



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott

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FORMER STATE EMPLOYEE WHO CHARGED A WEDDING CEREMONY AND FAMILY VACATIONS TO A GOVERNMENT CREDIT CARD WAS SENTENCED TO FULL \$16,668 RESTITUTION

ROCHESTER – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced the sentencing of a former employee of the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (“OPWDD”) who made more than \$16,500 in unapproved personal purchases on a state issued credit card, including limousine services, a wedding ceremony and family vacations at an upstate amusement park.

Donald L. Chrisman, 46, formerly of Niagara Falls and now living on Almay Road in Rochester, was sentenced in Monroe County Court today to full restitution in the amount of \$16,668.55 and five years of probation. The sentence is subsequent to his November guilty plea to Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, a felony.

An investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott found that between June 1, 2015, and August 18, 2015, Chrisman made at least 249 unapproved personal transactions using his state issued credit card, totaling over \$16,500 in charges. Chrisman charged more than \$4,000 on personal limousine services for himself and his family during that period. He and his family used the limousine services for rides to various locations including Wal-Mart, numerous restaurants, and family vacations at Darien Lake amusement park, improperly using the state-issued credit card for purchases at each location. Chrisman also used the card to pay for a ceremony at The Falls Wedding Chapel in Niagara Falls where he and his wife renewed their vows.

“This defendant’s repeated abuse of a taxpayer-backed government credit card was an affront to the public trust,” said Inspector General Leahy Scott. “I will relentlessly pursue any government worker who shows such brazen and unabashed disdain for his or her obligation to the public they serve.”

Chrisman was employed by OPWDD as a Peer Advocate from August 7, 2003 until his resignation in February 2016. As a Peer Advocate, his responsibilities included providing guidance to and advocating for people with developmental disabilities. He was assigned a State credit card to be used for travel expenses as part of his work-related duties.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked the New York State Police for their assistance with the arrest and Monroe County District Attorney Sandra Doorley and her office for prosecuting this matter.

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