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ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL: COOK COUNTY WOMAN CHARGED OVER ALLEGED FORGERY AND THEFT OF GOVERNMENTAL PROPERTY

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today announced charges against a Cook County woman for allegedly falsifying information on Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) documents and misappropriating government property.

Attorney General Raoul charged Catherine Brown, 48, of Chicago in Cook County Circuit Court with one count of theft of governmental property over \$100,000, a Class X felony punishable by up to 30 years in prison; and three counts of forgery, Class 3 felonies, punishable by up to five years in prison. Brown's bond was set at \$5,000.

"The Housing Choice Voucher Program provides important housing benefits to residents in need, and it is inexcusable that anyone would lie to obtain benefits to which they are not entitled," Raoul said. "I am committed to ensuring that individuals are held accountable for exploiting government programs for their personal gain, particularly when families are waitlisted until the support they deserve is available."

Brown was a participant in the CHA's Housing Choice Voucher Program; however, in 2006 she became a joint owner of the property for which the CHA subsidized her rent. According to the Attorney General's office, Brown received approximately \$136,000 from the CHA for rent payments between 2006 and 2017. Raoul's indictment alleges that in 2016, Brown submitted documents to the CHA that omitted her ownership interest in order to obtain CHA benefits to which she was not entitled. In addition, Raoul alleges Brown submitted documents in 2012 and 2014 that omitted a household member and the household member's income.

The case was investigated by the CHA Inspector General's office.

"For years, Ms. Brown defrauded the CHA Housing Choice Voucher program and received over \$100,000 in voucher payments to live in a house she owned," said Kathryn Richards, Inspector General at the Chicago Housing Authority. "We aggressively pursue fraud, waste, and abuse of CHA's housing programs to ensure these precious resources reach those who truly need it. We are grateful to the Illinois Attorney General's Office for their partnership on these matters."

The public is reminded the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Assistant Attorney General Haley Bookhout is prosecuting the case for Raoul's Public Integrity Bureau.