



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

ROSE GILL HEARN
COMMISSIONER

80 MAIDEN LANE
NEW YORK, NY 10038
212-825-5900

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CONTACT: DIANE STRUZZI
(212) 825-5931

**DOI ARRESTS SIX QUEENS RESIDENTS FOR ALLEGEDLY DEFRAUDING THE
NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY OF \$150,000**

-- One individual remains at large --

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), announced today the arrest of two current Section 8 recipients, one former Section 8 recipient and three New York City Housing Authority ("NYCHA") residents for fraudulently receiving approximately \$150,000 in rent subsidies for apartments located throughout the Borough of Queens. One individual remains at large.

Each defendant has been charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony; Offering False Instruments for Filing in the First Degree, a class E felony; and Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree, a class E felony. If convicted, they each face up to seven years in prison.

NYCHA provides affordable housing for low-and-moderate income residents throughout the five boroughs. NYCHA also administers a Citywide Section 8 Leased Housing Program. Participants in the Program are free to reside in any type of housing that meets the Program's requirements. NYCHA calculates the participating family's share of rent based on the family's income and administers rental subsidies directly to the landlord to satisfy the balance of the actual monthly rent.

The allegations consist of individuals who concealed their household incomes in order to receive reduced rent in a NYCHA development or to receive Section 8 benefits for which they're not entitled. Some of the fraudulent acts committed by those arrested include: a Section 8 recipient who reported public assistance and/or food stamps as her sole source of income to gain acceptance into the Section 8 Program and as a result continued receiving rental subsidies for nearly two years, totaling \$19,405, even though she was gainfully employed and not entitled to those benefits; a New York City Department of Education ("DOE") employee who concealed her DOE employment as a School Lunch Helper; a Section 8 recipient who concealed two jobs from NYCHA, including one in which she worked as a Traffic Enforcement Agent for the New York City Police Department.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, “The money earmarked for this program is supposed to go to those in need. Instead, as this case shows, individuals are scamming the system. The individuals arrested concealed or underreported their household incomes to garner housing subsidies they did not deserve. With thousands of individuals on waiting lists for affordable housing, the City and DOI will continue to remain vigilant on this issue and ensure that those funds go to people who truly need them.”

District Attorney Richard A. Brown, whose office is prosecuting the cases, said, “The New York City Housing Authority was established to ensure that low and moderate income New York City residents be provided affordable housing. It is disturbing the defendants -- including a former New York City traffic agent -- would try to deceive the City into providing rental subsidies that they can well afford to pay. When any individual cheats the system and undermines its purposes, my office and the New York City Department of Investigation will continue to make sure he or she is apprehended and vigorously prosecuted.”

The DOI investigation found the following:

- ANGELA PENNICOOKE, 50, a Section 8 recipient until March 2006 who lived in an apartment located in Richmond Hills, Queens, is accused of defrauding NYCHA of \$34,888 in Section 8 subsidies between November 1998 and March 2006. PENNICOOKE concealed from NYCHA her income from working at a non-profit from May 2001 through March 2006, where she earned up to \$28,043 annually. DOI investigators also determined that PENNICOOKE concealed and/or underreported the child support payments she received from 1998 through 2003. Had PENNICOOKE reported her employment and accurate monthly child support payments, she would not have been eligible for any rental subsidies after November 2002. PENNICOOKE paid between \$53 and \$239 a month for a four-room apartment.
- KHADIJA AHMAD, 59, a resident of an apartment in NYCHA’s Pomonok Houses in the Flushing section of Queens, is accused of illegally obtaining \$30,869 in rent subsidies by concealing from NYCHA the employment income she and her son earned. DOI investigators determined that AHMAD was employed as a Nursing Assistant since June 2003, earning up to \$22,979 annually. Investigators further determined that AHMAD’s son was employed as a Service Representative for an insurance company since December 2003, earning up to \$42,034 annually. AHMAD also concealed her children’s receipt of Survivors Insurance benefits in 1998 and 1999 and her receipt of Widows benefits between 2000 and 2002. AHMAD failed to disclose all of her household income on the Affidavits of Income she filed with NYCHA from 1999 through 2005. As a result, NYCHA undercharged AHMAD rent from July 1998 to January 2006. AHMAD paid between \$116 and \$153 a month for a four-room apartment.
- NIVEA CLOUD, 31, a Section 8 recipient of an apartment in Queens Village, is accused of concealing from NYCHA employment income of up to \$31,250 annually, which she received between 2001 through 2005. Instead of reporting that she was a Cook from 2001 through July 2003 and a Traffic Enforcement Agent with the New York City Police Department from July 2003 through May 2006, CLOUD reported that public assistance was her sole source of household income. As a result of CLOUD’s actions, NYCHA was defrauded of \$20,722 during the period October 2002 through May 2006. CLOUD paid between \$123 and \$272 a month for a three-room apartment.

- WYASIA FULCHER, 31, a Section 8 recipient of an apartment in the Jamaica section of Queens, is accused of illegally obtaining \$19,405 in Section 8 rental subsidies between October 2004 and July 2006. FULCHER allegedly concealed two years of employment income totaling about \$75,000. DOI investigators determined that FULCHER reported public assistance and/or food stamps as her sole source of household income on her application for the Section 8 Program in June 2004 and on her Affidavit of Income in June 2005. DOI found that she was actually employed at an architecture and planning firm since November 2003, where she earned about \$38,000 annually. If FULCHER disclosed her employment and income she would not have been eligible for the receipt of Section 8 subsidies. FULCHER paid between \$68 and \$117 a month for a five-room apartment.
- REGINA WISE, 43, a resident in NYCHA's Queensbridge North Houses located in Long Island City, is accused of defrauding NYCHA of \$16,663 between May 1999 and May 2004. She allegedly failed to report the income she earned as a School Lunch Helper with the New York City Department of Education ("DOE"). On the Affidavits of Income she filed with NYCHA from 1999 to 2005, WISE reported social security benefits for her daughter as the sole source of household income and checked "no" to the question that asks if anyone in the apartment is currently employed. DOI Investigators determined that WISE has been employed by the DOE since April 1998, earning up to \$21,590 annually. WISE paid between \$130 and \$360 a month for a four-room apartment.
- GREGORY BRUNO, 49, a resident of NYCHA's Baisley Park Houses located in the Jamaica section of Queens, is accused of defrauding NYCHA of \$15,157 from July 2000 to May 2005. BRUNO reported to NYCHA that he was only employed on a part-time basis earning approximately \$9,300 a year. According to BRUNO, he worked part-time at a nursery school until January 2003 and then as a Custodian with a day care center. DOI investigators determined that BRUNO has been a full-time employee of the day care center since October 1999, and earned up to \$24,133 a year. DOI also determined that BRUNO has not been employed with the nursery school since April 1997. BRUNO paid \$208 a month for a four-room apartment.

These investigations were conducted by NYCHA Inspector General Robert J. McSweeney and members of his staff, including Senior Deputy Inspectors General Kevin Smith and Irene Serrapica, Deputy Inspector General Bergia Telesford, First Assistant Inspector General James Hylton, Assistant Inspectors General Rosemary Caruso and April Mastrangelo, Chief Investigator Christopher France, Special Investigators Patricia Carvajal and Virginia Arana, Confidential Investigators Lia J. Pasichow and Luciana Pace and Deputy Counsel Lauren Hintz.

The Office of Queens District Attorney Richard Brown is prosecuting the cases. Assistant District Attorney Rosemary Buccheri, under the supervision of Gregory Pavlides of District Attorney Brown's Economic Crimes Bureau, is handling the prosecutions.

Criminal complaints are merely an accusation. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country. The agency investigates and refers for prosecution City employees and contractors engaged in corrupt or fraudulent activities or unethical conduct. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City.

***Get the worms out of the Big Apple.
To report someone ripping off the city, call DOI at (212) 825-5959.***