



STATE OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF THE WELFARE INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION FRAUD INSPECTOR GENERAL

EMPIRE STATE PLAZA
AGENCY BLDG. 2, 16TH FLOOR
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12223
(518) 474-1010

61 BROADWAY, SUITE 2100
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10006
(212) 635-3150

65 COURT STREET, 5TH FLOOR
BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14202
(716) 847-7118

LETIZIA TAGLIAFIERRO
INSPECTOR GENERAL

July 7, 2020

Marie A. Cannon
Commissioner
Erie County Department of Social Services
Rath County Office Building
95 Franklin Street
Buffalo, New York 14202

Re: OWIG 0728-318-2019

Dear Commissioner Cannon:

In March 2019, the Office of the New York State Welfare Inspector General received an anonymous complaint alleging that [REDACTED], a recipient of Public Assistance and SNAP benefits in Erie County, was working at [REDACTED] in Buffalo and not reporting her income to the Erie County Department of Social Services. The complaint referenced posts that [REDACTED] made on Facebook and Snapchat regarding working at [REDACTED]

The Office of the Welfare Inspector General conducted an investigation of this allegation, which included a social media search, and found postings indicating that [REDACTED] worked at three Buffalo-area nightclubs: [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] employment records at these nightclubs, obtained by subpoena, identified income for [REDACTED] between October 2017 and May 2019, ranging from \$20 to \$1,520 per month from the three nightclubs.

Advised of these findings, the Erie County Department of Social Services Special Investigation Division (SID) reported that [REDACTED] by failing to report this income, improperly received \$4,833.99 in Public Assistance benefits between March 1, 2018 and December 31, 2018, and \$421 in SNAP benefits between September 1, 2018 and February 28, 2019. Also, SID advised that [REDACTED] Public Assistance case had an additional potential civil recovery of \$3,396.57 for other overpayments made to her during the periods November 1, 2017 to February 28, 2018, and January 1, 2019 to May 31, 2019.

Given the above, the Office of the Welfare Inspector General is referring this matter to the Erie County Department of Social Services for administrative or other action as appropriate. Please advise me of any actions taken by the Erie County Department of Social Services within 45 days of the date of this letter. If you require further information, please contact Deputy Inspector General Jeffrey Hagen at 716.847.7118.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Letizia Tagliaferro
Inspector General

Cc: Craig Provenzo
Director of Special Investigations

