

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

Wendy Wingers Special Agent

Wendy Wingers, who was promoted to Special Agent in December 2004, conducts investigations as lead agent and performs various other duties for the OIG Investigations Section.



She joined the OIG Support Section in 2000 as an administrative assistant, specializing in budget reconciliation. In 2002, Wingers took on new duties as an assistant in the Investigations Section, where she compiled and maintained statistics in the OIG database and assisted Senior Special Agents with their cases.

Starting in 2004, Wingers underwent extensive training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Georgia. In February 2005, she graduated from Inspector General Academy Criminal Investigator Training Program at FLETC.

Prior to joining the OIG, Wingers held several positions in the private sector.

Born in Dearborn, Michigan, Wingers and her family traveled extensively throughout the world during her father's Army career. She graduated high school in Frankfurt, Germany.

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Fraud Case Settled For \$534,000

Inspector General Gerald Walpin announced June 14 that the YMCA of Greater New York has agreed to repay the Federal Government \$534,000 in misapplied funds and damages stemming from abuses by officials of its former AmeriCorps School Success Program.

The settlement was the result of a joint effort by the OIG's Audit and Investigative sections, which uncovered widespread fraud and grant violations in the YMCA program, which was designed to provide tutoring help to at-risk students in New York City's elementary schools.

The case was investigated by OIG Senior Special Agent Jeffrey Morales and Special Agent Wendy Wingers. OIG Audit Manager Stuart Axenfeld supervised the audit.

Michael J. Garcia, United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, said that YMCA officials, in agreeing to settle the civil charges, did not admit to any wrongdoing or liability.

OIG auditors and investigators found that, from 2000-2005, YMCA officials falsified timesheets and inflated the number of service hours performed by AmeriCorps members, allowing the school tutors to obtain Federally funded Education Awards to which they were not entitled. In some cases, YMCA officials directed their AmeriCorps members to sign blank timesheets and then filled in the forms with inflated hours, in many cases doubling the actual number of hours served.

AmeriCorps members can earn an award of



Walpin: "Great Result"

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Debarment Turns Crooks Into Pariahs

Persons who betray the public's trust by defrauding the Corporation for National and Community Service face a number of sanctions, including jail time, probation, fines and a criminal record.

They also risk becoming the Federal equivalent of pariahs.

The Office of Inspector General actively works to deny persons who commit fraud continued access to Federal programs and taxpayer dollars through debarment or suspension.



Even before a final determination, if there is strong evidence of fraud, the OIG will seek suspension of an individual. Once a fraud case has been adjudicated, the OIG will issue a recommendation to Corporation officials to consider debarment of the offenders. All persons who have been convicted of, or have plead guilty to, defrauding the Federal Government are subject to debar-

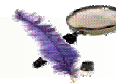
ment. Programs and companies that have engaged in fraud can also be debarred. The final decision is made by the Corporation's debarment official.

"Debarment and suspension are important tools to prevent wrongdoers from having continued access to taxpayers' money," said Inspector General Gerald Walpin. "These tools help to ensure that Federal funds only go to the overwhelming number of our grantees that are honest."

Most debarments last up to three years, even longer if the facts warrant. Suspensions can last up to one year. Both sanctions have the same serious consequences.

A debarred or suspended individual is prohibited from participating in a wide array of Federal and government-financed activities. Need a Federally guaranteed

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Debarment Turns Crooks Into Pariahs

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loan or grant for college? Debarred persons need not apply. The same goes for government-insured home mortgages and small business loans.

Debarment can also put a severe crimp on a career, especially for professionals working in social service programs that depend on government grants. Federal grant recipients are barred from employing debarred persons for positions of responsibility. Programs that do employ debarred individuals can have their grants canceled or their applications rejected.

OIG Cases Lead to Five Debarments

Corporation management recently announced the debarment of five individuals as the result of OIG investigations.

- Arthur Kirk, a former Michigan AmeriCorps member and program director who concealed the fact that he was a convicted sex offender and plead guilty to three counts of False Statements, was debarred for three years.
- Veronique King, a former Michigan VISTA member who defrauded the VISTA*Care program of \$15,861 in child care benefits and plead guilty to Welfare Fraud, was debarred for three years.
- Anna Goree, a former Michigan VISTA member who defrauded the VISTA*Care program of \$10,320 in child care benefits and plead guilty to Welfare Fraud, was debarred for three years.
- Lanaye Williams, a former Michigan VISTA member who defrauded the VISTA*Care program of \$4,480 and plead guilty to Welfare Fraud, was debarred for two years.
- Dwana Parker, former Michigan VISTA member who defrauded the VISTA*Care program of \$3,535 and plead guilty to Welfare Fraud, was debarred for two years.

These bans are enforced by all Federal agencies and Federal funding recipients with the help of a rogues' gallery called the "Federal Excluded Parties List." This database, maintained by the General Services Administration (GSA), lists all currently debarred individuals, programs and companies.

Even after the debarment period ends, the sanction can have a lingering negative impact. The GSA's list includes archived information on past, expired debarment actions that can be taken into account by grant-making agencies and potential employers.

In extreme cases of waste, fraud and abuse, the OIG has the authority to debar the offending program, thereby immediately cutting off all Federal funding. Acting on directives from Congress, the Corporation has authorized the OIG to debar programs that, as the result of OIG audit findings, have committed "substantial violations" of Federal laws and grant agreements.

"Substantial violations" can include misapplications of funds for activities not covered by a Corporation grant, the use of Federal funds for outlawed activities like lobbying Congress, and other actions that indicate a serious lack of business integrity and honesty.

Fraud Case Results "Great"

(Continued from page 1)

\$4,725, to be paid to their college or the lender of their higher education loan, for completing 1,700 hours of service in a year.

The fraud also allowed unqualified members, including several who had left the program before completing their service terms, to earn Federally funded AmeriCorps living allowances to which they were not entitled. Officials further allowed members to serve in activities not covered by their grant.

"This great result, recovering more than half a million dollars of Federal funds, demonstrates the value of having an Inspector General and of conducting audits and investigations," said Walpin. "And this case proves that even a nonprofit agency with a good reputation can fail in its duty to supervise its officials and prevent misuse of Federal funds."

The \$534,000 penalty represents a doubling of the actual loss to the Government. The YMCA was charged with violations of the False Claims Act. Such violations are punishable by at least a doubling of the amount proven to have been misapplied.

The YMCA official who supervised the AmeriCorps program resigned early in the investigation and the New York State Commission for National and Community Service, the state agency that sub-grants Corporation funds to local nonprofit groups, froze additional funding for the Program in 2005.

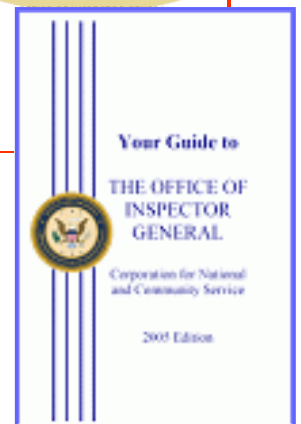
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