



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE WELFARE INSPECTOR GENERAL

Catherine Leahy Scott – Acting Welfare Inspector General

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ACTING WELFARE INSPECTOR GENERAL: SULLIVAN COUNTY WOMAN ARRESTED, CHARGED WITH STEALING MORE THAN \$25,000 IN BENEFITS IN TWO COUNTIES

New York State Acting Welfare Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott announced the arrest of Andrea Lee, 28, of Pond Eddy, Sullivan County, on charges she stole \$25,884 in Child Care assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance (TA) cash benefits in two separate counties. Lee's arrest came as a result of an investigation by Inspector General Scott's office, which found the alleged thefts took place between November 2011 and January 2013 in Orange and Sullivan counties.

“Important support programs – designed to assist those truly in need – require recipients to comply with the rules to guard against fraud,” said Inspector General Scott. “When people circumvent the rules in an effort to obtain benefits to which they are not entitled, my office will step in, investigate and ensure offenders are fully prosecuted. For the sake of people truly in need and the taxpayers who fund these programs, this criminal misconduct will not be tolerated.”

Inspector General Scott found that through the Orange County Department of Social Services, Lee collected \$11,169.04 in Child Care assistance between November 2011 and July 2012, and \$882 for SNAP, between November 2011 and June 2012. She claimed she was living in Port Jervis, Orange County, when in fact she was residing in Pond Eddy. Moreover, Lee failed to report she was living with the father of one of her children, and that his salary at the time was more than \$70,000.

Lee was arrested today by the Orange County Sheriff's Department and charged with Grand Larceny in the 3rd Degree, Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the 1st Degree, and Welfare Fraud in the 3rd Degree, all felonies. Lee was arraigned before the Hon. Robert Moson of Middletown City Court and is due to reappear in court May 30.

This alleged theft is in addition to charges she stole more than \$13,000 in child care, SNAP and TA cash benefits through the Sullivan County Division of Health and Family Services between July 2012 and January 2013. She was arrested by New York State Police on May 7 and charged with Grand Larceny in the 3rd Degree, Offering a False Instrument for Filing 1st Degree, Falsifying Business Records 1st Degree, and Providing a False Sworn Statement 1st Degree, all felonies. She is alleged to have stolen \$8,408 in child care benefits, \$3,550 in SNAP and \$335 in

TA cash, for a total of \$13,383. She was arraigned in the Town of Liberty Court by the Hon. Brian Rourke and is due to return to court on June 19.

Between the two counties, the total in assistance fraudulently obtained equaled \$25,884.04.

Families are eligible for child care subsidies if they meet the state's low income guidelines and need child care to work, look for work, or attend employment training. Benefits are guaranteed for Temporary Assistance recipients who need child care to meet work participation requirements. SNAP is a federally-funded program which provides benefits to help low-income New Yorkers – working people, seniors, the disabled, and others – to feed their families. SNAP eligibility and benefit levels are based on household size, income, expenses, and other factors.

Inspector General Scott thanked the New York State Police, Orange County Sheriff's Department, Orange County Department of Social Services, and the Sullivan County Division of Health and Family Services for their assistance in the investigation. She additionally thanked the Orange County District Attorney's Office and Sullivan County District Attorney's Office for prosecuting these cases.

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

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