



Department of Investigation

Press Releases

DOI Arrests HRA Eligibility Specialist For Stealing Funds From 5 Welfare Recipients

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2000 -- EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the arrest of CONSUELO ROSARIO, an eligibility specialist for the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA), for stealing more than \$1,600 from 5 welfare recipients at the Dyckman Job Center in Upper Manhattan.

According to Commissioner Kuriansky, DOI initiated an investigation after Dyckman's director reported that she had received a complaint from a welfare recipient alleging that her caseworker, ROSARIO, had solicited a payment in excess of \$300 from her.

The investigation revealed that ROSARIO had allegedly informed the recipient that the requested money was for an "excess rent payment"(that portion of the recipient's rent which is over and above her public assistance rent benefit) to be given to her landlord. ROSARIO said that the payment was necessary to demonstrate that the recipient had sufficient funds to pay her rent in the future. ROSARIO instructed the recipient to provide her with a money order to cover the difference between her public assistance rent benefit and her actual rent -- and to leave the payee's name blank. However, instead of providing the money order to the recipient's landlord, it is alleged that ROSARIO took the money order, made it payable to herself, and cashed it.

The investigation further revealed that ROSARIO had similarly instructed 4 other recipients at the Dyckman Job Center to provide her with blank money orders -- ranging in value from \$50 to \$480 per recipient -- for excess rent payments. In all, it is charged that, between September 1998 and March 1999, ROSARIO fraudulently obtained 6 money orders, totaling \$1,645, from welfare recipients, which she then made payable to herself and cashed at various check cashing establishments.

Commissioner Kuriansky noted that HRA policy prohibits caseworkers from soliciting or accepting money orders from welfare recipients. With respect to excess rent payments, the proper procedure is for the recipient to pay the excess rent directly to the landlord and obtain a receipt, which is then forwarded to the recipient's caseworker as proof of the recipient's ability to pay the portion of the rent above the public assistance benefit.

ROSARIO, 41, of the Bronx, has been employed by HRA since 1985, and is presently assigned to the Fordham Job Center at 2551 Bainbridge Avenue in the Bronx, earning \$28,605 annually. She has been suspended without pay.

ROSARIO was charged with two counts of Tampering with Public Records in the First Degree, Scheme to Defraud in the First Degree, and Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree. If convicted, she faces up to 7 years in

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prison.

The investigation was conducted by Gerard Hoey, DOI's Inspector General for HRA, and members of his staff, including Deputy Inspector General Benjamin Defibaugh and Confidential Investigator Mauricio Kasianko.

The Office of New York County District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau is prosecuting the case. Assistant District Attorney Christina Berninger is handling the matter