



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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**DOI STATEMENT ON THE SENTENCING OF A FORMER HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION EMPLOYEE
ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FRAUD AND OTHER CHARGES**

Mark G. Peters, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”) issued the following statement on a former City Human Resources Administration (“HRA”) employee who was sentenced today in U.S. District Court to 90 months in federal prison for charges including Conspiracy to Commit Wire Fraud in connection with the theft of more than \$600,000 in cash assistance benefits, and other unrelated charges involving a narcotics trafficking scheme. DOI’s role focused on the public assistance fraud, in which the defendant, PETRONILA PERALTA, issued fraudulent benefits to individuals who were not entitled to receive them. PERALTA was also ordered, upon release from prison, to pay \$675,000 in restitution to HRA. The case was highlighted in DOI’s 2015 Report, detailing various schemes to defraud HRA. A copy of the report can be found here: <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/doi/newsroom/public-reports.page>. The U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York prosecuted this case.

DOI Commissioner Mark G. Peters said, “This defendant stole public assistance dollars – lifeline funds earmarked for the City’s neediest individuals – and now she’ll pay with prison time for her greed. DOI will continue to pursue these cases with our partners, including through our collaboration with HRA, to ensure those who commit public assistance fraud are held accountable.”

PERALTA, 52, of The Bronx, N.Y. was arrested in December 2015 and had been employed by HRA since April 2005 as a Job Opportunity Specialist working at the HRA Job Center 37 in Queens. She was terminated in August 2014, in connection with DOI’s investigation. At the time of her termination, Peralta was receiving an annual salary of \$42,346.

DOI’s investigation showed between 2008 and 2011, PERALTA was linked to over 800 fraudulent benefit issuances to approximately 140 individuals who were not entitled to receive them. DOI also found that recruiters working with PERALTA identified clients who received public assistance and offered them money in exchange for their account information, which was then used to issue the fraudulent benefits. PERALTA’s scheme resulted in the theft of more than \$600,000 of public funds.

DOI Commissioner Peters thanked Joon H. Kim, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and his staff, for their dedication, assistance and cooperation in the PERALTA investigation.

The PERALTA investigation was conducted by DOI’s Office of the Inspector General for HRA, specifically Assistant Inspector General Octavia Hill, and Deputy Inspector General Margaret Shivers; Director of Investigative Auditing Laila Yu, Senior Data Analyst Calvin Lam, and Investigative Auditor Lap Chan; under the supervision of Inspector General Milton Yu, Special Associate Commissioner Susan Lambiase, Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Michael Carroll, and First Deputy Commissioner Lesley Brovner.

Assistant United States Attorneys Shawn G. Crowley and Daniel C. Richenthal of the office of the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District's Public Corruption Unit prosecuted the case.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country and New York City's corruption watchdog. 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. DOI's strategy attacks corruption comprehensively through systemic investigations that lead to high-impact arrests, preventive internal controls and operational reforms that improve the way the City runs.

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