



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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DOI INVESTIGATION LEADS TO CHARGES IN \$135,000 HOUSING FRAUD SCHEME

Jocelyn E. Strauber, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”), announced the arrest today of a Staten Island woman charged with stealing more than \$135,000 in Section 8 rental subsidies administered by the New York City Housing Authority (“NYCHA”) over an eight-year period. The office of Richmond County District Attorney Michael E. McMahon is prosecuting the case.

MARIE RATTLER, 49, of Staten Island, N.Y., was charged by indictment with Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, a class C felony; Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony; five counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, all class E felonies; and two counts of Petit Larceny, class A misdemeanors. Upon conviction, a class C felony is punishable by up to 15 years in prison, a class D felony 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. RATTLER was arraigned in Richmond County Supreme Court and released on her own recognizance. Her next court date is November 16, 2023.

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, “As charged, this defendant concealed her household income and other information to illegally obtain more than \$135,000 in public funds. I thank the Richmond County District Attorney’s Office for their partnership and commitment to protecting these precious public resources from fraud.”

Richmond County District Attorney Michael E. McMahon said, “Those who use deceit to profit off the backs of taxpaying Staten Islanders by filing false documents and hoarding precious housing resources for themselves and their family members should be ashamed, and my office’s Economic Crimes Bureau, working hand in hand with the NYC Department of Investigation (DOI) and NYCHA, will do all we can to hold these lawbreakers accountable. We are grateful for our continued and successful partnership with DOI and NYCHA, and will diligently do all we can to ensure justice is secured in this case in the days and weeks ahead.”

According to the indictment and statements made in court, between March 2015 and April 2021, RATTLER caused NYCHA to make an overpayment of approximately \$86,000 on her behalf by concealing the fact that her husband resided in her Section 8 apartment in Staten Island and failing to report his income. The investigation also found that in May 2021, RATTLER received a transfer to a second Section 8 apartment in Staten Island. Instead of moving into the apartment, RATTLER subleased it to a friend, and failed to report this to NYCHA, causing NYCHA to overpay rental subsidies of approximately \$49,560 between May 2021 and May 2023. RATTLER is charged with illegally obtaining a total of approximately \$135,560 in Section 8 subsidies between 2015 and 2023.

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DOI Commissioner Strauber thanked the Office of Richmond County District Attorney Michael E. McMahon for their partnership on this investigation. The prosecution is being handled by Jon Chananie, Deputy Chief of the Economic Crimes Bureau, under the supervision of Bureau Chief Gregg Brown. Commissioner Strauber also thanked NYCHA CEO Lisa Bova-Hiatt and her staff for their cooperation.

The investigation was conducted by Assistant Inspector General Robert Joyce with DOI's Office of the Inspector General for NYCHA, and was supervised by Deputy Inspector General J. Graham Forbes, Inspector General Ralph Iannuzzi, Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Initiatives Christopher Ryan and Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella.

An indictment is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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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