



# 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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## Announcements

- The OEIG is pleased to announce the hiring of **Tanya Rone** as an Administrative Assistant in its Complaints & Compliance Division.

## Keeping Hiring Free from Improper Influence

The OEIG investigated a complaint alleging that an Illinois Department of Agriculture (AGR) employee (Interviewer A) approached another interviewer after participating in interviews for an inspector trainee position and indicated that a specific candidate was a supervisor's preferred candidate and should be selected.

The OEIG investigation revealed that the AGR Bureau of Meat and Poultry Inspection had a practice of allowing supervisors who were not interview panel members to observe hiring interviews and provide their input regarding the candidates. Various supervisors were invited to observe the interviews for their respective counties in the inspector trainee hiring sequence and, although they did not score the candidates, they were allowed to express their opinions of the candidates with the interview panels after the interviews were completed. In addition, the attendance of observers did not appear to be documented in the hiring files, nor did the supervisors complete conflict of interest forms, allowing for the opportunity of influence in the selection without being part of the appropriate scoring process.

For the particular hiring sequence at issue in this investigation, the OEIG learned that, after the interviews were completed, Interviewer A emailed one of the invited observers asking her to provide the names of candidates in her preferred order. Subsequently, Interviewer A approached his co-interviewer and told her they should take the opinion of the observers into consideration when scoring the candidates and informed her of the observer's preferred candidate. Furthermore, Interviewer A admitted to changing his scores based on input from the observers, and the OEIG's review of Individual A's scoresheets confirmed that he significantly raised his scores of the preferred candidate, while lowering another candidate's scores, without documenting why he did so.

The OEIG concluded that Individual A failed to independently evaluate candidates for the inspector trainee position, and tried to influence another interviewer's scores based on improper input from non-panel members, in violation of the Comprehensive Employment Plan (CEP). In response to this report, AGR stated that Interviewer A would be receiving a written reprimand and would no longer be participating as an interviewer for hiring sequences at AGR. Furthermore, this hiring sequence did not result in any hires as this particular sequence was ultimately canceled following the involvement of the OEIG's Hiring & Employment Monitoring Division (HEM).

OEIG Case No. 20-01251 is available on the OEIG website [here](#).