Below is the redacted 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. 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 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 Executive Inspector General for the Governor, and Lisa Simmons’ last address.

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

I. ALLEGATIONS

On November 21, 2013, the Office of Executive Inspector General (OEIG) received a complaint alleging that Department of Human Services (DHS) Caseworker Lisa Simmons\(^1\) married [Identifying Information Redacted] while he had an active benefits case, but failed to report the marriage or her income to DHS. The complaint also alleged that Ms. Simmons processed a form for her husband’s [Identifying Information Redacted].

II. BACKGROUND

A. DHS Benefits

DHS administers the provision of various social services to individuals and families in financial need. These benefit programs include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which provides food benefits to low-income households. DHS customers can also apply for various Medical Assistance Programs, which provide medical benefits to persons who meet certain financial eligibility, residency, and other requirements. Recipients of these DHS benefits are required to report any changes that could affect their eligibility, such as changes in income or address, to DHS.\(^2\)

B. Caseworker Lisa Simmons

Lisa Simmons became a Human Services Caseworker in July 2011 and currently works at the Kankakee Family Community Resources Center (FCRC).\(^3\) In her position as a Human Services Caseworker, Ms. Simmons works in service coordination and her responsibilities include processing SNAP and expedited SNAP cases, as well as adding SNAP to Medicaid cases. When she first started working at the Kankakee FCRC, her duties included processing medical redeterminations and determining eligibility for SNAP and medical cases.

Ms. Simmons married a DHS customer, [Identifying Information Redacted], on [Identifying Information Redacted]. At the beginning of 2012, Ms. Simmons was earning an annual salary of $58,788.

III. INVESTIGATION

As part of this investigation, OEIG investigators conducted numerous interviews and obtained and reviewed various documents. As discussed in further detail below, the investigation revealed that Ms. Simmons failed to report her marriage to a DHS customer and that she handled her husband’s [Identifying Information Redacted] in violation of DHS policy.

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\(^1\) Prior to her marriage to [Identifying Information Redacted], Ms. Simmons had the last name [Surname 1]. She will be referred to as Lisa Simmons throughout this report.

\(^2\) DHS Policy Manual, 01-02-02-a.

\(^3\) Ms. Simmons transferred from Chicago to Kankakee in August 2013.
A. Review Of [Identifying Information Redacted]’ DHS Benefits File

[Identifying Information Redacted].

B. Interviews Of Caseworker [DHS Employee 1]

OEIG investigators twice interviewed [DHS Employee 1], the caseworker assigned to [Identifying Information Redacted]’ [Identifying Information Redacted].

1. Knowledge of Lisa Simmons’ Marriage to [Identifying Information Redacted]

According to [DHS Employee 1], on October 1, 2013, [Identifying Information Redacted] came into the Kankakee FCRC to provide her with [Identifying Information Redacted]. During this interaction, [Identifying Information Redacted] informed her that he was married to her colleague, Lisa Simmons. According to [DHS Employee 1], she did not know of the marriage until this meeting. [DHS Employee 1] stated that she asked [Identifying Information Redacted] for proof of income and marriage for his [Identifying Information Redacted] file, at which time, [Identifying Information Redacted] went to his wife’s office and then returned to [DHS Employee 1], requesting that his case be canceled. [DHS Employee 1] canceled the case, effective November 2013.

2. [Identifying Information Redacted]’ [Identifying Information Redacted] Documents Left in [DHS Employee 1]’ Office

[DHS Employee 1] said that on the morning of November 20, 2013, she found the following two documents on her office chair:

- A letter, dated November 20, 2013, on DHS letterhead addressed to “Susan” at [Identifying Information Redacted], stating in part, “Susan: Here is the updated [Identifying Information Redacted],” with a signature above the typed name of “Lisa Simmons.” Below the “Lisa Simmons” typed name is a telephone number which belonged to Ms. Simmons’ former office.

- A form [Identifying Information Redacted] ([Identifying Information Redacted]), addressed to [Identifying Information Redacted], which certifies benefits for [Identifying Information Redacted]. A hand-written note on the form states, “Ms [Surname 2] FYI This was sent to [Identifying Information Redacted] for service date.” [DHS Employee 1]’ name is typed on a line designated for the caseworker.

[DHS Employee 1] stated that as she was starting up her computer that morning, Ms. Simmons stopped by her office and remarked, “I have left paperwork for you.”

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4 [Identifying Information Redacted].
5 [Identifying Information Redacted].
6 These documents were provided to the OEIG by DHS for review.
7 [DHS Employee 1] had the last name [Surname 2] when this investigation opened, but has since changed her name. She is referred to as [DHS Employee 1] throughout this report.
8 Although [Identifying Information Redacted]’ case was canceled by November 2013, OEIG investigators learned that a DHS customer may present [Identifying Information Redacted] for previous months in which spenddown had not been met, going back two years.
stated that she was upset by Ms. Simmons’ actions, so she went to LOA William Willis to report what had happened and to show him the documents. According to [DHS Employee 1], Mr. Willis told her to memorialize what had happened in an email.9

[DHS Employee 1] informed OEIG investigators that the November 20, 2013 incident was not the first time she had spoken to management about Ms. Simmons. She said that a month prior, Ms. Simmons provided her with [Identifying Information Redacted] for her husband’s [Identifying Information Redacted] and asked her to process them. [DHS Employee 1] explained that she was very busy on that day and did not appreciate being told to do work by someone who was not her manager. She said that she reported this incident to Mr. Willis, who said he would speak to Ms. Simmons.

C. Interview Of Local Office Administrator William Willis

OEIG investigators interviewed LOA William Willis on June 26, 2014. Mr. Willis stated that he is responsible for the operation of the Kankakee FCRC. According to Mr. Willis, on November 20, 2013, [DHS Employee 1] reported to him that Ms. Simmons had done some work on her (Ms. Simmons) husband’s [Identifying Information Redacted]. Mr. Willis said that he was shocked to learn at this meeting that Ms. Simmons was married to a DHS customer. Mr. Willis said that Ms. Simmons had an “immediate responsibility” to inform DHS that she married a DHS customer.

Mr. Willis confirmed that [DHS Employee 1] sent him an email regarding the [Identifying Information Redacted] documents that Ms. Simmons had worked on and left in [DHS Employee 1]’s office. Mr. Willis stated that sometime after [DHS Employee 1] reported this incident to him, Ms. Simmons approached Mr. Willis and told him that she (Ms. Simmons) did some work on her husband’s case. Mr. Willis stated that he could not say why Ms. Simmons came to him “after the fact,” but thought she might have been trying to downplay what had occurred. According to Mr. Willis, Ms. Simmons did not tell him what she did exactly on the case. Mr. Willis said that he told Ms. Simmons that she was not supposed to work on a relative’s case. Mr. Willis stated that typically when situations between employees arise, he holds a meeting with everyone involved, but in this instance he did not want Ms. Simmons or [DHS Employee 1] discussing the matter with each other in the event that it resulted in an investigation.

D. Interview Of [Identifying Information Redacted] Customer Service Representative [Identifying Information Redacted Employee]

[Identifying Information Redacted] Customer Service Representative [Identifying Information Redacted Employee] informed OEIG investigators that she received a call from Lisa Simmons on November 20, 2013. [Identifying Information Redacted Employee] said that Ms. Simmons called twice on that day, but the first call was handled by another employee. [Identifying Information Redacted Employee] stated that although her ([DHS Employee 1]) name appears on the form [Identifying Information Redacted], she did not put her name on the document. [DHS Employee 1] noted that this was a conflict of interest and concluded the email saying, “Please inform ms simmons that this is unethical.”

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9 OEIG investigators obtained and reviewed an email, dated November 20, 2013, from [DHS Employee 1] to LOA Willis. In the email, [DHS Employee 1] indicated that Ms. Simmons completed a [Identifying Information Redacted] on behalf of her husband and sent a letter to “Susan” at [Identifying Information Redacted]. [DHS Employee 1] stated that although her ([DHS Employee 1]) name appears on the form [Identifying Information Redacted], she did not put her name on the document. [DHS Employee 1] noted that this was a conflict of interest and concluded the email saying, “Please inform ms simmons that this is unethical.”
Information Redacted] said that Ms. Simmons did not identify herself as a DHS employee but as the wife of [Identifying Information Redacted]. According to [Identifying Information Redacted Employee], Ms. Simmons was authorized to provide information on behalf of her husband.

[Identifying Information Redacted Employee] said that Ms. Simmons called customer service to verify that [Identifying Information Redacted] was eligible for [Identifying Information Redacted]. [Identifying Information Redacted Employee] confirmed that she entered notes documenting the phone call as it was occurring. She said that she provided Ms. Simmons with a fax number to send a form [Identifying Information Redacted], which is a [Identifying Information Redacted] form.

E. [Identifying Information Redacted] Records Of Communication With Ms. Simmons

OEIG investigators obtained [Identifying Information Redacted] records, which confirmed that Ms. Simmons twice called [Identifying Information Redacted], on November 20, 2013, concerning [Identifying Information Redacted]’ [Identifying Information Redacted]. A description of each conversation was documented on [Identifying Information Redacted]’ file at [Identifying Information Redacted], which is summarized below.

**Conversation 1**  Ms. Simmons, who is referred to as the [Identifying Information Redacted]’s girlfriend, asks why [Identifying Information Redacted]’ account had been referred to collections. She is told that he had an unpaid balance of [Identifying Information Redacted]. Ms. Simmons responds that the [Identifying Information Redacted] neglected to bill [Identifying Information Redacted] and is informed that [Identifying Information Redacted]. Ms. Simmons then says that she will contact the caseworker.

**Conversation 2**  Ms. Simmons, who is referred to as the [Identifying Information Redacted]’s wife, calls to update [Identifying Information Redacted]. Ms. Simmons says that she will fax a [Identifying Information Redacted] to the attention of the customer service representative ([Identifying Information Redacted Employee]).

F. Interview Of DHS Caseworker Lisa Simmons

The OEIG interviewed DHS Caseworker Lisa Simmons on May 28, 2015 concerning her marriage to a DHS customer and [Identifying Information Redacted] documents that were left in [DHS Employee 1]’ office.

1. Ms. Simmons’ Marriage to [Identifying Information Redacted]

DHS Caseworker Lisa Simmons informed OEIG investigators that she married [Identifying Information Redacted] on [Identifying Information Redacted], and that he moved into

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10 Ms. Simmons was on [confidential information] from DHS from June 9, 2014 through April 27, 2015. The OEIG delayed her interview until her return to work.
her house a week later. Ms. Simmons confirmed that she was aware that on the date of their marriage, [Identifying Information Redacted] was a DHS benefits customer.

OEIG investigators asked Ms. Simmons if a spouse could inform DHS of a change in circumstances, and she replied that she thought a spouse could but was not exactly sure. Ms. Simmons stated that she informed Mr. Willis and [DHS Employee 1] that she had gotten married but was not sure when she informed them. When asked if she told anyone at DHS that she was married, specifically to a DHS customer, Ms. Simmons replied that she did not inform anyone because she did not know that she had to.

Ms. Simmons stated that a DHS customer’s spenddown amount can be affected by income but, according to Ms. Simmons, DHS does not consider a spouse’s income on [Identifying Information Redacted]s. OEIG investigators presented Ms. Simmons with DHS’s policy on when changes should be reported on [Identifying Information Redacted]s. After reviewing the policy, Ms. Simmons acknowledged that she should have reported her marriage to DHS and that her income would have affected [Identifying Information Redacted]’s DHS [Indemnifying Information Redacted]. Ms. Simmons stated that she had never received formal training on these policies and did not intend to violate any DHS policy by not reporting her marriage.

Ms. Simmons said that she sometimes accessed her husband’s DHS case file while at work to determine if it was financially easier to [Identifying Information Redacted] versus adding him to her State health insurance. Ms. Simmons confirmed that she added [Identifying Information Redacted] to health insurance with the State but did not recall when. Ms. Simmons stated that she and her husband discussed canceling his DHS [Identifying Information Redacted] after he was added to her State health insurance.

2. [Identifying Information Redacted] Documents Left in [DHS Employee 1]’ Office

OEIG investigators asked Ms. Simmons about documents regarding her husband’s [Identifying Information Redacted] that were left in [DHS Employee 1]’ office on November 20, 2013. Ms. Simmons acknowledged that she left documents in [DHS Employee 1]’ office but could not recall the code numbers associated with these documents. Nevertheless, when investigators showed her the DHS letter addressed to “Susan” at [Identifying Information Redacted] with the typed name of “Lisa Simmons,” Ms. Simmons denied authoring or signing the letter. Ms. Simmons stated that she had never seen the letter before. Ms. Simmons said that she did not know who “Susan” was and that she never contacted “Susan” or anyone at [Identifying Information Redacted]. Ms. Simmons confirmed that DHS letterhead is available to DHS staff but is not available to DHS customers.

OEIG investigators showed Ms. Simmons the [Identifying Information Redacted] form. Ms. Simmons verified that her handwriting appeared on the form in a note that stated, “Ms [Surname 2] FYI This was sent to [Identifying Information Redacted],” but denied entering any of her husband’s information on the form. Ms. Simmons said that she does not know anything about [Identifying Information Redacted], so she would not have generated the form. Ms. Simmons stated that she could not explain how her handwriting appeared on the split bill transmittal form. Ms. Simmons confirmed that a split bill transmittal form is only available to DHS staff, not to DHS customers.
According to Ms. Simmons, she left documents regarding her husband’s case in [DHS Employee 1]’s office because Mr. Willis had instructed her (Ms. Simmons) not to take action on her husband’s case. Ms. Simmons stated that [DHS Employee 1] became upset when she ([DHS Employee 1]) found [Identifying Information Redacted] for [Identifying Information Redacted] in her office. Ms. Simmons explained that she called [DHS Employee 1] into Mr. Willis’ office so they could sort out what had happened. According to Ms. Simmons, November 20, 2013, was the only time she provided [Identifying Information Redacted] to [DHS Employee 1] on behalf of her husband.

Finally, OEIG investigators showed Ms. Simmons records of communication between her and staff at [Identifying Information Redacted] related to [Identifying Information Redacted]’ file [Identifying Information Redacted]. Although she previously denied having contacted anyone at [Identifying Information Redacted], Ms. Simmons reviewed the records and remarked that she now recalled calling [Identifying Information Redacted] on November 20, 2013, and telling someone that she would fax something over but did not remember what she was supposed to fax. Ms. Simmons denied faxing anything over to “Susan” or the [Identifying Information Redacted] after speaking with Mr. Willis.

IV. ANALYSIS

A. Lisa Simmons Violated DHS Policy By Failing To Notify DHS Of Her Marriage To A DHS Customer

Under DHS policy, an employee shall not participate in or condone fraud, dishonesty, or misrepresentation in the performance of duties. Moreover, every recipient of [Identifying Information Redacted] is obligated to report changes in circumstance to DHS, such as income and the number of people living in the house, within ten days.

DHS customer [Identifying Information Redacted] had active cases for [Identifying Information Redacted] when he married DHS Caseworker Lisa Simmons on [Identifying Information Redacted], and, according to Ms. Simmons, he moved into her house about a week after their marriage. Under DHS policy, he had ten days to report any change that affected his assistance. However, he did not report any change, and Ms. Simmons’ income was not budgeted into his cases. Thus, any benefit that [Identifying Information Redacted] received after his date of marriage was improper because it was based on a misrepresentation of his circumstances.

Ms. Simmons participated in and condoned this misrepresentation by not informing DHS of her marriage to a DHS customer. Ms. Simmons confirmed that she was aware that [Identifying Information Redacted] had active DHS benefits cases when she married him. Furthermore, Ms. Simmons stated that she contemplated putting [Identifying Information Redacted] on her State health insurance when they married, and did add him to her health insurance in July 2013, but even then, nothing was done to cancel his DHS benefits cases. This clearly shows that Ms. Simmons was well aware that [Identifying Information Redacted] was receiving DHS benefits and that no

11 DHS Administrative Directive 01.02.03.040.
12 PM 01-02-02-a; PM 01-02-02.
changes had been reported to DHS after they were married, even though she was a DHS caseworker who knew or should have known of the reporting requirements.

In any event, after reviewing the relevant DHS policy, Ms. Simmons admitted that her marriage to a DHS customer should have been reported. Ms. Simmons asserted that the reason she did not report a change in circumstance was that she did not receive formal training on DHS policy and therefore was not aware of her obligation to report a change in circumstances. However, as a DHS employee, it is her obligation to be aware of DHS policies. In fact, as a caseworker who determines eligibility and has processed [Identifying Information Redacted], Ms. Simmons should be especially aware of the policies regarding reporting changes in income and marital status. If Ms. Simmons is unaware of these policies, it certainly calls into question her ability to perform her job competently.

For these reasons, the allegation that Ms. Simmons violated DHS policy by participating in and condoning misrepresentation in the performance of duties is **FOUNDED**.

**B. Lisa Simmons Violated DHS Policy When She Handled Her Husband’s [Identifying Information Redacted]**

Per DHS policy, an employee may not authorize benefits, provide services, or otherwise handle a case for a relative or household member.  

The OEIG investigation revealed that on November 20, 2013, Ms. Simmons left documents regarding her husband’s [Identifying Information Redacted] in [DHS Employee 1]’ office. According to [DHS Employee 1], Ms. Simmons came by [DHS Employee 1]’ office and told [DHS Employee 1] that she (Ms. Simmons) had left documents for her. [DHS Employee 1] said that the documents included a cover letter to [Identifying Information Redacted] on DHS letterhead signed in the name of Ms. Simmons and a [Identifying Information Redacted] form. [DHS Employee 1] told LOA Willis of this exchange with Ms. Simmons and sent him an email documenting the incident on the morning of November 20, 2013. Mr. Willis confirmed these events and stated that Ms. Simmons told him “after the fact” that she left documents regarding her husband’s [Identifying Information Redacted] in [DHS Employee 1]’ office.

Although Ms. Simmons admitted to the OEIG that she left documents regarding her husband’s [Identifying Information Redacted] in [DHS Employee 1]’ office, she denied that the documents were the DHS letter or the [Identifying Information Redacted] form, specifically. According to Ms. Simmons, even though the letter had her name on it and the [Identifying Information Redacted] form included her handwritten note, she had not produced these documents, had not authored them, and had not left them in [DHS Employee 1]’ office.

Not only are Ms. Simmons’ statements regarding these forms incredible, they are contradicted by the evidence. The DHS letter concerns the delivery of a form [Identifying Information Redacted] to “Susan” at [Identifying Information Redacted] and the [Identifying Information Redacted] records of communication show that on exactly the same day as that of the

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13 DHS Administrative Directive 01.02.02.200; see also, DHS Employee Handbook, Section V, “Relatives Applying For or Receiving Services” (“An employee may not authorize assistance, benefits, or services to relatives, household members…”).
DHS letter, Ms. Simmons spoke to [Identifying Information Redacted Employee] about faxing a [Identifying Information Redacted] form to [Identifying Information Redacted]’s attention. The [Identifying Information Redacted] bears a handwritten note, which Ms. Simmons admitted was her writing, indicating that this form “was sent to [Identifying Information Redacted] for billing for services date” (emphasis added). In addition, the information contained on both the DHS cover letter and the [Identifying Information Redacted] form are consistent with information that Ms. Simmons admittedly discussed with staff at [Identifying Information Redacted], on the same date that both documents were generated.

Furthermore, Ms. Simmons credibility in general is questionable based on inconsistent statements she made regarding phone calls to [Identifying Information Redacted]. Ms. Simmons originally denied speaking with anyone at [Identifying Information Redacted] and only admitted to conversations once confronted with records documenting the calls.

There is sufficient evidence to find that Ms. Simmons handled her husband’s case when she created the DHS cover letter and the [Identifying Information Redacted] form authorizing benefits for her husband. First, [DHS Employee 1]’ and Mr. Willis’ accounts of the events on November 20, 2013, are credible, including Mr. Willis’ statement that Ms. Simmons told him she worked on her husband’s case. Second, only DHS employees have access to DHS letterhead and the [Identifying Information Redacted] forms. The cover letter is in Ms. Simmons’ name and appeared on the same day she had a conversation with [Identifying Information Redacted Employee] at [Identifying Information Redacted], in which Ms. Simmons told [Identifying Information Redacted Employee] that she would fax the [Identifying Information Redacted] form to her. Third, the form [Identifying Information Redacted] has Ms. Simmons’ handwritten note indicating that the document had been faxed to [Identifying Information Redacted]. And fourth, Ms. Simmons admitted that she left documents concerning her husband’s case in the office of [DHS Employee 1]. Even if these documents were not the DHS cover letter (with her name) and the form [Identifying Information Redacted] (with her handwriting), she still handled her husband’s case by producing documents that pertained to it.

Ms. Simmons was not [Identifying Information Redacted]’ caseworker, she was his wife. Yet she generated documentation for action to be taken on his case that should have been generated, if at all, by his caseworker. Even if Ms. Simmons did not fax the documents to the [Identifying Information Redacted], as she purports, she clearly handled her husband’s [Identifying Information Redacted] by creating these documents and leaving them for [DHS Employee 1]. Therefore, the allegation that Ms. Simmons handled her husband’s [Identifying Information Redacted] in violation of DHS policy is FOUNDED.

V. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Upon completion of this investigation, the OEIG issues the following findings:

- **FOUNDED** – Lisa Simmons violated DHS policy when she failed to notify DHS of her marriage to [Identifying Information Redacted] on [Identifying Information Redacted], or at any point thereafter.
FOUNDED – Lisa Simmons violated DHS policy when, on November 20, 2013, she handled her husband’s [Identifying Information Redacted] by generating documents for action to be taken on the case.

The OEIG recommends that DHS terminate Ms. Simmons’ employment. The OEIG further recommends that DHS seek to determine the exact amount of overpayment made to the [Identifying Information Redacted]’ household and pursue recovery of those funds.

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

Date: July 9, 2015

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

David Sanchez Assistant Inspector General

Joseph Allen Investigator
July 30, 2015

Via e-mail to Fallon Opperman, Deputy Inspector General and Chief of Chicago Division, on behalf of:
Maggie Hickey
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 the Final Report for Cases 13-02420

Dear Executive Inspector General Hickey:

This letter responds to the Final Reports for Cases 13-02420 (attached). The Reports indicate wrongdoing by certain Department of Human Services (DHS) Division of Family and Community Services employees. The Reports recommend a variety of employment-related activity and possible recovery of funds.

Where recommended, DHS is seeking to recover funds. Staff have notified the Department of Healthcare and Family Services for assistance regarding identifying information. In addition, below is a detailed list of employment-related activity by DHS for these Reports.

The redacted information relates to other case files that are unrelated to OEIG Case No. 13-02420.

Case 13-02420

The Report recommends employment termination for Ms. Simmons. The Department is seeking employment termination for her.
As you know, the Collective Bargaining Agreement specifies a process for discipline, including termination. Accordingly, a pre-disciplinary meeting is currently scheduled for all four employees. At that meeting, the charges, their basis and proposed action will be shared with each employee. A rebuttal period will be afforded to them 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,

James T. Dimas
Secretary-designate
March 31, 2016

Via e-mail to Fallon Opperman, Deputy Inspector General and Chief of Chicago Division, on behalf of:
Maggie Hickey
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 the Final Report for Complaint 13-02420

Dear Executive Inspector General Hickey:

This letter updates the response to the Final Report for Complaint Number 13-02420. The Report recommended employment termination and recovery of an overpayment. Lisa Simmons grieved her discharge. The grievance was denied at the third level, and forwarded to the fourth level with the Department of Central Management Services. No hearing has been scheduled yet. Regarding the recovery of funds, an overpayment of $127,000 has been established, and the Department continues to bill. If the bill is not paid by May 22, 2016, other collection actions will start (per statute).

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

Regards,

James T. Dimas
Secretary-designate
September 16, 2020

Via e-mail to Fallon Opperman, Deputy Inspector General and Chief of Chicago Division, on behalf of:
Susan M. Haling
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: Updated Response to the Final Report for Complaint 13-02420

Dear Executive Inspector General Haling:

This letter updates a previous response for the Final Report for Complaint Number 13-02420. The Final Report detailed wrongdoing on the part of case worker Lisa Simmons. The Department of Human Services (DHS) originally responded on July 30, 2015, and provided an updated response on March 31, 2016.

At that time, DHS had established an overpayment debt in the amount of $127, and was also awaiting the grievance process to conclude with respect to Ms. Simmons. The overpayment was fully collected on April 4, 2017. The grievance process has now concluded. On February 28, 2020, a grievance resolution prior to arbitration was reached with Ms. Simmons, wherein she agreed to either resign by May 1, 2020, or be considered discharged. No resignation was received from Ms. Simmons. Accordingly, personnel records indicate she was discharged.

With the personnel activity complete and the overpayment collected, DHS considers this matter closed. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Robert J. Grindle, DHS’ Ethics Officer.

Regards,

/s/ Grace B. Hou by /s/ Robert J. Grindle

Grace B. Hou
Secretary