


[Home](#)
[CEO Hotline](#)
[Viewpoint](#)
[Classified Ads](#)
[Archives](#)
[Metro.net \(web\)](#)

Resources

[Safety](#)
[Pressroom \(web\)](#)
[Ask the CEO](#)
[CEO Forum](#)
[Employee Recognition](#)
[Employee Activities](#)
[Metro Projects](#)
[Facts at a Glance \(web\)](#)
[Archives](#)
[Events Calendar](#)
[Research Center/Library](#)
[Metro Classifieds](#)
[Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

[30/10 Initiative](#)
[Policies](#)
[Training](#)
[Help Desk](#)
[Intranet Policy](#)

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DPW Employee Pleads Guilty to Defrauding Metro Rideshare Program

(Aug. 30, 2005) A former employee with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works pled guilty to grand theft charges, Aug. 16, in Los Angeles Superior Court.

Following an investigation by the Office of the Inspector General, April Gonzales was charged Oct. 7, 2004, with felony grand theft and public officer crime. She allegedly misappropriated \$700 in Target gift certificates generated through Metro's former Rideshare Program while she was employee transportation coordinator at DPW's Alcazar Street facility in Lincoln Heights.

- See myMetro.net report Nov. 17, 2004 >
[DPW Employee Charged with Defrauding Rideshare Program](#)

With Los Angeles Superior Court Judge C.H. Rehm presiding, Gonzales pled guilty to one count of grand theft, a felony. She was placed on three years formal probation, fined \$210, ordered to perform 300 hours of community service, and ordered to remit \$650 in restitution to the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

The IG's office determined that from December 2002 through July 2003, Gonzales used various methods to misappropriate retail gift cards generated through the program.

These methods included fabricating employees, forging signatures of employees, and fabricating carpool partners. In each instance, Gonzales misappropriated a portion or the entire allotment of the retail gift cards for her own use.

The Rideshare Rewards Program, started in 1997, encouraged ridesharing by workers at companies with fewer than 250 employees. Through the program, employees who rideshare could earn Target, Ralphs or Best Buy gift certificates valued at up to \$120.

Rideshare Rewards was revised and combined with another incentive program in December 2004. It was renamed the Metro Rewards Program.

– From The Office of Inspector General reports.