

# **Taunton woman to serve 4 months for defrauding SSI, Section 8 housing of \$178,722**

A Taunton woman was sentenced today in federal court in Boston for concealing information and making false statements in order to receive Social Security disability benefits and Section 8 housing assistance to which she was not entitled.

Marisha Ebanks, 41, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Allison D. Burroughs to four months in prison, three years of supervised release, with the first three months to be served in home confinement, and ordered to pay restitution of \$178,722. In June 2017, Ebanks pleaded guilty to one count of Supplemental Security Income fraud and one count of making false statements.

In 1999, Ebanks began receiving housing assistance payments from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program; and in January 2003, she began receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability benefits from the Social Security Administration (SSA). Eligibility for both Section 8 housing and SSI is based, in part, on the applicant having limited income and resources. In assessing a married individual's eligibility for these benefits, the income of the applicant's spouse is considered if they live together.

When Ebanks applied for SSI benefits in September 2002, she truthfully reported that she was married, but falsely stated that she and her husband did not live together, when, in fact, she and her husband were living together with their two children. SSA sent Ebanks annual reminders of her obligation to report any changes in her household composition, including any change in income of any household member, but Ebanks

concealed her husband's true residence. During an eligibility redetermination with SSA in October 2010, Ebanks continued to report that she was married, but falsely stated her husband was not a member of her household.

Similarly, in May 2002, in order to continue receiving Section 8 housing, Ebanks falsely reported that her husband had moved out of her residence. She repeatedly omitted her husband from the list of household members on recertification questionnaires in subsequent years, and she falsely stated that no member of her family received income from any employment, even though her husband was working.

Ebanks fraudulently received approximately \$70,655 in disability benefits and \$108,067 in Section 8 housing assistance benefits.