



# Richmond Office of the City Auditor

## Office of the Inspector General

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*Fighting government waste, fraud and abuse*

April 13, 2018

Mrs. Selena Cuffee-Glenn  
Chief Administrative Officer  
City of Richmond

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has completed an investigation within the Department of Social Services, as it relates to the abuse of authority. This report presents the results of the investigation.

### **Legal & City Policy Requirements:**

1. In accordance with the Code of Virginia, §15.2-2511.2, the City Auditor is required to investigate all allegations of fraud, waste, and abuse.
2. VA. Code: §18.2-152.5. Computer invasion of privacy; penalties. "A person is guilty of the crime of computer invasion of privacy when he uses a computer or computer network and intentionally examines without authority any employment, salary, credit or any other financial or identifying information."
3. City Code § 2-214 requires the Office of the Inspector General to conduct investigations of alleged wrongdoing.
4. City Admin Regulation: 2.7.III.C: USE OF COMPUTER EQUIPMENT. "Under no circumstances is an employee of the COR authorized to engage in any activity that is illegal under local, state, federal or international law while utilizing COR-owned resources."

### **Allegation:**

The complaint alleged two City of Richmond Department of Social Services (RDSS) employees abused their authority by accessing the Virginia Department of Social Services' (VDSS) automated system for personal gain.

### **Findings:**

The investigator was able to identify the employees as (1) a Benefit Programs Supervisor (Supervisor) and (2) a Benefit Programs Specialist (Specialist) who does not work under the Supervisor's purview. Both employees had authorization to access the VDSS system by virtue of their employment with RDSS. This authority is provided to a limited number of employees only for performing their official duties.

The investigator contacted the VDSS Information Technology Department and requested all information the subject employees had requested through the State's computer system for a specific period of time. VDSS informed the investigator that the Specialist had accessed the State system which enabled the Specialist to access personal information on an individual that was not part of their client base. Further analysis showed that the Supervisor did not access the VDSS system to obtain information on the victim.

During the interview, the Supervisor initially denied knowing the victim. The Supervisor also stated that they did not ask anyone to search the State system for information on the victim on their behalf. Subsequently, the Supervisor admitted to both knowing the victim and asking the Specialist to conduct a search on the victim. The Supervisor stated the reason for the inquiry was to see if the victim was receiving benefits from the State and employment status. The Specialist provided the information obtained from the inquiry verbally to the Supervisor. The Specialist was aware of the victim prior to conducting the search because of a personal conversation between the Supervisor and the Specialist.

During the interview with the Specialist, the Specialist initially denied anyone requesting information on a known individual that was not part of their client base. Subsequently, the Specialist admitted that the Supervisor did request a search to be conducted of the known individual seeking benefits and employment information. This request was sent through text message to the Specialist's personal cell phone. The Specialist admitted to conducting this search on two separate occasions at the request of the Supervisor. The reason provided for the second search was due to the Supervisor seeing the victim at their work location. The Specialist admitted knowing that performing the search was against City Policy but due to the Specialist and the Supervisor's personal relationship, the Specialist conducted the search.

**Conclusion:**

Based on the findings, the OIG concludes that the allegation is substantiated. The OIG recommends appropriate disciplinary actions be taken in regards to this matter in consultation with Human Resources. This case is being referred to the Commonwealth Attorney's Office for further review.

If you have any questions, please contact me at extension 5616.

Sincerely,

*Louis G. Lassiter*

Louis Lassiter, CPA  
City Auditor/Inspector General

cc: Risha Berry, DCAO Human Services  
Shunda Giles, Director, Social Services  
Honorable City Council Members  
City Audit Committee