



# City of Chicago



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Public Library Staffing Audit

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# CITY OF CHICAGO OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

## CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY STAFFING AUDIT FOLLOW-UP INQUIRY



REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL



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**MAY 7, 2019**

**TO THE MAYOR, CITY COUNCIL, CITY CLERK, CITY  
TREASURER, AND RESIDENTS OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO:**

The City of Chicago Office of Inspector General (OIG) has completed a follow-up to its May 2018 audit of the Chicago Public Library's (CPL) staffing plan. Based on CPL's responses, OIG concludes that the Department has not fully implemented any of the four corrective actions related to the audit findings and recommendations. CPL plans to implement OIG's third and fourth recommendations later this year, but only partially implemented the second recommendation and does not intend to pursue any corrective action on the first.

The purpose of the May 2018 audit was to determine whether CPL's staffing plan followed industry guidance and constituted an effective and efficient tool for allocating human resources among libraries. Our audit found that CPL's staffing plan did not optimally align library staffing with community needs.

Based on the results of the audit, OIG recommended that CPL conduct a staff workload analysis to determine the amount of time employees in each job classification spent on each of their activities. OIG also recommended that CPL involve stakeholders—such as its Board of Directors, library employees, and community members—in redesigning its staffing plan around factors that will ensure libraries are appropriately staffed to meet community needs. CPL should also replace qualitative descriptors (e.g., "large" population size) with numeric ranges for factors that are quantifiable. OIG recommended that after CPL redesigned the staffing plan, it should consistently and completely apply the factors to allocate the appropriate staff to each library location. Finally, CPL should develop a process to evaluate the effectiveness of the staffing plan on a periodic basis and should modify it as needed to adjust to changes in library services and community needs.

In response to the audit, CPL described corrective actions it would take regarding some audit recommendations, but disagreed with OIG's recommendation to disseminate the plan to all library employees and declined to involve CPL's Board of Directors and community members in redesigning the plan.

In January 2019, OIG inquired about corrective actions taken by CPL. In its April 2019 response, CPL stated it has chosen not to conduct a staff workload analysis to

understand the amount of time staff spend on specific activities. CPL simplified the staffing plan by removing hybrid library classifications, but has not quantified factors where possible, and still declines to involve the CPL Board of Directors, library employees, and community members in redesigning the plan. CPL has not yet reviewed the categorization of libraries within the staffing plan or developed a formal process for evaluating the plan's effectiveness. It expects to start those processes in the third quarter of 2019. Then, in the fourth quarter, CPL intends to create a policy to codify how and when the staffing plan should be applied, evaluated, and updated.

We urge the Department to fully implement all corrective actions in order to best align library staffing with community needs. Below, we summarize the audit findings and recommendations, as well as CPL's response to our follow-up inquiry.

We thank the staff of CPL for their assistance during the audit and follow-up inquiry.

Respectfully,



Joseph M. Ferguson  
Inspector General  
City of Chicago

## FOLLOW-UP RESULTS

In January 2019, OIG followed up on its May 2018 Audit of Chicago Public Library Staffing.<sup>1</sup> CPL responded by describing the corrective actions it has taken since receiving the audit and providing supporting documentation. Below, we summarize OIG's finding, the associated recommendations, and the status of CPL's corrective actions. Our follow-up inquiry did not observe or test implementation of the new procedures; thus, we make no determination as to their effectiveness, which would require a new audit with full testing.

OIG uses four categories to describe the Status of Corrective Action:

- **IMPLEMENTED** - The department has implemented actions that may reasonably be expected to resolve the core findings/concerns noted in the audit.
- **PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED** - The department has implemented actions in response to the audit, but the actions do not fully address the findings/concerns raised in the audit.
- **PENDING IMPLEMENTATION** - The department has initiated action that, if fully implemented, may reasonably be expected to resolve the core findings of the audit. However, the department has not completed implementation.
- **NOT IMPLEMENTED** - The department has not initiated or implemented any actions responsive to OIG's findings.

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<sup>1</sup> The 2018 CPL Staffing Audit is available on the OIG website: <https://igchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CPL-Staffing-Audit.pdf>.

**FINDING:****CPL'S STAFFING PLAN DOES NOT OPTIMALLY ALIGN LIBRARY STAFFING WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS****OIG RECOMMENDATION 1:**

Based on workforce planning guidance from the U.S. Government Accountability Office and the American Library Association, OIG recommended that CPL conduct a workload analysis to determine the amount of time spent on all activities by staff in each job classification. This analysis would provide information necessary for determining how many and what type of staff are required to serve community needs at each library. It would also help identify any inefficient use of CPL's human resources, such as clerks and librarians regularly sorting and shelving books—tasks normally done more cost-effectively by library pages. We recommended that CPL then incorporate the results of the analysis into its staffing plan.

**STATUS OF CORRECTIVE ACTION: NOT IMPLEMENTED**

In response to the audit, CPL stated that it “works with the Department of Human Resources to review positions and responsibilities needed to provide library programs and services.” CPL also said that “as workload reviews are completed for vacated positions, the analysis serves as the basis for the CPL staffing plan.”

In response to OIG's follow-up inquiry, however, CPL said it is not conducting workload analyses. Specifically, CPL stated that “at this time, CPL is not reclassifying positions but reassigning them to locations where there is a need.” For example, CPL said that teen librarians have been assigned to new branches with teen YOUmedia digital labs.

**OIG RECOMMENDATION 2:**

OIG recommended that CPL involve stakeholders such as library employees, as well as community members and its Board of Directors, in redesigning its staffing plan around factors that will ensure libraries are appropriately staffed to meet community needs. The redesigned plan should include only factors for which

complete and accurate data is available for all library locations. The plan should be designed to assign each library location to a single category, eliminating the use of hybrid classifications. CPL should also replace qualitative descriptors (e.g., "large" population size) with numeric ranges for factors that are quantifiable.

**STATUS OF CORRECTIVE ACTION: PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED**

In response to OIG's follow-up inquiry, CPL provided a revised staffing plan (see Appendix A) that eliminates the use of hybrid classifications.<sup>2</sup> However, it does not address the other design flaws OIG noted, such as the use of qualitative factors for quantifiable characteristics, and the use of zip codes rather than U.S. Census tracts for population size.

In addition, CPL declines to involve stakeholders in the redesign of its staffing plan, stating that, "It would not be to the advantage of the Department to work with current employees, the library board and/or the community in redesigning its staffing plan. This could lead to the assumption that hiring guidelines and practices can be changed at the discretion of CPL." OIG maintains that seeking stakeholder input would provide valuable information for CPL's ideal staffing allocation, and that stakeholders would understand that CPL must work within the City's hiring policies.

**OIG RECOMMENDATION 3:**

OIG recommended that after CPL redesigns the staffing plan, it consistently and completely apply the factors to allocate the appropriate staff to each library location. OIG also recommended that CPL send the plan to library staff so that everyone is aware of the rationale for CPL's staff allocations and has an opportunity to offer input for future revisions.

**STATUS OF CORRECTIVE ACTION: PENDING IMPLEMENTATION**

In response to OIG's follow-up inquiry, CPL stated that it has not updated the library classifications "due to workload and capacity," but expects to begin the review in the third quarter of 2019. CPL said that a staff member has been reassigned to assist in gathering the data needed for the review

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix B for the revised library classification assignments.

Regarding achieving its targeted staff allocations, CPL said that it “is not able to maintain the FTE described in the staffing plan due to attrition and vacancy rates.”

Finally, CPL reiterated that it does not intend to share the plan with front line staff.

#### OIG RECOMMENDATION 4:

OIG recommended that CPL develop a process to evaluate the effectiveness of the staffing plan on a periodic basis, and modify it as needed to adjust to changes in library services and community needs. To promote consistent and transparent use of the plan, CPL should implement a policy detailing how it will be applied, evaluated, and updated going forward.

#### STATUS OF CORRECTIVE ACTION: **PENDING IMPLEMENTATION**

In response to OIG’s follow-up inquiry, CPL stated that it has “not yet developed the formal process and metrics” for evaluating the effectiveness of its staffing plan, but it intends to do so beginning in the third quarter of 2019. CPL has not created a policy to codify how and when the staffing plan is applied, evaluated, and updated, but expects to do so by the fourth quarter of 2019.



## APPENDIX A: CPL BRANCH STAFFING CATEGORIES

This is the staffing plan CPL provided with its April 2019 response to OIG's inquiry.

### CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY

#### Branch Staffing Categories

##### Factors:

- Branch activity levels: circulation, Holds filled and Holds requested, program attendance, collection size, computer use.
- Number of service points
- Public PCs
- Unique characteristics of the community
  - Population in local zip code
  - # of schools in the service area
  - # of persons 0-5 in the community and under 17
  - # of persons with a language other than English
  - User educational needs
  - Safety and security challenges

##### Category A: Regional Libraries, staffing = 40-45 FTE

- Very large facility (60,000 sq. ft. +) with expansive service areas on multiple floors
- Open 7 days, 68 hours per week
- Multiple reference service points on multiple floors
- Extensive fiction and non-fiction collection, as well as materials in multiple formats
- Specialized and archival collections
- Computer Commons with 90+ public PCs
- Heavy afterschool and weekend use
- Large public meeting spaces with heavy community use

##### Category B: Staffing 8-12 FTE

- Large, dense population in zip code area
- Over 9,000 visitors per month
- Over 8,000 circulations per month
- Processes approximately 2,000 Holds per month
- Two or more reference service points in different parts of the building
- 12+ schools in the service area
- Heavy afterschool use
- Heavy computer use
- Heavy community room use

**Category C: Staffing 6-9 FTE**

- Large population in zip code area or branch serves a broad area
- Over 6,000 visitors per month
- Over 5,000-8,000 circulations per month
- Processes approximately 1,500 Holds per month
- Two or more reference service points in different parts of the building
- 7-10 schools in the service area
- Heavy afterschool use
- Heavy computer use
- Heavy community room use

**Category D: Staffing 8-12 FTE**

- Large population in zip code area
- Lower socioeconomic, employment, literacy, and school achievement rates
- Challenging security issues
- 5,000-12,000 visitors per month
- 1,500-6,000 circulations per month
- Processes approximately 1,500 Holds per month
- 1-3 reference service points in different parts of the building
- 10+ schools in the service area
- Heavy afterschool use
- Heavy computer use

**Category E: Staffing 5.5-8 FTE**

- Population in service area at or below Chicago's population density rate
- Less than 6,000 visitors per month
- 1,500-5000 circulations per month
- Processes approximately 600 Holds per month
- One or two reference service points
- 8 or fewer schools in the service area
- Heavy afterschool use
- Heavy computer use
- Heavy community room use

## APPENDIX B: CPL 2019 LIBRARY CLASSIFICATIONS

This table, provided by CPL in its April 2019 response, shows the staffing category of each library.

Branch/Regional	Staffing Category	Branch/Regional	Staffing Category
Albany Park	B	Lincoln-Belmont	B
Altgeld	E	Little Italy	B
Archer Heights	C	Little Village	D
Austin	D	Logan Square	B
Austin-Irving	B	Lozano	D
Avalon	D	Mabel Manning	D
Back of the Yards	D	Mayfair	C
Beverly	C	McKinley Park	C
Bezazian	D	Merlo	B
Blackstone	B	Mount Greenwood	C
Brainerd	E	Near North	B
Brighton Park	C	North Austin	D
Bucktown-Wicker Park	B	North Pulaski	C
Budlong Woods	B	Northtown	B
Canaryville	E	Oriole Park	C
Chicago Bee	D	Portage-Cragin	C
Chicago Lawn	C	Pullman	D
Chinatown	B	Roden	C
Clearing	C	Rogers Park	B
Coleman, Bessie	D	Scottsdale	E
Daley, Richard J.	C	Sherman Park	E
Daley, Richard M.	D	South Chicago	D
Douglass	D	South Shore	D
Dunning	B	Thurgood Marshall	D
Galewood		Toman	D
Dunning/Galewood		Uptown	B
Edgebrook	B	Vodak/East Side	C
Edgewater	B	Walker	E
Gage Park	E	West Belmont	C
Garfield Ridge	C	West Chicago Avenue	D
Greater Grand Crossing	C	West Englewood	D
Hall	C	West Lawn	C
Hegewisch	E	West Loop (new, opened 2018)	TBD
Humboldt Park	D	West Pullman	D
Independence	B	West Town	B
Jefferson Park	C	Whitney Young	D
Kelly	D	Wrightwood	C
King	C	Sulzer Regional	A
Legler* (see regoinals)	D	Woodson Regional	A
Lincoln Park	B	Legler Regional (to open 2019)	A

## MISSION

The City of Chicago Office of Inspector General (OIG) is an independent, nonpartisan oversight agency whose mission is to promote economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity in the administration of programs and operations of City government. OIG achieves this mission through,

- administrative and criminal investigations by its Investigations Section;
- performance audits of City programs and operations by its Audit and Program Review Section;
- inspections, evaluations and reviews of City police and police accountability programs, operations, and policies by its Public Safety Section; and
- compliance audit and monitoring of City hiring and employment activities by its Hiring Oversight Unit.

From these activities, OIG issues reports of findings and disciplinary and other recommendations,

- to assure that City officials, employees, and vendors are held accountable for violations of laws and policies;
- to improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of government operations; and
- to prevent, detect, identify, expose, and eliminate waste, inefficiency, misconduct, fraud, corruption, and abuse of public authority and resources.

## AUTHORITY

OIG's authority to produce reports of its findings and recommendations is established in the City of Chicago Municipal Code §§ 2-56-030(d), -035(c), -110, -230, and 240.

*Cover image courtesy of City of Chicago Department of Fleet and Facility Management*

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TO SUGGEST WAYS TO IMPROVE CITY GOVERNMENT, VISIT:  
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