

NEWS

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Christopher J. Christie, U.S. Attorney

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Aug. 23, 2007

Former Paterson Section 8 Housing Employee
Admits Taking \$1,900 Bribe, Demanding Future Payments

(More)

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NEWARK – A former Paterson Section 8 housing employee pleaded guilty today to a one-count Information charging her with accepting and agreeing to accept bribes for filling certain apartments with Section 8 participants and other official assistance, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Elisa Griffin, 39, of Paterson, was a caseworker for the City of Paterson Section 8 program in January 2006 when she demanded and accepted a \$1,900 corrupt payment from a local property manager who was in fact cooperating with the FBI and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Inspector General (HUD OIG).

Griffin admitted that while negotiating future corrupt payments with the property manager she stated in substance that she could use all the money that she could get. Griffin settled on a bi-weekly \$200 payment in addition to the equivalent to one month's rent for each apartment of the property manager's that she filled. Griffin claimed that this amount would be enough to keep the paperwork moving.

The charge to which Griffin pleaded guilty, soliciting and accepting cash bribes in exchange for official action or influence, carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. U.S. District Judge Jose L. Linares scheduled sentencing for Dec. 13.

Griffin was initially arrested and charged on a criminal complaint in March 2007. She remains free on \$25,000 bond until sentencing.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI's Garret Mountain Resident Agency in West Paterson, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun, and Special Agents from HUD OIG, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Rene Febles, with the investigation that resulted in today's guilty plea. Christie also credited Assistant U.S. Attorney Hope Olds of the Office's Special Prosecutions Division, who is prosecuting the case.

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Defense Counsel:

Griffin: Jay V. Surgent, Esq., Woodbridge