



Jason E. Mumpower, Comptroller of the Treasury

May 3, 2023

Former Gibson County Recovery Court Coordinator Indicted

Monica Bridges Improperly Paid for Hours Not Worked

An investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller's Office has resulted in the indictment of Monica Bridges, who served as the full-time coordinator of the Gibson County Recovery Court from October 2019 until her resignation in September 2022.

The Gibson County Recovery Court allows non-violent offenders with substance abuse issues to obtain treatment while under close legal and clinical supervision. The investigation began after citizens reported questionable time-reporting practices and other concerns about the court's operations.



Investigators determined that Bridges received at least \$25,425.25 in improper wages and payroll benefits. This includes at least \$20,760.22 in unearned compensation for 1,156.24 hours she did not work; \$1,665.04 in prorated matching benefits and payments for Medicare and Social Security costs incurred by the county; and \$2,999.99 in supplemental pay that she did not earn.

Bridges was able to conceal the fact that she was not working her full-time hours by using the former General Sessions Judge's signature stamp on her timesheets to make it appear as if he had reviewed and approved them.

Investigators also question the purchase of 155 gift cards, valued at \$25 each, by the Recovery Court. These gift cards were intended to incentivize participants and reward them upon graduation from the program. However, due to a lack of documentation, investigators could not substantiate that all the gift cards were used for their intended purpose.

Bridges admitted to investigators that she was overpaid for not working full-time hours, and that she used gift cards to make personal purchases, but claimed it was not intentional.

The investigation also notes the Recovery Court's former clinical treatment director improperly referred participants to a business she personally owned in order to receive outpatient treatment. Participants told investigators that they were led to believe that the treatment director's business was their only option. The former clinical director resigned on August 31, 2022.

Based upon this investigation, in May 2023, the Gibson County Grand Jury indicted Monica Bridges on one count of theft of property over \$10,000, one count of official misconduct, one count of forgery over \$10,000, and one count of criminal simulation over \$10,000.

“The management of the Recovery Court must ensure it provides adequate oversight over its payroll operations, gift card use, and conflict of interest practices,” said Comptroller Mumpower. “Additionally, signature stamps should always be kept in a secure location, and there must be clear policies about their use to reduce the risk of unauthorized activity.”

To view the investigative report, go to tncot.cc/doireports. To view a map depicting Comptroller investigations, go to tncot.cc/mappinginvestigations.

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