

F o r Y o u r I n s p e c t i o n



"Mission First, People Always, Integrity Forever"

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Office Of Inspector General, Corporation For National And Community Service

OIG Profile

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Robert D. Shadowens joined the Office of Inspector General in 1995 as Assistant Inspector General for Investigations. In 2000, he was appointed Deputy Inspector General for Investigations and Operations, responsible for both the Investigations Section and the operations of the OIG. In 2003, Shadowens was appointed Deputy Inspector General. He is responsible for all OIG audit, investigative, and evaluation efforts, as well as the day-to-day operations.



Shadowens joined the U.S. Army in 1971 and served throughout the world. He retired in 1991 as a Special Agent in the Army's Criminal Investigation Division.

Shadowens holds a Bachelor's Degree with concentrations in Business, Criminal Justice, Education and Psychology, and has also earned college-level certificates, with honors, in law enforcement, criminal justice, and contract management. He received advanced forensic science training at the Metropolitan Police Detective Training School (Scotland Yard) in London, England.

He is a member of the CID Agents Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, the Disabled American Veterans, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

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Abuse Travel Cards at Your Own Peril !

The government credit card issued to employees by the Corporation for National and Community Service (Corporation) is a handy tool for financing official travel and tracking expenses. However, if the card is misused, it can easily destroy a career.

Many Americans have trouble managing their personal credit cards. Excessive charges on plastic can lead to insurmountable debt, a bad credit rating and even bankruptcy. But those problems pale compared to the payback faced by abusers.

Abusing a travel card can result in a number of Corporation administrative actions, including revocation of card privileges and dismissal. And Federal prosecutors have taken a keen interest in charging abusers with theft, fraud and other felonies.

A government travel card can prove to be a veritable plastic explosive in the wrong hands. And, with the Corporation and the Office of Inspector General (OIG) closely monitoring card use, that explosive is almost guaranteed to go off in an abuser's hands.

Employees must use their card only for official travel and allowable expenses and must settle their bills with the card-issuing bank in a timely manner. The Corporation requires all employees to undergo specialized training and agree to those rules before they are issued a government travel card. They are also required to take a yearly refresher course.

Cardholders who break the rules are easy to detect. Using bank-supplied records that list the dates and details of all transactions, the OIG and the Corporation's Office of Administration and Management Services cooperate on ongoing reviews of all

accounts.

For starters, those transaction records are compared to employee travel orders. A transaction that takes place outside of an employee's official travel period is a prime indicator of potential fraud. OIG investigators can also bank records to question the validity and legality of every purchase or cash withdrawal made with the card.

Overdue government credit card bills can also trigger an OIG investigation. While the basic financial agreement and billing process for travel cards is between the cardholder and the issuing bank, those banks are also charged with notifying the Corporation once an account is seriously in arrears.

More often than not, travel card deadbeats also prove to be travel card abusers.

A travel card abuser doesn't have to go on a mega-bucks spending spree to get the attention of Corporation management and OIG investigators. Every alleged abuse is subject to a formal probe. For example, the OIG recently conducted an investigation of an employee who had mistakenly used a travel card to purchase a few dollars worth of groceries. The employee admitted to the mistake, which the employee blamed on the similarity in appearance of the employee's travel card and personal credit card, and was given administrative counseling. Here are some tips to help



Perilous Plastic

See Travel, Page 2

Background Checks Can Prevent a Nightmare

An AmeriCorps member in your program has been arrested and convicted of molesting a child enrolled in your after-school recreation program. As the case unfolds, media reports repeatedly link the words "AmeriCorps" and "sex offender," casting a pall on the reputation of your worthy community efforts.

To make matters worse, the media reports that your program failed to conduct a criminal background check, a Corporation for National and Community Service (Corporation) requirement for all AmeriCorps members who have substantial contact with youth and other vulnerable persons, at the time of the member's enrollment. A check conducted by the media, using readily available data, reveals that

For more information on criminal background checks, visit our website at www.cncsoig.gov.

your AmeriCorps member is a repeat sex offender.

The background check provision states that "AmeriCorps Programs with Members or employees who have substantial direct contact with children (as defined by state law), or who perform service in the homes of children or individuals considered vulnerable by the program (including the frail, elderly and disabled) shall, to the extent permitted by state and local law, conduct criminal record checks on these Members or employees as part of the screening process."

See Nightmare, Page 2



OIG Investigations Result in 12 Debarments

As the result of information developed by OIG investigators, the Corporation for National and Community Service's debarment official has debarred 12 individuals since January 2004.

Debarment is a government-wide program that bans individuals convicted of theft, fraud and other serious crimes, as well as major violations of grant terms, from participating in Federal programs and grants for up to three years.

Debarred persons have their names included on an exclusion list that is maintained by the General Services Administration and used as a reference by all Federal agencies.

Individuals debarred by the Corporation include:

-Michael Scandrick, ex- director of a Georgia AmeriCorps program in GA, and his wife Domatrice Scandrick, also a program official, whom misapplied funds and used members to work on their business ventures, were each debarred for 24 months.

-Kate Fernald, the former associate director of a Baltimore-based AmeriCorps program who was found guilty of embezzling more than \$44,000, was debarred for 24 months.

-Shanelle Slade, a former AmeriCorps member in Rochester, NY, who submitted false and forged time sheets to obtain an Education Award, was debarred for 12 months.

-Donald McCoy, a former AmeriCorps program director who was found guilty of embezzling more than \$37,000 from a faith-based program in Coconut Grove, FL, was debarred for 12 months.

-Bernadette Teele, a former AmeriCorps member from Waterbury, CT, who pled guilty to defrauding the AmeriCorps*Cares childcare program of more than \$10,000, was debarred for 24 months.

-Brandee Henson, a former AmeriCorps director from Frankfort, KY, who pled guilty to using her program credit card for more than \$2,000 in personal

expenses, was debarred for 12 months.

-Susan Nelson, a former official with a nonprofit agency in Ladysmith, WI, and an accomplice, Leonard Holmstead, who both pled guilty to embezzling more than \$1 million (including AmeriCorps funds) from the agency, were each debarred for 36 months.

-Richlet Valmord, a former AmeriCorps member from New York who pled guilty to defrauding the AmeriCorps*Cares childcare program of more than \$2,000, was debarred for 24 months.

-Dorothy Guffey, a former bookkeeper for a nonprofit agency in New Castle, IN, who was found guilty of embezzling more than \$8,700 from the agency (including Foster Grandparent Program funds), was debarred for 12 months.

-Christopher Lewis, a former Georgia AmeriCorps member who was found guilty of diverting Education Awards to pay for automobiles, was debarred for 12 months.

From Page 1, Travel

you properly utilize your government travel card:

-Only use your card during your official travel periods. Store it in a secure place between trips.

-Use the card only for authorized travel expenses, including airfares, rental cars, hotels and meals while on official travel status.

-Pay all travel card bills by the due date and file your travel vouchers in a timely manner after returning from your trip. The Corporation usually reimburses employees in advance of credit card billing.

-If you have a history of credit problems with your personal cards, and fear temptation, your supervisor can arrange alternative methods to pay for official travel.

From Page 1, Prevent A Nightmare

Criminal background checks should also be an integral part of volunteer recruiting and staff hiring for Senior Corps and Learn and Serve grantees. Elder abuse has been identified as a growing concern, on a par with child abuse.

Recent program audits conducted by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) have detected a disturbing pattern of non-compliance with criminal background check grant provision requirements. In some cases, programs have failed to conduct the checks. Other programs have failed to retain documentation proving that background checks were conducted for members working with youth and other vulnerable persons.

It is OIG audit policy to question all grant costs re-

lated to members working with youth for whom there is no documentation of a criminal background check. That includes outlays for living allowances and education awards.

Because laws governing volunteer and employee screening can vary from state to state, program directors should make themselves familiar with these statutes.

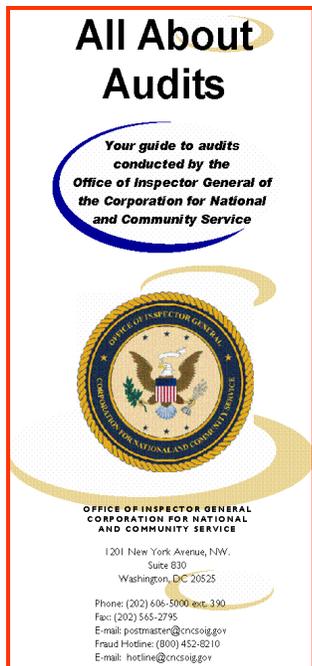
Program officials should also make an inventory of all available criminal databases, ranging from that maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation to State and county court records, and make use of as many sources as possible in their screening efforts.

Overall, the best policy for all grantee programs is to screen and, when in doubt, conduct additional background checks before hiring an employee or placing a member in service with young or other vulnerable individuals. Failure to fully screen employees and volunteers can lead to problems of nightmarish proportions, especially for the vulnerable persons whom lax oversight has placed in harm's way.

Read About The OIG
In Our Brochures



The Full Brochures Can Be Found
And downloaded Free On Our [WEB Site www.cncsoig.gov](http://www.cncsoig.gov).



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Did You Know?

These "Red Flags" can alert you to possible incidents of fraud, including:

- ☞ Checks are cashed at taverns, off-track betting parlors or other suspicious locales.
- ☞ Fellow employee has a close or personal relationship with a supplier.
- ☞ Fellow employee is hesitant to allow co-workers to examine records.