



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE WELFARE INSPECTOR GENERAL

Catherine Leahy Scott – Acting Welfare Inspector General

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INSPECTOR GENERAL ANNOUNCES ARREST OF MANHATTAN WOMAN ON CHARGES SHE STOLE NEARLY \$90,000 IN SNAP AND MEDICAID BENEFITS

New York State Acting Welfare Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott announced the arrest of a Manhattan woman who has been charged with defrauding the state of nearly \$90,000 in Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid benefits after fraudulently failing to report that her common-law spouse resided in her household and that he was earning an income.

Edith Rivera, age 36, of Manhattan, has been charged with Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, Welfare Fraud in the Second Degree, and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree.

“This individual is charged with stealing from programs designed to provide food and health care for New Yorkers who cannot afford them without assistance,” said Inspector General Scott. “Individuals applying for these critically important benefits must truthfully disclose income in order to qualify. Those who fraudulently apply for assistance to supplement their own incomes are committing criminal acts. My office will continue to investigate these crimes and work with our prosecutorial partners to ensure those committing these crimes are brought to justice.”

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. Medicaid is available to income qualifying New Yorkers who are unable to pay for medical care.

Inspector General Scott’s investigation found that from April 2007 to September 2011, Rivera submitted false benefit applications to the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) in order to obtain public assistance benefits. In these submissions, Rivera failed to disclose – as required – that she lived with her common-law spouse, and thereby failed to claim his earned income as part of her household income. Rivera admitted during the Inspector General’s investigation that she had not been truthful on her application for welfare benefits. As a result of these false filings, Rivera improperly obtained a total of \$87,992 in benefits as follows: \$9,992 in from SNAP and \$78,000 from Medicaid.

Rivera was arraigned before the Hon. Steven M. Statsinger of New York City Criminal Court. Rivera is scheduled to return to court March 11, 2014.

Inspector General Scott thanked HRA Commissioner Robert Doar and HRA’s Bureau of Fraud Investigations for their assistance with the Inspector General’s investigation. Inspector General Scott also thanked Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance and his staff for prosecuting this case. The Defendant is deemed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.

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