



**UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**  
*Southern District of New York*

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**STATE EMPLOYEE PLEADS GUILTY IN FEDERAL COURT TO  
STEALING NEARLY ONE MILLION DOLLARS IN FEDERAL FUNDS**

Preet Bharara, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that AGNES BERNIER, an employee at New York State Homes and Community Renewal (“NYHCR”), pled guilty today to stealing approximately \$944,000 in federal government funds that were intended to be used by New York State to provide rent subsidies for low-income families. BERNIER pled guilty before U.S. District Judge John F. Keenan.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara said: “Agnes Bernier perpetrated a blatant fraud on her employer – the State of New York - stealing precious federal housing dollars in the process. The Section 8 housing program is a vital resource for residents in need of subsidies in order to put roofs over their heads, and those who rob the program of taxpayer dollars will not be tolerated.”

According to the Indictment to which BERNIER pled and statements made in court during today’s plea proceeding:

In her role at NYCHR, BERNIER was responsible for, among other things, processing federal Section 8 housing subsidy refund payments that were intended to be paid to New York State’s Housing Trust Fund Corporation (“HTFC”). From 2004 through 2011, BERNIER used her position at NYCHR to steal more than \$944,000 in refund payments that were made out to the HTFC. On hundreds of occasions, she stole money orders made out to the HTFC by writing her own name over the letters “HTFC” and then depositing the money orders into her personal bank accounts. For example, in December 2011, BERNIER deposited 17 falsified money orders worth more than \$7,500 into her personal account.

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BERNIER, 55, of the Bronx, New York, pled guilty to one count of theft of government funds, and one count of bank fraud. She faces a maximum sentence of 40 years in prison, a maximum fine of \$1 million or twice the gross gain or loss from the offense. She has also agreed to forfeit to the United States \$944,000.

BERNIER is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge Keenan on September 25, 2012.

Mr. Bharara praised the investigative work of the Office of the New York State Inspector General.

This case is being prosecuted by the Office's Public Corruption Unit. Assistant United States Attorney Andrew D. Goldstein is in charge of the prosecution.

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