, written by the unit manager, stating “Reduction in workforce” and noting the specific days the Money Handlers processed bills and coins. Even when there was an agency-wide Return to Office date in May 2022, the CTA continued to pay the Vault employees for “remote” work. In fact, in January 2023, the Money Handlers three-day work week was increased to four days. However, after three weeks of requiring four days in the office—and being paid for five—there was a management decision to revert them back to only three days in the office. One manager explained that, after Vault employees complained about the four-day work week, “nobody wanted to deal with it.” Attendance records confirm this unexplained return to a three-day work week while paid for five then continued for another two years. The amount paid for the remote days from May 9, 2022 to February 1, 2025 was \$303,932.13.

Although paying these Vault employees for being at home may have been justified in the beginning of the pandemic, CTA did not follow its own remote work policies and continued to pay these employees for not working for five years. The failure of CTA management to appropriately address this issue amounts to mismanagement causing significant waste of CTA resources and funds.

The report of this investigation (Case No. 24-01140) is available on the OEIG website [here](#).