



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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**DOI ARRESTS THREE BRONX RESIDENTS FOR DEFRAUDING NYCHA
OF MORE THAN \$64K IN HOUSING SUBSIDIES**

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), announced today the arrest of three New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents for fraudulently receiving a total of \$64,758 in rent subsidies for apartments located throughout the Borough of the Bronx.

Defendants LIDIA MARTINEZ, RUTH GIBSON, and REBECCA FRANCIS have each been charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree. If convicted, they each face up to seven years in prison.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "We will continue to arrest those who try to defraud NYCHA by hiding their assets and/or their employment in order to pay lower rents and receive housing subsidies to which they are not entitled. These individuals are depriving other needy New Yorkers of affordable housing."

LIDIA MARTINEZ, 52, has been the Tenant of Record of a 5-room apartment in NYCHA's Andrew Jackson Houses located in the Melrose section of the Bronx, since 1995. MARTINEZ allegedly obtained \$28,104 in unwarranted rent subsidies from February 1998 through January 2005 by failing to report her job as a Home Attendant on her yearly Affidavits of Income to NYCHA. Instead, MARTINEZ reported only the Social Security benefits she has been receiving on behalf of her minor child. As a result, MARTINEZ' rental payments ranged from \$186 to \$304 per month when she should have been paying between \$434 and \$619 per month.

RUTH GIBSON, 63, has been the Tenant of Record of a 4-room apartment in NYCHA's Melrose House, also in the Bronx, since 1985. GIBSON allegedly concealed from NYCHA the fact that she has been employed with Abyssinian Development as a Child Care Worker. Instead of reporting her employment income that ranged from \$19,853 to \$22,854 yearly since 1998, GIBSON reported only the Social Security benefits her husband received. As a result, from 1998 through 2004, NYCHA overpaid rental subsidies for GIBSON totaling \$21,064. GIBSON was paying monthly rent payments ranging between \$236 to \$256, when she should have been paying \$495, the maximum rent for an apartment that size.

REBECCA FRANCIS, aka Rebecca Hay, 37, Tenant of Record of a 4-room apartment in NYCHA's Eastchester Houses located in the Baychester section of the Bronx, has been charged with unlawfully obtaining \$15,590 in rent subsidies for allegedly concealing her employment from NYCHA. DOI Investigators determined that FRANCIS has been employed with Somers Manor Nursing Home since September 2000. However, instead of reporting her employment income that ranged between \$23,448 and \$26,402 a year, FRANCIS claimed minimal monetary contributions and/or child support as her sole household income. As a

result, FRANCIS paid monthly rent payments of \$103 from October 2000 through January 2004. Had FRANCIS reported her employment, she would have paid maximum rent of \$495 per month.

These investigations were conducted by NYCHA Inspector General Judith F. Abruzzo and members of her staff, including Deputy Inspectors General Ralph Iannuzzi, Kevin Smith and Steven Gruberger, Assistant Inspectors General Anthony Capek and Rosemary Caruso, Chief Investigator Martina Mercaldo, Special Investigators Louis Vega and Patricia Carvajal and Confidential Investigator Suzanne Vitti.

The Office of Bronx County District Attorney Robert T. Johnson is prosecuting these cases. Assistant District Attorney Matthew Holly, under the supervision of Bureau Chief Richard Baker of the District Attorney's Arson, Auto, and Economic Crime Unit, is handling the prosecution.

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.

DEFENDANT INFORMATION:

1. Lidia Martinez, 52, 285 E. 156th Street, Apt. 11C (\$28,104 in rent subsidies)
2. Ruth Gibson, 63, 281 E. 153rd Street, Apt. 7B (\$21,064 in rent subsidies)
3. Rebecca Francis, 37, 1216 Burke Avenue, Apt. 4G (\$15,590 in rent subsidies)

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