

## Think About it..... Is Fraud Really Worth it?

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Recently, I have received a number of calls and visits to my office from residents facing eviction asking me for assistance to preserve their tenancy. Unfortunately, I was unable to because the violations they had committed were severe and fraudulent.

In one example, a resident had their adult daughter working for a number of years and chose to not report that income to the WHA, resulting in a fraud amount of over \$30,000. The resident even signed her recertification documents every year, under the pains and penalty of perjury, stating that her daughter was *not* working. When I asked her why she did this, she essentially thought she could get away with it. As a result, not only is the resident being evicted, but this matter has been referred to the District Attorney's office to file criminal charges.

In another example, another resident had an unauthorized occupant in her apartment and when we investigated the complaint, she denied it vehemently. She was quite angry at the WHA for even investigating and was extremely non-cooperative, including submitting fraudulent documents of where this person lived. After a few weeks of investigating, we were able to prove that she had an unauthorized occupant. I explained to her that had she been more cooperative with us and not lied with the fake documents she submitted, our lease enforcement may have been more lenient.

I wanted to alert you to how serious fraud is and what some of the consequences are so you can think twice about committing fraud. Fraud can lead to:

- Eviction from your apartment
- Requirement to repay fraud amount
- Fined up to \$10,000
- Imprisonment for up to 5 years
- Prohibited from future housing assistance

### Please Be Careful

Did you know that you are committing fraud if you sign a form knowing that you provided false or misleading information? All the documents you provide WILL be checked and verified. When you fill out WHA documents, please make sure the answers are accurate and honest. When we are investigating a complaint or issue, please be cooperative and answer honestly. We are far more likely to give a resident another chance if they cooperate fully compared to those that lie or mislead us.

If you are unsure of how to answer a question or don't understand something on your application or a WHA rule, please make sure you ask your management office for assistance. It's better to be safe than sorry.

Thank you.