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Former City Employee Sentenced for Role in Operation Crooked Code

The City of Chicago Office of Inspector General and the United States Attorney's Office announced that a former City employee was sentenced to one year and one day in prison today after having been found guilty of two counts of bribery.

In November 2011, Dominick Owens, of Chicago, was found guilty of accepting two separate bribes of \$600 in July 2006 in exchange for certificates of occupancy at four residential properties while working as a zoning inspector for the City. Owens, 45, had faced a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for each count. He will report to prison on June 13, 2012.

In one instance, a cooperating witness asked Owens for two certificates of occupancy for properties located at 6109 N Wolcott and 3713 South Wallace. On July 10, 2006, Owens entered a request in a City database for an occupancy inspection at the two addresses and then marked those same requests as "completed" in the system 12 minutes later. Then, under surveillance, the cooperating witness passed Owens \$600 in cash.

This is the final sentencing of a long standing federal corruption investigation code-named Operation Crooked Code. The cooperative effort, launched in 2007 between the City's Inspector General Office, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the U.S. Attorney's Office, has resulted in the convictions of 22 people, including 16 current or former City employees.

"Operation Crooked Code was a resoundingly successful local-federal partnership," said Inspector General Joe Ferguson. "Together, these agencies successfully brought to justice City employees who had violated the public trust. We also provided a strong lesson to those who might corruptly use their official positions for personal gain – should someone seek to game the system in the future, they should expect an equally vigorous and coordinated response. I look forward to continuing the longstanding and productive partnership we share with our Operation Crooked Code partners."

The government was represented by AUSAs Steven Grimes and Christopher Hotaling in front of U.S. District Court Judge Blanche Manning.

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

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