



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Office of Internal Audit • 7833 Walker Drive, Suite 425 • Greenbelt, Maryland 20770

December 17, 2019

To: Joseph Zimmerman, Secretary-Treasurer

Chip Bennett, Chief, Administrative Division

From: Renee Kenney, Inspector General

Renee M. Kenney

Wanda King, Assistant Inspector General

Wanda King

Re: Administrative Leave Pilot Program
Management Advisory – CW-006-2020

Background

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) was contacted in September 2019 by a department manager who raised concerns about the processing of administrative leave for some of his/her employees. The employees were awarded leave under the Commission's Performance Recognition Program in May 2019. In accordance with Commission requirements, they were instructed to use the administrative leave by June 30, 2019, fiscal year end, which they did. Historically, administrative leave is tracked manually, at the department level, using Excel spreadsheets. The manager told the OIG that the employees noticed they were awarded leave for their performance awards on their July 2019 paystubs, after they already took the awarded leave. The department manager was not aware that the Payroll Office, within the Department of Finance, assumed the responsibility for issuing and tracking administrative leave and was concerned with possibility of duplicate awards.

The OIG agreed to complete a Management Advisory¹ involving the issuance of administrative leave through the Commission's timekeeping system, Kronos. The objective of the advisory was to determine if the duplications were pervasive throughout the Commission, and to identify any additional duplicate awards.

Subsequently, the OIG spoke with Mr. Chip Bennett, Administrative Division Chief, Department of Finance, to gain additional information on the pilot program. The program was implemented in October 2018 by the Payroll Office, in conjunction with the Corporate Policy Office, within the Department of Human Resources and Management (DHRM). The purpose of the program was to facilitate the identification, tracking and management of administrative leave hours awarded under the Performance Recognition Program, which is administered by the Office of the Executive Director. The pilot program only included employees within the Department of Finance. Written details supporting the pilot program were not available.

¹ Management Advisories are non-audit services and are not subject to Government Auditing Standards.

It was determined, the Payroll Office erroneously processed administrative leave for five (5) Commission employees, who worked in a department other than Finance. Four (4) of the employees worked in Montgomery County’s Planning Department and one (1) employee worked in Prince George’s County Department of Parks and Recreation. Upon notification of the error, the Payroll Office corrected the processing error and deleted the leave balances for each affected employee. None of the employees had used any of the leave balances that were erroneously processed in July 2019. Payroll also ran query reports to ensure no additional employees in the Commission were affected by the error.

The OIG asked Ms. Courtney Bydume, Payroll Manager, for clarification on how the processing errors occurred, given that the pilot program, which only includes Finance Department employees, had already been in place for about one year. Per Ms. Bydume, the Montgomery County Planning employee award documents were erroneously sent to Payroll instead of the Human Resources Division. The data was mistakenly keyed in during payroll processing. Mr. Bennett further explained this was a human error that occurred due to a high-volume processing environment. Ms. Bydume was unable to provide any additional information about the processing of the Prince George’s County Parks and Recreation employee’s award, other than the error did occur.

Audit Concerns

The OIG strongly supports the Department of Finance’s rollout of the pilot program and recognizes the additional work and responsibility assumed by the staff to improve timekeeping efficiencies for administrative leave. However, the OIG has identified opportunities that will strengthen the pilot program and help mitigate the risks that led to the processing error.

1. Document Pilot Program Details

Issue: Fundamental data about the pilot program is not documented.

Criteria/Risk: Failure to document program specifics may delay final Commission-wide rollout. Defined benchmarks provide management with a tool to gauge the Programs success.

Recommendation: The Department of Finance should document or define:

- Program deliverables (e.g. management reports);
- Program phases and estimated timelines for completion;
- benchmarks or targets to be used for measuring the program’s success; and
- policies and procedures for prevention, timely detection and correction of operational and administrative errors.

In addition, the Department of Finance management should ensure the Program complies with current Commission Practices and Procedures (e.g., retain the built-in Kronos feature, which automatically deletes all unused administrative leave hours at the end of the fiscal year.)

Issue Risk: Medium

Management Response: We have further defined the pilot program beyond the email format and verified the hour balance zeroing last July. Additional review of the pilot has been scheduled and recommendations to the Commission’s Performance Recognition Program have been submitted to the Corporate Policy Office to adopt this process.

Expected Completion Date: Completed

Follow-Up Date: March 2020

2. Strengthen Managerial Oversight within the Payroll Office

Issue: There is not adequate controls in place to identify payroll processing errors.

The OIG understands that the Payroll Office is a high-volume area, dependent on manual processing, and human error is expected. However, there are not adequate procedures in place to identify possible irregularities. Payroll was not aware of the duplicate awards until notified by the department manager.

The awarded administrative leave was manually typed into the Krono’s system by a Payroll Office employee. The Program was only authorized for Department of Finance employees. One would reasonably expect Payroll Office employees (within the Finance Department) to know who was in the Program. Per Mr. Bennett, the Payroll employee erroneously picked up a file that contained four (4) of the awards and processed without reviewing the names on the documents, no explanation is available for the fifth award processed by the Payroll Office employee.

Criteria/Risk: Failure to provide oversight of payroll Programs may result in salary errors and/or errors in leave awards.

Recommendation: Department of Finance management should implement additional detective controls over the Program. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- During the Program’s pilot phase, at the end of each payroll processing cycle, obtain and review a report of awards. Ensure all employees on the report are employed within the Department of Finance.
- Once the Program is fully implemented, send periodic (pay-cycle or monthly) reports to department management of awarded administrative leave awarded through the Performance Recognition Program.

Issue Risk: Medium

Management Response: Payroll will be augmenting staffing for the first time in 30+ years and is currently recruiting a position that will have a significant role in quality review and auditing. Other actions are in progress to improve employee performance.

Expected Completion Date: February 2020

Follow-Up Date: March 2020

Paid Time Off – Administrative Leave Pilot Program
Management Advisory – CW-006-2020
December 17, 2020

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