



## Operation Double Dip Subsidized Housing Fraud Initiative

United States Department of Housing and Urban Development – Office of Inspector General  
Miami-Dade Police Department – Public Corruption Investigations Bureau  
Homestead Police Department  
Social Security Administration – Office of Inspector General  
Miami-Dade State Attorney’s Office – Eleventh Judicial Circuit

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development – Office of Inspector General (HUD-OIG), Social Security Administration – Office of Inspector General (SSA-OIG), Miami-Dade Police Department – Public Corruption Investigation Bureau (PCIB), Homestead Police Department (HPD), and Miami-Dade State Attorney’s Office – Eleventh Judicial Circuit (SAO) engaged in a collaborative effort to target fraud and abuse committed by local government employees in HUD subsidized housing programs administered by the Miami-Dade Housing Agency (MDHA). These employees violated the public trust and effectively “double dipped” in that tax payer dollars funded not only for their government salaries, but also their housing costs.

The Housing Choice Voucher and Public Housing programs are federally funded programs established to assist elderly, disabled, and low-income families afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing. The Housing Choice Voucher program, commonly referred to as “Section 8,” allows participants to find housing in the private rental market and the Public Housing program provides housing in government-owned developments. Applicants and participants are required to regularly provide accurate information regarding their household composition and all income or assets attributable to each family member. The information is provided to a local housing agency, such as the MDHA, which administers the program on behalf of HUD.

Together, the HUD-OIG, SSA-OIG, PCIB, HPD and SAO established a mechanism for the investigation and prosecution of subsidized housing fraud committed by local government employees. Assistant State Attorney (ASA) Sandra Miller-Batiste, Public Corruption Division, effectively coordinated with HUD-OIG Special Agents and PCIB and HPD Detectives, who conducted the investigative work.

The joint effort resulted in **TWELVE** (12) subjects indicted on charges including Public Assistance Fraud (FS 414.39), Organized Scheme to Defraud (FS 817.034), Grand Theft (FS 812.014), Identity Theft (FS 817.568), Criminal Solicitation (FS 777.04(2)), and Conspiracy (FS 777.04(3)). Those charged defrauded HUD and the MDHA of over **\$300,000** in rental assistance funds to which they were not lawfully entitled.

Defendants in these cases included employees of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Broward County Public Schools, Miami-Dade Transit Agency, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue, Miami-Dade Parks and Recreation, Florida Department of Children and Families, Florida Department of Corrections, and Jackson Memorial Hospital.

**Catrina Brown**, a tenant in the Public Housing program from 1998 through 2007, was named in an indictment that charged her with Public Assistance Fraud, Organized Scheme to Defraud, and Theft. Brown concealed employment income from her job at Jackson Memorial Hospital, and her ownership of a single-family home in order to qualify for continued housing assistance from the MDHA. In addition to rental assistance, Brown also received \$49,220 in HUD “HOME” funds through the Miami-Dade Housing Finance Authority and \$4,280 in down payment assistance from the Metro-Miami Action Plan for the purchase of her home. Subsequent to the purchase of her home, Brown sublet her public housing unit to several individuals from whom she unlawfully collected rent payments.

**June Coachman**, a tenant in the Public Housing program from 1985 through 2007, was named in an indictment that charged her with Public Assistance Fraud, Organized Scheme to Defraud, and Theft. Coachman concealed employment income from her job at the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), where she was employed as June Seymore, in order to qualify for continued housing assistance. Coachman concealed her DCF employment income from 1987 through 2005.

**Jeannette and Valaree Gough**, tenants in the Public Housing program from 1998 through 2005, were named in an indictment that charged them with Public Assistance Fraud, Organized Scheme to Defraud, and Theft. Jeannette and Valaree Gough concealed employment income from their jobs with Jackson Memorial Hospital and the Florida Department of Corrections, respectively, in order to qualify for continued housing assistance. Jeannette Gough also concealed her ownership interest in a single-family home.

**Armando Valdes, Jr.**, a landlord in the Housing Choice Voucher program, was named in an indictment that charged him with Public Assistance Fraud, Organized Scheme to Defraud, and Theft. Armando Valdes, Jr. unlawfully collected rent payments in excess of those stipulated in his Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract with the MDHA. Valdes falsely certified on the HAP Contract that he had not and would not accept any monies in excess of those stipulated in the contract. Armando Valdes Jr. also unlawfully availed himself of the “Homestead Exemption” property tax exemption on the home he rented under the program from 2003 through 2006.

**Debbie Page**, a tenant in the Housing Choice Voucher program since 2003, was named in an indictment that charged her with Public Assistance Fraud, Organized Scheme to Defraud, and Theft. Page concealed her ownership of a single-family home in order to qualify for continued housing assistance. Page purchased a home from Habitat for Humanity of Greater Miami in June 2006. In addition to rental assistance for her rental unit, Page also received \$58,000 in HUD “HOME” funds from the Miami-Dade Housing Finance Authority for the purchase of the home. Page resided in her new home since on or about August 2005.

**Katrina Martin**, a tenant in the Public Housing program from 2003 through 2007, was named in an indictment that charged her with Public Assistance Fraud, Organized Scheme to Defraud, and Theft. Martin concealed employment income from her job as a teacher with Miami-Dade County Public Schools in order to qualify for continued housing assistance.

**Miladys Penalver**, a tenant in the Housing Choice Voucher program from 1997 through 2007, was named in an indictment that charged her with Public Assistance Fraud, Organized Scheme to Defraud, and Theft. Penalver concealed employment income from her job as a counselor with Broward County Public Schools in order to qualify for continued housing assistance.

**Sunni Clayton** was a tenant at the Spinnaker Cove Apartments, a private development funded by HUD “HOME” funds and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) administered by the Florida Housing Finance Corporation. The MDHA provides oversight of Spinnaker Cove on behalf of HUD. Though not directly subsidized, qualified families admitted to Spinnaker Cove were entitled to discounted rental rates when compared to the private market. Clayton, through the fraudulent use of a child’s Social Security identification

number, concealed employment income from her job as a teacher with Miami-Dade County Public Schools in order to qualify for continued housing assistance.

**Iresa Bryant**, a tenant in the Housing Choice Voucher program since 1999, was named in an indictment that charged her with Public Assistance Fraud, Organized Scheme to Defraud, and Theft. Bryant concealed employment income from her job with Miami-Dade Parks and Recreation in order to qualify for continued housing assistance.

**Faith Jones**, a tenant in the Housing Choice Voucher program from 2003 through 2007, was named in an indictment that charged her with Public Assistance Fraud, Organized Scheme to Defraud, and Theft. Jones concealed income from her jobs with several employers, including the Miami-Dade Department of Corrections, in order to qualify for continued housing assistance.

**Kimberly Hollis**, a tenant in the Housing Choice Voucher program from 2002 through 2005, was named in an indictment that charged her with Public Assistance Fraud, Organized Scheme to Defraud, and Theft. Hollis concealed income from her job as a bus operator with Miami-Dade Transit in order to qualify for continued housing assistance.

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HUD-OIG Special Agents and Detectives from the HPD and MDPD – Sex Crimes Bureau, investigated Housing Choice Voucher and Public Housing program participants who concealed the residence of registered sex offenders in their government subsidized homes. Under Federal regulations, registered sexual offenders are prohibited from receiving housing assistance benefits. Seven (7) such households were identified. In a joint operation, nine (9) subjects were arrested (the heads of each household and two of the complicit sexual offenders) and charged with defrauding HUD of approximately \$105,371 in housing assistance to which they were not lawfully entitled.

HUD-OIG Special Agents and HPD Detectives assigned to HPD's new Subsidized Housing Integrity Fraud Team (SHIFT) developed probable cause and arrested seven (7) HUD program participants in two HUD-subsidized developments (Coral Gardens and Homestead Gardens) within the City of Homestead. Subjects of these cases concealed criminal violations such as cocaine possession, aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, aggravated battery with a deadly weapon, and sale of marijuana, or concealed additional income earning tenants who resided in the subsidized units in order to qualify for continued housing assistance. Altogether, the households received over \$82,000 in housing assistance to which they were not lawfully entitled.

HUD-OIG Special Agents and HPD Detectives also identified eleven (11) additional subsidized housing tenants with outstanding arrest warrants. The subjects resided at three HUD-subsidized developments (Coral Gardens, Milton Manor II, and Homestead Gardens) within the City of Homestead. During the ensuing arrest operation, eight (8) of the subjects were encountered and arrested.