



The City of New York  
Department of Investigation

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**FORMER DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE EMPLOYEE PLEADS GUILTY TO  
FRAUDULENTLY OBTAINING THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS IN REAL ESTATE TAX REFUNDS**

Jocelyn E. Strauber, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced the guilty plea of a former Department of Finance ("DOF") employee charged with fraudulently obtaining \$13,167 in tax refund checks issued to properties that he had no authorization to represent. DOI began its investigation after DOF notified DOI of discrepancies involving refund applications signed by the defendant. DOI worked with the office of Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, Jr., which is prosecuting this case.

NICHOLAS ZIMARAS, 60, of Arverne, Queens, was charged in March 2025 with Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class E felony, in connection with two fraudulently obtained tax refund checks from one hospital in Brooklyn and another in Manhattan. On April 1, 2025, the defendant paid restitution in the amount of \$95,537, which includes the \$13,167 associated with the offense he was charged with and other funds connected to the defendant improperly obtaining tax refunds from entities he was not authorized to represent. Today, ZIMARAS pleaded guilty to one count of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the Second Degree, a class A misdemeanor, and was sentenced to a one-year conditional discharge.

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, "This defendant exploited his institutional knowledge of DOF to fraudulently obtain thousands of dollars in tax refunds by falsely presenting himself as a representative of two hospitals, one in Brooklyn and a second in Manhattan. The defendant has acknowledged his responsibility through today's guilty plea, and by paying back the funds he wrongfully obtained. I thank the Department of Finance for referring this matter to DOI and the Manhattan District Attorney's Office for its commitment to combat tax fraud."

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg Jr., said, "Nicholas Zimaras pleaded guilty for targeting New York City property owners by pocketing tax refunds he fraudulently filed on their behalf and without their knowledge. This tax season, I urge individuals and corporations alike to stay vigilant and protect themselves from scams. I thank the Department of Investigation for its ongoing collaboration, and the Department of Finance for strengthening its oversight."

According to the criminal complaint, a City property owner seeking a property tax refund must submit an application to DOF and DOF must approve the refund before it is paid. In February 2022, DOF received a refund application owed to Maimonides Hospital in Brooklyn and, in March 2022, DOF received a refund application for Manhattan Eye, Ear & Throat Hospital in Manhattan. In both applications, the defendant and his company, Madison Property Services, are listed as the "Managing Agent" of each

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property and the application requests that the refund checks be paid and mailed to Madison Property Services in Flushing, N.Y. On each application, a box was checked certifying the defendant was authorized by the taxpayer to accept payment on its behalf, and that all statements made were true and correct. Both applications were reviewed and approved by DOF and resulted in refund checks made out to each property and mailed to Madison Property Services, "C/O Madison Property Services" at the address provided by the defendant and subsequently deposited in Madison Property Services' bank account at JP Morgan Chase Bank NA. The investigation found that neither Maimonides nor Manhattan Eye, Ear, & Throat Hospital had authorized the defendant or his company to request or accept payment for a tax refund on their behalf.

As a result of this investigation, DOF has strengthened its oversight and review of tax refund requests.

The defendant was employed by DOF as a Senior Investigative Analyst from October 1996, until his resignation in July 1999.

Commissioner Strauber thanked DOF Commissioner Preston Niblack and his staff for their cooperation on this investigation. Commissioner Strauber also thanked Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg for his office's partnership. Assistant District Attorney Benjamin Reed in the Financial Frauds Bureau is handling the prosecution with the assistance of Senior Financial Investigator Lana Wong, Investigative Analyst Jade Yang, Detective Investigator Brigitte Jaramillo and Lieutenant Rackets Investigator Daniel Clark-El.

At DOI, the case was investigated by DOI Investigative Attorney Qinyu Xu with DOI's Office of the Inspector General for DOF and supervised by Deputy Inspector General Aleksandro Tilka, Inspector General Ann Petterson, 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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