



# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Lori Torres, Inspector General

OFFICE: INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES (DCS)  
TITLE: DCS CASEWORKER GHOST EMPLOYMENT AND THEFT  
(UNSUBSTANTIATED)  
CASE ID: 2019-09-0234  
DATE: April 3, 2020

*Inspector General Staff Attorney Kelly Elliott, after an investigation by Inspector General Director of Investigations, Darrell Boehmer, reports as follows:*

The Indiana General Assembly charged the Office of Inspector General (OIG) with addressing fraud, waste, abuse and wrongdoing in the executive branch of state government. I.C. § 4-2-7-2(b). The OIG also investigates criminal activity and ethics violations by state workers. I.C. § 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. I.C. § 4-2-7-3(2).

On September 20, 2019, the OIG received a complaint from the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) alleging that a former employee (Employee) engaged in ghost employment and theft by submitting falsified travel logs and timesheets. DCS terminated the Employee on September 20, 2019. OIG Director of Investigations, Darrell Boehmer, conducted an investigation into this matter.

Accompanying the complaint, DCS provided a report that outlined DCS's initial investigation into the allegations against the Employee. The report stated that the Employee's position with DCS required her to work in two counties. As such, the Employee worked out of two

different DCS local offices. The employee maintained a primary post in one local office (Primary Local Office), but DCS also permitted her to complete work at another local office (Satellite Local Office). DCS provided the Employee reimbursement for her travel between both local offices. The Employee requested reimbursement for her travel using a travel log.

As a part of their investigation, DCS reviewed the following records for the Employee for a seventy-two day period: state identification badge access into DCS local offices, emails sent from the Employee's state-issued iPhone and computer, Outlook calendar entries, internet usage, cell phone records, access to the Management Gateway for Indiana's Kids (MaGIK)<sup>1</sup> and case information, travel logs and timesheets.

Based on their review, DCS alleged that the Employee was padding her travel and stating she was working from the Satellite Local Office when she was not. DCS stated that on days the Employee reported working from a different location, such as the Satellite Local Office, the Employee sent emails from her state-issued iPhone and not her computer. DCS found a number of dates in which the Employee claimed travel from the Primary Local Office to the Satellite Local Office; however, records indicate that she did not use her state identification badge to access the Primary Local Office on these same dates. DCS found that the Employee's travel logs did not match up with her Outlook calendar appointments. The Employee also had appointments with families on her Outlook calendar that did not have an accompanying MaGIK entry to document the alleged face-to-face contact. DCS found that on certain days the Employee did not use the internet or only used the internet for limited periods. DCS terminated the Employee based upon their findings of the Employee's violation of the DCS Code of Conduct, DCS Child Welfare Policies and the State Personnel Discipline Policy.

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<sup>1</sup> MaGIK serves as DCS's electronic case management system for documentation.

DCS provided the Employee's records along with their investigative report to the OIG. Director Boehmer reviewed such records and requested records from the Indiana Office of Technology (IOT) regarding the Employee's Virtual Private Network (VPN) usage. IOT reported that they (IOT) had no records of the Employee using the VPN network to access the State's system. Director Boehmer found that the Employee maintained a state-issued laptop computer that would have allowed her to access her state emails without utilizing the State's VPN network.

Director Boehmer reviewed the Employee's use of her state identification badge in relation to her reported travel. Director Boehmer found that badge access was required to enter the Primary Local Office but not leave this office. During the time in question, the Satellite Local Office did not require badge access to enter or exit the building. Director Boehmer also found that the travel the Employee claimed on her travel logs did not provide the specific times in which she traveled between both offices, only the date and the mileage claimed for such travel.

Director Boehmer reviewed the Employee's entries in MaGIK and her Outlook calendar in relation to her reported travel. Director Boehmer found that the Employee claimed travel on her travel logs that did not have a corresponding entry on her Outlook calendar. The Employee also had appointments with families on her Outlook Calendar that did not have a corresponding MaGIK entry to document the contact. Director Boehmer determined that there were many inconsistencies between the Employee's entries in the various DCS reporting platforms; however, the Employee's lack of entries made in MaGIK or her Outlook calendar did not definitively prove that the Employee intentionally falsified a MaGIK entry or her travel log or engaged in ghost employment.

Director Boehmer interviewed the Employee. The Employee stated her assigned station was at the Primary Local Office, but she worked out of the Satellite Local Office as well. She noted that she normally only worked at the Satellite Local Office once a week on her "assigned"

day. The Employee stated that on her assigned day at the Satellite Local Office, she was to assist family case managers with any questions or concerns.

The Employee stated that in the summer of 2019, the Primary Local Office began to undergo renovations. As a result, the Employee and other DCS employees no longer had assigned workstations within that office. The Employee stated that she and the other displaced employees worked where space was available in the office, such as an empty desk or office. DCS also relocated the displaced employees' physical case files and office equipment to a different floor of the office building. The Employee explained that without an assigned desk and multiple monitors to work from, she often found it easier to use her state-issued iPhone for emailing while she used her computer screen for other agency applications, such as MaGIK or KidTraks.<sup>2</sup>

The Employee stated that the Primary Local Office had multiple doors that required badge-access to enter. The Employee had to use her state-identification badge to enter the local office and enter different divisions within the office. The Employee explained that the renovations caused changes to the doors that required badge access within the Primary Local Office. The Employee stated that one of the doors that required badge-access was knocked down during the renovations. She also stated that for a period during the renovations, DCS employees utilized an "unlocked door."

The Employee stated that due to the limited workspace available at the Primary Local Office, her supervisor advised that she should work out of the Satellite Local Office. The Employee stated she complied with her supervisor's request and worked out of the Satellite Local Office more frequently during the renovations. The Employee stated that the Satellite Local Office did not require badge access at that time. The Employee stated that she worked in an available office

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<sup>2</sup> KidTraks is an online system that allows licensed foster parents and service providers to submit invoices and other financial claims to DCS.

at the Satellite Local Office. The location of this available office did not require the Employee to check in with other employees at the Satellite Local Office. The Employee explained that she only went around the Satellite Local Office to greet everyone on her assigned days.

The Employee stated she never falsified an entry in MaGIK, a court report or claim on her travel logs. The Employee explained that she maintained a caseload of approximately sixty families. She agreed that she was not consistent in keeping her Outlook calendar up-to-date. She stated her calendar of appointments was a combination of her Outlook calendar and an appointment book. Moreover, she stated she was also inconsistent in making entries in MaGIK for her cases. She stated this task often fell last on her to-do list. She explained that she maintained many of her notes for contacts on paper (calendars, notebooks, logs, etc.). She stated she turned over all paper documentation relating to her cases to DCS upon her termination.

The Employee clarified that she never used the State's VPN network while working with DCS. She explained that she only needed the internet to access MaGIK and KidTraks. She stated that DCS employees can utilize MaGIK and KidTraks through their state-issued phones but noted that KidTraks did not work well on a phone. She also stated that she often did not claim travel when visiting families only a couple of miles away from the DCS local offices.

Director Boehmer corresponded with the DCS Regional Manager for the Primary Local Office and Satellite Local Office regarding the remodel and the Employee's access to the local offices. The Regional Manger verified that the Primary Local Office underwent an extensive remodel during the summer and fall of 2019. The Regional Manager explained that during the remodel, regional staff members, such as foster care staff, did not have a designated work area at the Primary Local Office; however, regional staff members had a "landing station" at the office if they needed to do work from the Primary Local Office. The Regional Manager noted that regional

staff members would have worked with their supervisor regarding any telework arrangements. The Regional Manager stated that DCS asked foster care staff members who had workstations in other county offices within the region to work primarily from those satellite stations. The Regional Manager also verified that the Employee had a key to access the Satellite Local Office and office space within that local office.

In conclusion, Director Boehmer found insufficient evidence to substantiate allegations that the Employee engaged in ghost employment or theft by intentionally falsifying travel logs and timesheets; however, he concluded that the Employee failed to adequately document the actions she took in carrying out her official state duties. Director Boehmer also found no evidence to indicate that the Employee falsified any MaGIK entries or any other child abuse/neglect information or records. As a result, the OIG is closing this case for insufficient cause.

Dated: April 3, 2020

APPROVED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori Torres". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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Lori Torres, Inspector General