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### **County woos away Village adjudication chief**

When Cook County decided to take some of the pressure off its court system by establishing an administrative adjudication process for misdemeanors and code violations, officials took a page from the Oak Park playbook – look to a community with a well-established program and recruit its top administrator.

Unfortunately for Oak Park, Cook County's choice of an executive to design and launch its new program currently manages the Village's high-performing [Office of Administrative Adjudication](#).

Wayne Moran, who set up Oak Park's adjudication program that began in 2004, and has managed it since, will be doing the same for Cook County beginning in January.

"While I am sad to see Wayne go, I certainly can understand why Cook County would want him to help set up their program," said Village Manager Tom Barwin. "Oak Park historically has recruited top professionals in their fields. But when you recruit and hire the best staff, you have to expect others to occasionally come after them."

But Moran said he made it clear to Cook County from the beginning that he would not simply up and leave Oak Park without giving the manager plenty of time to recruit a replacement. That's why he won't be starting the new job with the county until January.

"The Village of Oak Park has been a great place to work and I have the best staff in the world," he said. "Together, we have created a program that is fairer and more convenient for citizens. Everyone may not be satisfied with the outcome of the process, but they know it will be just and objective – and won't take nearly as long as a traditional court system.

"Oak Park was not my first adjudication program, but it has been the most personally rewarding. I feel a true sense of responsibility to the community and hope that by giving a long notice I can facilitate an orderly, professional transition to my successor."

For Moran, the Cook County role is a new opportunity to further refine how to most effectively manage an adjudication process that not only enhances revenue collection, but also makes it less difficult for individuals to challenge a citation through a process that is less complex, easier to navigate and not as intimidating as the circuit court.

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**Adjudication chief to leave**  
**2-2-2**

Moran came to Oak Park from the City of Evanston where in 2000 he created one of the first administrative adjudication programs in the state. Since then, he said at least 40 Illinois communities have set up programs to expedite resolutions, reduce litigation expenses and offer a more convenient venue for those who wish to contest a parking ticket or other citation. And more communities are setting up programs every day, he said.

An administrative hearing is a civil, not a criminal proceeding, according to Moran. Cases are punishable by fines and a variety of other penalties, excluding jail time. Under the adjudication hearing system, an administrative law judge certified by the state hears cases. Anyone not satisfied with the law judge's ruling still has the option of having the case heard in the circuit court. A list of the types of violations heard in Oak Park is posted at [www.oak-park.us/adjudication](http://www.oak-park.us/adjudication).

Last year, Oak Park's adjudication program brought in about \$2.7 million, some \$1.2 million more than in years when cases were heard only in the circuit court. Moran estimates that more than 50,000 cases have been heard in Village Hall since the program began – all handled by Moran and his staff of two administrative clerks, two bailiffs and three administrative law judges who rotate through the program.

A Cook County program undoubtedly will be much larger than in Oak Park or any other Illinois municipality, a fact that Moran views as more challenging than intimidating. As one of the most densely populated counties in the country, Moran said he expects the program eventually will adjudicate hundreds of thousands of tickets each year.

So how does one decide to become an adjudication guru who has governments seeking you out to set up and manage their programs?

Happenstance, Moran says. As the Midwest Regional Director for the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, he had managed a federal adjudication process that heard cases related to breweries, firearm outlets and tobacco sales. When he learned Evanston wanted to set up a program to hear local ordinance violations, the similarities were clear.

"Administrative adjudication is a concept that just makes sense," he said. "The ATF rightly saw it as an effective, efficient way to deal with issues that could be settled without having to go through a traditional court system that already is overburdened. Municipalities have come to recognize this, too, and I am proud to have played a part in making these programs work at the community level."

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