




**MEMORANDUM
CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY
OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL**

OIG Reference: 2017-04-00014

To: Angela Hurlock, Chairperson, CHA Board of Commissioners
Matthew Brewer, Vice-Chair & Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee
Members of the Board of Commissioners
Tracey Scott, Chief Executive Officer

From: Kathryn Richards, Inspector General 

Date: January 31, 2024

Subject: Significant OIG Activity – Sentencing, Former HCV Participant

The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) writes to notify you that, on January 30, 2024, Catherine Brown, a former CHA Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) participant, was sentenced in the Circuit Court of Cook County to 48 months' probation and ordered to pay restitution to the CHA totaling \$136,000.00 relative to her scheme to defraud the CHA. Prior to sentencing, Brown made two restitution payments totaling \$50,000.00 to the CHA. For the remaining \$86,000.00, the court ordered Brown to make monthly restitution payments to the CHA in the amount of \$1,791.67, throughout her 4-year probation. A status date has been set for April 25, 2024, to ensure Brown is compliant with the terms of her sentencing.

Brown, a local pastor and community activist, who unsuccessfully ran for mayor in the 2019 Chicago mayoral election, pleaded guilty on October 11, 2023, to an amended charge of Theft of Governmental Property greater than \$10,000 and less than \$100,000, a Class 1 Felony. She had previously been indicted on March 2, 2022, on four-counts charging Brown with Theft of Governmental Property Exceeding \$100,000 (Class X felony) and three counts of Forgery (Class 3 felony).

The indictment stemmed from an OIG investigation, which found that from October 2006 through July 2017, Brown fraudulently received housing benefits totaling over \$136,000.00 by residing with her CHA voucher in a property she jointly owned with her parents. During this time, Brown was a signatory on both the P.O. Box and the bank account where Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) intended for Brown's landlord were sent. Brown also failed to report her husband as a household member, and his income, to the CHA.

In addition, prior to her ownership of the property, Brown failed to report that she was renting her HCV unit from her parents, a violation of CHA's family obligations. This caused CHA to incur additional loss of approximately \$57,000 from September 2000 to September 2006.

The Illinois Attorney General's Office Public Integrity Bureau prosecuted the case. The OIG's investigation is now closed.