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## CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT OFFICE OF PREVENTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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### Third Quarter 2025 Report

**To General Superintendent Carlos Ramirez-Rosa, President Marlon Everett and the Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners,**

Attached please find the Third Quarter 2025 Report from the Office of Prevention and Accountability (OPA).

The Q3 Report summarizes OPA's ongoing efforts to address the training and policy needs of the Chicago Park District pursuant to the Human Rights Ordinance, Chapter IV of the Chicago Park District Code. OPA continues to focus on ensuring that the Park District remains a safe, inclusive, and respectful recreation and work environment.

The Q3 Report also includes a summary of OPA's investigative work, which is the core mission of our Office. OPA - working in conjunction with Park District leadership - continues to concentrate on addressing any reports of discrimination, harassment, workplace violence, retaliation, and abuse and neglect of children and vulnerable adults.

The OPA team will remain focused on these vital issues and looks forward to continuing to work with you.

Sincerely,

*Tamara B. Starks*

Tamara B. Starks  
Director  
Office of Prevention and Accountability

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### Mission

The Office of Prevention and Accountability (OPA) works to ensure that the Chicago Park District provides all employees, patrons and visitors with a recreation and work environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, workplace violence, abuse and neglect of children and vulnerable adults, and retaliation.

Information regarding OPA's mission and operations is available to Park District staff and patrons online at <https://ChicagoParkDistrict.com/OPA>. Complaints related to the concerns enumerated above can be submitted to OPA in the following ways:

- By phone: 312-742-5OPA (312-742-5672)
- By email: [OPA@ChicagoParkDistrict.com](mailto:OPA@ChicagoParkDistrict.com)
- Online: Via a form linked on [www.ChicagoParkDistrict.com/OPA](http://www.ChicagoParkDistrict.com/OPA)
- In writing: Chicago Park District  
Office of Prevention and Accountability  
4830 S. Western Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60609

### Personnel

Throughout the Third Quarter of 2025, OPA remained staffed as follows: a Director, a Senior Investigator, three Investigators and a Case Intake Specialist. With those personnel, OPA was fully staffed in accordance with the Chicago Park District's 2025 Budget for this Office.

OPA is committed to conducting thorough, fair, impartial and independent investigations regarding any alleged violations of the Human Rights Ordinance. To accomplish that, OPA has assembled a team of individuals with experience in investigations, law, Title IX, Title VII, child protection and human rights issues.

During the Third Quarter of 2025, three members of the OPA team attended a two-day training through the Association for Inspectors General on Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) and Digital Investigation Tools. Another member of the OPA team attended a continuing education seminar focused on updates in employment law, including discrimination and harassment cases. This work was part of OPA's ongoing efforts to ensure that our personnel remain aware of best practices and are trained on the tactics needed to complete complex, fair and independent investigations.

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### Continued Emphasis on Prevention and Training

During the Third Quarter 2025, worked on efforts to wrap up the mandatory Harassment Prevention and Bystander Intervention trainings required of all Park District employees (both year-round and seasonal).

As a reminder, these trainings are required by the state of Illinois and the City of Chicago and are done to ensure that all employees are aware of the responsibilities and expectations related to their service as Park District personnel. The 2025 Harassment Prevention training included guidance on how to identify sexual harassment and harassment/discrimination based on protected categories, such as age, race, national origin and religion. The Bystander Intervention training supplements the Harassment Prevention training by providing employees with instruction on how to react when they witness harassment or discrimination in order to serve as an ally or upstander.

In July, OPA completed the final two in-person trainings for seasonal employees, bringing the total number of in-person trainings completed to 13 sessions attended by roughly 1,000 seasonal employees.<sup>1</sup> This is in addition to the two in-person trainings done for year-round employees in the Department of Culture and Nature Resources in February.

By the end of the Third Quarter, more than 2,760 year-round employees had completed the Harassment Prevention training, while roughly 2,530 year-round employees had completed the Bystander Intervention training.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of these trainings, OPA currently is working with the vendor contracted to provide these trainings to review feedback received from staff during the course of the trainings. The vendor provided OPA with an initial report regarding feedback on the trainings themselves, while a more detailed analytic report based on the questions imbedded in both trainings is expected in the Fourth Quarter.

The initial report from the vendor indicated that 54 percent of the feedback<sup>2</sup> provided was positive, with many Park District employees stating that they appreciated the trainings' clarity, structure, relevance and video content. Additionally, a review of the feedback showed that:

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<sup>1</sup> Additionally, a recorded version of these OPA trainings was also provided to Community Recreation and used to train more than 1,600 seasonal employees at 18 orientation locations in June 2025.

<sup>2</sup> This information was provided to OPA by the vendor and was pulled from 440 sample responses to a prompt that asked "Please provide any additional feedback" in the 2025 Bystander Intervention training. The vendor's summary of the feedback did not include any identifying information regarding the respondents.

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- About 15 percent of respondents offered suggestions for improvement, asking for more relatable examples, less repetition and better pacing/timing.
- About 11 percent of respondents were concerned that the examples included in the trainings were not specifically related to work at the Park District and rather were focused on situations in an office environment.
- Roughly 8 percent of respondents appreciated the interactive nature of the trainings, specifically the use of the workplace color spectrum as a tool to assist in identifying inappropriate conduct.
- About 5 percent of respondents asked for broader support and accountability, with some stating that supervisors need more training and employees need more counseling / support.
- About 3 percent of respondents asked for training examples that are more culturally nuanced and inclusive, especially as it relates to support of the transgender community and discussions of religious ideology.
- About 2 percent of respondents expressed frustration that the training was performative and needs to be followed up with real action.
- Another 2 percent of respondents encouraged more frequent training, including periodic refreshers and in-person training opportunities.

All of this valuable feedback will be reviewed and considered as OPA works with Park District leadership, Human Resources and Workforce Development to plan for future trainings. This includes other trainings that are being planned to supplement the annual, state-mandated Harassment Prevention/Bystander Intervention trainings. OPA also will review the feedback with the vendor to provide input on the content of future training courses. OPA also has already met with the Park District's Workforce Development division to begin an ongoing discussion regarding plans for trainings in 2026.

### **Policies and Best Practices**

During the Third Quarter, the Park District Board of Commissioners approved a series of changes OPA proposed to the Park District Code. Those changes to Chapter IV and Chapter VII of the Code were approved at the September 10, 2025, Board meeting and are now in effect.

The amendments to Chapter IV updated the Park District's Human Rights Ordinance, which governs OPA's jurisdictions and scope of operation. The changes included: clarifying the definition of retaliation to include retaliation for reports made directly to a supervisor/manager; updating the definition of "Vulnerable Adult" to make it consistent with the Adult Protective Services Policy; adding interference with an investigation to the list of Prohibited Conduct;

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adding the Gender Diversity Policy to the list of policies related to the Human Rights Ordinance; and inserting language to specify that OPA files and reports are confidential. These changes support OPA's mission to administer the Human Rights Ordinance and facilitate OPA's ability to conduct fair and impartial investigations into alleged violations of Chapter IV.

Additionally, the Board approved changes to Chapter VII, which updated the section regarding "Use of Restrooms, Comfort Stations, and Locker Rooms" to make it consistent with the Gender Diversity Policy. These amendments also updated the guidance in the Code regarding facility usage by young children and people with disabilities who require assistance.

Finally, OPA - working with the Park District's Policy Director and Law Department - updated the Park District's Violence in the Workplace Policy, effective July 31, 2025. This Policy was updated to include references to related policies, specifically the Victim's Economic Safety and Security Act (VESSA) Policy, the Firearm Policy for Park District Security Officers, and the Standard Operating Procedures for Violent Incidents. Additionally, the updated Violence in the Workplace Policy also expanded the section on prohibited conduct to include examples of weapons prohibited on Park District property. The examples include firearms, BB guns, knives, fireworks, tasers, and replicas of firearms or other weapons.

### **Q3 Complaints, Reports and Investigations**

In the Third Quarter 2025, OPA received 263 complaints/inquiries.<sup>3</sup> In the Third Quarter, OPA opened 61 investigations and closed 196 cases. At the conclusion of the Third Quarter, OPA had a total of 219 open cases. The open cases include matters being actively investigated, matters under review to determine an appropriate course of action, and matters being held open for monitoring.

Many of the cases closed in the Third Quarter were complaints received by OPA that did not require a full, formal investigation and the issuance of an OPA Summary Report. OPA did, however, work with Park District personnel to identify specific actions needed to ensure that those concerns were promptly addressed. Additionally, OPA frequently worked with Park District leadership on numerous occasions to provide guidance on how best to address less urgent concerns in order to prevent those concerns from growing into larger issues and policy violations that would necessitate a formal investigation. This type of counseling and advisory role is a vital part of OPA's work, as it goes towards the "prevention" part of our mission. OPA

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<sup>3</sup> In 2025, OPA received 89 complaints/inquiries in Q1 and 123 in Q2. In 2024, OPA received 87 complaints/inquiries in Q1, 98 in Q2, 127 in Q3, and 77 in Q4. In 2023, OPA received 17 in Q1, 41 in Q2, 121 in Q3, and 81 in Q4.

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very much values the supervisors who have reached out for advice on how to address such concerns as that is an impactful way to improve the Park District's work culture by ensuring that issues are addressed promptly and clear expectations for conduct are established.

Of the complaints/inquiries received in the Third Quarter 2025, the most common complaints/inquiries received were: discrimination (34), harassment (27), concerning conduct by or involving minors (22), sexual harassment/misconduct (20), workplace violence (11), and retaliation (9). The remaining complaints/inquiries were in less common categories, were determined to not fall under OPA's jurisdiction, or remain under investigation.

Of the 263 complaints/inquiries received in the Third Quarter, OPA determined that 130 did not fall under OPA's jurisdiction or require investigation; those matters included: allegations of time theft or other types of fraud/illegal activity involving Park District employees; complaints about safety related to unhoused tent residents; misbehavior by minor Park District participants; concerns about rudeness by Park Advisory Council members; complaints about reckless driving or accidents involving Park District vehicles or on Park District property; unprofessional comments by Park District employees; concerns about rodents, ticks and off-leash dogs on Park District property; and complaints about trash, fences, equipment or conditions in Park District fields and playgrounds. In several instances, OPA conducted intake interviews with the complainants to determine how their concerns should most appropriately be addressed and shared that information as part of OPA's referral process. In several cases, OPA's initial review of the complaints determined that an investigation was not feasible or required; those matters were administratively closed.

In the Third Quarter 2025, eleven cases were closed after the completion of formal investigations and/or the issuance of an OPA Summary Report. Information about the eleven Summary Reports issued by OPA in the Third Quarter is provided below:

### **OPA 24-0254**

An OPA investigation found substantial evidence to support allegations that a Park District manager (Subject) engaged in acts of sexual harassment and sexual misconduct with minors and sexual harassment of a former Park District affiliate.

OPA's investigation established that Subject violated Chapter 4, Section A(4)(a) of the Park District Code (the Code) by engaging in acts of sexual harassment and sexual misconduct with multiple minor girls, including acts of grooming for sexual purpose, abusing his position of employment and power, communicating with minors outside of the Park District, giving his

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personal phone number to minors, sending sexually explicit social media direct messages to minors, hugging minors, and crossing appropriate boundaries in interacting with minors.

Furthermore, OPA's investigation established that Subject engaged in acts of sexual harassment of a former Park District Vendor and program facilitator through social media direct message.

Additionally, OPA's investigation found sufficient evidence that the allegations against Subject were reported to multiple Park District supervisors, including a current park supervisor who failed to report the allegations to OPA per Section A(4)(f) of the Code and Section VII of the Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy.

### INVESTIGATION OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

#### COMPLAINT

OPA received a complaint from a patron (Complainant) who stated that she met Subject at a park when she was a teenager. Subject told Complainant that he could help get her job at the park and gave her his phone number, telling her to call him. Complainant called Subject but never helped her get a job.

Subject then repeatedly called Complainant's home for hours and in the middle of the night. Complainant's father answered and told Subject to stop calling, yet Subject continued to call. Complainant told another Park District employee about Subject calling her. Not long after, Subject was relocated to another park.

While still in high school, Complainant received messages from Subject that continued for years, even after she had graduated from high school. Subject's messages said things like "don't you miss me."

In 2024, Complainant went to register her child for Park District programming and saw Subject. Complainant was shaken to see Subject and shocked to discover that he still worked at the Park District and with children.

Complainant told the supervisor of recreation (Supervisor 2) and a physical instructor at that park the details of her childhood experience with Subject. Additionally, Complainant reported the same to the Office of the Superintendent, which immediately forwarded the report to OPA for investigation.

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#### INTAKE AND INTERVIEW OF COMPLAINANT

The information Complainant relayed in the written complaint, intake interview, and investigator interview was consistent. During interviews with OPA, Complainant related that she was 14- or 15-years-old when she first met Subject at a park. Subject was 23- or 24-years-old.

Subject paid Complainant individual attention. Subject's behavior progressed and Subject started physically touching Patron Complainant, including on her side with his hand and holding her hand with his. Subject would ask Complainant for hugs. Subject would give Complainant full frontal hugs with their chests touching.

Subject told Complainant he could get her a job at the park, gave Complainant his personal cell phone number and told her to call him. Complainant called Subject approximately twice for his help with obtaining a Park District job. Subject told Complainant to meet him at a park. Both times she met Subject, Subject did not help her with any job applications or anything job related.

Following Complainant's calls to Subject, Complainant's landline rang in the middle of the night and when she answered, it was Subject. Subject repeatedly called Complainant's home throughout the night into the morning. Because her father was sleeping, Complainant answered for fear of getting in trouble.

Subject would tell Complainant (who was 15- or 16- years old at the time) that he missed her, asked if she missed him, and said they could be together. Complainant became afraid for her safety and woke up her father, who spoke to Subject on the phone and told Subject to stop calling. Subject continued to call.

Complainant told Subject's supervisor at the time (Former Employee 1) that Subject called her house. Not long after, Complainant learned that Subject moved to a different park. Complainant believed that Subject was transferred because of her complaint.

When Subject first started at the other park, Complainant's father confronted Subject and there was a physical altercation between them. Complainant did not report Subject to anyone again for fear that her father would get in trouble and because she had already told a supervisor and nothing happened to Subject.

While still in high school, Complainant had a Facebook (FB) account and Subject contacted her via FB direct message (DM). The DM was similar to Subject's phone calls – they could be together,

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she was beautiful, he missed her. She knew it was Subject because the profile picture was a close up of Subject's face and the profile name was Subject's first and last name. Complainant blocked Subject on FB.

After graduating high school, Complainant received FB DMs from a profile that was under a nickname of Subject and it again had a profile picture of Subject's face. The nature of the DMs was the same. Complainant also blocked this account.

For as long as Complainant had a FB account, she would periodically receive DMs from Subject, even after she graduated high school. The profile picture the messages came from all had Subject's picture and variations of his name.

Complainant also had an Instagram account. She received Instagram DMs from Subject and blocked him. All of the Instagram messages came from a profile with a picture of Subject.

In 2024, Complainant brought her child to a Park District sports program and saw Subject. Complainant was upset and she reported to the park supervisor and a physical instructor what happened with Subject when she was a minor. One of the employees asked Complainant why her parents had not called the police on Subject in 2005.

Complainant was shocked that Subject was still a Park District employee and she was concerned about him continuing to interact with minors, particular girls, at the Park District. As a result, Complainant withdrew her child from Park District programming.

#### INTERVIEW OF FORMER EMPLOYEE 1

During an interview with OPA, Former Employee 1 confirmed he worked at the Park District from approximately 2000 to 2012. He had been Subject's supervisor during the relevant time period and remembered Subject.

Former Employee 1 recalled hearing from minors at the park that Subject had been "harassing" a teenage girl and that it was "very much a problem." Former Employee 1 did not recall the girl's name or exact age but remembered that she was under the age of 18 at the time.

Former Employee 1 reported the information about Subject's interactions with the minor girl to his supervisor (Former Employee 2). Not long after Employee 1 reported Subject, Subject was promoted and moved to another park.

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### INTERVIEW OF FORMER EMPLOYEE 2

During an interview with OPA, Former Employee 2 confirmed he worked at the Park District from approximately 2003 or 2004 to 2010, was the area manager in the relevant region and was Former Employee 1's supervisor during the relevant time period.

Former Employee 2 remembered Subject and that he had been told to keep an eye on Subject because Subject was "too close to the girls," referring to minor female participants.

Not long after receiving the report, Subject's promotion was finalized and he was placed at a park outside of Former Employee 2's area. Former Employee 2 did not report Subject to anyone.

### INTERVIEWS OF SUPERVISOR 1

During two interviews with OPA, Supervisor 1 related the following, in summary.

Within the first one or two months of Subject being promoted to the park where Supervisor 1 worked, a man walked into the facility and physically attacked Subject, possibly pulling Subject over the desk and hitting Subject in the head.

Supervisor 1 was not present but a security camera captured the incident, and Supervisor 1 viewed video of the altercation. Supervisor 1 also spoke to Subject, who reported it as a robbery. Supervisor 1 remembered the physical altercation as a "random act of violence."

### INTERVIEWS OF SUPERVISOR 2

During interviews with OPA, Supervisor 2 related the following, in summary:

Supervisor 2 met Complainant in Summer 2024 when Complainant brought her child to Park District programming. When Complainant returned to pick up her child, Supervisor 2 saw that Complainant "froze" and was "visibly shaken."

Complainant told Supervisor 2 she had just seen Subject. Complainant related she had met Subject at a different park when she was a minor and Subject had called her. Supervisor 2 told Complainant it sounded like Subject's conduct was "sexual harassment" and offered her "resources."

Supervisor 2 was not surprised by what Complainant reported about Subject because a former Park District program provider (Vendor) told Supervisor 2 about two now adult women who had

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received sexual messages on social media from Subject while they were under the age of 18. Supervisor 2 recalled that the messages from Subject were “pretty sexually graphic” and included “genitalia.”

At an unknown time, Vendor saw Subject at a park and told Supervisor 2 that Subject was the kind of guy who made her feel like he was undressing her with his eyes.

#### INTERVIEW OF VENDOR

During interviews with OPA, Vendor related the following, in summary:

Vendor’s friend (Reporter) told her that Reporter’s adult child said that while he was socializing with friends, they reviewed old, unused social media accounts, including Facebook. Two of the women said they had FB messages from Subject from when they were teenagers.

Reporter’s adult child arranged a call with one of the women (Victim 1) and Vendor. During the call, Victim 1 read a DM she had received from Subject when Victim 1 was under the age of 18. Vendor recalled that the message was sexually graphic and included references to body parts.

According to Reporter’s adult child and Victim 1, the other woman (Victim 2) related to the group of friends that she did not want to report Subject. In early 2024, Vendor reported Subject to DCFS.

Vendor was not entirely shocked by Subject’s messages because Vendor had also received inappropriate FB DMs from Subject. Vendor was a Park District vendor and provided different services to the Park District, including an afterschool program. In or around 2011 or 2012, Vendor met and collaborated with Subject at a park.

In 2015, approximately two or more years after working with Subject, Vendor received the FB DMs from Subject. Vendor provided OPA with screenshots of Subject’s messages, which showed that he called her “sexy cougar” and commented “ass so fatty.” Vendor was offended by Subject’s messages.

In approximately 2021 or 2022, Vendor saw Subject at a park. Vendor said to Supervisor 2 that Subject was “grimy” and made Vendor feel like he was undressing her with his eyes. She then told Supervisor 2 about Subject’s FB messages to Vendor.

#### INTERVIEWS OF VICTIM 1

During interviews with OPA, Victim 1 related the following, in summary:

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Victim 1 was enrolled in a Park District summer camp in or around 2007 or 2008 and first met Subject that summer at camp. After that summer, Complainant hung out at that park.

In or around late 2023, Victim 1 opened her FB and saw a post from Subject with a picture of him sitting in a Park District office. The photo brought back memories of Subject. In her FB DMs, Victim 1 found messages from Subject dated in 2011. In one, he wished her a Happy Birthday and referenced being between her legs. He followed that by writing "i said i would eat yo pussy." Victim 1 provided OPA with screenshots of the DMs.

On the date of Subject's FB DMs, Victim 1 was 15- turning 16-years-old. Throughout her school years, Victim 1's profile was under her full name and her profile picture was a picture of herself. Victim 1 therefore believed that Subject knew who she was and her age when he sent the DMs in 2011.

Victim 1 told her school friends about Subject's FB DMs; her friends also knew Subject from the Park District. It was the first time Victim 1 had ever told anyone about Subject's DMs.

Another female friend, Victim 2, told Victim 1 that she also had FB DMs from Subject. Victim 1 heard Victim 2 read the messages from Subject and they were of a similarly sexual nature, but "worse" than what Subject sent to Victim 1 but she did not remember details.

Victim 1 did not recall the dates of Subject's DMs and remembered that Victim 2 was under the age of 18 at the time of Subject's messages. Victim 2 said she did not want to be involved in reporting Subject because she wanted to move on.

Victim 1 and a male friend told his mother, who connected them Vendor, about the messages because they were mandated reporters. Vendor called DCFS. When DCFS did not do anything, Victim 1 felt discouraged.

Victim 1 believed there was another woman who had attended Park Kids with her who Subject may have also contacted because Subject paid the girl a lot of attention. Victim 1 was unable to recall her name.

#### INTERVIEW OF SUBJECT

Prior to an interview with OPA, Subject was advised of his rights orally and in writing, and did not have any questions. Subject denied any reasons he would not be able to understand the

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Advisement of Rights Form and signed the form. Unless otherwise noted, Subject related the following, in summary:

Subject confirmed his work history including the relevant dates and locations.

He initially denied ever being formally or informally disciplined and ever being told he had violated the Employee Code of Conduct. Later, under questioning by the OPA investigator, Subject admitted he was suspended for five days in 2023 but stated he disagreed with the disciplinary action.

Subject said the Park District has always had rules about interacting with minors but it was not enforced until recent years. Employees were not to hug minors or talk about sexual topics with minors and as Mandated Reporters, employees were to report to DCFS and OPA. Subject denied that he had ever violated those rules as an employee.

Subject also denied that a parent ever complained about Subject's interactions with their child or with any other minor. Later in the interview, Subject mentioned a father who did not like how Subject was speaking to minor female basketball players.

In January 2024, Subject received a call from someone identifying himself as a DCFS worker, who informed Subject that there was an allegation that Subject had sent text messages to a minor. DCFS later informed Subject the report would stay in the system for five years.

Subject denied that he had ever sexually harassed anyone including minors, employees, vendors and volunteers. He also denied that he ever flirted with women he met through the Park District, including minors, employees, vendors, and volunteers. He stated that he had dated the mothers of Park District minor child participants.

#### *Interactions with Minors*

Subject said he had given Park District minor participants "side hugs" but denied giving minors full frontal hugs, asking minors for hugs, or touching minors on their sides with his hands. Specifically, Subject denied ever hugging or touching the side of a minor girl at Kenwood.

Subject denied that he ever told any minors that they were beautiful, that he wanted to be with them, that he missed them or that he asked them to come see him.

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Subject then referred to his “park daughters,” who were now in their 20s. When they were minors, Subject would drive his “park daughters” between parks “on [his] break.” He had permission from their mother and, at the time, there were no rules about driving minor park participants in employee’s vehicles.

Subject told Park District minors that he loved them “all the time.”

Subject initially stated that he never gave his personal phone number to minors and only contacted minors’ parents or the minors directly with parental consent. Later in the interview, Subject said it was possible that he had called a landline looking to speak to a minor from the Park District. Subject later also said he had given his personal cell phone number to his “park daughters.”

Also later in the interview, Subject said he would give his personal cell phone number to minors he met through the Park District to provide them with employment application assistance, including for the Park District. Most recently, Subject had given his personal cell phone number to a minor boy for job assistance.

Subject then denied that he ever gave his phone number to any female minors, even for job assistance. Subject specifically denied giving his personal cell phone number to a minor girl at one specific park and said he did not “recall” offering to help a minor girl at that park with getting a job.

Subject repeatedly denied ever messaging, calling or otherwise contacting minors from the Park District, including via social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, and SnapChat. Subject denied ever calling a minor girl. Subject further denied that her father answered Subject’s call.

Then when asked if he called the minor girl a couple of times, Subject said he did not “recall.” When asked if he could have called but not recall doing so, Subject said “accurate.”

When asked if there was any reason he would not be able to recall calling the minor girl, Subject said “no” and it was a long time ago.

Subject said he was physically assaulted with a table by an unknown male who walked into the park where Subject worked in 2005. Subject denied that the man said anything about his daughter or Subject’s interactions with any child. The unknown man had “mental health problems.”

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Subject denied that he reported the incident as a robbery. Subject did not know if the unknown man could have been the father of the minor girl he did not recall calling in 2005.

When presented with a printed copy of a FB profile under his name, Subject confirmed that the account belonged to him and was active. Subject has had the same FB account since in or around 2009. Subject denied that he ever had any other FB accounts under any name or nickname. Subject also confirmed that he has had an Instagram account since in or around 2013 or 2015.

Subject said he did not friend minors but he accepted social media friend requests from minors, including those he met through the Park District.

Subject was shown a copy of the DMs sent to Victim 1 and confirmed he had sent the DMs. Although he did not know to whom he had sent the DMs, Subject adamantly denied that the person he sent the sexually graphic messages to was a minor, even after he was informed that the person who received them was under the age of 18.

When he sent the DMs in 2011, Subject was around "30-ish" years old.

Subject denied that he deleted FB DMs, then stated he only deleted FB DMs when he was "hacked." Hacked meant Subject received "garbage" from other people not that other people sent messages from Subject's FB account. Subject did not delete DMs.

Subject opened his FB profile on his phone and offered to allow OPA investigators to search his DMs. Based on OPA's review, Subject's FB messages stopped on January 14, 2014. Subject said he didn't really use FB DMs anymore, yet the OPA investigator saw multiple DMs dated in 2025 and 2024.

When asked why Victim 1 still had Subject's messages from 2011 but Subject did not, Subject said he did not know why and "I evidently deleted [the messages]."

Subject then said he "might" be at home and leave his FB open so other people could use his account. Subject then said he did let other people use his FB account and that he had "silly friends who've flirted." When asked why suddenly, an hour into the interview, he said friends used his FB account, Subject did not answer.

If someone else used Subject's FB to send DMs, they would identify themselves by their own name. Subject later denied that other people who might have sent DMs from his FB would identify themselves by their own names.

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When asked if he had ever been written up or suspended for lying or not telling the truth, Subject said “no.” Subject was presented with the HR Determination letter from 2023, marked as Exhibit 4, and asked to read the findings. Subject then said he had been accused of things he had not done and that he had been found by HR to not tell the truth and to have not cooperated during the HR investigation.

#### *Interactions with Adult Women*

Initially, Subject said he “could be flirtatious” and later said he did “not really” flirt with women anymore but had in the past. Later, Subject said he had been single for a long time and “flirt[ed] a lot.”

Subject flirted with women by complimenting them, including parts of their bodies, such as they had a “nice behind” and a “nice frame.” Subject did not initially compliment them on their bodies; he only did so if they “might take it to another level.”

Subject made sexually explicit comments and talked about oral sex with women after they had been talking for “maybe a month or two.” He said none of the women he had flirted with had told him that he was disrespectful.

Subject then was shown a copy of the DMs sent to Vendor. Subject confirmed he had sent the DMs. Subject did not know who he sent the DMs to, but the woman was “older than [Subject]” because Subject called her a “cougar.”

Subject admitted it was possible he had met the recipient via the Park District. He also acknowledged that the woman in the DMs had told him his “flirting” and comments were disrespectful.

When asked again if he had ever flirted with a vendor, service provider or another woman he had met through the Park District, Subject said he was changing his previous answer to “don’t recall.”

Subject was familiar with the Park District’s sexual harassment policy. Subject said the messages sent to Vendor were sexual harassment. Subject did not “recall” sexually harassing any other women.

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### ANALYSIS

OPA's investigation found substantial, consistent, and corroborated evidence that Subject engaged in a pattern of sexual misconduct and sexual harassment of minor girls and that he used his position as a Park District employee to gain the trust of and access to these minor girls. The evidence further showed that Subject's sexual harassment was not restricted to minor girls; consistent with his pattern of sending messages of a sexual nature via social media, the evidence established that he also sent sexual FB DMs to a former Park District vendor who he also met through his position at the Park District.

The evidence showed, and OPA found, that Subject engaged in acts of sexual harassment and sexual misconduct over the course of years and in doing so, violated numerous iterations of the Park District's policies regarding sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, and appropriate interactions with minors. OPA further determined that had Subject's conduct occurred at the time of reporting in 2024, Subject would have violated Section II.A(3) and Section II.B of the Park District's Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy and the Park District's guidelines for appropriate interactions with minors and keeping children safe.

OPA's determinations are based on credible and corroborated testimony provided to OPA by multiple victims and witnesses. This testimony not only established a clear timeline that is supported by Park District records, witness testimony, and Subject himself, but also demonstrated a consistent pattern of conduct by Subject in which he subjected victims, including minor girls, to romantic and sexual communications through electronic communications.

The evidence showed that Subject engaged in sexual misconduct with Complainant through acts of grooming, including progressively intimate verbal and physical contact, using the pretense of Park District employment to give her his personal phone number, making harassing phone calls of a sexual or romantic nature, and sending inappropriate and harassing FB DMs. This was further evidenced by Subject himself, who admitted he previously has and continues to provide his phone number to minors at the Park District in violation of the guidelines for interactions with minors; guidelines that Subject accurately articulated his knowledge of.

The already credible statements by Complainant that she met at a park and he used his position to establish communication with via phone were further bolstered by the testimony of two former supervisors. Both of those former supervisors related that there were concerns about Subject's interactions with girls in 2005, with Former Employee 1, who Complainant said she told,

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specifically remembering that Subject had harassed a girl under the age of 18. Furthermore, Subject himself and Supervisor 1 recounted a man physically confronting Subjects in May or June of 2005, matching Complainant's statements regarding her father's confrontation with Subject.

The testimony of Victim 1 and Vendor combined with the FB DM's they provided to OPA showed that Subject sent sexually explicit DMs on FB to females regardless of whether or not they were minors, lending further credibly to Complainant's statements that Subject contacted her via Facebook DMs. Furthermore, Subject confirmed that the FB account that Complainant, Victim 1, and Vendor received the messages from was his, and he admitted he had sent the DMs to both Victim 1 and Vendor.

Subject himself confirmed his conduct when he told OPA he "flirted" with women by making comments about women's body parts, specifically "behinds," and that he would make sexually explicit comments, including about oral sex. Subject's statements that he only sent such messages to women he was dating was shown to be false when he was confronted with his FB DMs about oral sex with a minor girl he was not dating and his FB DMs to Vendor in which Subject wrote "ass so fatty."

In contrast to the consistent information provided by victims and witnesses, OPA found Subject not to be credible. For example, Subject said he never contacted minors by phone, had never given minors his personal phone number, and never offered to help a minor with obtaining a job. Subject later said that he may have contacted minors by telephone and that he has been giving his phone number to minors for job support assistance. Later still, Subject said he had never given his phone number to nor offered to assist a minor girl with a job application – only minor boys. Additionally, Subject said he never deleted FB DMs, then said he only deleted "garbage" DMs, and then said that he must have deleted Victim 1's DMs and all DMs prior to January 14, 2014.

Furthermore, over an hour into the interview, and only after being confronted with exhibits, Subject's statement that he let other people use his FB appeared to be wholly fabricated. OPA found that Subject's new defense strained credulity and that Subject's statements were consistent only in their inconsistency.

As to Victim 1, when considered in its entirety, the evidence showed and OPA found, it is more likely than not that Subject also sent sexual or romantic FB DMs to Victim 1 and that she was likely a minor at the time.

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Finally, Complainant, Victim 1, and Vendor Complainant discussed how Subject's actions and statements made them feel uncomfortable and, at times, fearful for their personal safety. They also discussed the long-term impact Subject's actions has had on them, which Complainant withdrawing her child from Park District programming while Victim 1 worried about her friend's children, particularly girls, who visit the Park District. Vendor has reconsidered providing Park District services in the future. All three women expressed an unease about being at a Park District location where they might see Subject. Subject's actions created an intimidating and offensive recreation and work environment that unreasonably interferes with each woman's full and equal enjoyment of the Park District's programs, services, facilities, and employment or other opportunities.

For all of these reasons, OPA is closing this case as substantiated. Based on these findings, OPA recommended the immediate termination of Subject's Chicago Park District employment and placement of a permanent "Ineligible for Rehire" designation in Subject's personnel file barring him from future employment and volunteer opportunities. In response, Human Resources terminated Subject and designated him as ineligible for rehire.

### **ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

OPA's investigation found sufficient evidence that Supervisor 2 had knowledge of allegations of Subject sexually harassing minors from the Park District as well as a Park District Vendor, that Supervisor 2 was a supervisor at all relevant times, and that she failed to report Subject to OPA, as required by Chapter 4, Section A(4)(f) of the Code and Section VII of the Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy.

Based on this substantiated finding, OPA recommended that the Park District issue Supervisor 2 discipline as it deems appropriate. As to Supervisor 2, OPA closed this case as substantiated.

### **OPA 25-0002**

OPA received a complaint from a Park Supervisor of Recreation (Complainant) alleging that one of their supervisors (Subject) harassed Complainant, retaliated against Complainant and made reference to Complainant's age.

OPA interviewed Complainant and found Complainant could not provide evidence to support the allegations. When asked for specifics, the Complainant's response was that they had made so many complaints they could not recall the specifics for this particular one.

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When asked for specifics related to the allegation that Subject had referenced Complainant's age, Complaint said Subject told Complainant that Complainant should be a mentor for younger staff.

Complainant said Subject moved into a new position and Complainant no longer has any issues with Subject.

Based on this, OPA found insufficient evidence to merit a full investigation. OPA has, therefore, closed this matter as unsubstantiated.

### **OPA 25-0141**

OPA received a complaint alleging a Lakefront Region Landscape Laborer (Employee 1) made derogatory and racist comments toward a Seasonal Laborer (Employee 2).

Additionally, Employee 1 made a complaint alleging Employee 2 threatened her. Employee 1 filed a police report with the Chicago Police Department.

After interviewing the foreman who supervised the employees and reviewing narratives, OPA did not find that the initial complaint was credible. Additionally, during the course of the investigation, Human Resources terminated Employee 2 and placed an "Ineligible for Rehire" designation in Employee 2's personnel file.

OPA found insufficient evidence to merit a full investigation into the allegations. OPA, therefore, has closed this matter as unsubstantiated.

### **OPA 25-0142**

An OPA investigation found insufficient evidence to support the allegation that Park District employees violated Chapter IV of the Park District Code during interactions with a Park District patron, who alleged she was discriminated against and harassed. OPA's investigation, however, found sufficient evidence to find that the complainant (Patron) violated the Facility User Code of Conduct (Code of Conduct).

### **OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND**

OPA received an email complaint from Patron in which she described an incident in May 2025 at a Park District fieldhouse. Patron stated that she was using the employee kitchen and was told by Employee 1 that she needed to leave the staff kitchen because the rules had changed. In her complaint, Patron asserted that she had been given permission to use the kitchen "3 years ago" by the Park Supervisor. She stated that, because she had been given permission to use the kitchen

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in the past, she did not understand why she could not continue to use it. Patron said she used the kitchen on several occasions when she brought food and for birthday parties.

Patron stated she “demanded” that Employee 1 contact a supervisor, and Employee 1 refused. Patron said she and the other patrons in the kitchen were told to leave; she alleged they were taunted and told that they were racists.

Patron stated that she attempted to involve the police and have them take a report; they refused, telling her it was a civil matter. In her complaint, Patron added that she was told that the Park Supervisor was probably not reprimanding the employee and was “covering for her” because she “likes females.”

Patron specifically demanded that the Park District fire the employees who told her she could not continue to use the kitchen.

Patron did not allege that there were any comments made by any staff member related to her race or the disability of her husband, who was present during the incident. Patron, however, stated that she felt she was being discriminated against based on her race because Employee 1 was Black. Patron added that Employee 1’s request that the patrons leave the kitchen exacerbated her husband’s medical condition.

### **OPA’S INVESTIGATION**

**OPA interviewed the Park Supervisor, who stated the following, in summary:**

The Park Supervisor said that Patron was allowed to use the kitchen in the past. Initially, Patron wanted to cook whole meals and heat things up for her husband. She explained to Patron that she needed to ask permission to use the kitchen and that she could not just enter whenever she wanted to.

Park Supervisor said that, the day before the incident in May 2025, Patron brought food in. She was not there when Patron first arrived but she assumed someone had given her permission to use the kitchen. Afterward, Park Supervisor found out that no one had given Patron permission to use the kitchen, so she decided Patron’s use of the kitchen was no longer allowed.

While Park Supervisor was home sick the next day, she received a call from an Attendant informing her that Patron wanted to speak with her. She said Patron demanded that Park Supervisor needed to speak with Employee 1 immediately and alleged that Employee 1 was being mean and yelling at her. Park Supervisor explained to Patron that she was unable to speak with Employee 1 immediately and that she would talk to everyone the next day.

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Park Supervisor later received a follow-up call from the Attendant, who said Patron was speaking with the police.

Park Supervisor received a follow-up email from Patron alleging that Employee 1 was “nasty” and loud during the incident. Park Supervisor said she has never had any complaints about Employee 1 ever being mean, loud, or unprofessional with anyone. She spoke with her staff and was informed no one raised their voices during the interaction with Patron. She was informed that Employee 1 told Patron the kitchen was for staff only and that she needed to leave.

Later in May 2025, Park Supervisor received a call from Employee 1, who described a second incident involving Patron that occurred after Employee 1 had finished working and was at the park with her children. Employee 1 reported that Patron came into the restroom where Employee 1 was with her children and tried to talk to Employee 1, making Employee 1 uncomfortable.

Security later spoke with Patron and tried to de-escalate the situation.

Park Supervisor stated that Patron’s conduct made the workplace difficult for her and Employee 1, especially since Patron was saying negative things about them to people in the community and at the park. She related that Patron’s comment regarding her “liking women” was a direct reference to sexual orientation.

**OPA interviewed Employee 1, who stated the following, in summary:**

Employee 1 related that the issue began when staff looked into the employee kitchen and noticed Patron was in there with two other individuals eating a large meal. Employee 1 stated that Park Supervisor had told her that they needed to post a sign noting that the kitchen was for staff use only. Employee 1 was going to the kitchen to warm some food in the microwave but decided not to because Patron and the other individuals were in there.

The next day, another employee asked Employee 1 to check out the kitchen because there were people in there. When she walked into the kitchen, the lights were off, the door was slightly open, and she noticed the microwave was running. She said she saw Patron kissing a man in a wheelchair. At that time, she told Patron she could finish up what was in the microwave but that they would then need to leave the kitchen.

Patron responded by stating that Park Supervisor used to let her use the kitchen. Employee 1 explained to Patron that she and Park Supervisor had just talked about the use of the kitchen being for staff only. Patron then insisted that Employee 1 call Park Supervisor and repeated that Park Supervisor said she could use the kitchen. Employee 1 told Patron that may have been true

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in the past, but that she and Park Supervisor had a conversation the previous day about the public not using the kitchen.

Employee 1 then went back to the front desk where she had been working; Patron followed her to that area and kept talking towards her. Employee 1 asked Patron if she needed help with anything else and Patron asked her why she was screaming at her because it was upsetting her husband. Employee 1 said other employees witnessed the interaction and were confused because she was not screaming.

Some Chicago Police Officers on bike patrol had stopped in the building at that time; one officer looked at Employee 1 to ask if she was okay and continued watching the situation to see if Employee 1 needed help. She stepped to the side and told the officer that Patron was in the staff kitchen and was not supposed to be in there. When the Patron interjected, the officer suggested employees put up a sign to designate the kitchen as "Staff Only." Another employee immediately made a sign and put it on the door. Employee 1 then called Park Supervisor to tell her what happened.

The following week, Employee 1 was in the restroom with two of her children when she had another encounter with Patron that made Employee 1 feel uncomfortable. Employee 1 stated that Patron was aggressive and made a comment that Employee 1 was lucky she had her children in the restroom. Employee 1 did not say anything while Patron was in the restroom talking; she just wanted to make sure Patron had exited the restroom before Employee 1 and her children left.

Employee 1 provided OPA with a copy of a video/audio recording of part of the encounter in the restroom with Patron that supported Employee 1's description of the incident.

Employee 1 said she does not feel comfortable with Patron in the building

#### CONCLUSION

OPA's investigation found no substantial, credible, and corroborated testimonial or documented evidence to show that Park District employees engaged in any discriminatory behavior against Patron or any other patrons at that location. Patron's mere assertion that Employee 1 belongs to a different racial group than Patron falls far short of establishing harassing conduct or a discriminatory motive in the staff's request that Patron cease using the employee kitchen.

The allegations against the Park District employees are, therefore, unsubstantiated.

OPA's investigation found that since Patron was informed that the kitchen at the Park District fieldhouse is only for staff use, she has been speaking with other park patrons to falsely allege

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that Employee 1 is a racist. She also inappropriately referred to sexual orientation and questioned the Park Supervisor's professionalism and oversight of staff with no legitimate basis.

Patron's behavior and comments toward staff and regarding staff are in direct violation of the Park District's Facilities Users Code of Conduct. Under the Code of Conduct, all Park District patrons are required to "comply with any reasonable request from Park District Employees" and to respect all Park District employees. Patron's conduct meets the Code of Conduct's definition of harassment as it is based on an individual's actual or perceived membership in a protected category (race and/or sexual orientation) and it has created an intimidating and hostile/offensive work environment for the employees at Loyola Park.

For those reasons, OPA recommended that leadership in Community Recreation review Patron's conduct, including the information in this Summary Report, and assess an appropriate penalty under the Code of Conduct. In response, Patron was issued a temporary suspension of her Park District privileges on August 18, 2025.

### **OPA 25-0160**

OPA received a complaint alleging that, according to the minor sons of a patron (Complainant), a monthly physical instructor (Instructor) was observed "tickling" female minor participants.

During the course of its investigation, OPA reviewed Park District records, communicated with Human Resources, and interviewed employees. No employees had seen or heard of Instructor physically touching any minor participant. Specifically, employees had never seen or heard of Instructor tickling or hugging a minor participant. One employee related that they had witnessed Instructor, when approached by minor participants, deny minor participants hugs. No employee had witnessed or heard of Instructor engaging in conduct that would indicate grooming or other similarly concerning behavior with minor participants.

Additionally, OPA learned that Complainant had threatened Instructor after he disciplined her minor participants in a way she disagreed with. While multiple concerns regarding Instructor's discipline of minor participants were reported, OPA was aware that Human Resources was already addressing both these allegations as well as additional alleged conduct by Instructor that did not fall under OPA's purview.

Because OPA's investigation found no evidence that Instructor tickled, hugged, or otherwise physically touched minor participants, OPA has closed that matter as unsubstantiated, and deferred to Human Resources the additional allegations made against Instructor.

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### OPA 25-0162

OPA received a complaint from a seasonal lifeguard (Minor Complainant), alleging a seasonal lifeguard (Minor Subject) inappropriately touched Minor Complainant by picking her up around the chest area. Minor Subject also was accused of kissing Minor Complainant on the cheek. Both Minor Complainant and Minor Subject were 17 years old at the time.

In an effort to gather specific details related to the allegations, OPA interviewed Minor Complainant. Minor Complainant said Minor Subject scooped her up from a chair by putting his arms around her chest and back area. Later the same day, Minor Subject kissed Minor Complainant on the cheek.

After the incident Minor Complainant sent Minor Subject a text telling him she didn't know he felt anyway about her. Minor Subject texted back saying not to worry, it would not happen again. Minor Complainant and Minor Subject agreed to just be friends.

Minor Complainant told OPA that she felt a little embarrassed and uncomfortable because she didn't know Minor Subject liked her that way.

Minor Complainant was given to opportunity to be relocated; she declined the offer. Minor Complainant said she feels safe around Minor Subject.

Because of this, OPA found insufficient evidence to merit additional investigation into the allegations and closed this matter as unsubstantiated.

### OPA 25-0226

OPA received a complaint stating that a Park District lifeguard (Subject) brought a weapon to work in violation of the Park District's Violence in the Workplace Policy.

#### INVESTIGATION

##### *Interview with Park Supervisor*

The park supervisor who oversees the park where Subject was working (Park Supervisor) explained that in July 2025, a Park District employee (Complainant) reported that Subject had a gun at the park the day before and showed it to Complainant.

Park Supervisor said he wanted to keep Complainant at ease, so he did not ask many questions. He immediately reached out to his Area Manager, who came to the park. Area Manager and Park Supervisor both met with Complainant, who relayed the same information a second time.

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Park Supervisor did not speak with Subject. Prior to this incident, he had not heard from anyone that Subject may have a weapon. Park Supervisor had not had any issues with Subject in the past.

#### *Interview of Complainant*

Complainant met Subject at the beginning of the 2025 summer season and did not know him prior to that. On the day in question, Complainant saw that Subject had what appeared to be a gun, either in his hand, pants or waistband. Complainant described the gun as black with an orange tip. He may have then put the gun in a backpack. Complainant thought he may have been attempting to hide it because a supervisor might have been coming to the park.

Complainant asked Subject why he had the gun and he responded that he had problems with people in the parks. Complainant told Subject that, if he felt threatened, he should tell someone.

Complainant had never seen the gun before and did not know if Subject ever brought it to the park previously.

#### *Interview of Employee 1*

Employee 1 is familiar with Subject and was working with Subject on the day in question.

Employee 1 was in the office, where everyone hangs out, when he saw that Subject had a BB gun. Employee 1 thought it was obvious that the item was not a real gun because it was made of black plastic and had an orange tip. He did not recall if Subject was holding the BB gun or if it was in his backpack.

When asked if he was concerned or nervous after seeing the BB gun, Employee 1 said he was not. Employee 1 did not talk to anyone about seeing the BB gun or ask Subject why he had it. He did not know if any other co-workers saw the BB gun but was pretty sure no patrons did because Subject was in the office.

The following day when he arrived to work, he learned that Subject had been suspended. Park Supervisor and someone from Park District security spoke with the staff about reporting incidents when anyone has a weapon in the park.

#### *Interview of Employee 2*

Employee 2 was working on the day Complainant stated Subject had the gun. He did not know anything about Subject having a gun at work until he arrived at work the following day and Park Supervisor pulled him aside. Park Supervisor told him that another employee possibly had a gun

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at work the previous day and was showing it off; Park Supervisor did not identify the employee but said the individual had been suspended.

Employee 2 learned that it was Subject from other coworkers talking about it. Employee 2 said he really does not know or interact with the seasonal lifeguards because he stays inside at the front desk. None of his coworkers said they had ever seen Subject with a gun.

#### *Interview of Subject*

OPA interviewed Subject with his union representative present. Subject stated that he learned of his emergency suspension in an email he received from Human Resources and the union. He was told the reason for the suspension was due to a “security threat.”

Subject has been with the Park District for a little more than one year, starting as a seasonal lifeguard then moving into a year-round position in September 2024. He reported to Park Supervisor.

When asked what he thought the “security threat” was referring to, Subject stated that he believed someone saw him with what they thought was a real gun, which was not true. He said he had water guns with him at the park pool; there were three in total. Two of the water guns, an orange and green, were small and look like toys. The third gun is black and looks more like a real gun; the black gun has an orange tip. He stated that he can understand why someone might think it was a real gun. But he said he wished the person who thought it was a real gun would have just asked him about it.

Subject said he and other lifeguards would just mess around with the water guns, squirting each other. They only did this on the pool deck before the pool opened to patrons; no patron would have ever seen them with the water guns. He added that patrons are not allowed to have water guns in the pool, so lifeguards should not have them either.

Subject said the two smaller water guns had been in the office on the desk for a few weeks. He had just purchased the black gun at a flea market he went to before his shift on the day Complainant reported seeing the gun.

Over the weeks that the smaller squirt guns were on the desk in the office, no one told him they should not be there. When he brought the two smaller guns, he probably had them in his backpack. When he brought the black gun, he is pretty sure it was in his backpack as well. He said he may have had the black gun in his waistband when they were playing around because he would have used it for a “sneak attack” to squirt his co-workers.

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Subject has completed several mandatory Park District trainings. He stated that he is aware that employees cannot have weapons at work. He stated that the water guns were not weapons; they were only for fun.

At the end of the interview, the SEIU Representative asked Subject a few questions. Subject said he is eighteen years old and the other lifeguards he works with are around the same age. Never did a supervisor tell Subject that they could not play around with the water guns. Subject has never been in trouble or disciplined by the Park District. He has completed the Park District's mandatory trainings and understands he cannot have weapons at work. Subject said he did not consider the water guns to be weapons.

### ANALYSIS

Based on a photo provided by Subject, the black gun with an orange tip is a Sig Sauer SP2022, which is an airsoft gun that is designed to shoot small plastic BBs. OPA's research did not find that this type of gun is typically used as a water gun, although OPA cannot rule out that Subject's intention was to use it for that purpose.

Regardless of the intended use, a BB gun can cause harm and is a weapon that should be prohibited at the Chicago Park District under the Violence in the Workplace Policy.

OPA commends Complainant for reporting what appeared to be a weapon and alerting the Park District to a potential violation of the Violence in the Workplace Policy. There was, however, insufficient evidence to support Complainant's statements that Subject intended to use the gun for protection/as a weapon.

Instead, there was consistent evidence of the staff's use of squirt guns, including a description of Subject and his co-worker attempting to fill the black gun with water for use in a pre-work, squirt gun game among teen-age employees.

For these reasons, OPA found that the investigation is substantiated. OPA recommended that Human Resources evaluate these findings and discipline Subject as appropriate. In response, Human Resources issued Subject a disciplinary suspension.

### OPA 25-0262

OPA received a complaint from a Park District patron (Patron) regarding the conduct of a physical instructor (Instructor) towards the Patron's grandchildren during day camp. The complaint alleged that Instructor told minor participants he (Instructor) "is a boy and a girl at the same time," "mocked" her grandchildren's religion, and allowed racial slurs to be used around

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her grandchildren. In addition, Patron stated that one of her grandchildren was excluded from a field trip and that Instructor was “antagonistic, disrespectful” towards Patron.

OPA interviewed the area manager (Manager) and the park supervisor of recreation (Supervisor).

Both Manager and Supervisor related to OPA that they met with Patron and her grandchildren on July 15, 2025. During the meeting, Patron said one of the grandchildren had a diagnosis that impacted the child’s behavior, which was not previously disclosed to staff. Per patron’s request, Manager arranged for Patron’s grandchildren to transfer to another park.

During the meeting, Patron’s five-year-old grandchild said that Instructor wore a pink shirt and she asked Instructor if he was a girl. Instructor told Supervisor that he said he was a boy and a girl in a joking way.

According to Supervisor, in Summer 2024, minor participants called Instructor “God” and Instructor would refer to himself as the same. It was a playful joke between Instructor and participants. Supervisor spoke to Instructor about not joking with minor participants about God and to be mindful when interacting with participants. Supervisor had not heard Instructor or participants refer to Instructor as God again until Patron’s complaint. Instructor told Supervisor that, in this instance, he did not refer to himself as God but a minor participant had.

Regarding racial slurs, one of the grandchildren was asked by other minor participants what their race was. All of the minors involved were under the age of 10.

Supervisor related to OPA that during the field trip in question, the group of minor participants demonstrated poor behavior and Instructor ended the field trip approximately 15 to 20 minutes early. That time was used to discuss behavior with the entire group. Patron’s grandchild was not singled out nor was he prevented from going on the field trip. While Patron’s grandchild was redirected during camp, other participants in the group were also redirected and in the same way.

Neither Manager nor Supervisor had ever observed or been told that Instructor inappropriately discussed gender or gender identity. Both Manager and Supervisor observed Instructor to treat everyone the same regardless of race, ethnicity, language, religion or another protected category.

OPA’s initial investigative steps uncovered no evidence that Instructor’s behavior met the legal definition of discrimination or harassment based on race, ethnicity, color, religion or another protected category. OPA, therefore, closed this matter as unsubstantiated and deferred the matter to Manager and Recreation to address as they deemed appropriate.

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### OPA 25-0319

OPA received a complaint alleging a recreation leader (Subject) had harassed seasonal employees in violation of Park District policies, including the Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy.

### INVESTIGATION

OPA received a report from a Park Supervisor, who received complaints from two seasonal recreation leaders alleging that Subject made sexually harassing comments to them, as well as inappropriate touching and other behavior. The complaints alleged that Subject made the female employees uncomfortable with his comments, touching, and actions towards them.

Because one of the complainants was a minor employee, OPA reached out to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to initiate a hotline report. DCFS declined to open an intake and deferred the case handling to OPA.

Based on the serious nature of the conduct alleged, OPA also recommended that Subject be placed on emergency suspension. Human Resources issued the emergency suspension on July 24, 2025.

**As part of its investigation, OPA conducted the following interviews. Below are summaries of the information provided by the witnesses:**

#### *Employee 1*

Employee 1, a seasonal employee who is a minor, related that during July she was hit in the head with a ball and suffered a concussion. She and Subject were in the office alone while she waited to be picked up. She has a picture on her phone screen of her boyfriend, and Subject asked, "oh that's your boyfriend, are you guys doing it?" She said he was referencing the two of them having sex.

Employee 1 said Subject started gradually engaging with her by giving her high-fives and fist-bumps. She related every day while she was in her rotation, Subject would put his arms around her and rub her back.

Subject also called her nicknames, for example by adding letters to her first name to make it rhyme with "delicious." She said he also called her "cute" at least once per day or made comments about how cute she looks that day.

Employee 1 said that on one occasion, they were leaving for the pool and he asked her if she was wearing a one-piece or two-piece swim suit. She said he made the comment despite knowing that

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they are required to wear a one-piece for work. He also made comments about her shorts and said how he likes them.

She related that the latest comment he made was when he walked up to her and asked her how old she was. When she told him she was 16, he commented that he thought she was, "waaaay older" and then he told her he was 45.

Employee 1 said she felt uncomfortable around Subject.

#### *Employee 2*

This is the third year Employee 2 has worked at the Park District. This season, she was called into work a week earlier to help organize for day camp. She said she and Subject were in the office and she was doing paperwork. He was talking to her and then dropped into a pushup position and began doing pushups. She said when he stood up from doing pushups, he said "Don't worry about it. I'm not trying to impress you. I have a wife."

She related he always wants a high-five when they are passing one another. He also sometimes would rest his arms on her shoulder, and on the shoulders of others.

Employee 2 related that his behavior made her uncomfortable around him.

#### *Employee 3*

Employee 3 also is in her third year working at the Park District. She worked with Subject in the fall when he first started working at the park. She said she began experiencing concerning comments from him during the fall.

Employee 3 and Subject were alone a lot in the building last fall. Right before she turned 18 years old last November, he made a comment, "Oh, when you turn 18, you can have legal sex."

Additionally, around Halloween, he asked her if she was going to dress up cute or sexy for Halloween and if she was going to get drunk.

On her last day during the fall, he made a comment "not to be a creep or weird or anything but you're very attractive and smart, and if I don't see you again, I hope you do well."

One day at work, Subject took two cones and put them on her head and the head of a junior counselor, who is a minor. He made a comment that they looked cute with those hats on and laughed. After the incident, she and the minor expressed to one another that the interaction was weird and it made both of them uncomfortable.

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Most recently, when the weather was really hot, he made a joke asking if she was the reason the weather was so hot out that day. She asked what the punch line was for that, and he said, “nothing, I’m just being goofy.”

She related she does not feel comfortable around him.

#### *Interview with Park Supervisor of Recreation*

The park supervisor of recreation (Park Supervisor) was meeting with her seasonal staff and Employee 3 asked to speak to her, along with other recreation leaders. They left the room and Employee 3 shared that they were having an issue with a staff member. Employee 3 then reported that they all felt uncomfortable around Subject.

Park Supervisor asked them how he made them feel uncomfortable. They then explained that he says things that are “inappropriate” and that he is “very touchy.” She asked for more information, and then she instructed them to write narratives.

#### *Interview with Subject*

Prior to working for the Park District, Subject worked at an elementary school as a front office assistant. He worked with the Park District during the summer of 2023 and the summer of 2024 as a seasonal employee. Since October 2024, he has worked as a full-time Recreation Leader under Park Supervisor’s supervision.

He was familiar with Employee 1. She is a summer recreation leader, and he believed she mentioned she was 16 years old.

He recalled the incident where she was hit in her head with a ball and he waited in the office with her for her ride to arrive. He denied seeing a picture of her boyfriend on her phone and said he did not ask if they were “doing it.”

He does give Employee 1 high-fives and fist bumps. He does it with many of the staff and as a way to say “Hi.”

He denied putting his arms around Employee 1 or rubbing her back. He did not recall calling any of the campers or staff nicknames. He denied ever calling Employee 1 a nickname that added letters to her name to make it rhyme with “delicious.” He also denied telling anyone, specifically Employee 1, that she was cute or that she looked cute.

He denied asking Employee 1 whether she was wearing a one-piece or two-piece swimsuit. He also did not recall telling Employee 1 that her shorts were cute or that he liked them.

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He was familiar with Employee 2 but said he did not know how old she is. He stated that someone mentioned she was going to college.

Prior to summer camp starting, he was just doing his daily workouts and she happened to be in the office with him at that time. He did tell her not to worry, that he was not trying to impress her, and that he had a wife. He said he did so because he did not want her to think he was doing anything inappropriate.

He occasionally gives Employee 2 high-fives when they are passing one another. But he said he is not aware of any occasions when he rested his arms on Employee 2's shoulders or the shoulders of any other campers.

Subject is familiar with Employee 3, and she mentioned she is going to college. He recalled the two of them working together last fall, and he believes it was mostly him, her, and one other individual in the building at that time.

He denied making a comment that when she turned 18, she could have legal sex.

He said he probably asked what she was wearing around Halloween, but he denied asking if she was going to dress up cute or sexy, or if she was going to get drunk.

He did not recall saying she was attractive or cute. He probably did say "If I don't see you again, I hope you do well," purely as a goodbye.

He did not recall the incident where it was alleged that he put cones on her head and the head of another child and said they looked cute in the hats.

He does not recall asking her if she was the reason it was hot outside. He may have made a comment about it being hot, but he does not recall that specific comment Employee 3 alleged.

He denied doing "many of the things that are deemed inappropriate."

#### **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION**

The Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy specifically prohibits sexually suggestive remarks, including comments or innuendoes about clothing and inquiries about a co-worker's sex life. The Policy also bars employees from any unwelcome touching, which includes hugging.

Violations of this Policy go directly against the Park District's mission of creating a safe and welcoming workplace for all employees. Additionally, violations that involve minor employees also raise concerns that the conduct could constitute grooming – which is a gradual process

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designed to manipulate a young person and build a relationship that could lead to future sexual abuse/misconduct.

OPA's investigation found substantial evidence that Subject engaged in behavior which violated the Policy and the Chicago Park District's Code of Conduct. The employees who provided evidence regarding his behavior were credible and consistent in their descriptions of his conduct. In contrast, his blanket denials during his interview with OPA were not credible.

OPA finds that Subject made lewd, unwelcomed and unwanted sexual comments. Subject also engaged in unwelcomed and unwanted touching of female District employees while on duty, including minors. Especially concerning is the fact that Subject displayed a pattern of behavior with several young women and minors.

For these reasons, OPA found that the investigation was substantiated. OPA recommended termination of Subject's Chicago Park District employment and placement of an "Ineligible for Rehire" designation in Subject's personnel file. Subject ultimately resigned in lieu of termination; HR designated him as ineligible for rehire.

#### **OPA 25-0361**

An OPA investigation found substantial, credible and corroborated evidence to support allegations that a former Seasonal Senior Lifeguard (Subject) engaged in acts of harassment of subordinate employees, including minors, based on sex, gender, sexual orientation, and race, ethnicity and/or color.

#### COMPLAINT

OPA received a complaint from multiple employees who alleged that over the course of multiple summer seasons, Subject engaged in behavior such as: asking female employees invasive sexual questions, including whether they were a virgin; called female employees "bitches" and "females"; had inappropriate sexual conversations at work; discussed employees' sexual orientations; yelled profanities and slurs at an employee while patrons were present; and was verbally hostile to female employees. The reporting employees stated that Subject's conduct created a toxic and uncomfortable work environment.

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### BACKGROUND

Based on OPA's initial investigative steps, on August 4, 2025, OPA recommended that Human Resources take appropriate action, up to and including seasonal termination. On August 5, 2025, HR informed OPA that it was issuing Subject a termination of employment. HR later informed OPA that because Subject had worked at the Park District for four consecutive seasons and had objected to his termination, under the union bargaining agreement, Subject was instead being placed on emergency suspension. On August 7, 2025, Subject was placed on emergency suspension.

### INVESTIGATION

#### **OPA interviewed Employee 1, who related the following, in summary:**

Employee 1 had worked with Subject for multiple summer seasons; in three of those seasons, Subject was Employee 1's direct supervisor. During all times that Employee 1 worked with Subject, Subject made inappropriate sexual comments and asked Employee 1 personal and invasive sexual questions.

In or around Summer Seasons 2022 and 2023, both Employee 1 and Subject were under the age of 18. Subject asked Employee 1 if they and their same sex partner used a "strap on [penis]" and if they "scissored." Subject also asked or implied that Employee 1 could not sexually satisfy their partner if Employee 1's partner had had sex with a man.

In or around July 2025, in front of two other lifeguards, Subject asked Employee 1 if they were a virgin. One of the other lifeguards, who was 16-years-old at the time (Minor Employee 1), asked Subject if he could ask that question.

Subject's questions upset Employee 1, who was audibly crying while relating the information to the OPA investigator.

Employee 1 heard Subject ask a male subordinate lifeguard if he would rather fight a gorilla or have sex with Bonnie Blue. Employee 1 did not know who Bonnie Blue was and later Googled it; Employee 1 then learned that Bonnie Blue was a pornographic actress on Only Fans.

In 2025, Subject called Employee 1 and a female subordinate lifeguard "bitches." Employee 1 also heard Subject say that the women in his life were his mother and his girlfriend and other women were "females."

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Employee 1 did not previously report Subject's conduct because he was Employee 1's supervisor and Employee 1 was afraid Subject would retaliate against them.

**OPA interviewed Employee 2, who related the following, in summary:**

Employee 2 had worked with Subject for multiple summer seasons and was under the age of 18 during seasons 2023 and 2024. Subject was Employee 2's direct supervisor. In Summer 2024, Subject was a senior lifeguard and told Employee 2 and other subordinate lifeguards that he had sex with one of the camp counselors after work.

In Summer 2025, Employee 2 heard Subject talking to other subordinate lifeguards, including Minor Employee 1, about "sucking dick" and money. Subject, Minor Lifeguard 1, and the other male lifeguard were outside on the pool deck and were "scream laugh[ing]." Minor participants were in the nearby locker rooms. Employee 2 felt uncomfortable.

Subject told Employee 2 about a group of Black female patrons who had been at the pool and said that Employee 2 would have gone "feral" for them. Employee 2 was previously in a relationship with a Black woman and understood Subject as saying that Black women were Employee 2's type sexually and/or romantically.

Employee 2 heard Subject say that lesbians "loved woodworking."

Subject called Employee 1 and Employee 2 "bitches" and seemed to make everything about girls against boys.

Subject was mad at Employee 2 for an accident and called Employee 2 "the r-word" (retarded) in front of other employees.

Subject called Employee 2 and other subordinate employees the "b-word" ethnic slur (beaner) and used the slur constantly. Subject said he was Mexican so he could use the slur. Subject asked Employee 2 about her racial/ethnic background. After seeing Employee 2's mother, who was white, Employee 2 called Employee 2 a "cracker" by association.

Employee 2 heard Subject talk to Minor Employee 1 about his race and/or ethnicity and encourage Minor Employee 1 to use the n-word racial slur.

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**OPA interviewed Employee 3, who related the following, in summary:**

Subject was Employee 3's direct supervisor. Subject asked Employee 3 how much money it would take for Employee 3 to "suck dick." Two male subordinate lifeguards were present, including Minor Employee 1. They were all laughing. Employee 3 said he was not going to entertain the topic and walked away.

Employee 3 overheard Subject say Bonnie Blue to unknown lifeguards. One of the lifeguards asked Employee 3 why he would say that.

Employee 1 told Employee 3 they were considering calling off work because Subject had asked Employee 3 if they were a virgin. Employee 1 was clearly upset.

Employee 3 overheard Subject ask Employee 1 about their sexual orientation. Employee 3 observed that Employee 1 looked visibly upset. Employee 3 was not surprised about Subject's question because it was "typical" behavior of Subject.

After an argument between Subject and the park supervisor of recreation (Park Supervisor), Employee 3 heard Subject call Park Supervisor a "bitch." Employee 3 would hear Subject call female patrons "bitches," especially those patrons who complained.

Employee 3 would hear Subject say the "b-word" ethnic slur repeatedly. Employee 3 heard Subject say it was okay for him to say the ethnic slur because Subject was Hispanic.

**OPA interviewed Employee 4, who related the following, in summary:**

Subject was Employee 4's direct supervisor. Employee 4 heard Subject, Minor Employee 1 and another male lifeguard talking about how much money it would take for each of them to "suck dick." They were loud and out on the pool deck. There were a few minors on the pool deck and in the locker room.

Employee 4 heard Subject tell a female lifeguard that female patrons with short hair were the lifeguard's type sexually or romantically. Employee 4 understood Subject was stereotyping women with short hair as lesbians.

During an argument amongst lifeguards, Subject told Employee 4 not to rotate with one of the female lifeguards and that he was not going to rotate with the other female lifeguard. Employee

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heard Subject say “these bitches won’t cooperate with me.” Employee 4 believed not rotating was Subject retaliating against the two female lifeguards.

Employee 4 would hear Subject use the “b-word” ethnic slur. Employee 4 once suggested it was not appropriate to use the slur at work and Subject laughed. Subject asked Employee 4 what their ethnic and/or racial background was.

**OPA interviewed Minor Employee 2, who related the following, in summary:**

Minor Employee 2<sup>4</sup> was under the age of 18. Minor Employee 2 thought Subject was a good supervisor and “inclusive.”

Minor Employee 2 engaged in a conversation with Subject and two other male lifeguards about an Instagram video Subject had watched. The topic was how much money it would take for Subject and the lifeguards to “suck dick.” Subject did not show Minor Employee 2 the video. It was a “joke conversation” on the pool deck.

**OPA interviewed Park Supervisor, who related the following, in summary:**

Park Supervisor had concerns about Subject’s decision-making capabilities and believed he should not be in a supervisory position.

Multiple minor patrons complained that Subject disproportionately disciplined Black minors.

During an issue with a few minor patrons who would not follow pool rules, Subject told Park Supervisor he did not want to speak to their dad. Park Supervisor could not remember Subject’s exact wording but it had a similar meaning to “ghetto” and Park Supervisor understood Subject did not want to interact with the father because of the father’s race and/or racial stereotypes.

### E. INTERVIEW OF SUBJECT

Prior to an interview with OPA, Subject was advised of his rights and waived representation. Subject related the following, in summary:

Subject worked as a seasonal employee at the Park District for four seasons and was 16-years-old when he began such employment in 2022. For three of those seasons - 2023, 2024, and 2025 -

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<sup>4</sup> Subject identified Minor Employee 2 as an individual OPA should interview as part of its investigation.

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Subject was a senior lifeguard. As a senior lifeguard, he was responsible for employee scheduling and enforcement of rules for employees, patrons and minor participants.

Subject had read the Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy and was aware of the guidelines regarding interactions with minors, including minor employees.

#### **Sex/Sexual Orientation/Gender**

When asked if he had asked any employee(s) if they were a virgin, Subject said, "no, I don't think so." When told there were witnesses, Subject said he knew who and that he had "issues" with the two female lifeguards he believed said this. When informed a male was present, Subject said he didn't recall and it never happened.

Subject denied he had ever asked any employee(s) if they wore a strap-on and denied asking an employee if they and their same sex partner "scissored."

Subject admitted that during his break, he watched an Instagram video that asked if someone would "give neck" for a million dollars. "Give neck" was slang for "suck dick." Subject admitted he "probably" said "suck dick." Subject initiated a conversation with at least two subordinate male lifeguards about Instagram videos and they proceed to ask each other the question from the video. Subject knew that one of those employees was under the age of 18.

Subject did not think the conversation was sexual harassment because it was a "hypothetical" question and he was on his lunch break at the time, as was one of the seasonal lifeguards.

When asked who Bonnie Blue was, Subject said she was an Only Fans personality known for "sexual acts" and "disgusting things." Subject denied talking about Blue at work. Subject said he did not hear other lifeguards talk about Blue.

Subject knew about the one guerilla versus 100 men question in relation to Blue because while at work, Subject watched a Tik Tok video asking that question. Subject denied he ever asked any employees the same question. Subject kept repeating "that's so nasty."

Subject had a family member who was a member of the LGBTQI+ community and who "trained" him. Subject later said that he asked two seasonal lifeguards about pronouns, sexual orientation, transitioning and other LGBTQI+ questions, including stereotypes about lesbians, because he did not want to exclude anyone and he wanted to know if what he saw on the internet was true.

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Subject did not see a problem with having the conversation with the two subordinate employees, then said it was “probably the wrong place.”

When asked about women and females, Subject said he never called anyone female in a “derogatory way.” When asked if he ever called Park Supervisor a “bitch,” Subject said no, then said he didn’t recall. When asked if he called female lifeguards “bitches,” Subject talked about an argument over perch rotation and said Minor Employee 1 called the female lifeguards “bitches.” Later, Subject said he didn’t know if he called them “bitches.” He did call them “lazy.”

#### **Race/Ethnicity/Color/National Origin**

Subject asked about employee’s ethnicity and/or race because he was interested. Subject knew the race and/or ethnicity of everyone at the pool, including patrons.

Subject introduced himself to employees as a “beaner;” it was an ice breaker. Subject knew “beaner” was an offensive term because he was Hispanic. Subject denied he ever called any employee(s) beaner/s.

Subject denied he said the n-word racial slur or that he encouraged others to do so. Minor Employee 1 said it and Subject did not think it was his place to tell a Black person not to use the slur even though Subject’s job was to enforce rules.

Subject called a male subordinate lifeguard, who was also a minor, a “cracker.” Subject denied he told a subordinate they were a “cracker” by way of their mother. Subject said Minor Employee 1 used the term “cracker” because Minor Employee was “Brazilian,” Black, and had a white mother. He stated that “cracker” was not a racial slur because a racial slur was made by a person in a position of power and white people had power.

Subject enforced the rules equally amongst minor participants and patrons regardless of their age, race or ethnicity.

Subject recalled the day when a group of Black women were swimming at the park because Black women did not usually swim there. The women were also taking pictures and Subject thought the way the women were posing in their bathing suits was sexually inappropriate. Subject denied he later told a female subordinate employee she would have gone “feral” for the Black women.

Subject denied that he did not want to speak to the Black father of minors who were not following rules because of the father’s race, ethnicity or color – it was because the father looked like a

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“football linebacker” and Subject was small so he wanted “back up.” Subject denied he said the father looked “ghetto” or anything with a similar meaning.

### FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy specifically prohibits sexual jokes, stories or comments, and discussions or inquiries about sexual preferences or sexual histories about self or others.

OPA found substantial, consistent, and credible evidence that Subject created an intimidating, offensive, and hostile work and recreation environments by repeatedly discussing specific sex acts, using vulgar language, inquiring about the sexual history and preferences of Employee 1, and assuming the sexual and racial preferences of Employee 2. The employees who were subjected to Findley’s crude behavior credibly testified they heard Subject talk about “suck[ing] dick” and pornographic actress Bonnie Blue and sex with Blue. Furthermore, Findley himself admitted he talked to subordinate employees about “suck[ing] dick,” he knew at least one of those employees was under the age of 18, and they were on the pool deck at the time.

In violation the Park District’s policies on harassment based on the protected categories of sex, sexual orientation, and gender, Subject admitted he regularly talked about sexual orientation and gender identity at work, including asking subordinate employees about LGBTQI+ stereotypes. Additionally, multiple employees credibly testified they heard Subject repeatedly call female employees “bitches” and he created a “frat house” mentality.

Subject also violated the Park District policy on harassment based on the protected categories of race, ethnicity and/or color by creating an offensive environment when he repeatedly asked multiple subordinate employees about their race and/or ethnicity, called himself and others the b-word ethnic slur, and focused on the races and/or ethnicities of patrons, particularly in the sexualization of Black women, which were corroborated by multiple employees and Subject himself admitted to. Furthermore, testimony showed that Subject either said himself or, at a minimum, failed to discipline and/or report an employee who called patrons the n-word racial slur.

In contrast, OPA found that Subject’s testimony was not credible. Subject demonstrated a complete lack of self-awareness and lack of personal accountability, often placing blame on subordinate employees, including a 16-year-old employee, who he was tasked with supervising.

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Because Subject was in a position of authority and at least two seasonal employees were under the age of 18, Subject's conduct raises serious concerns about his professional judgment as well as his ability to work with minor employees and minor participants.

For these reasons, OPA is closing the matter as substantiated. Based on these substantiated violations, OPA recommended that the Park District evaluate these findings and take any disciplinary and/or hiring action it deems appropriate. Due to the serious nature of the Subject's actions, OPA recommended that the Park District place an "Ineligible for Rehire" designation in Subject's personnel file. In response to these recommendations, Human Resources terminated Subject and designated him as ineligible for rehire.

### OPA 25-0376

The Chicago Park District (Park District) Office of Prevention and Accountability (OPA) received a complaint alleging that a lifeguard made serious threats against employees in violation of Park District policies, including the Violence in the Workplace Policy.

### INVESTIGATION

#### *Interview with Employee 1*

Employee 1 said overall Subject was not a very good leader, she didn't lead by example, she wasn't a nice person, and did not do her job professionally. Employee 2 transferred to another park due to the way Subject was treating her.

Subject would bring an older man to the park with her most days, who she called "Unc." He would sit near the pool. An Assistant Manager of Beaches and Pools (Manager) had told Subject that "Unc" could not be at the park with her during her work hours, but Subject continued to bring him. Employee 1 notified Manager when "Unc" was there after Subject had been told he couldn't be there. After this, Subject started treating Employee 1 differently, picking on her and yelling at her.

Subject would say out loud, for people to hear, that there were snitches amongst us, referring to Employee 1 and Employee 2. Subject told the male lifeguards that she was going to start being mean to Employee 1 and Employee 2 because they reported her for having "Unc" at the park. Subject also said that snitches get stitches and snitches get themselves killed. Employee 1 did not hear this herself, Employee 4 told her.

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Employee 1 said Employee 2 eventually asked for a transfer because Subject called her lazy, yelled at her and said she was a snitch. Subject also made Employee 2 do things that were not her duties, like clean out the refrigerator.

Subject was always asking the younger lifeguards to give her rides, because her car overheated. Employee 1 drove Subject to her house, during work hours, when she said she forgot paperwork. Employee 1 said none of the lifeguards wanted to drive her around, but felt they had to. Subject would arrive late to work most days and would take long lunches.

Employee 1 said she would not come back to work for the Park District next year if she had to work with Subject.

#### *Interview with Employee 2*

Employee 2 said Subject would come in late all the time, but if someone else was late she would get mad. Subject would constantly forget paperwork at home and ask the lifeguards to give her a ride back home to pick things up. None of the lifeguards wanted to do it, so they would play the game "rock, paper, scissors" to decide who would have to do it. They felt like they were forced into it.

An older man, who Subject called "Unc," would come to work with her and sit under the tent during her shift. Manager told Subject that "Unc" couldn't stay at the park all day hanging out by the pool, but Subject didn't listen. On one occasion Employee 2 notified Manager that "Unc" was there. District security came to the park and told him he had to leave. Subject's son and grandkids would also always be at the pool.

After the incident with the park security, Subject started saying things like "there is a snitch amongst us," "snitches get stiches" and "snitches get killed." Employee 2 didn't hear this firsthand; Subject was telling this to the male lifeguards on a day she wasn't working.

Employee 2 asked to be transferred, saying she couldn't deal with Subject anymore. She was scared that Subject would start treating her and Employee 1 differently. At this point, Subject had already screamed at her and told her she was lazy. Subject would also use curse words routinely. Employee 2 didn't want to be a part of that environment.

Employee 2 said she would not come back to the Park District next season if she had to work with Subject.

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#### *Interview with Employee 3*

Employee 3 said an older guy would come to work with Subject and sit near the gate by the pool for most of the day. Employee 3 only worked with Subject three or four days a week. Subject told the lifeguards to call the guy "Unc."

Employee 3 didn't have any bad interactions with Subject but knows the younger lifeguards did. She would say things about Employee 2 and Employee 1 being snitches and telling on her for having "Unc" around. Employee 3 heard Subject say something like snitches get stitches and snitches get hurt or killed. Employee 4 reported this to Manager. Eventually Employee 2 asked to be transferred because she couldn't put up with Subject anymore.

Subject would ask for rides to the convenience store during work. Employee 3 never gave her a ride but knows the other lifeguards did. Subject would come in late a decent amount of time.

Employee 3 doesn't think Subject should be in a position of authority or train junior staff on how to be a lifeguard. He would not enjoy having to work with her again.

#### *Interview with Employee 4*

Employee 4 said Subject would bring a guy with her to work who she called "Unc," he was around 60 or years old. "Unc" would just sit around by the pool next to Subject. He'd stay the entire day. Manager came to the pool when "Unc" was there and told Subject he could not be there. Then two days later, "Unc" was back. "Unc" did not appear to be sickly.

Subject was talking in front of the male lifeguards, when the girls (Employee 1 and Employee 2) were not working, saying the reason Manager came around regarding "Unc" was because the girls were snitches. Subject also said snitches get stitches, and snitches could get themselves killed. Subject said these things in front of patrons too. Subject would say if "they" want to be snitches, she was going to be mean to them. Eventually, Employee 2 asked to be transferred because she was afraid to come to work.

Employee 4 described a situation when a female lifeguard came to the park to cover for a day, and Subject was very unprofessional. The lifeguard was trying to ask Subject if she could move out of the sun, because the glare was causing issues with her seeing into the pool. Subject started yelling at her and eventually told her to leave, kicked her out of the pool area and locked her out.

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During the entire confrontation, the girl was calm and respectful, while Subject was out of control. Employee 4 does not know the girl's name.

Subject would have lifeguards drive her home saying she forgot paperwork, and drive her to the convenience store to get food. The lifeguards didn't want to drive her, but felt they had to. Employee 4 wasn't asked, he didn't drive to work.

#### *Interview with Subject*

Subject stated that she started with the park District in 1995 working her way up to Senior Lifeguard. She worked with several other lifeguards, including Employee 1, Employee 3, and Employee 4. She had also worked with Employee 2 before she asked to be transferred to work with her boyfriend.

During her interview, Subject told OPA that her cousin, who she calls "Unc," comes to the park sometimes and sits with her by the gate area near the pool. Subject didn't think there was anything wrong with "Unc" being there until Manager told her he cannot be there all of the time. Subject said "Unc" would only come a few days a week, not every day. Subject gave it some time, maybe a few weeks, then she let "Unc" come back. Subject said he was causing no harm to anyone; he'd just sit in a chair or on a bench in the park.

Subject said park security eventually came to the park when "Unc" was there and told him he cannot be on park property in the pool area and that he had to leave. Subject said she does not know how security and Manager found out that "Unc" was back at the park. When asked if she thought a coworker could have notified them, she said she had no clue. When asked if she said she was going to start being mean to Employee 1 and Employee 2 because they snitched on her, Subject said she didn't. When asked if she said to anyone that snitches get stitches and/or snitches get themselves killed, Subject said "I'd never say that, oh God no."

Subject said one time she left paperwork at home that she needed for work, Employee 1 offered to give her a ride home because her car had overheated. Employee 1 is very nice, and pretty cool. Subject said this only happened one time, and she would never force anyone to drive her anywhere.

Subject said she has never been disciplined, no write-ups or suspensions. Subject said she takes her job seriously and is very good at what she does. She has only been late to work on a couple

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occasions when she had issues with her car. The only thing a supervisor has told her was to keep her eyes on the water.

When the interview concluded and Subject was leaving, she mentioned having had her own trucking business in another state for several years. OPA then asked for clarification because during the interview she said she worked for the Park District for 25 years. Subject then said she worked for the Park District 25 years ago and has now been back for a couple years.

### *Interview with Manager*

Manager was made aware from staff that Subject made comments about female staff being snitches and that snitches get stitches and snitches get themselves killed. It was immediately agreed upon that Subject be put on Emergency Suspension.

Manager said she had been on a few visits to the park and saw a man sitting on the pool deck with Subject. Manager contacted Subject and told her that he shouldn't be in the area and it was a big no-no to have a non-employee on the pool deck. Subject said she understood.

After asking the other lifeguards about the man, she was told he would be there all day usually two or three times a week, and they were told to call him "Unc." Manager instructed the lifeguards to contact her if they saw him in the area again. Employee 1 reached out in the following days letting her know he was back; this is when Park District Security went to the park and asked him to leave.

### **ANALYSIS**

Making direct or implied threats is prohibited conduct under the District's Violence in the Workplace Policy (Policy). Additionally, the Policy prohibits exhibiting hostile behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury or subjects another individual to emotional distress.

OPA's investigation found consistent and credible evidence to support the allegation that Subject, while acting in a supervisory capacity, threatened two of the lifeguards who reported to her by calling them "snitches" and stating that snitching would get them "stitches" or - even more explicitly - that snitching would get them killed. Her conduct clearly qualifies as threatening behavior that left the employees in fear and caused emotional distress to the point that multiple employees stated they would not come back to work for the Park District if they were assigned

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to work with Subject again. Her conduct was especially concerning given that at least two of the lifeguards who witnessed or were the target of Subject's threats were minor employees.

Subject's blanket denial of the allegations against her were not credible, given the statements made by the other witnesses interviewed by OPA. Additionally, during her interview with OPA Subject was found to make several statements that were misleading and deceptive, which further undermined her credibility.

For these reasons, OPA finds that the investigation is substantiated. OPA recommends that Human Resources evaluate these findings, discipline Subject as appropriate, and assign any additional measures, including training, as determined appropriate by Human Resources. In response, Human Resources issued Subject a disciplinary suspension.