

Department of Justice

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Western District of New York

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FORMER ROCHESTER RESIDENT IS SENTENCED FOR THEFT OF HUD SECTION 8 HOUSING BENEFITS

ROCHESTER, N.Y.-- United States Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr., of the Western District of New York, announced today Lavonya Bess, 60, of Jacksonville, Florida, was sentenced to 3 years' probation and ordered to pay \$48,698 to the Rochester Housing Authority by the Honorable Charles J. Siragusa, United States District Court Judge, after pled guilty to a one-count felony information in June 2012 charging her with committing the felony of theft of public money.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Tiffany H. Lee stated that Bess admitted that beginning in or about October 2006 and continuing to in or about October 2010, while she was residing in the Western District of New York, she applied for and received United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 8 benefits to assist her with rent. In her Section 8 application, Bess claimed to be the tenant of a residence located on Flanders Street in the City of Rochester when, in truth and in fact, she was the owner of the residence. Bess admitted to knowingly converting over \$30,000 in Section 8 housing benefits for her own use, benefits she knew to which she was not entitled.

The plea was the culmination of an investigation on the part of special agents of the Department of Housing and Urban Development under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Cary Rubenstein.

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