



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE WELFARE INSPECTOR GENERAL

Catherine Leahy Scott – Acting Welfare Inspector General

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SULLIVAN COUNTY WOMAN SENTENCED AFTER STEALING MORE THAN \$25,000 IN WELFARE BENEFITS FROM TWO COUNTIES

MIDDLETOWN - New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced the sentencing of Andrea Lee, 28, of Pond Eddy, Sullivan County, on charges she stole more than \$25,000 in child care assistance benefits, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and Temporary Assistance (TA) cash benefits from two separate New York counties. The investigation determined that the thefts took place between November 2011 and January 2013, in Orange and Sullivan counties.

“New York’s public assistance programs are intended for the truly needy” said Inspector General Leahy Scott. “This defendant abused these important programs by deliberately perpetrating a scheme to fraudulently collect public benefits in not only one, but two separate jurisdictions. I will continue to vigorously pursue anyone who fraudulently collects benefits and work to ensure offenders are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.”

Inspector General Leahy Scott’s investigation found that Lee fraudulently collected \$11,169 in Child Care assistance benefits and \$882 in SNAP benefits from the Orange County Department of Social Services. In order to collect benefits, Lee falsely claimed that she was living in Port Jervis, Orange County, when in fact she resided in Sullivan County. Moreover, Lee intentionally under-reported her household income in order to qualify for benefits. Specifically, Lee failed to disclose that she was living with the father of one of her children, and that his salary at the time was more than \$70,000 per year.

Lee, who previously pleaded guilty to Welfare Fraud in the 5th Degree, was sentenced today before the Hon. Judge Robert F. Moson in Middletown City Court. She received three years of probation and was ordered to pay full restitution to the State in the amount of \$12,051. She also previously pleaded guilty in Sullivan County to Petit Larceny and Making a Punishable False Written Statement, misdemeanors, for stealing more than \$13,000 in Child Care assistance, SNAP and TA cash benefits from the Sullivan County Division of Health and Family Services. She was sentenced for that matter in Liberty Town Court on May 14, and received three years of probation and was ordered to pay restitution to the State in the amount of \$13,136.

Between the two counties, the total amount of public assistance Lee fraudulently obtained was in excess of \$25,000.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked the New York State Police, Orange County Sheriff’s Department, Orange County Department of Social Services, and the Sullivan County Division of Health and Family Services for their assistance in the investigation. She additionally thanked the Orange County District Attorney’s Office and the Sullivan County District Attorney’s Office for prosecuting these cases.

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The New York State Office of the Welfare Inspector General investigates fraud, abuse or illegal acts committed against public assistance programs designed to help those in need. Our office also investigates complaints about the agencies and local social services districts who administer social services programs. Complaints and referrals are kept confidential. We can be reached by calling toll free: 1-800-367-4448, utilizing our online complaint form: <http://www.ig.state.ny.gov> or sending an email to: inspector.general@ig.ny.gov. You also can write to our office at: Office of the Welfare Inspector General, Empire State Plaza, Agency Building 2, 16th Floor Albany, New York 12223.