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City of Chicago Employee Sentenced For Bribery Under *Operation Crooked Code*

A City of Chicago employee was sentenced to 41 months in federal prison today. Mario Olivella, 43, has been a supervisory plumbing inspector for the City's Department of Buildings since 1998. A federal jury found him guilty in January of two counts of bribery and conspiracy for taking bribes to overlook code violations at a building being converted to condos at 1637 W. Granville.

In addition to the prison sentence, the Court imposed a term of 2 years of supervised release to run at the conclusion of the Olivella's prison term, a \$2,000.00 fine, and a \$200.00 special assessment court cost.

A joint City of Chicago Office of Inspector General (IGO), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) investigation revealed that Olivella took bribes on at least two occasions. At trial, Olivella was convicted of taking a \$7,000.00 bribe from a developer to approve plumbing work that was not in compliance with the City building code at the Granville property. At sentencing today, Judge Joan Lefkow found that Olivella had accepted a total of more than \$50,000 in bribes to overlook plumbing code violations at Granville and other residential properties in the City.

The sentencing is part of an ongoing federal corruption investigation, code-named *Operation Crooked Code* involving extensive cooperation between the IGO, USPIS, FBI, and the U.S. Attorney's Office. To date, there have been twenty one individuals convicted under *Operation Crooked Code*, fifteen of whom are current or former City employees.

"The IGO remains hopeful that its successful continuing partnership with the U.S. Attorney's Office and its federal law enforcement partners will someday bring an end to the corrupt culture that *Operation Crooked Code* has revealed is still at work in City operations," said Inspector General Joseph Ferguson.

The government was represented by Assistant United States Attorney Christopher Hotaling before Judge Lefkow of the U.S. District Court of Northern Illinois.

Anyone with information about alleged corruption in the City permit process is encouraged to contact the Inspector General's Office either through its hotline – (866) 448-4754, or through its web site at www.chicagoinspectorgeneral.org.

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