



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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Release #22-2007
nyc.gov/html/doi

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 4, 2007

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DOI ARRESTS SUPERVISOR AT HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION IN WELFARE SCAM
--More than \$9,000 was fraudulently taken as part of the scheme --

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”), announced today the arrest of CHERIE HEYWARD, a Principal Administrative Associate with the New York City Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services (“HRA”), for fraudulently issuing and diverting for her own use public assistance funds totaling \$9,786.91. DOI’s investigation found that HEYWARD allegedly used these funds to pay her landlord rent she owed on an apartment in the Bronx.

HEYWARD, 44, of the Bronx, was charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony. If convicted, she faces up to seven years in prison.

Commissioner Gill Hearn said, “This individual is accused of not just breaching her responsibilities as an HRA employee, but also taking thousands of dollars of taxpayer funds that were earmarked for those in need. City employees must be aware that if they steal from the job there will be repercussions. They place their job at risk and they face possible prison time.”

DOI’s investigation began when HRA reported to DOI’s Inspector General for HRA that an unusually large number of public assistance checks, 12 in all, had been issued to a public assistance client whose case was being handled at HEYWARD’s work location, the Rider Job Center in the Bronx. The investigation determined that the client who had been issued the checks was actually HEYWARD’s boyfriend. The checks were purportedly issued for a variety of needs for the sole use of HEYWARD’s boyfriend, including rent supplements while on public assistance, moving expenses and storage fees. However, the investigation found that the checks were diverted and used exclusively by HEYWARD to pay her own landlord for rent she owed on her apartment. Between October 2003 and March 2004, 12 fraudulent public assistance checks ranging from \$720 to \$920 were generated and directed to her landlord for payment of her rent.

HEYWARD, who began working for HRA in 1987, was assigned to the Rider Job Center in the Bronx, where her duties included supervising the unit that reviewed and processed authorizations for public assistance checks. She was a supervisor in the unit that input data for the issuance of the public-assistance checks. The checks that were supposed to go to HEYWARD’s boyfriend instead were directed to HEYWARD’s landlord.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked HRA Commissioner Robert Doar and his staff for their assistance and cooperation during the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Inspector General's Office for HRA, under the supervision of Assistant Commissioner Benjamin Defibaugh and members of his staff, including Inspector General Rebecca Holland, Deputy Inspector General Margaret Shivers and Confidential Investigator Angie Wells.

The Office of Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson is prosecuting the case. Assistant District Attorney Richard Lawson, under the supervision of Thomas Kapp, Chief of the Economic Crimes Bureau, is handling the prosecution.

Criminal complaints are accusations. 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.

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