



NEWS RELEASE

Office of the New York State Welfare Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott – Acting Welfare Inspector General

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BRONX WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO STEALING \$115,000 IN WELFARE BENEFITS BY CONCEALING SPOUSE'S INCOME

NEW YORK CITY – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott and Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark announced the guilty plea of a Bronx woman who defrauded New York State of more than \$115,000.00 in Medicaid, Family Assistance (FA) cash benefits, and Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), after failing to report that her spouse, a former MTA city bus driver, resided in her household and that he was earning an income.

Lizette Cuadrado, age 49, of Evelyn Place, the Bronx, pled guilty today to Welfare Fraud in the Fourth Degree, a felony. The plea includes an expected sentence of five years of probation as well as a civil judgment against Cuadrado for the full \$115,450.33 gained through the fraud. Cuadrado will be precluded from collecting SNAP (also known as food stamps) for one year and Family Assistance benefits for six months.

“The defendant’s fraudulent conduct continued for years as she amassed six-figures worth of public funds that were meant for the neediest New Yorkers,” said **Inspector General Leahy Scott**. “For the sake of taxpayers and those who rely on these essential support benefits to make ends meet I will continue to use all the powers at my disposal to put a stop to this type of fraud.”

“This defendant took funds meant to assist the truly needy and sick, and such shameful behavior will not be tolerated,” said **District Attorney Clark**.

Inspector General Leahy Scott’s investigation found that from January 2006 to April 2012, Cuadrado submitted false applications to the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA). Cuadrado admitted that she falsified her application by failing to disclose her spouse’s income and that he was living in her household. As a result, Cuadrado improperly obtained a total of \$115,438 in public assistance benefits as follows: \$57,563 from Medicaid, \$33,057 in FA cash benefits, and \$24,818 from SNAP.

Medicaid is available to income-qualifying New Yorkers unable to pay for medical care. FA provides temporary cash assistance for those unable to work, cannot find a job, or whose job income is insufficient to meet cost-of-living expenses. SNAP is a federally-funded program which provides benefits to help low-income New Yorkers – including working people, seniors, and people with disabilities – feed their families. SNAP eligibility and benefit levels are based on household size, income, and expenses.

Inspector General Scott thanked HRA Commissioner Steven Banks and HRA’s Bureau of Fraud Investigation for their assistance with her investigation. Inspector General Scott also thanked Bronx District Attorney Clark and her staff for prosecuting this matter.

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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.