

2023 Budget Hearing Statement

Patricia Jackowiak, Director /Chief Administrative Law Judge

Department of Administrative Hearings

Thursday, October 13, 2022

Good morning, Chairman Dowell and members of the City Council. Thank you for the opportunity to appear today and update you on the Department of Administrative Hearings (DOAH).

Several process modifications which were made during COVID-19 to divert foot traffic still continue at DOAH. For example, Respondents can file motions to set-aside default judgements online. Also, those who have pending Building code violations can email photos, receipts, paid invoices, permits and a sworn statement attesting to full compliance. The Building Department representative at DOAH reviews these documents. If the property owner is in compliance, the Law Department transmits a request to non-suit the case. The Coordinated Advice and Referral Program for Legal Services (CARPLS) continue to staff a dedicated phoneline and virtual advice desk for DOAH cases. However, CARPLS will return to onsite consultations at the Courthouse when their staff returns to full-time in-person operations in October 2022.

CARPLS provides practical “how to” advice to Respondents in presenting their defenses to the alleged violations and in preparing any applicable motions. The legal help desk also promotes equal access and understanding of the Administrative Hearings process for the Respondents who are self-represented litigants at DOAH.

In 2021, when DOAH began virtual adjudications, there have been 15,485 virtual hearings requested for parking, speed, and red-light camera cases. As of September 30, 2022, there have been 22,733 virtual vehicle hearings requested at DOAH. This represents 31% of the total number of in-person vehicle hearings requested at DOAH. DOAH anticipates that the number of virtual hearings will continue to increase as the public becomes more familiar with remote hearing functionality. Vehicle hearings can still be conducted via mail or in-person. Respondents continue to utilize the e-request method to upload their documents for contest by mail hearings. As of September 30, 2022, 54,868 Respondents used e-request to forward their documents instead of mailing their documents to the City. In 2021, there were 76,766 e-requests.

On September 15, 2022, DOAH senior managers attended the Illinois State Bar Association’s Annual Minority Bar program. DOAH distributed information

regarding ALJ opportunities. DOAH's goal is to increase the diversity of its ALJ representation to reflect the current demographics of Chicago.

DOAH remains committed to achieving its core mission in 2023 – providing a forum for fair and impartial adjudication, maintaining an exceptionally high level of courteous, respectful, and prompt customer service for the public. We will continue this work to efficiently and effectively serve all those who appear at DOAH.

Thank You.