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OSIG NEWS

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Virginia Inspector General Teamed with State Police to Develop Case for Brown Indictment

The Virginia Office of the State Inspector General (OSIG), in collaboration with Virginia State Police, developed the case for last week's federal indictment of a former congressional candidate charged with stealing from the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), which provides meals to low-income children during summer months when free school-lunch programs are unavailable.

OSIG investigated allegations that Shaun Brown, 58, of Hampton, had submitted fraudulent claims to SFSP for reimbursement when handling operations for Jobs Community Outreach Development Corporation (JOBS), a local Virginia sponsor and coordinator of the summer food program.

A complaint to the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), which administers SFSP in Virginia, was referred to OSIG for investigation. In partnership with Virginia State Police, OSIG conducted interviews and examined records obtained by subpoena to develop the case and substantiate allegations. The case was then presented to the United States Attorney's Office (USAO) Eastern District of Virginia, where Assistant U.S. Attorney Elizabeth M. Yusi now serves as lead prosecutor on the case.

"We value the working relationship with our local, state and federal law enforcement partners," said Acting State Inspector General Michael Westfall, "and will continue to investigate complaints of fraud and abuse to protect public programs and preserve the public's trust."

According to the indictment, Brown directed JOBS staff to inflate the numbers of children fed under SPSF and falsified documents to obtain additional money. She has been charged with wire fraud and theft of government property, and faces a maximum of 20 years in prison if convicted.

This is the second summer food service case investigated by OSIG in the last 18 months. In 2016, OSIG and Virginia State Police were honored by USAO for investigative work on the U.S. vs. Cindy Hall and Stephanie Almond case, a Tidewater SFSP case involving mail fraud and unlawful monetary transactions that resulted in prison sentences for the mother/daughter team, as well as a judgment of \$249,000 in restitution to the Commonwealth of Virginia.

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Established in 2012 to investigate fraud, waste, abuse and corruption in executive branch state government, the Virginia Office of the State Inspector General (OSIG) manages the State Fraud, Waste and Abuse Hotline; conducts investigations and performance reviews of state agencies; provides training and standards for the commonwealth's internal audit divisions; and conducts inspections and reviews of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services facilities and programs. Additional information is available at www.osig.virginia.gov.