



NEWS RELEASE

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

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WELFARE CHEAT FEIGNED POVERTY IN UPSTATE NEW YORK WHILE LIVING UPSCALE LIFESTYLE IN NEW JERSEY

New Jersey Resident Used Bogus Schenectady Address and Forged Records to Qualify for More Than \$35,000 in Welfare Benefits to Which She Was Not Entitled

ALBANY – New York State Acting Welfare Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced the arrest of a New Jersey woman living an upscale lifestyle on charges she defrauded New York’s welfare system for more than \$35,000 by falsely claiming she lived in Schenectady without any access to income.

Nicole Tompkins, 30, of Palisades Avenue, Bogota, NJ., was arrested and charged today with three counts of Welfare Fraud in the Third Degree, five counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, two counts of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree and two counts of Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, all felonies.

An investigation by Acting Welfare Inspector General Leahy Scott and the Schenectady County Department of Social Services Special Investigations Unit found that since January 2017, Tompkins has repeatedly certified to the Schenectady County Department of Social Services that she lived in Schenectady without any access to income when she was actually living in an upscale New Jersey apartment with the father of her child, who earned a salary of more than \$106,000. The false representations enabled Tompkins to receive more than \$22,600 in Medicaid premium benefits for herself and \$8,751 in Medicaid premium benefits for her child, who was eligible for private health insurance coverage through the father’s employment. Additionally, between January 2017 and February 2018, the false representations, which included forged documents from a Schenectady landlord, enabled Tompkins to receive \$5,147 in home heating assistance and food stamp benefits to which she was not entitled.

“Through a self-indulgent criminal scheme this defendant exploited critical public benefit systems to illicitly augment her comfortable lifestyle,” said **Acting Welfare Inspector General Leahy Scott**. “Such abuses of welfare programs are a direct theft from taxpayers and an affront to those who are in the most financial distress and require assistance for basic and necessary expenses. Working with my law enforcement partners, my office will pursue and hold accountable anyone who corruptly obtains public funds to which they are not entitled.”

Tompkins was arraigned on the charges today in Schenectady City Court and released on her own recognizance pending her reappearance in court on June 10, 2019.

Acting Welfare Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked the Schenectady County Department of Social Services for their partnership with the investigation, the New York State Police for processing the arrest and Schenectady County District Attorney Robert M. Carney and his office for prosecuting this matter.

The defendant is presumed 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.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