

PRESS RELEASE

Former NYCHA Superintendent Sentenced To 41 Months In Prison For Bribery And Extortion

Wednesday, February 26, 2025

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of New York

Matthew Podolsky, the Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that JOY HARRIS, a former superintendent for the New York City Housing Authority (“NYCHA”), was sentenced today to 41 months in prison for soliciting and accepting over \$50,000 in bribes from contractors in exchange for awarding those contractors at least approximately \$500,000 in contract work. HARRIS’s sentence was imposed by U.S. District Judge Lewis A. Kaplan, who also presided over a one-week trial after which HARRIS was convicted of bribery and extortion under color of official right.

Acting U.S. Attorney Matthew Podolsky said: “Joy Harris was given a position of public trust in New York City. She used that position to demand bribes in exchange for approving important repair work at NYCHA buildings. As today’s sentence shows, those who abuse positions of public trust—at any level of government—to seek personal gain will face a harsh penalty.”

According to the Indictment, public court filings, statements made in court, and evidence presented during trial:

NYCHA is the largest public housing authority in the country, providing housing to New Yorkers across the City and receiving over \$1.5 billion in federal funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) every year. When repairs or construction work at NYCHA housing require the use of outside contractors, services must typically be purchased via a bidding process. However, when the value of a contract was under a certain threshold, designated staff at NYCHA developments, including superintendents, could hire a contractor of their choosing without soliciting

multiple bids. With either type of contract, a NYCHA employee needed to certify that the work was satisfactorily completed in order for the contractor to receive payment from NYCHA.

HARRIS, an assistant superintendent and superintendent at four different NYCHA developments in Manhattan from 2015 through 2021, demanded and accepted cash bribes in exchange for NYCHA contracts. She demanded contractors to pay bribes up front in order to be awarded the contracts and accepted bribe payments after the contractor finished the work and needed a NYCHA employee to sign off on the completed job so that the contractor could be paid by NYCHA. HARRIS typically demanded 10% of the contract value—between \$500 and \$1,000 depending on the size of the contract. In total, HARRIS demanded and accepted more than \$54,150 of dollars in bribes in exchange for awarding no-bid contracts or approving payment on previously awarded contracts worth more than \$500,000.

Of the 70 individual NYCHA employees charged with bribery and extortion offenses who were arrested in February 2024, 61 have pled guilty, and three have been convicted after trial. HARRIS is the first of the three NYCHA employees convicted after trial to be sentenced. The cases of the six remaining defendants, who are each presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty, remain pending.

If you believe you have information related to bribery, extortion, or any other illegal conduct by NYCHA employees, please contact OIGNYCHA@doi.nyc.gov or (212) 306-3356. If you were involved in such conduct, please consider self-disclosing through the [SDNY Whistleblower Pilot Program](#) at USANYS.WBP@usdoj.gov.

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In addition to the prison term, HARRIS, 49, of Bushkill, Pennsylvania, was sentenced to three years of supervised release and ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$54,150 and forfeit \$54,150.

Mr. Podolsky praised the outstanding investigative work of the New York City Department of Investigation, U.S. Department of Homeland Security – Homeland Security Investigations (“HSI”), the HUD Office of Inspector General, and the U.S. Department of Labor – Office of Inspector General, which work together collaboratively as part of the HSI Document and Benefit Fraud Task Force, as well as the Special Agents and Task Force Officers of the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York.

This prosecution is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (“OCDETF”) operation. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles criminal organizations using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF Program can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF>.

This case is being handled by the Office’s Public Corruption Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jerry J. Fang, Jacob R. Fiddelman, Catherine Ghosh, and Meredith C. Foster are in charge of the prosecution, with the assistance of Paralegal Specialists Jayda Foote and Nandita Vasantha.

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Topic

PUBLIC CORRUPTION

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