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City worker who lied to get Section 8 housing gets 6 months

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Bethel Wooten

Bethel Wooten lived rent-free for eight years in a four-bedroom Academy Square apartment on West Jackson Boulevard, prosecutors said, thanks to a Section 8 low income housing voucher from the department of Housing and Urban Development.

But Wooten wasn't unemployed as she claimed on the forms that netted her \$124,000 in benefits between 2000 and 2008, prosecutors said Thursday.

She had a job in Chicago's Streets and Sanitation Department that paid her more than \$50,000 a year, according to the Illinois attorney general's office.

Charged with theft over \$100,000 and facing jail time, Wooten, 49, pleaded guilty Wednesday at the Cook County Criminal Courthouse and accepted a 6-month sentence, Attorney General spokeswoman Maura Possley said.

HUD officials began investigating Wooten, whose address is listed in the 1800 block of North Linder Street, after running a list of benefit recipients against a list of income reported to the state of Illinois, she said. They arrested her in early 2010.

Wooten will have to pay back the \$124,000, including \$35,000 immediately from her city pension, Possley said. She'll also serve three years probation.

Hired in 2000, Wooten resigned from the department on April 28, according to streets and sanitation spokesman Matt Smith.

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