



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott

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Cape Vincent Prison Employees Engaged in Unauthorized Game of Chance with a Nearly \$32,000 Prize Pool

Unauthorized Fundraising At The Prison Was Used For An Employee Benefit Account To Fund Retirement Parties, Employee Recreation and Picnics

ALBANY – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today released a [report](#) on an investigation that found employees and supervisors at the Cape Vincent Correctional Facility in Jefferson County engaged in unauthorized fund-raising activity at the prison through an ongoing “Search for the Queen of Hearts” game of chance that had a prize pool of \$31,781. The game was run as a fundraising activity for the facility’s Employee Benefit Account and was meant to be used to fund retirement parties, employee picnics and similar activities.

Inspector General Leahy Scott’s investigation found the game of chance is specifically prohibited in the Town of Cape Vincent and can only be operated in other New York jurisdictions by certain authorized organizations of which the Cape Vincent Correctional Facility Employee Benefit Account was not. As part of the investigation, the State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (“DOCCS”) revised its directive regarding the raising and spending of Employee Benefit Account funds in prisons statewide.

The DOCCS directive developed under the Inspector General’s guidance implements detailed procedures to ensure that fundraising activities are legally permissible, and specifically prohibits activities considered gambling under state law. The directive further states that DOCCS management must approve all fundraising activities and expenditures, and establishes procedures for regular audits of Employee Benefit Accounts in all prison facilities.

The Inspector General’s investigation was referred to the New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics for whatever action it deems appropriate.

A copy of the report may be obtained by clicking [HERE](#)

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