



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 the hiring of **Katelyn Ruyle** as an Investigative Assistant in its Springfield office.

EEC Levies Record \$193K Fine for Revolving Door Violations

On June 24, 2020, the Executive Ethics Commission publicly issued its decision regarding Michael Wons, a former employee of the Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT). The EEC concluded, based on stipulations by the parties, that Mr. Wons violated the revolving door provisions of the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act on four separate occasions. The EEC fined Mr. Wons \$193,689.60, which is the largest fine ever levied under the Ethics Act.

As the OEIG investigation uncovered, Mr. Wons participated personally and substantially in an Illinois Student Assistance (ISAC) contract awarded to a company called PayIt within the year preceding the termination of his State employment. DoIT had intergovernmental agreements and statements of work with ISAC, under which ISAC was to provide DoIT with IT resources. Under one such statement of work worth \$58,000 signed in February 2017, Mr. Wons was the signatory, the “business owner,” and main point of contact at DoIT for purposes of the procurement, development, and roll-out of PayIt’s mobile app for the Illinois First technology program.

Mr. Wons was classified as a “c-list” employee (after 5 ILCS 430/5-45(c)), and thus required to notify the OEIG prior to accepting non-State employment for a period of one year following the termination of State employment. Mr. Wons had participated in ethics training outlining this requirement, and in May 2017, DoIT’s general counsel had provided him with information regarding the revolving door process and his c-list status.

Prior to his leaving State employment in January 2018, Mr. Wons sought a determination from the OEIG about an offer of employment from an employer other than PayIt; the OEIG determined that Mr. Wons was not restricted from accepting that offer of employment. However, Mr. Wons did not notify the OEIG, or any official at DoIT, that he accepted two roles with PayIt in the year following his termination of State employment: first as consultant or advisor starting in January 2018, and second as an employee starting in July 2018.

Therefore, in two instances, Mr. Wons failed to notify the OEIG as required, and in two instances, he accepted compensation prohibited by the Ethics Act because he had personally and substantially participated in the award of a contract to PayIt. The fine was based on a recommendation by the parties. The decision, [Haling v. Wons \(20-EEC-001\)](#), is available on the OEIG’s website.

Prohibited Political Activity Report Released

Another OEIG investigation report recently concluded that an Illinois Department of Employment Security employee engaged in prohibited political activity: The employee received a seven-day suspension. A copy of the report, [In re: Dwayne Truss \(Case #19-00361\)](#), can be found on the OEIG’s website.