



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A12100072

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Closeout

We conducted an investigation into an NSF employee¹ who used her transit benefit 938 times for personal trips and 51 times for parking over three years. During this period, the employee replaced her Metro card four times but did not transfer the subsidy balance to the new card, thereby leaving \$974 of federal funds on the old card accounts. She also accepted a \$981 ARRA cash reimbursement for transit expenses that she had not incurred. Because the employee's actions were fraudulent, we referred this matter to the U.S. Attorney's Office, which declined criminal prosecution in lieu of administrative action by NSF. During our interview, the employee admitted that she had given her son the cards, obtaining new cards as he lost or broke them and registering them with NSF to continue the subsidy. The inappropriately used funds totaled nearly \$4,000, adding together personal trips, parking, the ARRA check, and the subsidy funds left on old cards. We referred the matter to the employee's supervisor and recommended that NSF itself recover the funds remaining on the employee's old transit cards, and recover the rest of the money (\$2,881) from the employee. We also recommended NSF take appropriate personnel action.

NSF management first proposed to suspend her for 20 days, but the employee requested 10 days instead. NSF reduced the suspension to 14 days, in part because her supervisor thought that she had repaid all of the misused funds. However, when we requested documentation to confirm that the funds had been repaid, NSF discovered the employee had previously repaid only the \$67 of her parking mischarges identified in our proactive review of the Transit Subsidy Program from 2011, but had not repaid any money from the other misuse identified in this investigation. The employee was aware that she had not repaid her transit abuse; nevertheless, she did not clarify the facts for her supervisor but instead signed the decision letter and did not attempt to pay. NSF then asked her to pay the amount she had misused minus \$524 because NSF determined that she was not responsible for any misuse due to personal trips that occurred during our earlier proactive review.

After she repaid the money she misused, NSF decided to return the fraudulent \$981 ARRA reimbursement to the employee, stating that it lacked "traceability to specific usage"—despite the employee's admission that she *had not used the Metro* and had taken the money for personal use. We also learned that the employee or her son transferred most of the \$974 left on her old transit subsidy card accounts to new cards, over which NSF did not have authority to recover funds. The employee acknowledged her responsibility for this and repaid the \$974.

This case is closed with no further action taken.

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