§ 48. General functions, powers and duties of office of welfare inspector general. The office of welfare inspector general, by and through the welfare inspector general, or his duly authorized deputy, director, assistant, officer or employee, shall have the following functions, powers and duties notwithstanding section one hundred thirty-six of the social services law:

1. To receive and investigate complaints from the public or any other source concerning alleged abuses, suspected frauds, and other violations of the welfare system which shall be deemed to include medical assistance. As used in this article, the term "medical assistance" shall have the same meaning contained in section three hundred sixty-five-a of the social services law.

2. To receive complaints of alleged failures to prosecute frauds against the welfare system which shall be deemed to include medical assistance and to investigate the same.

3. To receive complaints of alleged failures to enforce the state's laws regarding the employment of welfare recipients in available employment, and to investigate the same.

4. To receive complaints of alleged failures of local officials and employees to comply with state laws and regulations regarding welfare administration which shall be deemed to include medical assistance, and to investigate the same.

5. On the initiative of the office and at the direction of the welfare inspector general, to conduct any investigation: of the operations of the state social services department and local social services districts, the state health department and local health departments, and the state department of mental hygiene and community mental health boards in order to insure proper expenditure of welfare funds; of violations of the welfare system; of failure to prosecute welfare frauds; of failure to enforce the state's laws regarding the employment of welfare recipients in available employment; of failure of local officials and employees to comply with state law, rules, and regulations

regarding welfare administration which shall be deemed to include medical assistance, and other matters relating thereto.

6. To exercise and perform such other functions, powers and duties as may from time to time be conferred or imposed by law.

7. To make an annual report to the governor, the comptroller and the legislature concerning its work during the preceding year, and to make such further interim reports to them as they or any of them shall deem advisable or require.

8. To conduct any inquiry pertinent or material to the discharge of the functions, powers and duties imposed by law; and through designated members of the staff, to subpoena witnesses, administer oaths, take testimony and compel the production of such books, papers, records and documents as may be relevant to any such inquiry and investigation.

9. To do all things necessary or convenient to carry out the functions, powers and duties set forth in this article, to the extent they conform with applicable federal requirements, if any.

10. To make, amend or repeal such rules and regulations as may be necessary with the approval of the state comptroller, for the performance of the duties imposed hereunder.