



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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**DOI ARRESTS FORMER CITY HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION EMPLOYEE
ON CHARGES OF THEFT AND PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FRAUD**

Mark G. Peters, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced the arrest today of NAOMI MONTEROLA, a former Job Opportunity Specialist who worked in the Rental Assistance Unit of the New York City Human Resources Administration ("HRA"), on charges of defrauding the agency of more than \$47,000 in funds intended for public assistance clients. DOI's investigation began after HRA discovered discrepancies on an application submitted by MONTEROLA, specifically an invalid HRA client number, and promptly referred the matter to DOI whose investigators uncovered the scheme outlined in the complaint.

DOI Commissioner Mark G. Peters said, "This former City employee should have protected the vulnerable clients she served, instead of exploiting their situation by stealing the very funds dedicated to keep them in their homes, according to the charges. DOI will continue to work with our City government partners to identify these bad actors and protect these valuable funds."

MONTEROLA has been charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, and five counts of Welfare Fraud in the Third Degree, class D felonies; Attempted Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, Attempted Welfare Fraud in the Third Degree and thirty counts each of Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree, and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, class E felonies; and Official Misconduct, a class A misdemeanor. Upon conviction, a class D felony is punishable by up to seven years in prison, a class E felony by up to four years in prison, and a class A misdemeanor by up to a year's incarceration.

According to the criminal complaint and DOI's investigation, MONTEROLA worked at an HRA office in the Bronx and falsely registered her teenage son as a landlord in the HRA computer system, opened bank accounts in his name, and appointed herself as the custodian of those accounts. The defendant then falsely created exact duplicates of more than two dozen previously approved, and legitimate, rental assistance applications. MONTEROLA falsely designated her son as the recipient of those rental assistance benefits. The defendant then submitted those fraudulent documents for payment, and obtained and deposited those checks in her son's bank account – cashing in on more than \$47,000 in fraudulent rental assistance benefits between 2011 and 2012. The defendant is charged with multiple instances of fraud, including the initial incident reported by HRA, in which she attempted to steal more than \$6,500 in public funds, according to the criminal complaint.

MONTEROLA, 39, of the Bronx, began her employment with HRA in February 2008 and was receiving an annual salary of approximately \$41,101 when she was terminated in July 2013.

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Commissioner Peters thanked Bronx County District Attorney Robert T. Johnson and HRA Commissioner Steven Banks, and their staffs, for their assistance in this investigation.

This investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for HRA, specifically Assistant Inspector General Bradley Howard and Deputy Inspector General John Bellanie, under the supervision of Inspectors General Shelley Solomon and Milton Yu, Special Associate Commissioner Susan Lambiase, Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Michael Carroll, and First Deputy Commissioner Lesley Brovner.

Assistant District Attorney Agata DiGiovanni of the Bronx District Attorney's Office is prosecuting this case under the supervision of Bureau Chief of Economic Crimes William Zelenka. Detective John Might from the Bronx County District Attorney's Office assisted in the investigation.

A criminal complaint is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country and New York City's corruption watchdog. 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. DOI's strategy attacks corruption comprehensively through systemic investigations that lead to high-impact arrests, preventive internal controls and operational reforms that improve the way the City runs.

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