



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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Release #10-2024
nyc.gov/doi

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2024**

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**FORMER YOUTH DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST WITH THE CITY ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES
PLEADS GUILTY TO WORKERS' COMPENSATION FRAUD**

Jocelyn E. Strauber, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), issued the following statement on today's guilty plea by a former City Administration of Children's Services ("ACS") Youth Development Specialist ("YDS") to a charge related to illegally obtaining over \$18,000 in workers' compensation benefits. DOI's investigation was prompted by a report from another ACS employee that the defendant, while on workers' compensation leave, worked for Uber Eats food delivery service. The Office of Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark prosecuted this case.

OBADIAH ISRAEL, 30, of Elmont, N.Y., pled guilty today to Penalties for Fraudulent Practices, a class E felony, and was sentenced to 150 hours of community service. Upon completion of those community service hours, the defendant will be allowed to re-plead to Petit Larceny, a class A misdemeanor. ISRAEL was charged in August 2023 and that release can be found at the following link: <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doi/press-releases/2023/August/33Israel08.24.2023.pdf>

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, "Today this former City employee is held accountable for lying under oath to obtain workers' compensation, in part because his colleague observed and reported his misconduct to DOI. I thank that colleague for speaking up, and I thank our law enforcement partners in the Bronx District Attorney's Office for their commitment to ensuring that the City's workers' compensation funds are provided only to those who qualify."

ISRAEL worked as a YDS at Horizon Juvenile Center ("Horizon") in the Bronx, where he was responsible for the supervision of residents.

According to the criminal complaint, ISRAEL submitted documents to the New York State Workers' Compensation Board in 2020 and 2021, including a workers' compensation claim and nine doctor's notes supporting the claim, and a reasonable accommodation request to ACS, in which ISRAEL falsely represented himself as wholly disabled and unable to work. In September 2021, during a Workers' Compensation Board hearing, ISRAEL falsely stated under oath that he had not returned to work for any employer. As a result of these submissions and false statements, the New York State Workers' Compensation Board remitted approximately \$18,370 in unemployment benefits to ISRAEL, which he was not entitled to receive. Documents received from Uber, as well as bank records reviewed as part of the investigation, revealed that from August 2020 through September 2021, ISRAEL worked as a driver employed by Uber Eats, and was paid approximately \$19,695 by Uber during that period. ISRAEL was also observed playing basketball on June 2, 2021.

Israel started as a YDS at ACS in June 2019, returned to full duty status at ACS in February 2022, and was receiving an annual salary of approximately \$56,097 in April 2023, when he was terminated for reasons unrelated to DOI's investigation.

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Commissioner Strauber thanked ACS Commissioner Jess Dannhauser and his staff for their cooperation in this investigation. Commissioner Strauber also thanked the Office of the New York State Inspector General and the New York State Workers' Compensation Board for their assistance with this investigation.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Samantha Sizemore of the Bronx District Attorney's Economic Crimes Bureau, under the supervision of Bureau Supervisor John Oxenreiter; Deputy Chief of the Bureau Michelle Milanes; Bureau Chief Herman Wun, Deputy Chief of the Investigations Division Denise Kodjo and Chief of the Investigations Division Wanda Perez-Maldonado.

At DOI, the investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for ACS, and handled by Deputy Inspector General Harlyn Griffenberg, under the supervision of Senior Inspector General Laura Millendorf, 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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