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SAFEGUARDS AGAINST FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE

The DHS Office of Inspector General provides support and oversight throughout the Department of Human Services to ensure that work is carried on according to Agency Policy, Procedure, and Practice. Within that oversight lays the responsibility to investigate allegations of fraud, abuse, waste, as well as misconduct internally by employees, and externally by our vendors, contractors, and consumers.

Definitions of fraud, waste and abuse:

Fraud – an act of intentional or reckless deceit to mislead or deceive.

Examples:

- Deliberate omission, misuse or misapplication of resources or assets
- Fraudulent identification or credentials
- Fraudulent expense for reimbursement
- Falsifying financial records
- Intentionally misrepresenting the costs of goods or services provided
- Falsifying payroll information
- Forgery or alteration of official documents (applications, contracts, checks, purchase orders, invoices, etc.)

Waste – the intentional or unintentional, thoughtless or careless expenditure, consumption, mismanagement, use, or squandering of government resources. Waste also includes incurring unnecessary costs because of inefficient or ineffective practices, systems, or controls.

Examples:

- Purchase of unneeded supplies or equipment
- Purchase of goods at inflated prices
- Failure to reuse or recycle major resources or reduce waste generation

Abuse – Intentional destruction, diversion, manipulation, misapplication, maltreatment, or misuse of government resources. Extravagant or excessive use as to abuse one's position or authority. Abuse can occur in financial or non-financial settings.

Examples:

- Misuse of state money, equipment, supplies and/or other materials
- Failure to report damage to state equipment or property
- Improper hiring practice
- Significant unauthorized time away from work
- Significant use of state time for personal business
- Receipt of favors for awarding contracts to vendors
- Falsification or misuse of overtime or compensatory time

And, we must recognize there is other potential for misconduct to include:

Corruption – an intentional act of fraud, waste or abuse, or the use of public office for personal or financial gain for oneself or another.

Examples:

- Accepting kickbacks
- Bid rigging
- Contract steering

Conflict of Interest – a situation in which a person is in a position to exploit their professional capacity in some way for personal benefit. It may occur when a person has competing professional obligations and private interests. A conflict of interest may exist even if no unethical or improper act results from it, as it may be evidenced by the appearance of impropriety.

Examples:

- Purchasing state goods from vendors who are controlled by or who employ relatives
- Nepotism
- Accepting gifts from vendors
- Outside employment with vendors
- Inappropriately using one's position to influence the selection of vendors with whom you have a personal interest/relationship
- Using confidential information for personal profit or to assist outside organizations

Errors of Omission – unintentional errors - whether verbal or written.

The battle against fraud, waste and abuse is extensive. Our strategy must be multifaceted, targeted and strong. Our frontline defense is our employees, who are educated and have the expertise to detect fraud, waste and abuse when it occurs. The second line of defense is our vendors and contractors who must participate in this defense by self-monitoring and diligent fulfillment of contractual obligations. The third line of defense is our community who must be encouraged to report fraud, waste and abuse when suspected.

In spite of our efforts to deter fraud, waste and abuse through our established lines of defense, it is inevitable that violations may occur. When detected and reported, the fraudulent activity will be investigated by the OIG, as tasked by the DHS Commissioner. Upon receipt of a report of potential fraud, waste or abuse, our actions will include:

- Collaboration with any Department/Division/Office or Law Enforcement Agency necessary for investigation
- Thorough investigation of the reported allegations
- Complete review of contract language and processes if applicable
- Reporting of findings to Executive Levels within DHS for recommendations
- Prosecution if appropriate

HOW TO REPORT FRAUD, WASTE OR ABUSE

OIG Hotline: 1-877-423-4746

OIG Fax: 404-463-5496

OIG Email: inspectorgeneralhotline@dhr.state.ga.us

Via the web: www.dhs.georgia.gov and follow the link to report an incident to OIG

U.S. Mail Two Peachtree St., NW, suite 30.450, Atlanta, GA 30303
Attention: DHS Inspector General