



NEWS RELEASE

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

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BUFFALO HOSPITAL WORKER FEIGNED POVERTY IN FOOD STAMP FRAUD SCHEME

BUFFALO – New York State Acting Welfare Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced the arrest of a Buffalo resident on charges she defrauded New York’s food stamp program for more than \$6,000 by dramatically underreporting her income with bogus pay stubs.

Marie Jackson, 39, of Kermit Avenue, Buffalo, was arrested and charged today with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, Welfare Fraud in the Third Degree, six counts of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree and three counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, all felonies.

An investigation by Acting Welfare Inspector General Leahy Scott and the Erie County Department of Social Services (DSS) found that Jackson, a medical assistant for an Erie County hospital network, repeatedly submitted forged payroll records in late 2014 through 2015 when certifying her need for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP or food stamps) funding through the DSS in 2015 and 2016. Her submitted records indicated an annualized income of less than \$10,000 in 2014 and 2015, enabling her to receive more than \$6,000 in food stamps, when she was actually making more than \$30,000 and was therefore ineligible for the public benefits.

“Through a pattern of concealment and deception, this defendant stole taxpayer funds to supplement her income,” said **Acting Welfare Inspector General Leahy Scott**. “This abuse of a welfare program is a direct offense to those who are in the most financial distress and require public assistance. I thank my law enforcement partners for their ongoing commitment to pursue anyone who illicitly obtains public funds to which they are not entitled.”

Jackson was arraigned on the charges today in Buffalo City Court and released on her own recognizance pending her reappearance in court on July 11, 2019.

Acting Welfare Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked the Erie County Department of Social Services for their partnership with the investigation and Erie County District Attorney John J. Flynn and his office for their assistance with the investigation and 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