



Inspector General

2024-0007-INVI-P — Inappropriate Relationship between Supervisor and Subordinate Employee

Supervisor: Suspected Violations of the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) “Relationships Between Supervisors and Subordinates” Policy and “Standards of Conduct” Policy. Not Substantiated

Employee: Suspected violations of the AOC “Career Staffing Plan” Policy, “Relationships Between Supervisors and Subordinates” Policy and “Standards of Conduct” Policy. Not Substantiated

The AOC Office of Inspector General (OIG) received an allegation that a supervisor (Supervisor) hired an employee (Employee) despite their alleged lack of knowledge, skills and ability for the position. Additionally, it was alleged that the Supervisor had a romantic relationship with the Employee. Lastly, the complaint alleged that the Supervisor created a toxic workplace environment and had a long history of bullying, abuse and intimidation related to both routine workspace issues and rumors of the relationship with the Employee. The OIG has referred the toxic workplace allegation to Diversity, Inclusion and Dispute Resolution Office and the Human Capital Management Division for action deemed appropriate.

The investigation revealed that the Employee was hired under Direct-Hire Authority, which can be used when there is a severe shortage of qualified candidates, and exempts applicants from traditional competitive rating and ranking requirements. The Supervisor stated that the Employee’s hiring process included a panel interview, skills test and reference checks. The Supervisor acknowledged that although the Employee’s skills and expertise were not in the exact field, the interview panel agreed that the Employee was the best qualified candidate. A subsequent document review of the Employee’s Direct-Hire packet did not reveal any evidence of violations of the AOC’s Career Staffing Plan policy.

Both parties denied the existence of an inappropriate romantic relationship; however, they did admit to having a “close working relationship” that has garnered negative attention. The Supervisor stated that the rumor of an inappropriate relationship culminated during an instance which both parties, and the Employee’s children, participated in a non-AOC related fishing trip.

Forensic exams conducted on the AOC-owned cellular phones issued to the Supervisor and Employee did not produce evidence of an inappropriate relationship between the supervisor and subordinate. A review of the subjects’ AOC-owned email accounts also failed to produce any evidence of an inappropriate relationship. Interviews and subsequent document reviews did not reveal evidence of any violations of AOC’s “Relationships Between Supervisors and Subordinates” policy or the AOC’s “Standards of Conduct” policy.

Final Management Action: The OIG did not substantiate the allegations of AOC policy violation against either employee. The case is closed.