



The City of New York  
Department of Investigation

ROSE GILL HEARN  
COMMISSIONER

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**[nyc.gov/html/doi](http://nyc.gov/html/doi)**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**FOUR INDIVIDUALS ARRESTED IN \$62,000 HOUSING FRAUD**  
**-- Three defendants are City employees --**

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), announced today the arrest of four individuals -- three current City employees: a Correction Officer, a New York City Housing Authority secretary and a Health and Hospitals Corporation Community Service Aide -- for fraudulently receiving more than \$62,000 in government rent subsidies for apartments in Brooklyn.

Defendants MARYLAND FULLER, LISA FULLER, VERNELL KING, and ELISE JOHNSON have been charged with theft of public monies. In addition, KING and JOHNSON have been charged with knowingly making false statements or representations. If convicted, all four could each face up to 10 years in jail.

These arrests are part of an ongoing City-wide crackdown by DOI and New York area prosecutors that has resulted since 1995 in the arrest of 293 residents, including 97 City, State and Federal employees, who were charged with stealing more than \$5.7 million in rent and welfare subsidies by hiding their income and assets from the City. So far, 237 cases have resulted in convictions and more than \$3.1 million in court-imposed restitution.

Since January 2003 alone, 35 individuals have been arrested for illegally receiving more than \$550,000 in government housing benefits by concealing their employment or household income from the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA).

NYCHA manages 345 public developments, which provide housing to more than 418,000 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 83,000 families.

Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "These defendants cynically took advantage of officials at NYCHA and NYCHA's Section 8 rent subsidy program so they could save themselves money. The City will not be deceived into subsidizing apartments for people who do not qualify for the scarce subsidized housing."

In today's cases, MARYLAND FULLER and her daughter, LISA FULLER, Section 8 recipients since October 1992, allegedly concealed from NYCHA, from May 1997 to April 2001, the salary LISA earned as a New York City Correction Officer. From 1996 to 2001, LISA FULLER earned between \$35,798 and \$46,055

per year. If reported accurately, LISA's income would have made the family ineligible for the Section 8 rent subsidies program. However, both mother and daughter filed with NYCHA Affidavits of Income and other documents that indicated LISA was either unemployed or worked part-time in a low-paying job. As a result, the family was undercharged rent for their five-room apartment in East New York, Brooklyn. Their rent subsidies totaled \$38,973.74.

VERNELL KING, a secretary in NYCHA's Law Department, allegedly failed to disclose that her sister, ELISE JOHNSON, a Health and Hospitals Corporation Community Service Aide, had lived in her four-room apartment in NYCHA's Linden Houses in the East New York section of Brooklyn from November 1992 until April 2003. NYCHA regulations require tenants to list accurately household occupancy and income. Because JOHNSON was an unauthorized tenant, the family did not report her income, which would have increased KING's rent. Furthermore, in August 1999, KING vacated her apartment, continued to file affidavits with NYCHA that claimed she still lived there, and allowed her sister to remain in the apartment. At her new address, KING concealed her NYCHA tenancy in order to receive reduced rent benefits pursuant to a HUD Section 236 program, which also offers reduced rent to low income persons. KING and JOHNSON's actions caused NYCHA to be defrauded of \$18,377. KING's simultaneous participation in two HUD-subsidized programs defrauded HUD of \$5,120.

Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn thanked the Inspector General for the United States Department Housing and Urban Development and members of their staff, including Special Agent Anthony Losito for their assistance in this case.

These investigations were conducted by DOI Assistant Commissioner and NYCHA Inspector General Steven A. Pasichow and members of his staff, including Deputy Inspector General Kevin Smith, Assistant Inspector General Bergia Telesford and Confidential Investigator Alexandra Hampton. Special Agent Anthony M. Losito of HUD's Office of the Inspector General also participated in this investigation. The Office of Roslynn R. Mauskopf, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, is handling the cases. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Charles Kleinberg and Alphonzo Grant are prosecuting.

Criminal complaints are merely an accusation. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country. The agency investigates and refers for prosecution City employees and contractors engaged in corrupt or fraudulent activities or unethical conduct. 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.

**DEFENDANT INFORMATION:**

1. Maryland Fuller, 49, Brooklyn (\$38,973.74 in NYCHA rent subsidies)
2. Lisa Fuller, 33, Brooklyn (\$38,973.74 in NYCHA rent subsidies)
3. Vernell King, 39, Brooklyn (\$18,377 in NYCHA rent subsidies; \$5,120 in HUD rent subsidies)
4. Elise Johnson, 43, Brooklyn (\$18,377 in NYCHA rent subsidies)

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To report someone ripping off the city, call 311 or DOI directly at (212) 825-5959.***