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# Seven held in housing bust

**HIGHLAND: Deputies serve 10 search warrants for people illegally receiving assistance.**

**BY PAUL LaROCCO**  
THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

**HIGHLAND** — Seven people were arrested Thursday in an operation aimed at reducing public housing fraud in Highland, officials said. Working with local and federal housing authority investigators, San Bernardino County sheriff's deputies served 10 search war-

rants at apartments and homes throughout the city. The goal was to identify people who illegally obtained public assistance for housing, either by not divulging their criminal records on applications or allowing others with felony convictions to live with them. "Usually it's a boyfriend, husband or son," said sheriff's Deputy Ron Hall, one of the program's organizers. The suspects all were arrested on suspicion of charges including

defrauding a public housing program and perjury. One of the biggest problems, officials said, is tenants who lie on their applications to obtain subsidies, leaving those who would legally qualify for the assistance stuck on lengthy waiting lists. The county has 28,000 people waiting to receive housing assistance. Residents are asked to pay rent equivalent to 30 percent of their monthly income, with the government providing the rest. Sixty-eight percent of San Ber-

nardino County's affordable housing tenants are seniors, children or the disabled. "We have zero tolerance for fraud," said Housing Authority Executive Director Susan Benner. "We can't have criminals on these properties." The housing-fraud operation, one of four conducted in the county each year, included arrests of several people for parole or probation violations. Reach Paul LaRocco at 951-368-9468 or plarocco@PE.com