



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

ROSE GILL HEARN
COMMISSIONER

80 MAIDEN LANE
NEW YORK, NY 10038
212-825-5900

Release #42-2007
nyc.gov/html/doi

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, JUNE 1, 2007

CONTACT: DIANE STRUZZI
(212) 825-5931

DOI ARRESTS TWO BRONX RESIDENTS FOR ALLEGEDLY DEFRAUDING NYCHA OF \$36,000
-Individuals part of group arrested last week for defrauding NYCHA of nearly \$148,000-

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), announced today the arrest of two former Section 8 recipients, ADRIENNE COUSINS and ANDREA THOMAS-NEWKIRK, for illegally obtaining \$36,048 in rental subsidies by failing to accurately report their household income to NYCHA.

Each has been charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony, and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class E felony. If convicted, each faces up to seven years in prison.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "Both of these individuals allegedly concealed thousands of dollars of employment income in order to receive Section 8 subsidies they didn't deserve. With so many City residents in need of rental assistance, DOI will continue to aggressively pursue those who abuse these programs. Since January 2007, DOI has arrested 51 individuals for illegally receiving over \$1.5 million in government housing benefits."

ADRIENNE COUSINS, 33, was a Section 8 recipient until March 2007, of an apartment located in the Pelham Bay section of the Bronx. She is accused of illegally receiving \$21,774 in rent subsidies from August 2002 through October 2006 by concealing various sources of income from NYCHA, including over \$63,000 in employment income she earned from July 2004 through December 2005 as an Operating Room Technician. Instead of reporting her actual household income on the Affidavits of Income she filed with NYCHA from 2003 through 2006, COUSINS listed public assistance or babysitting as her sole source of income. As a result, COUSINS paid monthly rent ranging from \$129 to \$497, when she should have paid between \$308 and \$1,400 per month. In fact, had NYCHA been aware of her actual yearly income, COUSINS would not have been eligible for any of the \$17,166 in rent subsidies she received after August 2004.

ANDREA THOMAS-NEWKIRK, 44, is a former Section 8 recipient of an apartment in the Morris Heights section of the Bronx, and is accused of illegally obtaining \$14,274 in Section 8 subsidies during the period August 2001 through April 2003, by failing to report her employment with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority/New York City Transit ("MTA"). On the yearly Affidavits of Income she submitted to NYCHA in 2002 through 2004, THOMAS-NEWKIRK listed public assistance as her sole source of income. As a result, THOMAS-NEWKIRK paid rent ranging between \$161 and \$182 per month. DOI investigators determined, however, that THOMAS-NEWKIRK had been employed by the MTA as a Word

Processor from January 2001 through April 2004 and earned up to \$35,291 annually. Had NYCHA been aware of her employment income, she would not have been entitled to any of the \$14,274 in Section 8 subsidies she received, which ranged between \$672 and \$783 per month.

Last week, DOI arrested seven individuals for similar offenses. Some of the fraudulent acts allegedly committed by those arrested last week include: a Section 8 recipient who allegedly obtained \$26,000 in housing subsidies because she failed to report her employment with the New York City Department of Education (DOE) and the United States Postal Service (USPS); a NYCHA tenant who allegedly concealed various sources of household income for years to receive a reduction in rent, even though she and others in the household were employed and/or receiving other income; and a Section 8 recipient who would not have been entitled to the \$13,944 in rental subsidies she received if she had reported to NYCHA her employment at a pharmaceutical company where she earned an estimated \$31,000 annually. In all, the eight individuals defrauded NYCHA of nearly \$148,000.

The following is information on last week's arrests:

1. Sharae Miggins-Green, 40, former Section 8 recipient of an apartment in the Soundview section of the Bronx, allegedly defrauded NYCHA of \$26,000.
2. Kathleen Conklin, 57, a resident of an apartment in NYCHA's Fort Independence Towers in the Kingsbridge Heights section of the Bronx, allegedly defrauded NYCHA of \$16,823.
3. Matilda Johnson, 63, a resident of an apartment in NYCHA's Castle Hill Houses, allegedly defrauded NYCHA of \$15,858.
4. Rosa Guzman, 43, a Section 8 recipient of an apartment in the Tremont section of the Bronx, allegedly defrauded NYCHA of \$15,400.
5. Tiesha McDonnough, 36, a former Section 8 recipient of an apartment in the Wakefield section of the Bronx, allegedly defrauded NYCHA of \$13,944.
6. Veda James, 36, a resident of an apartment located in NYCHA's Betances Houses in the Mott Haven section of the Bronx, allegedly defrauded NYCHA of \$12,084 and is also accused of defrauding the Human Resources Administration (HRA) of \$27,046.
7. Lillian Rodriguez, 50, a Section 8 recipient in the Crotona Park section of the Bronx, allegedly defrauded NYCHA of \$11,806.

These investigations were conducted by NYCHA Inspector General Robert J. McSweeney and members of his staff, including Senior Deputy Inspectors General Kevin Smith and Ralph Iannuzzi, Deputy Inspector General Bergia Telesford, First Assistant Inspector General James Hylton, Assistant Inspectors General Anthony Capek and Rosemary Caruso, Chief Investigator Christopher France, Special Investigators Emily Bizzarro, Louis Vega and Denis Kennedy, Confidential Investigator Lia J. Pasichow and Deputy Counsel Lauren Hintz.

The Office of Bronx County District Attorney Robert T. Johnson is prosecuting the cases.

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.

***Get the worms out of the Big Apple.
To report someone ripping off the city, call 311 or DOI directly at (212) 825-5959.***