



NEWS RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Oct. 28, 2015
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CAPITAL REGION LANDLORD CHARGED AS A WELFARE CHEAT IN THE BRONX

NEW YORK CITY - New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced the arrest of a Bronx resident who owns rental properties in upstate Rensselaer County on charges she allegedly defrauded the government and stole nearly \$8,000 worth of food stamp benefits she was not entitled to.

Alina Griffen-Dowe, age 36, a resident of Tryon Avenue in the Bronx, was charged with Welfare Fraud in the Third Degree, Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, Welfare Fraud in the Fourth Degree, Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, all felonies, and Petit Larceny, Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the Second Degree, and Welfare Fraud in the Fifth Degree, misdemeanors. She was accused of collecting \$7,927 in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits (“SNAP” and routinely known as food stamps) she would not have been entitled to because of rental income she received from the Troy apartment buildings she owns as well as income from a part-time job at a law firm.

“This defendant collected food stamps in the Bronx while collecting rent payments from her tenants in Troy, allegedly manipulating the welfare system to improperly divert public benefits to which she was not entitled,” said Inspector General Leahy Scott. “Whether it is in Rensselaer County, the Bronx, or anywhere across the State, I remain committed to rooting out welfare fraud in all its forms.”

Inspector General Leahy Scott’s Investigation determined that between January 3, 2012 and January 31, 2015, Griffen-Dowe allegedly collected \$7,927 in SNAP benefits from the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) through fraud. Griffen-Dowe was accused of engaging in a scheme in which she intentionally concealed her ownership of two multi-unit residential income-producing properties in Troy, one on Second Avenue with four units and another with two units on Third Street. During the three year period charged in the fraud scheme announced today, these properties generated approximately \$83,000 in rental income to Griffen-Dowe. In turn, Griffen-Dowe failed to report this income to HRA as she was required to do.

The investigation also found that Griffen-Dowe earned at least \$12,880 from part-time employment at a law firm that she also concealed from HRA.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked HRA Commissioner Steven Banks and his staff for their assistance in the investigation. She also thanked Bronx District Attorney Robert Johnson and his staff for prosecuting this case.

Griffen-Dowe was arraigned on the charges in Bronx Criminal Court by the Hon. Kim Wilson.

The defendant is considered innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.

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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.