



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

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**FORMER NEW YORK CITY EMPLOYEE PLEADS GUILTY
IN MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURT TO PARTICIPATING
IN \$7 MILLION FOOD STAMP FRAUD**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that VANEY SYKES, pled guilty today to carrying out a massive food stamp fraud that caused \$7 million in food stamp benefits to be paid by the United States Department of Agriculture Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. SYKES pled guilty to one count of conspiring to commit mail fraud and one count of embezzlement of funds from a federal program. She had been a long-time supervisor at the New York City Human Resources Administration ("HRA"), which is the agency responsible for administering the food stamp benefit program in New York City. SYKES pled guilty before U.S. Magistrate Judge KEVIN NATHANIEL FOX. With today's plea, all defendants in this scheme have now been convicted.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA said: "Vaneey Sykes used her access to, and knowledge of, the city's administration of the national food stamps benefit program to rip it off with impunity. By her actions, along with those of her co-conspirators, she deprived hungry New Yorkers desperate to feed themselves and their children, of access to millions of dollars in benefits. I commend the work of DOI for bringing this fraud to light and helping stop the abuse of the food stamp

According to the Complaint, Indictment, and statements made today in Manhattan federal court:

From 2006 through 2010, SYKES used her access to a computer database that maintains records concerning food stamp benefit cards ("Food Stamp Cards") and food stamp benefits to process and approve numerous fraudulent Food Stamp Cards and food stamp benefits using false names, false social security numbers, and false income and expense information. Records reflect that

SYKES created approximately 1,200 fraudulent food stamp benefit cases in this manner, causing over \$7,000,000 to be credited to the fraudulent cards.

As part of the scheme, a co-defendant, ALICE BRADFORD, provided mailing addresses for SYKES to use in creating the fraudulent food stamp cases. SYKES caused the cards to be mailed to these addresses, and BRADFORD sold the majority of the cards received to another individual who paid her in cash. BRADFORD, in turn, provided a portion of the cash she received to SYKES. In addition, SYKES herself sold fraudulent food stamp cards that she created in exchange for cash.

As part of the scheme, another co-defendant, TORI JACKSON, who worked at HRA in various positions and reported to SYKES, also processed fraudulent Food Stamp Cards using false names and false social security numbers. SYKES also mailed fraudulent food stamp cards to mailing addresses controlled by JACKSON.

* * *

SYKES, 44, of Brooklyn, New York, faces a statutory maximum of 30 years in prison. ALICE BRADFORD, TORI JACKSON, and another co-defendant and former HRA employee, LOIS JOHNSON, have already pled guilty for their participation in the scheme. All of the defendants will be sentenced by U.S. District Judge WILLIAM H. PAULEY III on a date to be determined.

Mr. BHARARA praised the investigative work of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI") in this case.

This case is being prosecuted by the Office's Public Corruption Unit. Assistant United States Attorney PAUL M. KRIEGER is in charge of the prosecution.

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