



Lucy Lang
Inspector General

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February 17, 2022

Kerri Neifeld, MSW
Acting Commissioner
New York State Office for People
With Developmental Disabilities
44 Holland Avenue
Albany, New York 12229

Re: NYS IG 1601-031-2021

Dear Acting Commissioner Neifeld:

In June 2021, the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) alleged to the Offices of the New York State Inspector General that ██████████, a motor vehicle operator at OPWDD's Metro New York office, had potentially misused the WEX card assigned to an OPWDD vehicle for which she was responsible. Specifically, OPWDD alleged that, beginning in January 2021, the WEX card system displayed suspicious purchases of fuel for the card assigned to ██████████ OPWDD vehicle. These included transactions that occurred prior to ██████████ assigned start time, transactions that conflicted with the amount of fuel used by ██████████ OPWDD vehicle, and multiple large transactions on the same day. Additionally, OPWDD alleged that ██████████ repeatedly completed her vehicle use logs incorrectly.

The Inspector General's investigation found that on multiple occasions, ██████████ improperly used the WEX card assigned to her OPWDD vehicle to purchase gas for her personal vehicle. Specifically, the Inspector General cross-referenced ██████████ suspicious WEX card charges with surveillance video from the gas station where each transaction occurred. This review revealed that on August 3, 23, and 30, 2021, ██████████ used the WEX card to purchase fuel for her personal vehicle. Although it appears likely that ██████████ misuse of the WEX card dates back until at least the beginning of 2021, consistent with the suspicious transactions highlighted by OPWDD, the Inspector General was unable to acquire surveillance video for this earlier period.

Given the above, I am referring the findings of this investigation to OPWDD for any action deemed appropriate against ██████████ I am also providing the findings to the New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics for its review and consideration.

Please advise this office of any action taken by OPWDD in response to this referral within 45 days of the date of this letter. If you require further information, please contact Deputy Inspector General Jessica Silver at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Lucy Lang
Inspector General

cc: Peter Scalise
Director/Chief of Investigations
OPWDD Office of Investigations and Internal Affairs

Dorothy V. Lechmanski
OPWDD Director of Fiscal Services and Revenue Support

Monica Stamm, Esq.
General Counsel
New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics