



Department of Investigation *Press Release*

Release # 034-2002

TUESDAY, JUNE 18, 2002

5 INDIVIDUALS - INCLUDING CORRECTION OFFICER & TEACHER - CHARGED IN \$111,000 HOUSING FRAUD IN QUEENS

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), and RICHARD A. BROWN, Queens District Attorney, announced today that 5 Queens residents, including 2 City employees - a Department of Correction (DOC) Officer and a Board of Education (BOE) teacher - have been charged with stealing more than \$111,000 in government rent subsidies. The investigation focused on people who lied about their employment, household income, and/or family composition and thereby fraudulently received subsidized housing benefits from the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA).

Commissioner Gill Hearn and District Attorney Brown said that these arrests are part of an ongoing Citywide crackdown by DOI and the local district attorneys, which has, since 1995, resulted in the arrest of 253 residents - including 81 City, State and Federal employees - charged with stealing over \$5.1 million in rent and welfare subsidies by hiding their income and assets from the City. Since January alone, 38 individuals have been arrested for illegally receiving nearly \$800,000 in government housing benefits by concealing their employment or household income from NYCHA. So far, 182 cases have resulted in convictions and more than \$2.6 million in court-imposed restitution.

NYCHA manages 345 public housing developments providing shelter to over 435,000 tenants. In addition, NYCHA administers a federally-funded leased housing program known as Section 8. Under that program, tenants living in privately-owned dwellings can receive a government rent subsidy. The program presently covers more than 79,000 families.

The 5 defendants charged are Section 8 tenants and a Section 8 landlord residing in various sections of Queens, including Arverne, Ridgewood, South Ozone Park, and Richmond Hills. They are accused of stealing, between March 1996 and February 2002, a total of \$111,377 in rent subsidies, in amounts ranging from \$18,695 to \$50,652, by concealing their employment or actual household income and family composition from NYCHA.

Commissioner Gill Hearn said, "The lesson these defendants and others would be wise to learn is that, with so many needy New Yorkers on long waiting lists for affordable public housing, the City will simply not be deceived into providing subsidized apartments to people -- like the correction officer and teacher charged here - - who can well afford to pay more or even live elsewhere."

District Attorney Brown added, "The theft of public monies is a serious offense that can deprive others of much needed support. It will not be ignored by law enforcement no matter what the amount involved."

In today's cases, NOREEN JAMES, a New York City Correction Officer, was charged with fraudulently receiving \$21,768 in rent subsidies from November 1996 to April 2001. JAMES, who became a Section 8 participant in 1989, lives in a 4-room apartment at 130-14 131st Avenue in South Ozone Park, Queens. Although JAMES has been employed as a Correction Officer by the New York City Department of Correction since April 1999, earning between \$29,624 and \$31,396 a year, she failed to report this employment and income to NYCHA. In addition, JAMES failed to report her previous employment at the White and Case law firm and income she received as a full-time receptionist from June 1996 to April 1999, during which period she earned between \$21,000 and \$23,000 a year. Instead, JAMES reported that during the period from June 1996 to April 2001, her household income ranged from \$11,700 to \$13,650 a year and was derived from her employment as a receptionist at a firm providing security services. In actuality, JAMES' income from November 1996 to April 2001 ranged from \$21,000 to \$31,396. JAMES' rent share during this period ranged from \$281 to \$329 a month, while her Section 8 subsidies was between \$409 and \$459 a month. In fact, JAMES should have been paying rent totaling between \$581 to \$738 a month.

ALAKISHA EURE, a BOE teacher, was charged with fraudulently receiving \$18,695 in rent subsidies by concealing from NYCHA, between February 1997 and October 2001, the actual income she received from her employment as a teacher at P.S. 3K, located at 50 Jefferson Avenue in Brooklyn. EURE, a Section 8 participant since 1995, has been receiving rent subsidies for a 4-room apartment at 1670 Putnam Avenue in the Ridgewood section of Queens. From 1997 to 2001, EURE's actual income was between \$28,213 and \$40,562 a year. However, in her annual Affidavits of Income filed with NYCHA, EURE reported that her household income ranged from \$17,749 to \$28,749 a year. EURE's rent share for that time period was between \$374 and \$580 a month, while the Section 8 program paid subsidies ranging from \$269 to \$442 a month. In fact, EURE should have paid rent totaling between \$640 to \$849 a month.

DOLORES DUBOSE, a Section 8 participant since 1989 of a 4-room apartment at 146 Beach 59 Street in the Arverne section of Queens, has been charged with unlawfully obtaining \$20,261 in rent subsidies by concealing from NYCHA, between April 1996 and July 2001, her employment with Lawrence Nursing Care Center in Queens. From 1996 to 2001, DUBOSE's actual income ranged from \$21,011 to \$26,369 a year. For that time period, however, DUBOSE reported that her sole income consisted of less than \$7,020 a year from public assistance benefits and contributions she received from her mother. DUBOSE's rent share since April 1996 has ranged from \$58 to \$106 a month, while the Section 8 program paid benefits ranging from \$576 to \$635 a month. In fact, DUBOSE should have been paying a rent ranging from \$349 to \$525 a month.

MIGUEL SALCEDO, a Section 8 landlord, was found to be residing with his Section 8 tenant, RAMONA RAMIREZ, in the same subsidized apartment that he rented to her for \$775 to \$829 a month. RAMIREZ, a Section 8 participant since 1991, moved into SALCEDO's single-family dwelling at 91-69 110th Street in the Richmond Hill section of Queens, in 1996. Neither SALCEDO nor RAMIREZ disclosed to NYCHA the fact that SALCEDO and RAMIREZ were living together. Indeed, RAMIREZ reported that her household composition consisted only of herself and her son, and that her household income was wholly derived from public assistance benefits. SALCEDO's occupancy of the Section 8 apartment with RAMIREZ rendered him ineligible for the Section 8 subsidies paid to him as landlord, and RAMIREZ' repeated failure to disclose their living situation to NYCHA resulted in her improperly obtaining rent subsidies totaling \$50,652, between March 1996 and February 2002.

5 Individuals Including Correction Officer and Teacher Charged om \$111,000 Housing Fraud In Queens

JAMES, EURE, and DUBOSE have each been charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a Class D felony. If convicted, they face up to 7 years in prison. SALCEDO and RAMIREZ have been charged with Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, a Class C felony, punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

Commissioner Gill Hearn expressed her sincere appreciation to NYCHA's Leased Housing Department for their cooperation and assistance during the course of the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI Assistant Commissioner and NYCHA Inspector General Steven A. Pasichow and members of his staff, including Deputy Inspector General Kevin Smith, Special Investigator Rosemary Caruso, Confidential Investigators Patricia Carvajal, Michelle Purnavel and Louis Vega, and Investigative Attorney Lauren Hintz.

Assistant District Attorney Christine Burke, under the supervision of Brian Mich of District Attorney Brown's Economic Crimes Bureau, is handling the prosecutions.

DEFENDANT INFORMATION:

1. NOREEN JAMES, 35, of 130-14 131st Avenue in Queens (\$21,768 in rent subsidies)
2. ALAKISHA EURE, 31, of 1670 Putnam Avenue in Queens (\$18,695 in rent subsidies)
3. DOLORES DUBOSE, 41, of 146 Beach 59 Street in Queens (\$20,261 in rent subsidies)
4. MIGUEL SALCEDO, 51, of 91-69 110th Street in Queens (\$50,652 in rent subsidies)
5. RAMONA RAMIREZ, 50, of 91-69 110th Street in Queens (\$50,652 in rent subsidies)

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