



The United States Attorney's Office

Central District of California



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8 ARRESTED FOR OBTAINING LOW-INCOME HOUSING ASSISTANCE AFTER FAILING TO DISCLOSE FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

Seven current employees of the federal government and one former federal worker were arrested today on federal charges of making false statements to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development in order to fraudulently obtain federal Section 8 rental housing assistance. A ninth defendant accused of making false statements to HUD is currently being sought by authorities.

Last month, a federal grand jury in Los Angeles charged the nine defendants in separate indictments that each allege several counts of making false statements. At the time the alleged false statements were made, all nine were employed by either the United States Postal Service or the United States Department of Veteran Affairs.

The eight defendants arrested today are:

- USPS employee Vivian Dyann Lollis, 41, of Los Angeles (90034);
- VA employee Birdie Toomes Jackson, 57, of the Crenshaw district of Los Angeles;
- USPS acting supervisor, Sonya Reshard, 39, of Downey;
- former USPS employee June Nanette Bly, 43, of the Jefferson Park section of Los Angeles;
- VA employee Wyvonnia Ware, 70, of the Crenshaw district of Los Angeles, who self-surrendered this morning;
- USPS employee Vera Nell Carter, 41, of the Hyde Park section of Los Angeles;
- VA employee Gloria JoAnn Jackson, 42, of Long Beach; and
- VA employee Lavon Allen Wright, 54, of San Bernardino.

The ninth defendant, USPS employee Antoinette Love, age 48, of Compton, is expected to be taken into custody by tomorrow morning.

The indictments allege that each of the nine defendants fraudulently received federal Section 8 subsidized housing payments from HUD. They each allegedly failed to disclose to HUD

either that they were federal employees earning a federal income or they failed to disclose their full federal salary. As a result of these false statements to HUD, each defendant continued to fraudulently receive the benefit of monthly Section 8 housing rental assistance payments which were designated for very low-income families. The defendants collectively received more than \$450,000 in federal housing subsidies to which they were not entitled.

"There are over 100,000 families on waiting lists for housing assistance in the Los Angeles metropolitan area," said James F. Todak Special Agent in Charge, United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General (HUD OIG), Pacific/ Hawaii Region. "In light of the overwhelming need for low-income rental assistance, it is intolerable for individuals to defraud HUD's rental assistance program. Such fraud is particularly appalling when federal government employees make false statements intending to take advantage of a federal program created to assist very low income families in need of rental assistance to obtain housing."

The eight defendants who were taken into custody today are expected to make their initial court appearances this afternoon in United States District Court in Los Angeles.

Each count of making a false statement carries a statutory maximum penalty of five years in federal prison.

An indictment contains allegations that a defendant has committed a crime. Every defendant is presumed to be innocent until proven guilty.

The charges against each of the nine defendants are the result of the FedRent Initiative launched by HUD OIG to ensure that federal employees receiving housing benefits from HUD properly disclose their federal wages and personal assets to HUD. The FedRent Initiative was launched in order to uphold the public's trust in the integrity of federal employees hired to serve the public's interest and to maintain the integrity of HUD's federal rental assistance program. The FedRent Initiative received assistance from the United States Postal Service-Office of Inspector General and the United States Department of Veteran Affairs-Office of Inspector General.

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