



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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NYC DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATION CLOSES OUT 2023 WITH INCREASES TO ARRESTS AND COMPLAINTS

Jocelyn E. Strauber, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”), issued the Calendar Year (“CY”) 2023 statistics today, which show increases from CY 2022 in several categories, including the number of arrests, complaints, active caseload at the agency, and recommendations issued to various City agencies as a result of DOI investigations.

In 2023, DOI:

- Made 299 arrests, a 22% increase from the 245 arrests DOI made in CY 2022*.
- Received 14,054 complaints, a 12% increase from the previous year.
- Carried an active caseload of approximately 1,594 cases, a 4% increase from the agency’s 1,536 active caseload in CY 2022.
- Issued 146 Policy and Procedure Recommendations (“PPRs”), an increase from the 111 issued in CY 2022.*
- Recovered \$2.3 million for the City as a result of DOI investigations.
- Made 390 referrals for criminal prosecution, consistent with the prior year when DOI made 394 referrals.
- Reached 42,145 City employees through our corruption-prevention module, webinars and in-person lectures, about 5,580 fewer employees than in CY 2022.
- Closed approximately 858 investigations, about 4% more than the 827 closed in CY 2022*.
- Further decreased the backlog of background investigations by closing 385 investigations, reducing the backlog to 523, down from the 2019 high of 6,500.

**The CY 2022 number was updated from the previous year’s release.*

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, “DOI’s investigative work uncovered theft, fraud and other corrupt acts against the City in 2023, holding accountable offenders who exploit public programs and dollars, recouping valuable taxpayer funds for the City, and providing improvements to government operations through DOI’s recommendations for policy and procedural reform. The fight against corruption and fraud requires collaboration City-wide, and DOI’s work relies, in part, on reports of misconduct made by concerned City employees and members of the public. I want to thank the DOI staff for their commitment to finding facts and exposing wrongdoing and for their diligence in conducting the significant investigations discussed in this annual report.”

The statistics above are only one facet of DOI’s anti-corruption work, which leads to accountability and change, including: criminal charges against fraudsters who steal City funds and compromise City operations; penalties issued by the Conflicts of Interest Board; the recoupment of funds from criminal offenders so the City, or workers victimized by wage theft, can recover losses; monitoring of ongoing projects and contracts to prevent corruption and other wrongdoing, and reforms that seek to protect City resources, strengthen best practices, and improve how government works. In CY 2023, for instance, DOI held public officials and City employees accountable for theft and other wrongdoing and construction companies accountable for safety issues leading to fatalities at their

sites. DOI issued nine public reports that provide additional insight into our investigative findings and the basis for our policy and procedural recommendations. DOI also engaged and is actively supervising an independent monitor, KPMG, assigned to monitor the City's multi-billion-dollar asylum seeker initiative. Their work includes the collection and review of hundreds of asylum seeker-related contracts and site visits to the contracted facilities to identify issues and share information with other City stakeholders in real-time, so that problems can be addressed and practices improved in real-time, among other tasks.

DOI works with state and federal prosecutors as well as other law enforcement to hold accountable those who seek to steal from the City of New York and compromise its integrity. Below are highlights of DOI's investigations from CY 2023:

DOI Reports

Public reports provide a critical window into important integrity-related issues in the City as well as DOI's investigations, findings, and recommendations to address those issues. In CY 2023, DOI issued nine reports on matters including [fire safety and prevention at New York City Housing Authority \("NYCHA"\) properties](#), [necessary improvements in oversight of mandatory asbestos inspections](#), [an examination of NYPD's use and operation of the criminal group database](#), and [the City's payment of substantial broker's fees to place clients into private housing without properly vetting potential landlord-broker affiliations](#).

Please click on each of the section headlines to see the related press releases to the cases mentioned.

Wage Theft

When there are indications that construction companies in New York City have failed to pay their workers the prevailing wage as set by New York State Labor Law or have stolen workers' pay through an array of schemes, DOI investigates to expose the misconduct and help recoup funds for victimized workers. In 2023, DOI worked with the Manhattan District Attorney's Office on an investigation that resulted in the conviction and a six-month jail sentence for a project foreman on grand larceny and bribery charges for his role in stealing more than \$1 million in wages from workers and bribing a New York City School Construction Authority investigator. The electrical company where the project foreman worked, and that company's principals, were also convicted as part of the scheme and were required to pay back \$900,000 in stolen wages. A separate investigation, as part of the Manhattan District Attorney's Construction Fraud Task Force, led to an indictment of a licensed Master Rigger and his company for stealing nearly \$170,000 of wages from workers.

Investigations Prompted by City Employees and Agencies Reporting Corruption

City employees have an affirmative obligation to report corruption and misconduct to DOI and DOI maintains robust relationships with the many City agencies and entities it oversees leading to the reporting of corruption-related allegations through those channels. In addition to the reporting of potential misconduct, DOI's investigative work is enhanced by its partnership with City employees and agencies. In CY 2023, there were a number of investigations that were prompted by these reports to DOI, including:

- A man was convicted of preying upon families in need of housing to defraud government rental assistance programs by stealing hundreds of thousands of dollars from HRA and HPD, including more than \$90,000 in federal funds. The case originated with a referral to DOI from the City Department of Social Services ("DSS"). The prosecution concluded earlier this year when the defendant was sentenced to 70 months in prison.
- Three Brooklyn residents were indicted for making and selling fake safety cards to construction workers who never received the required training, an investigation prompted by a NYCHA employee who reported discrepancies regarding a contractor's safety card to DOI.
- A Brooklyn restaurant owner was charged with bribery to avoid a health code violation, based on an investigation prompted by a report from a City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene ("DOHMH") inspector who was offered a bribe, declined it, and reported the attempted bribe offer to DOI. The restaurant owner pled guilty to Attempted Giving Unlawful Gratuities, a class B misdemeanor, was fined \$500, and was given a conditional discharge.
- Three individuals pled guilty in a scheme to receive advance notice of DOHMH inspections, an investigation that began after a DOHMH employee reported an alleged bribe attempt to DOI.
- A former City Department of Buildings ("DOB") Inspector pled guilty to accepting \$500 in cash to overlook construction work completed contrary to approved plans. DOI began its investigation after receiving allegations from a member of the public and DOB that the defendant had solicited cash payments in exchange for approvals of construction work he inspected.

- A pedicab driver was indicted for offering money to an employee of the City Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (“DCWP”) in order to obtain authentic pedicab registration plates outside of the registration plate lottery. A DCWP employee report to DOI about an alleged bribe offer prompted the investigation.
- A Staten Island woman was charged with stealing more than \$10,000 in Section 8 housing subsidies after the City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (“HPD”) reported discrepancies subsequent to an income verification check. The defendant recently pled guilty to Petit Larceny, a class A misdemeanor.

Charged Misconduct by Public Officials and City Employees

DOI investigated an array of conduct that resulted in arrests, convictions and prison sentences of public officials and employees, including:

- The indictment of a former DOB Commissioner for misusing his authority in every public service position he held — as a New York City Councilmember, a Senior Advisor to the New York City Mayor, and finally as a DOB Commissioner — to benefit his friends and associates in exchange for bribes.
- The former chief of Mayor de Blasio’s security detail pled guilty to and was sentenced for obstructing a DOI probe into the former mayor’s use of his security detail by repeatedly impeding investigators and tampering with evidence. As part of his guilty plea, the former NYPD Inspector was terminated from the NYPD, admitted to his misconduct, and issued an apology to DOI.
- Two former supervisors with NYCHA were convicted and sentenced to federal prison for accepting bribes to dole out no-bid contracts.
- Two supervisors at the Horizon Juvenile Center in the Bronx were charged with federal crimes in connection with the beating of a 16-year-old resident at the juvenile center.
- A New York City Fire Department (“FDNY”) firefighter was indicted for stealing credit cards from a deceased patient during an EMS call and, separately, an FDNY Emergency Medical Technician was arrested on charges of theft from a DOI undercover investigator posing as a patient.
- Current and former DOHMH employees were charged with stealing gift cards meant for HIV and AIDs research participants and later pled guilty in connection with the crimes.
- Three ACS employees were charged in separate cases involving timesheet fraud or workers’ compensation fraud during their City employment: A former ACS Youth Development Specialist was charged with workers’ compensation fraud, while two other ACS employees were charged in two separate investigations, one for allegedly stealing thousands of dollars in pay for hours the employee did not work and a second for allegedly falsifying his timesheets and stealing overtime and regular pay repeatedly while traveling internationally and domestically. Another investigation led to the arrest of a NYCHA caretaker on a charge of stealing nearly \$6,000 in City wages.
- A City Department of Environmental Protection employee was charged with making threatening and abusive calls to customers.
- An ACS Child Protective Services worker was charged with exposing himself to a parent he was investigating and a former City Parks and Recreation supervisor was charged with sexually abusing a subordinate at a Bronx park.

Charged Schemes that Defrauded Public Programs and Funds

- A Florida woman was charged with defrauding at least 120 low-income New York City residents out of tens of thousands of dollars of their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits. The defendant pled guilty in January 2024.
- A former senior fiscal officer for a nonprofit organization was charged in a multimillion-dollar embezzlement scheme. The defendant pled guilty in January 2024.
- A CEO and his business partner were charged with a massive scheme to defraud the City’s homeless services programs, a scheme perpetrated through a nonprofit that had hundreds of millions of dollars in contracts with the City.
- A Bronx man was charged with stealing hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of construction utility vehicles from NYCHA housing developments.
- Principals of a fire alarm repair company were charged with a decade-long scheme to overbill City agencies.

- Owners of a Brooklyn plumbing company were indicted for evading taxes on millions of dollars of income from the business they conducted in New York City.
- A Queens couple was charged with the theft of more than \$100,000 in state and federal benefits involving three separate public benefit programs.
- Two defendants charged in a \$5.4 million scheme to defraud New York City homeless veterans were each sentenced to prison terms.
- A former executive of two publicly-funded nonprofits who pled guilty in 2022 to grand larceny charges was sentenced in 2023 to probation and ordered to pay \$450,000 in restitution to one of the nonprofits he stole from.
- A social worker was sentenced to 42 months' imprisonment for defrauding the New York State Early Intervention Program, which provides remedial services to developmentally delayed children after a jury found that the defendant billed Medicaid and the State Early Intervention Program for more than 1,700 social work sessions that never occurred.

Construction Fraud Investigations

- The operator of a Sunset Park construction company was sentenced to two to four years in prison in connection with an excavation wall collapse that killed a construction worker, after ignoring workers' safety concerns, industry protocols, and concerns expressed by adjacent property owners.
- An unlicensed labor broker was sentenced to probation and ordered to pay \$500,000 to the New York State Insurance Fund after underreporting the size of his companies and lying to insurance carriers about the work being performed by his employees to evade more than \$1 million in insurance premiums, leaving more than 100 construction workers underinsured.
- Twenty-four individuals and 26 companies were indicted for a wide-ranging construction industry kickback scheme that corrupted the competitive bidding process for dozens of contracts over more than eight years.
- Eight individuals and six companies were indicted on charges relating to their involvement in pervasive fraud and corruption within the construction industry, including schemes that defrauded City and State agencies and affected the development of numerous affordable housing projects in the City and tri-state area. Four defendants – two individuals and two companies – have entered guilty pleas in connection with these charges.
- A mechanic was indicted on a criminally negligent homicide charge for his role in a fatal elevator plunge in a Bronx building.
- Three contractors were indicted in the death of a construction worker who was crushed by 1,000 pounds of debris at a dangerous Bronx building site. The investigation found builders allegedly falsified credentials and permits and flouted safety.

Charged Criminal Conduct Related to the City's Jails

- A Department of Correction ("DOC") Captain was convicted of Criminally Negligent Homicide and sentenced to six months in jail for issuing orders that prevented officers from saving the life of a person in custody at the Manhattan Detention Complex.
- A former DOC Correction Officer was sentenced to 29 months in prison for smuggling contraband into Rikers Island in exchange for nearly \$10,000 in bribe payments.
- Three DOC Correction Officers were indicted for attempting to cover up an assault on an inmate by a correction officer and allegedly filing false and misleading reports.
- Three former DOC Correction Officers pled guilty to sick leave fraud, with each fraudulently obtaining tens of thousands of dollars in salary while on sick leave.
- A DOC Correction Officer was charged with groping a fellow officer while both were on duty on Rikers Island.
- A former DOC Correction Officer, inmate and civilian were indicted for smuggling an iPhone into Rikers Island, with the correction officer allegedly taking a \$2,500 bribe for providing the phone to the inmate.
- A DOC Correction Officer was indicted for falsifying documentation of completion of a suicide prevention program for 74 correction officers.
- A DOC Correction Captain was indicted for stealing \$14,000 in payments for hours he did not work.
- A DOC Correction Officer was charged with salary and overtime fraud, stealing over \$170,000 for hours he did not work, and pled guilty in January 2024.

- A DOC Correction Officer was indicted for allegedly planting a sharp object in an inmate's cell and then reporting it as recovered contraband.

Housing Fraud

- A couple was sentenced to five months in jail for stealing the identity of a U.S. Army veteran, applying for benefits, including Section 8 housing in Brooklyn, and bail jumping. As part of their sentence the couple was ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$34,399.
- A Brooklyn woman was indicted for stealing approximately \$157,000 in Section 8 subsidies by allegedly using another person's Social Security number to conceal her employment and income from NYCHA while collecting rental assistance vouchers for a two-bedroom apartment in Crown Heights.
- A former prosecutor and her family members were indicted in an affordable housing scheme that secured the defendants hundreds of thousands of dollars in benefits for which they were not eligible.
- A Staten Island woman was charged with stealing more than \$135,000 in Section 8 rental subsidies administered by NYCHA by concealing her true household income and other information.

Complaints and Intakes

In CY 2023, the Complaint Intake Unit received communications from the public through various mechanisms, including: 765 complaints processed through the 311 system; 3,021 complaints rerouted from other City agencies; 305 complaints received via mail; 2,488 complaints received via DOI's online complaint system; and 4,126 calls to the Complaint Intake Unit.

Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. Defendants are 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.

DOI's press releases can also be found at twitter.com/NYC_DOI
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