



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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NINE QUEENS RESIDENTS ARRESTED IN \$131K HOUSING FRAUD
-- HHC employee among those arrested --
-- One resident also defrauded HRA of more than \$17,000 in benefits --

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), announced today the arrest of three former Section 8 recipients, as well as six New York City Housing Authority residents, for fraudulently receiving more than \$131,000 in rent subsidies for apartments located throughout the Borough of Queens. One NYCHA resident defrauded both section 8 as well as the New York City Human Resources Administration of \$17,691 in welfare benefits.

These arrests are part of an ongoing City-wide vigilance by DOI that has resulted, since 1995, in the arrest of 443 residents, including 142 City, State, and Federal employees, who have been charged with stealing more than \$8.8 million in rent and welfare subsidies by hiding their income and assets from the City. Thus far, 334 cases have resulted in convictions and nearly \$4.7 million ordered in restitution. From June 2005 to the present, 56 individuals have been arrested for illegally receiving nearly \$636,000 in government housing benefits. "We will continue to monitor and crackdown on individuals who would steal valuable tax-payer funded benefits", stated DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn.

Arrested were SHARON McCANTS, ELOISA GOMEZ and MANUELITA MONTERO, former Section 8 recipients of apartments located in the Far Rockaway, Woodhaven and East Elmhurst sections of Queens, respectively. The other six, HHC employee ROBERT VASQUEZ, part-time NYCHA employee JOEANN ENGLISH and her daughter JANNEILL ENGLISH, as well as KAREN ALEXANDER, ROSEMARY JONES and JACQUELYN LATIMORE reside in New York City Housing Authority developments located in the Rockaway Beach, Far Rockaway, Flushing and Long Island City sections of Queens. Each defendant has been charged with Grand Larceny, Falsifying Business Records and Offering a False Instrument for Filing. LATIMORE has been additionally charged with Welfare Fraud. If convicted, they each face up to seven years in prison.

Commissioner Gill Hearn said, "These defendants concealed hundreds of thousands of dollars in income or assets to receive valuable housing subsidies to which either they were not entitled, or to pay significantly less rent than they should have. We will continue to investigate and arrest those individuals who are undeserving of subsidies or low income housing in an effort to keep public housing available to those most in need."

District Attorney Richard A. Brown said, "With so many New Yorkers on long waiting lists for affordable housing, the City cannot be misled into providing subsidized apartments to those who can afford to live elsewhere -- and, in some cases even do, such as the Queens mother and daughter who allegedly stole over \$3,000 from NYCHA in rental subsidies by concealing their income and social security benefits for nearly four years. Such fraud cannot be tolerated and those who improperly take advantage of the City must now face the consequences of their actions."

In today's cases, SHARON McCANTS, 32, a Section 8 recipient until March 2006 of a 5-room apartment located at 25-43 Beach Channel Drive, Far Rockaway, Queens, concealed from NYCHA the income she earned from the Institute of Electrical & Electronics, where she has been employed as a Staff Assistant since October 14, 1999, earning between \$17,745 and \$29,537

per year. Instead, on the yearly Affidavits of Income she filed with NYCHA from 2000 through 2004, McCANTS reported only her fiancé's employment income or his receipt of unemployment insurance as the sole source of household income. As a result of McCANTS' failure to report her income, NYCHA paid between \$420 and \$937 per month towards McCANTS' \$813-\$1,134 monthly rent, while McCANTS only paid \$188 to \$393 per month. McCANTS' share of the monthly rent should have been between \$686 and \$935 a month. McCANTS' actions caused NYCHA to be defrauded of \$32,442 for the period October 2000 through March 2005.

ELOISA GOMEZ, 52, a former Section 8 recipient of a 4-room apartment located at 88-48 75th Street, Woodhaven, Queens, has been charged with illegally obtaining \$25,414 in rent subsidies by concealing from NYCHA her second employment with The Manhattan Club, where she works as a Club Attendant. On her yearly Affidavits of Income she filed with NYCHA from 2001 through 2004, GOMEZ reported employment with the Ramada Plaza/JFK, where she earned between \$13,173 and \$31,288 per year as a room attendant. However, DOI investigators determined that GOMEZ actually works two jobs. GOMEZ is also employed with The Manhattan Club, a timeshare hotel, earning between \$33,358 and \$44,113 per year since November 2000. By concealing more than \$160,000 in income from her employment with The Manhattan Club, between April 2001 and May 2005, GOMEZ paid rent ranging from \$329 to \$782 per month, while NYCHA paid subsidies on her behalf ranging from \$119 to \$544 per month. Had GOMEZ reported the income she earned from both of her jobs, between \$46,532 and \$73,903 per year, GOMEZ would not have been entitled to any of the Section 8 subsidies she received during this period.

JACQUELYN LATIMORE, 40, a resident of a 6-room apartment in NYCHA's Ocean Bay Houses in the Far Rockaway section of Queens, was found by DOI investigators to have illegally obtained \$10,170 from NYCHA, as well as \$17,691 from the City of New York's Human Resources Administration ("HRA"), by failing to report to both agencies her employment with the Union Plaza Nursing Home ("UPNH.") DOI's investigation determined that LATIMORE has been employed as a housekeeper with UPNH since March 2000. However, on her yearly Affidavits of Income she filed with NYCHA from 2001 to 2004, and her yearly Re-certifications she filed with HRA in 2002 and 2003, LATIMORE failed to report her employment and income of approximately \$15,000 to \$18,000 per year. Because of her concealment, LATIMORE paid rent ranging from \$203 and \$308 per month, when she should have paid between \$501 and \$594 per month. As a further result of her concealment, LATIMORE received \$17,691 in public assistance and food stamps benefits to which she was not entitled.

MANUELITA MONTERO, 43, a former Section 8 recipient of a 3-room apartment located at 30-34 93rd Street, East Elmhurst, Queens, has been charged with illegally obtaining \$21,696 in rent subsidies by concealing her employment with LSG Sky Chefs from July 1998 through February 2003. Instead of reporting her employment as an LSG Customer Service Representative, where she worked under her maiden name "DEOLEO" and earned between \$18,699 and \$23,844 a year, MONTERO reported minimal child support as her sole source of household income. By concealing her employment income, NYCHA undercharged her rent. As a result, MONTERO paid between \$157 and \$169 per month in rent when she should have paid between \$471 and \$708 per month.

JOEANN ENGLISH, 63, and her daughter JANNEILL ENGLISH, 36, tenants of a 4-room apartment located in NYCHA's Latimer Gardens in the Flushing section of Queens since 1970, concealed from NYCHA, on the Affidavits of Income JOEANN filed with NYCHA yearly from 2001 through 2004, JANNEILL's employment as a security officer. In addition, DOI investigators determined that JOEANN also failed to report on the Affidavit she submitted in 2005, Social Security death benefits she received from April 2004 through May 2005. Instead of reporting JANNEILL's employment income, which ranged from \$16,897 to \$18,645 and JOEANN's Social Security benefits, JOEANN reported only minimal income she earned with the NYCHA Community Service Tenant Patrol. JANNEILL concealed her employment income by signing Affidavits of Non-Employment indicating that she was not employed during 2000 through 2003 and that she has not been employed since 1994 when she worked for Caldors department stores. As a result of JOEANN and JANNEILL's actions, NYCHA undercharged JOEANN rent totaling \$12,334 for the period May 1, 2001 through April 30, 2003 and May 1, 2004 through May 31, 2005. JOEANN paid rent ranging from \$149 to \$162 during that period, when she should have paid rent ranging between \$471 and \$495 per month.

ROSEMARY JONES, 38, a resident of a 5-room apartment in NYCHA's Hammel Houses located in the Rockaway Beach section of Queens, is charged with unlawfully obtaining \$12,194 in rent subsidies for the period May 1, 2001 through March 31, 2005. JONES failed to disclose, on her annual Affidavits of Income for that time period, her employment with the Queens Nassau Nursing Home where she has worked, under her married name "FRANCIS," as a Laundry Aide since May 2000, earning between \$17,429 and \$37,154 a year. Instead, JONES falsely reported that she was still employed with Confidence Management earning a mere \$12,852 per year. As a result of JONES' underreporting of income, JONES paid monthly rent ranging from \$272 to \$369, when she should have paid \$388 per month from May 1, 2001 through April 30, 2002 and maximum rent of \$619 per month from April 30, 2002 through March 31, 2005.

KAREN ALEXANDER, 48, a resident of a 5-room apartment in NYCHA's Ravenswood Houses since 1993, is charged with unlawfully obtaining \$11,057 in rent subsidies over a two year period by failing to disclose her employment with Buy-Buy Baby. On her Affidavits of Income she filed with NYCHA in 2003 and 2004, ALEXANDER listed the receipt of Social Security benefits for her son as her sole source of household income. As a result, ALEXANDER paid monthly rent ranging from \$140 to \$297. Had ALEXANDER reported her employment income, which ranged between \$22,831 and \$24,181, ALEXANDER would have paid maximum monthly rent of \$619 during that time period.

ROBERT VASQUEZ, 41, a resident of a 3-room apartment in NYCHA's Hammel Houses, failed to report to NYCHA, on his 2002 to 2005 yearly Affidavits of Income, his employment with the New York City Health and Hospital Corporation. Although VASQUEZ had signed and notarized the Affidavit of Non-Employment section on his Affidavits of Income, DOI investigators determined that he has been employed at Bellevue Hospital as a Stock Worker since May 2002, earning a yearly salary between \$15,008 and \$28,759. By concealing his City employment, VASQUEZ paid monthly rent of approximately \$188 per month during this time period. Had he reported his employment, VASQUEZ would have paid \$421 per month rent for an apartment of that size. As a result, NYCHA undercharged VASQUEZ rental subsidies in the amount of \$6,317 during the period November 1, 2002 through January 31, 2005.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn thanked NYCHA's Queens Leased Housing and Management Departments for their assistance in the investigations and arrests.

These investigations were conducted by NYCHA Inspector General Judith F. Abruzzo and members of her staff, including Deputy Inspectors General Kevin Smith and Bergia Telesford, Assistant Inspectors General Rosemary Caruso and James Hylton, Chief Investigator Martina Mercaldo, Special Investigator Patricia Carvajal, Confidential Investigators J. Graham Forbes, Lia Pasichow, Andre Gorelkin and Susanne Vitti and Assistant Counsel Lauren Hintz.

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

Criminal complaints are accusations. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

***Get the worms out of the Big Apple.
To report someone ripping off the city, call 311 or DOI directly at (212) 825-5959.***