

## Chicago's inspector general's office sues the city

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It's a first.

NBC5 and the Chicago Sun-Times have learned the city Inspector General's Office is taking the Daley administration to court after issuing a subpoena last month.

The IGO is demanding the city Law Department and its boss, Mara Georges, turn over documents and records concerning an unspecified no-bid contract awarded in 2006.

First Deputy Inspector General Mary E. Hodge filed the lawsuit in the Chancery Division of Cook County Circuit Court Wednesday asking that Georges be compelled to fully co-operate in an ongoing contract probe "investigating how a former City employee was awarded a sole-source contract in apparent violation of the City's ethics and contracting rules."

Hodge has been the interim head of the IGO since August 2009 when Inspector General David Hoffman resigned to run for US Senate. Hoffman's replacement, former Assistant US Attorney Joseph Ferguson, awaits City Hall confirmation hearings later this month.

The lawsuit does not name the contractor or the amount that contractor has been paid.

The IGO wants the court to require Georges to tell them who hired that individual and why, saying it "has been unable to determine who bears responsibility for the critical decision to contract with the former employee."

Citing attorney-client privilege, Georges and the Law Department have, according to the lawsuit, refused to say.

IGO argues attorney-client privilege is a bogus argument, that the Inspector General and Georges both work for the same city and follow the same law, requiring the full cooperation of every city department in investigations of questionable hiring and contracts.

This is hardly the first time the Inspector General's Office and the Daley administration have butted heads. Recall the now infamous case of Christopher Kozicki, the \$130,000 Planning Department supervisor who rigged the 2004 hiring of a 19-year-old, unqualified building inspector named Andy Ryan. Though Kozicki admitted his role in federal court under a grant of immunity and then-Inspector General Hoffman urged his firing, the Daley administration refused. Kozicki later resigned.

The appointment of the city's first Inspector General, made by Mayor Daley five years ago, was meant to signal, in the wake of a series of scandals, that hiring and contract abuses would not be tolerated.

But Daley's relationship to the IGO became increasingly testy over the years.

Today's lawsuit suggests those tensions remain.

The City Law Department has not yet replied to a request for comment.