



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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**FORMER SECTION 8 RECIPIENT AND NYCHA TENANT ARRESTED
IN QUEENS FOR DEFRAUDING NYCHA OF MORE THAN \$60K**

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), announced today the arrest of two women – a former NYCHA Section 8 recipient and a New York City Housing Authority (“NYCHA”) tenant – for fraudulently receiving over \$60,000 in rental subsidies. By allegedly falsely representing their incomes to NYCHA, the women paid rents as low as \$33 and \$144 a month.

NANCY FAJARDO, 38, a former Section 8 tenant, of East Elmhurst, Queens, has been charged with Grand Larceny in the Second Degree and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree. If convicted, FAJARDO faces up to 15 years in prison

VELMA MERRIWEATHER, 51, a NYCHA tenant residing in the Far Rockaway section of Queens, has been charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree. If convicted, MERRIWEATHER faces up to 7 years in prison.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, “These defendants have learned the perils of their greedy behavior. They now know, as do the 18 others we arrested for similar crimes this year, that housing scams do not work. DOI investigates these types of cases so that tax payers’ money is not wasted and so that those who need and qualify for affordable public housing will receive it.”

FAJARDO, a former Section 8 recipient from September 1994 through July 2003 who lived in a two-bedroom apartment in Far Rockaway, Queens, allegedly received \$51,609 in unwarranted rent subsidies by concealing her employment income from NYCHA. FAJARDO worked as a Licensed Practical Nurse for ARO Community Services, Inc. (“ARO”) and/or Kings Harbor Multicare Center from February 1996 through March 2003 and earned between \$22,000 and \$45,000 per year, but allegedly failed to disclose this employment income to NYCHA. Instead, from February 1996 through August 19, 1999, FAJARDO reported welfare as her sole source of income. On the Affidavit of Income she submitted in August 19, 1999, Fajardo lists ARO Community Services as her employment, but states she had just started there and hadn’t earned any income yet. However, Fajardo had been employed with ARO for at least three years -- since February 1996. Further, on her following Affidavit of Incomes, Fajardo again did not list any source of employment. As a result, Fajardo’s share of her monthly rent for the period August 1996 through March 2003 ranged from \$33 to \$113 per month, while NYCHA paid rent subsidies on Fajardo’s behalf ranging from \$745 to \$818 per month. Had she accurately reported her income, Fajardo should have paid rent ranging from \$445 to \$885.83 per month.

MERRIWEATHER, who has been the Tenant of Record of a 4-room apartment in NYCHA’s Redfern Houses since 1976, allegedly obtained \$8,964 in undeserved rent subsidies by concealing her employment income from NYCHA for nearly three years, from November 2000 until September 2003. MERRIWEATHER has worked as an Assistant Teacher with the True Deliverance Christian School since September 1999, and earned \$8,183 to \$10,808 a year. MERRIWEATHER failed to report this employment on her Affidavits of Income she filed yearly with NYCHA. Instead,

she reported Public Assistance benefits as her only source of income. Based on MERRIWEATHER's misrepresentations, MERRIWEATHER's rent was calculated at a rate of \$144 a month. Had she accurately reported her income, she would have paid between \$333 and \$430 per month in rent.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn thanked NYCHA's Queens' Borough Management Department and Leased Housing Department for their assistance in the investigations and arrests.

These investigations were conducted by NYCHA Inspector General Judith F. Abruzzo and members of her staff, including Deputy Inspector General Ralph Iannuzzi, Assistant Inspector General Anthony Capek, Counsel to the Inspector General Karen Cohen and Assistant Counsel Laureen Hintz.

The Office of Queens District Attorney Richard Brown is prosecuting the cases. Assistant District Attorney Christine Burke, under the supervision of Gregory Pavlides of District Attorney Brown's Economic Crimes Bureau, is handling the prosecutions.

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.

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