



Office of the Chief Judge  
Quarterly Report  
July 1, 2025-September 30, 2025

Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center  
Iris Rivera  
Director of Compliance  
2245. W. Ogden Ave., Chicago, IL 60612

Iris Rivera, Director of Compliance (DOC) for the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center (CCJTDC), respectfully submits this quarterly report pursuant to Section V(B) of the [Employment Plan](#).

## I. Introduction

This document constitutes the tenth quarterly report<sup>1</sup> issued under the tenure of the current Director of Compliance (DOC). During the reporting period, the Human Resources Department initiated hiring sequences for positions subject to Shakman oversight across various operational divisions, including but not limited to the Division of Resident Advocacy and Quality of Life; Division of Programs and Professional Services; Division of Admissions, Security, and Control; and the Division of Resident Daily Life. This report details recruitment activities arising from hiring sequences initiated in the second quarter of 2025 and concluded in the third quarter, as well as those both initiated and concluded within the third quarter.

## II. Employment Plan Training

Pre-recorded training modules have been updated to incorporate questions and concerns raised by employees regarding Shakman-covered hiring processes, ensuring the content remains responsive, informative, and aligned with compliance objectives. The modules updated for calendar year 2025 remain accessible on PolicyTech.<sup>2</sup> The training material is accessible via the links provided- [Employee Employment Plan Training](#), [Interview Panel Employment Plan Training](#), [Human Resource Employment Plan Training](#) and [Supervisor Employment Plan Training](#). Training materials<sup>3</sup> remain

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<sup>1</sup> It is the responsibility of the DOC to prepare and submit quarterly reports within 30 days following the conclusion of each quarter to the Office of the Chief Judge and the Superintendent. These reports must provide a summary of activities undertaken during the preceding quarter, including audit initiatives, identified violations of the employment plan, allegations of unlawful political discrimination and the outcomes of related investigations, remedial issues, and corrective measures implemented by the CCJTDC.

<sup>2</sup> An online tool that helps organizations manage their policies, procedures, and important documents in one place. It ensures that employees can easily access the latest versions of policies and training materials, making it simpler to stay informed and compliant with workplace rules and regulations ensuring continuous availability for staff.

<sup>3</sup> No amendments to the Employment Plan have been proposed or adopted at this time. In the event that amendments are approved, corresponding updates to training materials will be implemented to ensure alignment with the revised provisions.

subject to annual review and are required to be completed alongside formal updates to the Employment Plan. As of the current reporting period, 76% of the workforce has completed the Annual Employment Plan Training, 100 % of mid-level managers and relevant personnel have fulfilled the Supervisor Employment Plan Training requirement, 100% of interview panel members have completed the interview panel employment plan training, and all assigned Human Resource personnel have viewed the human resource employment plan training module.

The Human Resources Department has conducted annual interviewer training emphasizing panelist responsibilities, ethical practices, and structured techniques. The training is currently being updated to directly support specific objectives outlined in the Employment Plan, including consistency in candidate evaluation and documentation standards.

### III. Recruitment Process

This quarter, the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center (CCJTDC) strengthened its recruitment strategy for the Youth Detention Specialist role by prioritizing diverse candidate pools across educational backgrounds and professional experience. In alignment with the minimum qualifications outlined by the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, CCJTDC assessed a large pool of college graduates who demonstrated critical academic preparation and strong capacity for professional development in trauma-informed care and structured environment safety. Targeted initiatives included diversifying interview panels<sup>4</sup> and extending candidate evaluation sessions into evening hours designed to engage working professionals currently active in social impact fields.

#### A. Monitored Interviews

The following interviews were conducted under monitored conditions at the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center:

- **July 17, 2026** – Custodial Worker
- **July 23–25, 2025** – Youth Detention Specialist
- **August 1, 6, 18, 19, 22, 25–27, 29, 2026** – Youth Detention Specialist
- **September 2, 3, 5, 8–10, 12, 17, 2026** – Youth Detention Specialist
- **September 16, 2026** – Food Service Worker

#### B. Monitored Ranking Sessions

Candidate ranking discussions for the vacancies listed below were conducted with formal oversight and documentation, either in person at the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center or via a secure virtual platform:

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<sup>4</sup> Interview Panel composition and eligibility must follow guidelines outlined in Section IV.G and Section VI.E, including diversity representation, required training and certification, and conflict of interest restrictions. Panel members must be at or above the pay grade of the vacant position unless approved by HR and the Superintendent.

- **July 9, 2026** – Laundry Worker (CCJTDC)
- **July 10, 2026** – Video Analyst (Teams platform)
- **July 11, 2026** – Barber and Cosmetologist (CCJTDC)
- **July 16, 2026** – Project Director II (CCJTDC)
- **July 21, 2026** – Quality Assurance Compliance Analyst (Teams platform)
- **July 30, 2026** – Administrative Assistant IV (CCJTDC)
- **July 31, 2026** – Custodial Worker II (CCJTDC)
- **August 11, 2026** – Youth Detention Specialist (CCJTDC)
- **August 28, 2026** – Youth Detention Specialist (CCJTDC)
- **September 2, 2026** – Youth Detention Specialist (CCJTDC)
- **September 11, 2026** – Youth Detention Specialist (CCJTDC)
- **September 16, 2026** – Youth Detention Specialist (CCJTDC)

C. Compliance Meetings

A compliance meeting was held at JTDC on September 3, 2025, and September 18, 2025, via Zoom.

IV. Validation Meetings<sup>5</sup>

At the outset of the quarter, validation meetings with the DOC were held regularly to ensure procedural oversight in the hiring of Youth Detention Specialists (YDS) and Rapid Response Team (RRT) personnel. While the scheduled validation meeting on August 20, 2025, did not occur—resulting in YDS candidates advancing through the hiring process outside of established protocols—the process resumed thereafter. The Human Resources Director acknowledged that conferring with the DOC on disputed applicants listed on the preliminary Validated Eligibility List is a necessary protocol to ensure proper review. Going forward, JTDC will ensure that all validation meeting outcomes, including the resolution of any disagreements<sup>6</sup>, are properly documented and uploaded to the posting file<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> A validation meeting is a structured review session held during the hiring process to ensure that candidate evaluations are consistent, fair, and aligned with established qualifications and selection criteria. In the event of a disputed applicant, the Human Resources Director and the DOC will meet and confer in good faith to reach a resolution.

<sup>6</sup> The Employment Plan § VI.G.7, mandates that disputes over Minimum Qualifications be resolved in favor of inclusion, disputes over Preferred Qualifications be resolved against inclusion, and all determinations be clearly recorded.

<sup>7</sup> An electronic posting file is a digital repository used to store and manage documentation related to hiring processes, including meeting records and procedural determinations.

## V. Auditing Posting Files

### 1. Assessment & Ranking of Candidates

Auditing of the Project Director II posting file revealed a scoring range error in the candidate assessment criteria. Although the issue was identified in the second quarter, no corrective action was taken to align all candidate evaluations with the standard interview scoring scale. This failure to implement necessary adjustments compromised the consistency and fairness of the assessment scale<sup>8</sup> for the position<sup>9</sup>.

The Video Analyst ranking meeting reflected a mixed level of alignment with the requirement to assess minimum competencies.<sup>10</sup> Internal candidates that demonstrated limited familiarity with the core job responsibilities, lacked relevant experience, and provided vague or non-substantive responses during the evaluation were advanced in the hiring process based primarily on perceived potential and trainability. While such attributes may be considered supplementary, using them as the principal basis for recommendation can be inherently subjective. Advancing internal candidates who do not demonstrate the minimum competencies required for specialized roles—based primarily on perceived potential or trainability—can introduce subjectivity into the hiring process. Promotion from within is a valued practice at CCJTDC, but it must be grounded in consistent, competency-based criteria applied equally to all candidates<sup>11</sup> who possess the minimum competencies required to perform the essential functions of the position.

A review of panel evaluations and ranking meeting notes for Youth Detention Specialists revealed inconsistencies in candidate evaluations. Candidates with relevant experience and demonstrated competencies were occasionally evaluated lower or not recommended for hire due to vague interview

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<sup>8</sup> See *Employment Plan*, Section VI: General Hiring Process, Subsection I: Interview of Candidates, Item 4: Evaluation Form.

<sup>9</sup> One panelist's use of a non-standard scoring scale—assigning half points instead of whole numbers—introduced several issues: it created inconsistencies in candidate evaluations, risked inflating or deflating final scores, violated established employment plan interview protocols, and complicated the DOC's score verification process.

<sup>10</sup> For higher ranked internal candidates, the panelists provided detailed feedback on job-specific knowledge, policy familiarity, and relevant experience, indicating a clear evaluation of required competencies.

<sup>11</sup> In instances where specialized vacancies have not been designated internal candidate preference, and external candidates are under consideration, evaluative criteria must be applied consistently. Attributes such as potential and trainability, if considered, must be uniformly assessed across all candidate pools. When comparing internal and external candidates, advancing internal applicants based on potential and trainability—while external candidates meet objective competencies—can introduce bias, especially if cultural familiarity is weighed more heavily than demonstrated qualifications. Evaluation must remain grounded in consistent, job-related criteria to ensure fairness and integrity in the selection process.

responses<sup>12</sup>, while others with limited experience and unclear understanding of the role were recommended based on perceived potential or trainability.<sup>13</sup>

Additionally, the same candidates received varying assessments across panels<sup>14</sup>, with discrepancies in how strengths, weaknesses, and red flags (e.g., lack of research of position, scheduling conflicts, boundary issues) were weighed.<sup>15</sup> The use of subjective descriptors such as “average candidate,” “great candidate,” or “solid candidate” lacked consistent alignment with established evaluation criteria, and scoring did not always reflect the narrative feedback provided.<sup>16</sup>

These findings suggest a need for clearer guidance on interviewer training to ensure consistent application of competency-based criteria, in accordance with the Employment Plan.

## 2. Documentation

A posting file audit revealed recurring issues with incomplete documentation<sup>17</sup>, including missing Shakman Requests to Hire, absent candidate licenses, incorrect job descriptions, and delayed validated eligibility lists and tabulated ranking scores. While the HR team has made notable documentation progress since the preceding quarter, required documents are often not uploaded before extending job offers. To maintain procedural integrity, all documentation must be reviewed and finalized prior to any offer of employment.

The submission of tabulated interview scores and preliminary applicant eligibility lists remain inconsistent and are often not provided in a timely manner<sup>18</sup> for DOC reviews prior to scheduled ranking meetings.<sup>19</sup> This issue is particularly concerning given prior discrepancies identified in the candidate ranking lists, which underscores the need for strict adherence to established procedures.

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<sup>12</sup> Evaluative language for some applicants was cited as a reason not to recommend for hire, while for others, similar responses were interpreted as indicators of potential and trainability. This inconsistent use of language raises concerns about the uniform application of evaluative standards and adherence to the Employment Plan’s requirement to assess minimum competencies.

<sup>13</sup> Evaluations must be grounded in clearly defined criteria to ensure that all candidates are assessed equitably and that hiring decisions reflect merit rather than perception.

<sup>14</sup> The panelists notes reflect a mix of thoughtful insights and informal commentary, but they lack consistency in structure, depth, and reference to defined competencies.

<sup>15</sup> A lack of candidate research on CCJTDC’s mission, population, and operations was cited as a significant concern in some evaluations yet overlooked in others where candidates were still recommended for hire. Additionally, mandatory scheduling requirements were applied inconsistently across candidate assessments. These inconsistencies may reflect subjective interpretation rather than adherence to uniform evaluative criteria.

<sup>16</sup> Subjective descriptors without consistent reference to competency-based criteria.

<sup>17</sup> The complete posting file for each hire must include: the Shakman request to hire, current position description, notice of job opportunity, contact log, applicant list, validated eligibility list, final interview list, interview panel roster, interview questions, testing protocols, documented conflicts of interest, interview evaluation forms, scored interview list, ranking meeting notes, interview panel ranking form, and justification to hire with written explanation pursuant to Section VI.L, if applicable. It must also include the grant of authority, NPCC, and any additional documentation related to the selection and ranking of the chosen candidate.

<sup>18</sup> This procedural requirement is essential to ensure accurate validation of candidate scores. Failure to upload candidate ranking scores in a timely manner increases the risk of discrepancies in candidate placement.

<sup>19</sup> These delays hinder the ability to conduct thorough, informed evaluations.

Improvements have been observed in candidate engagement through JAZZ HR<sup>20</sup>, association forms, and documentation of inclusion and exclusion applicant decisions by recruiters<sup>21</sup>.

## VI. Merit-Based Compliance and Organizational Transparency

In previous quarterly reports, the DOC issued targeted recommendations to the CCJTDC to enhance adherence to the Employment Plan. These recommendations emphasized the need to: (1) revise job descriptions and qualification criteria to align with current hiring practices, ensuring clearly defined requirements that support equitable applicant screening and validation; (2) conduct validation meetings in a systematic manner to uphold a standardized selection procedure, (3) ensure timely notification to the DOC regarding hiring activities; and (4) improve transparency and access to documentation<sup>22</sup> necessary for procedural auditing and review<sup>23</sup>.

### A. Corrective Action

1. Human Resources has improved the timeliness and consistency of electronic notifications to the DOC regarding hiring decisions.
2. In alignment with the Employment Plan, Human Resources targeted efforts have been made to diversify interview panels and provide interviewer training focused on structured techniques. Additionally, tabulated interview scores are shared with panel members to promote transparency, support structured dialogue, and reinforce fair and consistent candidate evaluation.
3. Documentation of applicants and candidate interactions has improved, enhancing transparency and compliance with permitted contact protocols.
4. Validation meetings are being held to strengthen procedural integrity.
5. Organization job descriptions are now accessible, supporting transparency and alignment with Employment Plan standards.

### B. Recommendations in Compliance with the Employment Plan Guidelines

1. Notification of job description revisions: The DOC has recent access to all job descriptions; however, advance notice must be provided when revisions occur to ensure proper review and compliance in alignment with Employment Plan protocols.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> JazzHR is an applicant tracking system (ATS) designed to streamline the hiring process.

<sup>21</sup> Recruiters have shown improvement in documenting the reasons for applicant inclusion and exclusion during the screening process. This practice is essential for ensuring transparency, accountability, and compliance with the Employment Plan, particularly in demonstrating that decisions are based on objective, job-related criteria.

<sup>22</sup> Document disputes & resolutions – A formal written explanation of any disputes regarding the inclusion or exclusion of applicants from the validated eligibility list, along with the resolution, must be recorded in the electronic posting file along with an NPCC, in accordance with the Employment Plan.

<sup>23</sup> All updated or revised position descriptions, interviewer evaluation forms, and application questions should be submitted to the DOC for review and feedback prior to all postings. Providing timely notification of updates to the posting file is essential to maintain transparency, support collaborative oversight, and uphold procedural integrity.

<sup>24</sup> The DOC was not notified of the revision to the PREA Coordinator job description or the change in the associated step level, which is inconsistent with required notification protocols.

2. Timely access to candidate ranking data: Candidate ranking data, including tabulated interview scores, must be made available to the DOC prior to procedural meetings to allow for meaningful review and validation.
3. Documentation of interview guide revisions: Any changes to interview guides must be communicated to the DOC in advance to ensure transparency and procedural alignment.
4. Validated eligibility lists: Eligibility lists must be finalized and accessible in a timely manner, especially during mass hiring initiatives involving large applicant pools.
5. Timely notification of employment actions: The DOC must receive prompt notice of promotions, terminations, resignations, and access to the “Do Not Hire/Rehire” list to maintain oversight and compliance.
6. Access to internal candidate preference lists: Finalized internal candidate preference lists must be shared with the DOC to support fair and consistent advancement decisions.
7. Ranking meeting timelines: Ranking meetings should be held within three business days of the final interview to ensure timely evaluation and decision-making.
8. Ongoing validation meetings: Regular validation meetings must include documentation of applicant inclusion and exclusion discussions, along with resolution details and uploaded to the corresponding posting files to ensure transparency and compliance.
9. Clear communication of scoring framework changes: JTDC must ensure that all future changes to interview scoring frameworks are clearly communicated and made accessible to the DOC in a timely manner to support transparency and procedural consistency.

### C. Substantial Compliance

On July 19, 2022, the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center consented to the entry of an Agreed Order by the District Court. The Agreed Order for the CCJTDC provides the framework for the CCJTDC to implement additional policies and procedures to ensure that all aspects of employment are free from unlawful political discrimination. The CCJTDC has the burden of showing that it remains in Substantial Compliance with the Consent Decrees and Agreed Order.

Instances of technical violations observed this quarter were primarily related to documentation deficiencies and procedural oversights. While such issues are not uncommon, they underscore the ongoing need for improved operational transparency and strict adherence to established protocols. A key concern remains the lack of timely access to documentation prior to procedural meetings, which leaves the DOC with limited opportunity to conduct meaningful review. This practice does not align with Employment Plan requirements and undermines transparency in the hiring process. Expediting employment actions without ensuring complete and accurate documentation—particularly in candidate screening, validation, and evaluation—risks procedural errors and compromises the integrity of employment decisions.

OCJ Human Resources continues to provide critical guidance and support throughout this process, ensuring that procedural improvements are practical, sustainable, and aligned with compliance and operational standards.

At this time, it remains undetermined whether employment decisions have been influenced by political considerations. To preserve the integrity of hiring and advancement processes, current efforts must be reinforced through robust documentation practices and procedural safeguards.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Iris Rivera*

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Director of Compliance  
Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center