



INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Lori Torres, Inspector General

OFFICE: INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES (DCS)

TITLE: DCS CASEWORKER FALSIFICATION OF RECORDS

CASE ID: 2019-04-0107

DATE: June 25, 2020

Indiana Office of Inspector General Staff Attorney Lyubov Gore, after an investigation by Inspector General Special Agent Chuck Coffin, reports as follows:

The Indiana General Assembly charged the Office of the Indiana Inspector General (OIG) with addressing fraud, waste, abuse and wrongdoing in the executive branch agencies of state government. Ind. Code §4-2-7-2(b). The OIG also investigates allegations of criminal activity and Code of Ethics violations within state government. Ind. Code §4-2-7-3. The OIG may recommend policies and carry out other activities designed to deter, detect and eradicate fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement and misconduct in state government. Ind. Code §4-2-7-3(2).

On April 15, 2019, the OIG received a complaint alleging that a former DCS Family Case Manager (Employee) engaged in ghost employment and falsified records regarding child welfare visits in DCS's Case Management Database, Management Gateway for Indiana's Kids (MaGIK). DCS conducted an independent investigation into the matter and determined that there were approximately five cases in which the Employee entered false information in MaGIK regarding visits with families and children that may not have occurred. Following the investigation, DCS terminated the Employee for administrative violations of DCS Child Welfare Policies, the DCS Code of Conduct and the State Personnel Department Discipline Policy. The complaint implicated

the Code of Ethics' rule on ghost employment and alleged criminal violations of theft, obstruction of a child abuse assessment, ghost employment and official misconduct.

OIG Special Agent Chuck Coffin conducted an investigation into this matter. Special Agent Coffin obtained and reviewed the Employee's employment and termination records; the Employee's MaGIK entries; court documents related to the Employee's assigned child welfare cases; the Employee's Outlook calendar, emails and travel logs; DCS Child Welfare Policies; the DCS Code of Conduct; and the State Personnel Department Discipline Policy. Special Agent Coffin also attempted to contact the witnesses involved in the cases that DCS had assigned the Employee.

Special Agent Coffin learned that the Employee had been having performance issues since 2018 and that DCS had taken progressive corrective measures to address those performance issues. DCS's measures ultimately culminated in a pre-deprivation meeting and the Employee's termination.

The documentation Special Agent Coffin obtained revealed the following: in approximately five of the Employee's assigned cases, there were discrepancies between the Employee's MaGIK entries and official court reports; the Employee failed to provide specificity in documenting her child welfare visits in MaGIK; and the dates of the Employee's visit note entries in MaGIK were not consistent with the scheduled dates of the visits in her Outlook calendar. For example, in several of her assigned cases, the Employee frequently entered the word "Safety" as the only contact note for a child welfare visit with the family, which was contrary to DCS Child Welfare Policies. Further, several of the Employee's MaGIK entry contact notes for scheduled family visits indicated that the visits occurred on a different date than the date the Employee noted on her Outlook calendar for the scheduled visits. In one of the Employee's cases, official court

reports indicate that the Employee visited the family on different dates than the dates the Employee entered in MaGIK.

Special Agent Coffin attempted to contact the witnesses involved in the Employee's assigned DCS cases; however, he was unable to locate or speak to them. Special Agent Coffin learned that DCS terminated the Employee's supervisor, and Special Agent Coffin was unable to reach the supervisor for an interview. Despite Special Agent Coffin's efforts, to this date, no witnesses who could provide information regarding the Employee's conduct at DCS could be located.

During the course of the investigation, Special Agent Coffin learned of an address in Indianapolis for one of the Employee's relatives, and he sent a letter addressed to the Employee to that address. The Employee called Special Agent Coffin in response to the letter. The Employee informed Special Agent Coffin that she moved out of the State after her termination from DCS. The Employee declined to be interviewed, maintained that other FCMs had similar issues with entering false information, and that DCS terminated one of her supervisors for similar conduct. During her contact with Special Agent Coffin, the Employee did not deny the allegations against her or offer a reason for her conduct.

The OIG submitted the results of this investigation to the Marion County Prosecutor's Office. On June 11, 2020, the Marion County Prosecutor's Office notified the OIG that there was insufficient evidence to move forward on any criminal charges against the Employee. The OIG determined that, with no witnesses or documented proof that the Employee was engaged in work other than the performance of her official duties during working hours, there was insufficient evidence to bring a ghost employment complaint to the State Ethics Commission. Accordingly, the OIG is closing this case for insufficient cause. Although the OIG is closing this case for

insufficient cause, the OIG may reexamine this evaluation should the OIG receive additional information.

Dated: June 25, 2020

APPROVED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori Torres". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Lori Torres, Inspector General