



The City of New York
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DOI ARRESTS FOUR INDIVIDUALS ON HOUSING FRAUD CHARGES
--Two defendants' combined income in one case exceeded \$135,000--

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced today the arrests of four individuals, in two separate cases, on charges of concealing income in an attempt to obtain low-income apartments developed through the New York City Housing Development Corporation ("HDC") Low-Income Affordable Marketplace Program ("LAMP"). The office of New York County District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau is prosecuting the cases.

DOI began investigating after it was notified by HDC about irregularities in the defendants' applications. As a result of DOI's investigation, which found that the defendants' incomes far exceeded the applicable limits, these individuals did not obtain an apartment subsidized by HDC.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "These four arrests underscore that housing fraud, which defeats the purpose of the City's housing-assistance programs, remains squarely in DOI's sights and will not be tolerated. Thankfully, HDC alerted DOI investigators, and these charged frauds were uncovered and stopped before they could succeed."

ERIC AFRIYIE, 42, and RITA MENSAH, 37, both of the Bronx, have each been charged with two counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class E felony. MARY KWAKYE, 40, and ISAAC AMOENYI, 43, both of the Bronx, have each been charged with one count of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree. Upon conviction, a class E felony is punishable by up to four years in prison.

According to the criminal complaint, in March 2008, AFRIYIE and MENSAH applied together for an HDC-sponsored low-income apartment for which the maximum household income limit was \$42,115 and submitted documents falsely stating that AFRIYIE had terminated his taxi lease as of August 2007 and that MENSAH was unemployed and had no annual income. DOI's investigation found that, contrary to the documents they submitted to HDC, AFRIYIE had leased a taxi from at least January 2006 through January 2009 and MENSAH had been employed as a nurse since November 2007 and earned approximately \$79,039 in 2008.

According to the second criminal complaint, KWAKYE and AMOENYI applied together for a low-income apartment in November 2007 and listed KWAKYE'S income as approximately \$26,399 and AMOENYI'S income as approximately \$10,299. DOI's investigation found that KWAKYE actually earned wages of approximately \$37,611 and \$46,628 in 2007 and 2008, respectively; and AMOENYI actually earned wages of approximately \$73,775 and \$89,041 in 2007 and 2008, respectively. The HDC-sponsored apartment for which KWAKYE and AMOENYI applied had a maximum household income limit of \$38,380.

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LAMP is an HDC-financed program in which building owners agree to provide reduced-rent apartments for low-income individuals in exchange for low-interest mortgages through HDC. In order to apply for a unit, individuals must submit an application and be selected through a housing lottery. Applicants are only considered for these HDC-sponsored apartments if their household income falls within the eligibility guidelines. In order to prove income applicants submit recent pay stubs, employment verification letters, and tax returns.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked HDC President Marc Jahr and New York County District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau and their staffs for their assistance in these investigations.

These investigations were conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for HDC.

Assistant District Attorney Savvas Diacosavvas from the New York County District Attorney's Office has been assigned to prosecute these cases.

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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