



Department of
Job and Family Services

John R. Kasich, Governor
Michael B. Colbert, Director

OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL
2013 SEP 16 PM 1:09

September 16, 2013

Mr. Randall J. Meyer
Ohio Inspector General
30 East Broad Street, Suite 2940
Columbus, Ohio 43215

RE: *Ohio Department of Job and Family Services*, File Identification Number: 2012-CA00087

Dear Inspector General Meyer:

Please take this letter as the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' (ODJFS) formal response to the recommendations made by your office in the State of Ohio's Office of The Inspector General Investigative Report issued on July 18, 2013.

The Inspector General's Recommendations and ODJFS' Responses are as follows:

- 1) **Review management controls to ensure that all supervisors and departmental personnel are trained on the internal protocols for reporting fraud related to unemployment benefits.**
- 2) **Review agency processes by which supervisors and departmental personnel are trained on the requirements of internal and external reporting procedures.**
- 3) **Consider developing or revising policies addressing the degree of detail which is required and permissible when reporting suspected fraud.**
- 4) **Review methods by which important departmental information is communicated and consider alternative feedback methods to ensure receipt and understanding of guidance. Email correspondence should not be the sole method of communicating department policy to all employees.**

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ODJFS is essentially one agency that houses and operates several separate federal and state welfare programs. It currently employs over 2900 employees throughout the State of Ohio. ODJFS, in compliance with O.R.C. §117.103(B)(2), notified all ODJFS employees about the Auditor of State's website that permits the reporting of fraud allegedly committed by public employees and officials. This notification went out by email, and required the employee to formally acknowledge receipt of the notice. Several months earlier, ODJFS engaged in a campaign of educating staff about the web based tools available to assist in reporting unemployment compensation fraud. This campaign involved articles in the ODJFS News Today on-line daily newsletter as well as the emails of which your office is already aware. Additionally, all news articles published in major Ohio newspapers contain information about ODJFS' fraud reporting system. It is assumed that ODJFS employees may be alerted to this system in this way as well.

Less than half of ODJFS employees have some level of access to the Ohio Job Insurance database that contains confidential unemployment compensation claimant information. In all cases, the level of access provided is necessary to allow the employee to complete his or her assigned duties. The investigation that your office undertook concerned two employees who had such access. These two employees work in the Office of Local Operations, in the employment services area. While agency-wide, there are several management controls in place to disseminate the seriousness of inappropriate accessing of OJI¹, because ODJFS employees who work in the area of unemployment compensation more regularly work with OJI in the course of their duties, more extensive training has been delivered over the years to this group of employees, and they regularly use a procedures manual that provides information regarding the reporting of fraud.

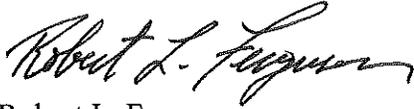
ODJFS is persuaded that there is not systemic confusion about how to report suspected unemployment compensation fraud. We arrive at this conclusion based upon the fact that there have only been two employees who have admitted confusion about how to report such fraud, and they have both been employed in the employment services area of the Office of Local Operations.

The greater concern for our agency is that employees are using OJI information to verify their suspicions that unemployment compensation fraud is being committed, which, while not based in any criminal motivation, is still beyond the scope of their assigned job duties. To remedy this problem, the Office of Local Operations has, by the date of this letter, trained its entire staff on proper unemployment compensation fraud reporting. In this training, it was explained that staff are not to undertake their own investigation, and specifically it was reemphasized that employees may not access OJI to shore up their suspicions.

¹ These include the requirement that all ODJFS employees sign the Code of Responsibility, JFS form 7078, that notifies them of the agency's key policies regarding accessing data, and also that data is only to be accessed in furtherance of their assigned job duties.

ODJFS believes that the efforts taken to date, and those it will pursue in the future, fully satisfy the recommendations that your office has made, but if there is any other step ODJFS should take, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert L. Ferguson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Robert L. Ferguson
ODJFS Chief Inspector

cc: Bruce Madson, ODJFS Assistant Director
Sonnetta Sturkey, ODJFS Chief Operations Officer
Lewis George, ODJFS Chief Legal Counsel
Tiffany Richardson, ODJFS Office of Employee and Business Services Deputy Director
Julie Smith, ODJFS Office of Local Operations Deputy Director