



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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**DOI INVESTIGATION LEADS TO THE ARREST OF A TEACHER FROM THE
NYC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ON A FEDERAL CHARGE OF
STEALING THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS IN SECTION 8 SUBSIDIES**

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced today the arrest of WENDY APONTE, a teacher with the City Department of Education ("DOE"), who was charged with misrepresenting her income to collect approximately \$27,000 in Section 8 housing subsidies that she was not entitled to receive.

The Section 8 Rental Assistance Program is a federal government program for helping low-income individuals to afford housing in the private market. A housing subsidy is paid each month directly to the landlord on behalf of the participating individual, and that individual pays the difference between the actual rent and the amount subsidized by the Section 8 program. The Section 8 housing subsidies in this investigation were administered by the New York City Housing Development Corporation ("HDC") and funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD").

APONTE, 34, of Manhattan, has been charged with violating 18 § U.S.C. 641 for fraudulently obtaining approximately \$27,000 from HUD between 2004 and 2007. If convicted, she faces up to ten years in federal prison.

Today's arrest stems from DOI investigators comparing the income City employees reported to HDC to collect Section 8 subsidies, with the employees' actual income listed in the City's payroll records.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "This arrest is the result of DOI's methodical approach to investigating and exposing housing fraud. Misrepresenting income to obtain Section 8 benefits drains valuable rental subsidies from some of the most vulnerable in our City, those in need of affordable housing."

According to the criminal complaint, APONTE, who resided in a Section 8 subsidized apartment in the Bronx from September 2004 to October 2007, reported to HDC that her income during that time ranged between \$7,268 and \$21,624. However, City records indicated she has been employed by DOE as a full-time teacher since 2004 and that she earned between \$26,905 and \$49,245 between 2004 and 2006. APONTE also submitted New York City pay stubs with altered payment dates and amounts.

As a result of these misrepresentations, she collected approximately \$27,000 in Section 8 subsidies that she was not entitled to receive. APONTE vacated the Section 8 apartment in October 2007.

APONTE has been employed with DOE since 2004 and is currently a teacher earning \$56,048 annually.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked HDC President Marc Jahr and members of his staff for their assistance and cooperation during the investigation. Commissioner Gill Hearn also thanked Michael J. Garcia, United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, whose office is prosecuting the case.

The investigation was conducted by HDC Inspector General Joseph P. Piazza and Special Counsel Catherine Riccards.

Natalie LaMarque of the U. S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York is handling the case.

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.**