



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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Use of AI in the Workplace

More and more users are turning to artificial intelligence (AI) applications to assist in research and drafting documents, including in the workplace. According to some surveys, approximately one in five U.S. employees report using AI frequently at work, with almost half reporting that they use it a few times a year.

Given the prevalence of AI, it is unsurprising that employers and others are regulating its use. For instance, the Illinois Human Rights Act was amended effective January 1, 2026, to prohibit the use of AI in employment practices when it has the effect of discriminating against individuals on the basis of protected classes, and to require employers to disclose the use of AI for certain employment practices. In addition, state agencies may have policies relating to the use of AI by their employees in the workplace. A recent OEIG investigation illustrates that employees must heed agency AI policy, particularly when using confidential agency data.

The OEIG received allegations that an Illinois Housing Development Authority (IDHA) attorney used a personal law firm email address for IHDA related business, used his IDHA email address when conducting secondary employment matters, and forwarded numerous IDHA emails to his private firm address. As part of the investigation into these allegations, the OEIG also discovered emails related to the employee's usage of AI tools.

In December 2024, IDHA's General Counsel issued guidance to the legal staff relating to use of AI, including a reminder that employees should not be inputting or uploading IDHA's confidential or proprietary information into public websites. The OEIG found employee emails that contained AI-related information or prompts. For instance, a May 2025 email from the employee's IDHA account to his law firm email that related to an IDHA real estate project; the text stated that "I need a memo in my voice but professional with Bold Sections Identified by bullet points;" the message further contained fact-specific information for the IDHA project, such as a capital stack summary and the parties involved. In his OEIG interview, the employee claimed that he used AI as a "form" to help put together the information for the large real estate deal in a way he could articulate.

Given other evidence in the case, the OEIG found that the employee violated IDHA policies when he engaged in outside employment activity on state time and using state resources and represented a client in a private matter that could be expected to have contrary interests to IDHA. With respect to the use of AI, the OEIG concluded that the employee mishandled confidential information in violation of policy. As a result of the investigation, IDHA terminated the employee and implemented additional AI compliance measures.

Employees should consult their agency's policies and guidance for the use of AI. State agencies should be considering how AI might impact their work, and create or clarify policies relating to appropriate use of AI. The OEIG's investigative report for [Case No. 25-01872](#) more fully describes the IDHA investigation.