



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE WELFARE INSPECTOR GENERAL
Catherine Leahy Scott – Acting Welfare Inspector General

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 3, 2013

Contact: Bill Reynolds (OWIG) 518-474-1010

Erin Duggan (DANY) 212-335-9400

WELFARE INSPECTOR GENERAL: \$34,000 STOLEN FROM STATE FOOD BENEFITS PROGRAM

Defendant Falsely Claimed Children Were in Household

Acting New York State Welfare Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott and Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance, Jr. announced today the arrest of Sabree Abdullah, who is charged with defrauding the state of more than \$34,000 from New York State's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by falsely claiming that four of her children lived with her.

Abdullah, age 43, of New York, was arrested today and indicted on one count of Grand Larceny in the Third Degree and four counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, all felonies.

“My investigation uncovered evidence that the Defendant stole from a program that provides critical benefits to New Yorkers who need them most,” said Acting Welfare Inspector General Scott. “Specifically, it appears that the Defendant filed false documentation in order to maximize the amount of public funds she received. In these times of limited resources, when so many truly depend on SNAP benefits to feed their families, deception and theft from this program is egregious.”

SNAP is a federally funded program which provides benefits to help low-income New Yorkers – working people, seniors, the disabled and others – feed their families. SNAP eligibility and benefit levels are based on household size, income, expenses, and other factors.

The Welfare Inspector General's investigation revealed that Abdullah collected SNAP benefits for herself and her four children, representing that they all resided in the same household, when in fact none of the children lived with her. As a result of these alleged false filings, Abdullah improperly obtained \$34,518 in SNAP benefits.

Abdullah was arraigned today in State Supreme Court before the Hon. Jill Konviser. Abdullah is to return September 24, 2013 for further proceedings.

Acting Welfare Inspector General Scott thanked New York City's Human Resources Administration Department of Social Services (HRA) Commissioner Robert Doar, as well as

New York City's Administration for Children Services for their assistance throughout the Inspector General's investigation. Inspector General Scott also thanked District Attorney Vance and his staff for prosecuting this case.

The defendant is innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.

###