



ALVIN L. BRAGG JR.,
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 30, 2023

Contact: Emily Tuttle, tuttle@dany.nyc.gov

**D.A. BRAGG RETURNS \$50,000 IN STOLEN WAGES TO NEW YORK CITY WORKERS
THROUGH OFFICE'S "STOLEN WAGE FUND"**

Seven Workers Receive First Set of Checks Distributed through Manhattan District Attorney's Office's Stolen Wage Fund with NYS Department of Labor Ahead of Labor Day

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin L. Bragg, Jr. today announced the first-ever repayment of wages to workers through the Manhattan D.A.'s Office's Stolen Wage Fund, created in partnership with the New York State Department of Labor. Seven employees of the now-defunct Ampak Electrical Services who performed electrical work at the site of the midtown Virgin Hotel in 2021 received the \$50,000 pay promised to them for nearly 1,800 total hours of work.

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“All workers deserve to be fairly compensated for the labor they provide. When Manhattan workers are taken advantage of by unscrupulous employers, we are fiercely committed to making them whole,” said **D.A. Bragg**. “I hope the return of these wages provides some closure to these hard-working individuals. I urge anyone who has been a victim of wage theft to call our Worker Protection Unit at 646-712-0298.”

New York State Department of Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon said, “This wage recovery marks a significant step forward in our commitment to justice and fairness for New York’s workers. In collaboration with the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office, we stand united in our resolve to hold accountable those who look to exploit workers. The first-ever repayment of wages from the Stolen Wage Fund is a testament to our dedication to ensuring that hardworking individuals receive the compensation they rightfully earned.”

New York City Department of Investigation Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, “Today we return wages to construction workers denied full and fair pay by their employer. DOI and its law enforcement partners will seek to hold accountable those who steal from the City’s workers, and also to repay those workers what they are owed. I thank the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office for their shared commitment to this important mission.”

The Manhattan District Attorney’s Office, the New York State Department of Labor, and the New York City Department of Investigation conducted a joint investigation after workers reported missing paychecks and wage theft in March 2021. In September 2021, Ampak Electrical Services pleaded guilty to the felony of Scheme to Defraud in the First Degree and was required to pay \$112,176 to 18 workers as part of the disposition. The seven workers receiving a total of \$50,000 in payments today came forward after restitution was paid and the company folded.

Created in February 2023, the D.A.’s Stolen Wage Fund helps Manhattan victims of wage theft who may not be made whole through the Office’s criminal prosecutions. In partnership with the Department of Labor, the Fund helps victims of wage theft who come forward after a criminal case has concluded and case-related restitution has already been distributed. The Fund also assists victims of companies that declare bankruptcy or otherwise cannot repay stolen wages.

After evaluating the initial one-year pilot, the Office may invest up to \$500,000 in the Fund. According to the Memorandum of Understanding signed earlier this year, the Department of Labor will vet claims and calculates stolen wages, which the D.A.’s Office will then distribute to claimants. Claims must be for work performed in Manhattan, reported within one year of a criminal conviction for theft, and filed under penalty of perjury.

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