



## INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT

2005-11-0571

June 9, 2009

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION FRAUD

*Inspector General Staff Attorney Kristi Shute, after an investigation by Special Agent Maurice Allcron, reports as follows:*

This investigation was originally commenced by Family and Social Services Administration (“FSSA”) investigators and the Indiana State Police (“ISP”). On November 11, 2005, Special Agent Maurice Allcron of the Office of the Inspector General (“OIG”) was contacted by ISP to determine whether the OIG would review the matter and assist in the investigation.

The OIG is a statutory law enforcement agency created in May of 2005 with the general duty to address fraud, waste, abuse and wrongdoing in agencies. IC 4-2-7-2(b). The OIG also is charged to investigate contractors doing business with the state, I.C. 4-2-7-3(3)(G), and is to supervise and coordinate investigations. IC 4-2-7-3(1).

This case involves FSSA and its Vocational Rehabilitation program. This program provides modifications to homes, such as building ramps and widening

doorways, so that disabled citizens can live independent lives.

During an internal investigative audit by FSSA, it was discovered that the FSSA Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor approved claims for client home modifications using the same private contractor. The contractor forged signatures under various construction company names to give the appearance of competing bids which were required for this program.

In a typical case, the client contacts the Vocational Rehabilitation Office and fills out an application for services. An evaluator meets with the client to determine whether modifications are necessary. The evaluator then reports back to the Counselor. If modifications are approved, the Counselor is required to obtain two bids from contractors. The Counselor then awards the contract. In most cases, the project is awarded to the lowest bidder.

In this case, the contractor submitted multiple bids under different company names, using forged signatures to hide that he was bidding against himself. The investigation also revealed that he submitted the lowest bid under his company name to ensure that he was awarded the contract.

The contractor was interviewed by Special Agent Allcron to have the opportunity to provide an explanation for this conduct, but the contractor admitted to forging the signatures on the numerous bid proposals so it would not look like he was bidding against himself.

Due to the physical evidence and the contractor's admission, criminal charges were filed by the Marion County Prosecuting Attorney's Office.

Accordingly, this investigation is closed.

Dated this 9<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2009.

APPROVED:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David O. Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive style with some loops and flourishes.

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David O. Thomas, Inspector General