



The City of New York  
Department of Investigation

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**DOI ARRESTS CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION EMPLOYEE ON CHARGES OF FALSIFYING INCOME  
TO OBTAIN LOW-INCOME APARTMENT FROM THE NYC HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

***--This is DOI's fifth arrest this year on similar HDC-related housing fraud charges--***

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced today the arrest of JOSEPH AWUAH, a City Department of Education ("DOE") employee, on charges of falsifying his income and submitting fake City pay stubs to qualify for a low-income apartment developed through the New York City Housing Development Corporation's ("HDC") Low-Income Affordable Marketplace Program ("LAMP"). The Office of New York County District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau is prosecuting the case.

AWUAH, 37, of the Bronx, has been charged with Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, a class D felony, and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class E felony. Upon conviction, a class D felony is punishable by up to seven years in prison and a class E felony is punishable by up to four years in prison.

AWUAH has worked at DOE since 2005 and is currently an Associate Bookkeeper receiving an annual salary of \$48,450. He is DOI's fifth arrest this year on similar HDC-related housing fraud charges.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "All individuals, and especially City employees, should know that filing false information to obtain a low-income apartment is criminal behavior that cheats eligible New Yorkers of these precious housing benefits. DOI's arrests on these crimes show that any individual, including City employees, who engage in this type of illegal conduct will be arrested and face prosecution."

LAMP is an HDC-financed program in which private building owners agree to provide reduced-rent apartments for low-income individuals in exchange for low-interest mortgages through HDC. In order to apply for a unit, individuals must submit an application and be selected through a housing lottery. Applicants are only considered for these HDC-sponsored apartments if their household income falls within a set range. Municipal employees are given a preference in HDC-sponsored housing lotteries, with a certain percentage of units set aside for them.

Since the beginning of 2009, DOI has arrested four other individuals on similar charges of submitting forged income information in attempts to secure HDC-sponsored apartments. As a result of DOI's investigation their applications were rejected.

Today's arrest was part of a proactive initiative in which DOI investigators verify that a City employee is properly reporting his or her income to HDC when applying for low-income housing. The income restrictions for the apartment AWUAH applied for required an annual household income of between \$32,663 and \$36,840.

According to the criminal complaint, DOI's investigation found that AWUAH listed his annual income as \$35,000 and that he submitted City pay stubs between August and October 2008 indicating he received an annual salary of

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approximately \$35,568. DOI's investigation found that AWUAH actually received an annual salary from his City employment of approximately \$44,668 during the time in question.

As a result of DOI's investigation, AWUAH's application for an HDC-sponsored apartment was rejected.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked HDC President Marc Jahr, New York County District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau and Bronx County District Attorney Robert T. Johnson, and their staffs, for their assistance in these investigations.

These investigations were conducted by DOI's Inspector General for HDC Joseph P. Piazza, Special Counsel Catherine Riccards, and Chief Investigator Belarminia Ortiz.

Criminal complaints are accusations. 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.**