

The Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General (OIG) today released a report examining allegations of improper hiring practices by senior officials in the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) Washington, a Department of Justice (DOJ) component co-managed by the Department of Homeland Security. The OIG report describes the efforts of Warren Lewis, the organization's Executive Officer, to obtain positions for his son and for three persons associated with members of his family, as well as the efforts of Lewis and other INTERPOL Washington managers to obtain internships for people they knew.

This investigation, which was prompted by a complaint made by a former INTERPOL Washington employee, follows several prior OIG reports dating back to 2004 that detail improper hiring practices at the DOJ, including three reports on improper hiring practices in the Justice Management Division and, most recently, a November 2014 report on improper hiring practices at the Executive Office for Immigration Review.

The OIG's specific findings in today's report about INTERPOL include:

- In 2012, Lewis exploited his position as Executive Officer to ensure his son received a contract position at INTERPOL Washington. Lewis repeatedly contacted the DOJ's Justice Management Division to facilitate the selection of former interns, a group that included his son. Lewis also contacted the contractor's Vice President about a job for his son, with the result that the Vice President instructed his subordinates to "provide extra attention to his processing for obvious reasons," and to "earmark a spot for him." Lewis then contacted an Assistant Director in the DOJ's Security and Emergency Planning Staff to request assistance in expediting his son's security clearance, which was required for the contractor position. Furthermore, Lewis had a financial interest in the selection of his son as a contractor because, during part of the time Lewis was helping his son secure the position, his son was living in a townhouse owned by Lewis. Lewis knew that if his son received the contractor position, his son would have a salary from which he could pay rent to Lewis. We concluded that by using his position to obtain employment for his son, Lewis failed to adhere to his ethical responsibilities under the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch.
- In 2011-12, Lewis exploited his official position to provide preferential treatment to three individuals who applied for permanent positions in INTERPOL Washington. Lewis knew of the three individuals because of their connections with his son and another family member. Lewis had no personal knowledge of their professional abilities. Lewis took several actions with respect to the three individuals that he did not take with regard to the other applicants. First, Lewis submitted the names of the three individuals to JMD as "by-name requests" to identify them as specific individuals INTERPOL Washington wanted to be able to select. Second, after the three individuals all failed to make the certified lists of qualified applicants, Lewis took steps to overcome their exclusion. Third, Lewis used his position to benefit the three individuals by supervising the selection of finalists to be interviewed and serving on the panels that interviewed, assessed, and recommended the candidates. We concluded that each of these actions provided the three individuals with an advantage based solely on their association with Lewis's family members, and therefore that Lewis's actions violated the Standards of Ethical Conduct.

- With respect to the internship program, we found that Lewis and other INTERPOL Washington managers used their leadership positions to benefit their friends and acquaintances by placing them in unpaid intern positions at INTERPOL Washington. This conduct also violated the Standards of Ethical Conduct. The internship program provided valuable work experience to students and enhanced their resumes. In addition, interns who performed well had a significant advantage in competing for full full-time positions at INTERPOL Washington. Because former interns were valued in contractor and FTE full-time employee positions, we faulted the decision of INTERPOL Washington managers to offer internships to friends and acquaintances.

The report released today can be found on the OIG's website at the following link: <http://www.justice.gov/oig/reports/2015/o1504.pdf>.