



# NEWS RELEASE

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

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Contact [John Milgrim](#): 518-474-1010

## CAPITAL REGION LANDLORD PLEADS GUILTY AND PAYS NEARLY \$8,000 RESTITUTION FOR FOOD STAMP FRAUD IN THE BRONX

NEW YORK CITY - New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced the guilty plea of a Bronx resident who owns rental properties in upstate Rensselaer County for stealing nearly \$8,000 worth of food stamp benefits to which she was not entitled. She paid full restitution upon her plea.

Alina Griffen-Dowe, age 37, a resident of Tryon Avenue in the Bronx, pleaded guilty to disorderly conduct, a violation, for 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 apartment buildings she owns in Troy, New York, as well as income from a part-time job at a law firm. As part of the plea agreement, Griffen-Dowe paid full restitution of the amount to which she was not entitled. She was also disqualified from receiving public assistance benefits for one year.

“This defendant collected a part-time salary from a law firm and rent payments from her tenants in Troy while claiming poverty in the Bronx and receiving food stamps to which she was not entitled,” said Inspector General Leahy Scott. “She corruptly enriched herself with public benefits meant only for those who are truly in need. I remain committed to rooting out welfare fraud in all its forms and across this State.”

Inspector General Leahy Scott’s Investigation determined that between January 3, 2012 and January 31, 2015, Griffen-Dowe collected \$7,927 in SNAP benefits from the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) through fraud. Griffen-Dowe intentionally concealed her ownership of two multi-unit residential income-producing properties in Troy, one on Second Avenue with four units and another on Third Street with two units. During the three year period, 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 Darcel D. Clark and her office for prosecuting this case.

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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>*

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