



UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
Southern District of New York

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<http://www.justice.gov/usao/nys>

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**FORMER NEW YORK STATE EMPLOYEE SENTENCED IN
MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURT FOR STEALING NEARLY \$1
MILLION IN FEDERAL FUNDS**

Preet Bharara, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that AGNES BERNIER, a former employee at New York State Homes and Community Renewal (“NYHCR”), was sentenced to 33 months in prison for stealing more than \$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 in May 2012 to one count of theft of government funds, and one count of bank fraud before United States District Judge John F. Keenan, who also imposed today’s sentence.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara said: “Agnes Bernier brazenly defrauded the State of New York by stealing nearly \$1 million in precious federal funding meant for the Section 8 housing program, a crucial resource for residents who need the subsidies in order to afford a place to live. Today’s sentence ensures that she will pay for her crimes.”

According to the Indictment to which BERNIER pled guilty and statements made during court proceedings in the case:

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 bank account.

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In addition to the prison term, Judge Keenan sentenced BERNIER, 55, of the Bronx, New York, to three years of supervised release. She was also ordered to pay \$944,000 in restitution to the HTFC, to forfeit \$944,000 to the United States, and to pay a \$200 special assessment fee.

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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