



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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**DOI STATEMENT ON THE SENTENCING OF MAN WHO PREYED UPON FAMILIES
IN NEED OF HOUSING TO DEFRAUD GOVERNMENT RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

Jocelyn E. Strauber, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”), issued the following statement on the sentencing today of PAUL FISHBEIN, 50, of Far Rockaway, N.Y., for defrauding rental assistance programs administered by New York City’s Human Resources Administration (“HRA”) and Department of Housing Preservation & Development (“HPD”). DOI investigated this matter in partnership with the office of Damian Williams, United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, which prosecuted the case.

FISHBEIN was sentenced to 70 months in prison and three years’ supervised release, and ordered to pay a total of approximately \$3.7 million in forfeiture and in restitution by U.S. District Judge Paul A. Crotty of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. FISHBEIN was found guilty in April 2023 of mail fraud and wire fraud, theft of government funds, aggravated identity theft, and Medicaid fraud. That release can be found here: <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doi/press-releases/2023/April/18.Fishbein.04.27.23.pdf>

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, “This defendant exploited New Yorkers in dire need of housing, placing them in properties in disrepair and fraudulently collecting \$1,789,116.41 in rental payments and more than \$50,000 in brokers’ fees. Today he faces the consequences of his criminal conduct. I thank the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York for their continued partnership on these important investigations that hold accountable offenders who abuse publicly-funded programs intended to support vulnerable New Yorkers.”

According to the evidence established at trial, from 2013 through 2021, FISHBEIN defrauded the rental assistance programs of HRA and HPD by falsely claiming to be the owner and landlord of several properties in New York City based on forged deeds. The defendant unlawfully leased those properties to individuals in need through these agencies’ rental programs and collected payments that included fraudulently obtained broker fees. FISHBEIN falsely claimed to HRA that he used a broker to rent out the properties, instead depositing the checks issued to the purported broker in his own bank account. FISHBEIN fraudulently obtained nearly \$2 million dollars from HRA and HPD via this scheme, including federal funds.

The defendant also committed Medicaid fraud. Between 2014 and 2021, FISHBEIN received Medicaid benefits based on his false claims to HRA that he was financially eligible for the program. That scheme netted FISHBEIN at least approximately \$49,524.80 in Medicaid benefits to which he was not entitled.

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Commissioner Strauber thanked U.S Attorney for the Southern District of New York Damian Williams and his staff for their collaboration on this investigation and prosecution, which was handled by Assistant United States Attorneys Sarah L. Kushner, Christy Slavik and Jared Lenow.

This investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for the City Department of Social Services' Deputy Inspector General Jeremy Reyes and Investigative Auditor Carmen Wong and Senior Investigative Auditor Yanyan Wang, under the supervision of Director of Audits Laila Yu, Senior Inspector General John Bellanie, Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Initiatives Christopher Ryan, and Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella.

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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