



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
SOUTHERN DISTRICT *of* GEORGIA

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of Georgia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, June 15, 2021

Augusta woman sentenced, ordered to pay restitution for CARES Act fraud

Defendant fabricated business information to claim losses due to pandemic

AUGUSTA, GA: A woman who admitted to submitting loan applications containing knowingly false representations in an effort to secure COVID-19 relief loans has been sentenced in U.S. District Court and ordered to pay restitution.

Jacinthia Williams, 44, of Augusta, was sentenced to 12 months plus one day in prison, followed by three years of supervised release, after pleading guilty to Wire Fraud, said David H. Estes, Acting U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia. Chief U.S. District Court Judge J. Randal Hall also ordered Williams to pay \$61,600 in restitution.

"Funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Security (CARES) Act was provided to help small businesses survive pandemic-related losses," said Acting U.S. Attorney Estes. "When unscrupulous actors attempt to swindle the funds for their own enrichment, those criminals will be held accountable."

As described in court documents and testimony, in June and July 2020 Williams applied for and received three loans totaling \$137,500 under the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) Program comprised of funds appropriated by the CARES Act. Williams has already paid a portion of the fraudulently obtained loans back to the SBA.

In pleading guilty to the charges, Williams admitted falsifying the loan applications by inflating the number of employees of the businesses and the amount of money those businesses earned prior to the pandemic-induced economic downturn. She also admitted to spending some of the loan proceeds on purely personal matters.

"Making false statements to fraudulently gain access to SBA's disaster assistance loan programs is unacceptable," said Amaleka McCall-Brathwaite, Special Agent in Charge of the SBA Office of Inspector General's Eastern Region. "SBA OIG, in coordination with its law enforcement partners, will relentlessly pursue evidence of fraud against SBA's programs aimed at assisting the nation's small businesses struggling with the pandemic challenges. I want to thank the U.S. Attorney's Office for its leadership and dedication to pursuing justice."

“Stealing from American taxpayers, whose money was intended to keep small businesses afloat during the worldwide pandemic, is the definition of greed,” said Steven Baisel, Special Agent in Charge of the Atlanta Field Office of the U.S. Secret Service. “We will always work collaboratively with our partners to bring those who prey on our financial systems to justice.”

“The Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration will aggressively pursue those who endeavor to defraud taxpayer-funded Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act programs, which were established to provide assistance to American business owners during these unprecedented times,” said J. Russell George, the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration. “We appreciate the efforts of the U.S. Department of Justice and our law enforcement partners in this effort.”

To report a COVID-19-related fraud scheme or suspicious activity, contact the National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) by calling the NCDF Hotline at 1-866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form> .

The U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Inspector General, the U.S. Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration, and the U.S. Secret Service investigated the case, with prosecution for the United States by Assistant U.S. Attorney and COVID-19 Fraud Coordinator Patrick J. Schwedler and Assistant U.S. Attorney Jonathan A. Porter.

Topic(s):

Cyber Crime

Financial Fraud

Component(s):USAO - Georgia, Southern**Contact:**

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