



**ALVIN L. BRAGG JR.,
DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 9, 2024

**D.A. Bragg, D.O.I. Commissioner Strauber Announce Guilty Plea of
Former ACS Director for Stealing Gift Cards from Children**

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin L. Bragg Jr. and DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber today announced the guilty plea of a New York City Administration for Children's Services ("ACS") Executive Director COURTNEY RAMIREZ, 51, for stealing 14 gift cards valuing a total of \$4,900 all intended for children who participated in ACS's Close to Home and Leadership Incentive Training programs. RAMIREZ pleaded guilty in Manhattan Criminal Court to one count of Official Misconduct. Under the terms of the plea, RAMIREZ will pay \$4,900 in restitution to ACS and waive her right to appeal. If RAMIREZ pays the full restitution, she will be sentenced to a conditional discharge.

"Courtney Ramirez abused her taxpayer-funded role at ACS to steal gift cards intended to reward children who completed a leadership program. She took advantage of her leadership position at an agency that seeks to help children facing immense challenges and used their gifts for herself," said District Attorney Bragg. "Alongside our partners at DOI, we will continue to root out fraud in Manhattan and make sure government officials who abuse their power will face accountability."

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, "This now former-ACS Executive Director of a Close to Home program, which supervises young people in out-of-home placements, pled guilty today to taking nearly \$5,000 worth of gift cards meant to reward the young people completing the program and used those public funds for herself. This crime was uncovered after another ACS employee reported to DOI that a young person who purportedly signed for a gift card never received any money. I thank the ACS employee who prompted this investigation by reporting potential misconduct to DOI and I thank our law enforcement partner the Manhattan District Attorney's Office for its commitment to holding accountable those City employees who abuse their positions, acting in their own interests rather than serving the public."

According to court documents, statements made on the record in court, and as admitted in the defendant's guilty plea, RAMIREZ worked as an ACS Executive Director from 2019 to 2020 and oversaw the ACS Close to Home program, which places children who have been ordered by Family Court to live outside of their home in communities close to their own.

RAMIREZ also oversaw the Leadership Incentive Training Program, where children in foster care and ACS juvenile justice programs (including the Close to Home program) receive a \$350 Visa gift card for completing the program. RAMIREZ was responsible for distributing the gift cards to eligible youths.

In 2019, RAMIREZ used 14 of the gift cards intended for the children in the program, totaling \$4,900, for her personal expenses. RAMIREZ submitted false paperwork to make it appear as though the children had received the cards, even though they did not receive them.

Assistant D.A.s Daniel Passeser and Shrey Sharma (Major Economic Crimes Bureau) are handling the prosecution of this case under the supervision of Assistant D.A.s Christine Payne (Deputy Chief of the Major Economic Crimes Bureau) and Jodie Kane (Chief of the Rackets Bureau and Acting Chief of the Investigation Division). Assistant Inspector General Octavia Hill assisted with the investigation. Investigative Analyst Serena Lu and Paralegal Georgia Longstreet Joseph are also providing valuable assistance in this case.

At DOI, the investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for ACS and handled by Assistant Inspector General Octavia Hill, under the supervision of Deputy Inspectors General Harlyn Griffenberg and Gladys Cambi, Senior Inspector General Laura Millendorf, Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Initiatives Christopher Ryan, and Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella.

D.A. Bragg thanked the DOI for its partnership in the investigation.

Defendant Information:

COURTNEY RAMIREZ

Amsterdam, NY

Convicted

Official Misconduct, a class A misdemeanor, one count

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