



# NEWS

From the Office of the New York State Inspector General  
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## **Rural Aide Prosecuted for Nearly \$14,000 In Car and Cell Phone Abuse**

A state Department of Labor (DOL) employee owes New York state more than \$13,762 for personal use of her state vehicle and cell phone from 2002 to 2006, the New York State Inspector General announced today.

Wuanita Graham, 51, of Wolcott, N.Y., drove 26,500 personal miles, claiming them as a work mileage, costing the state \$10,247. She also made thousands of cell phone calls from 2004 to 2006, at a costing to the state of \$2,516. During one 10-day vacation, Graham had 100 personal calls. In all, she charged New York State for more than 3,825 calls to family, friends, restaurants, mortgage companies, debt collectors, nail salons, lingerie stores and car dealers.

“This employee abused her position at the expense of state taxpayers, and should be required to make restitution,” Inspector General Joseph Fisch said.

The Inspector General has referred the case to the state Attorney General’s office for possible prosecution. DOL has initiated disciplinary action against Graham for misuse of a state car, state cell phone and other issues.

As a Rural Employment Aide earning \$45,000, Graham, was issued a state-issued vehicle, gas card, travel card and cell phone for her work. Employed by DOL since 1989, Graham traveled to about 300 farms a year to assist migrant workers in Wayne, Ontario, Yates, Seneca and Cayuga counties. The Inspector General’s investigation found that Graham routinely used her vehicle on non-working days.

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