



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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Release #32-2005
nyc.gov/html/doi

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, MAY 5, 2005

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DOI ARRESTS SECTION 8 TENANT IN \$11,000 RENT SUBSIDY SCAM

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), announced today the arrest of a Section 8 participant for fraudulently receiving more than \$11,000 in government rent subsidies from the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA).

BLANCA ROMOLEROUX, 52, of the Bronx, has been arrested and charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree. If convicted, she faces up to seven years in prison.

ROMOLEROUX has been a NYCHA Section 8 recipient of a five-room apartment in the Parkchester section of the Bronx since 1999. From May 2003 through September 2004, ROMOLEROUX allegedly failed to report to NYCHA that one of her sons, who has been a NYCHA employee since 1998, lived with her. Instead, ROMOLEROUX falsely claimed on documents filed with NYCHA in 2003 and 2004 that her family composition consisted of herself and young son, and that her household income consisted of money she earned working either as a babysitter or as a security guard. Because ROMOLEROUX failed to report her son's income, she paid between \$175 and \$457 a month in rent when she should have paid between \$919 and \$1,069 each month, thereby defrauding NYCHA of more than \$11,000 in rental subsidies.

In addition to administering 345 housing developments for 180,000 families throughout the five boroughs, NYCHA administers a Section 8 Program, in which NYCHA subsidizes the rent for more than 90,000 eligible, low-income families who live in private housing.

These arrests are part of an ongoing City-wide crackdown by DOI and New York area prosecutors that have resulted since 1995 in the arrest of 389 residents who were charged with stealing more than \$7.6 million in rent and welfare subsidies by hiding their income and assets from the City. So far, more than \$4.2 million has been collected in restitution. This year, 10 individuals have been arrested for illegally receiving over \$225,000 in government housing benefits.

This investigation was conducted by DOI's Inspector General for NYCHA Judith F. Abruzzo and members of her staff, including Deputy Inspector General Kevin Smith, Acting Assistant Inspector Rosemary Caruso, and Special Investigator John Reatz. The Office of Robert T. Johnson, District Attorney, Bronx County, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of ADAs Richard Baker and William Zelenka of the Investigations Division.

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

Get the worms out of the Big Apple.
To report someone ripping off the city, call DOI directly at (212) 825-5959.