



Department of Justice

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Six Women Charged with Making False Statements to Obtain Federal Program Benefits

U.S. Postal Service Employees Among Those Charged

CHARLOTTE, NC - Six former participants of Charlotte Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) were arrested Wednesday by federal agents on charges of theft and making false statements about their income to the Charlotte Housing Authority (CHA), announced U.S. Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert of the Western District of North Carolina. Three of the defendants are currently employed by the United States Postal Service (USPS), a federal agency. The arrests are the result of a joint investigation conducted by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General (HUD-OIG), the United States Postal Service, Office of Inspector General (USPS-OIG), the Charlotte Housing Authority, and the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services (DSS).

Kenneth M. Donohue, Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General said, "This joint investigative effort by HUD's Office of Inspector General, the U.S. Postal Service's Office of Inspector General, Charlotte Housing Authority, and Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services will help send a strong message that those who seek to unlawfully profit by defrauding programs within HUD will be thoroughly investigated." In addition, Gretchen Shappert, United States Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina, commended the cooperative effort involved in the law enforcement

investigation, saying, “We will vigorously prosecute individuals who would, in effect, steal from the federal government—particularly at the expense of so many others whose needs are real.”

Temeria Denise Alexander, 36, of 3417 Hampshire Place, Charlotte, is charged with one count of theft of \$26,548 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and seven counts of making false statements to HUD from April 2002 to April 2006. Alexander is also charged in separate counts with theft of money from several programs offered by the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services (DSS). Alexander is charged with stealing \$11,757 from Food Stamps, \$3,134 from Medicaid, and \$4,523 from Work First Family Assistance. These DSS programs are also funded in part by the U.S. government. Throughout the duration of Alexander’s participation in these various public assistance programs, Alexander was an employee of the USPS. Currently, Alexander is working at the USPS Minuet Station, located at 430 Minuet Lane. According to the indictment, in 2005, Alexander submitted a signed affidavit claiming no income while she was employed by the USPS, earning approximately \$41,127 annually. Alexander’s assistance through CHA’s HCVP was terminated as a result of this investigation in April 2006.

Lavoris McIver, 37, of 6103 Sid Crane Drive, Charlotte, is charged with one count of theft of \$20,587 in HUD money, and one count of making false statements to HUD from October 2003 to April 2006. McIver has been an employee of the United States Postal Service since September 2003. Currently, McIver is working at the USPS Freedom Station, located at 2318 Executive Street, Charlotte. McIver’s assistance through CHA’s HCVP was terminated as a result of this investigation in April 2006.

Sahia Nicole Seaman, 30, of 1117-B Geraldine Powe Drive, Charlotte, is charged with one count of theft of \$17,572 from HUD and one count of making false statements to HUD from November 2004 to March 2007. Seaman has been an employee of the USPS since September

2006. Currently, Seaman is working as an associate at the WT Harris Station, located at 3515 David Cox Road, Charlotte. Seaman's assistance through CHA's HCVP was terminated as a result of this investigation in March of this year.

Kawanna Michelle Rucker, 33, of 7707 Ivy Hollow Drive, Charlotte, is charged with one count of theft of \$29,302 from HUD and one count of making false statements to HUD from March 2002 to October 2005. While receiving housing assistance from CHA, Rucker concealed her income from employment at Presbyterian Hospital, 1900 Randolph Street, Charlotte. Rucker's assistance through CHA's HCVP was terminated as a result of this investigation in November 2005.

Sonya Charisse Douglas, 35, of 4722 Topsail Court, Charlotte, is charged with one count of theft of \$21,803 from HUD and one count of making false statements to HUD from April 2002 to July 2005. While receiving housing assistance from CHA, Douglas concealed her employment at the Alexander Children's Center and her annual income of nearly \$36,000. Douglas' assistance through CHA's HCVP was terminated as a result of this investigation in July 2005.

Banetta Martin-Williams, 29, of 3313 Magnolia Hill Drive, Charlotte, is charged with one count of theft of \$12,346 from HUD and one count of making false statements to HUD from June 2003 to April 2005. While receiving housing assistance from CHA, Martin-Williams underreported salary information concerning her employment at the Bellsouth Operations Center, 4100 Southstream Boulevard, Charlotte. Martin-Williams' assistance through CHA's HCVP was terminated as a result of this investigation in April 2005.

Housing authorities and social service agencies like CHA and Mecklenburg County DSS are federally funded by grants from HUD, HHS, and other departments. Both the Section 8 and Child Care Subsidy programs have waiting lists for prospective participants. Some applicants

wait years before funding becomes available for their participation. Truthful statements made by applicants about household income and composition are critical to accurately determining both eligibility to participate in the programs and the amount of assistance to which participants are entitled. Making false statements to obtain benefits from a housing authority or federally-funded social service agency is the same as making false statements to the federal government.

If convicted, the defendants each face a maximum statutory penalty of ten years' imprisonment and \$250,000 fine, or both, as to each count charging a violation of 18 U.S.C. 641 (theft) and a maximum statutory penalty of five years' imprisonment and a \$250,00 fine, or both, as to each count charging making a false statement to the government. However, it is important to note that any sentence received upon conviction will be influenced by the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which the Court consults in order to determine each defendant's actual sentence. Sentences are based upon a formula that takes into account the severity and characteristics of the offense and each defendant's criminal history, if any.

The charges contained in the indictments are only allegations. In the American justice system, a person is presumed innocent unless and until he or she is proven guilty in a court of law. The cases are being handled for the government by Assistant United States Attorney Kenneth M. Smith of the Criminal Division in the Charlotte United States Attorney's Office.

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