

PRESS RELEASE

Albany Resident Sentenced to 41 Months for Unemployment Insurance Fraud

Wednesday, March 20, 2024

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Northern District of New York

ALBANY, NEW YORK – Jamie Johnson, age 38, of Albany, was sentenced today to 41 months in prison for filing false unemployment insurance applications online with the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) in order to fraudulently obtain \$701,441 in benefits issued in the names of other people. The benefits included funds from federal programs intended to help out-of-work New Yorkers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The announcement was made by United States Attorney Carla B. Freedman; New York State Inspector General Lucy Lang; Matthew Scarpino, Special Agent in Charge of the Buffalo Field Office of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI); Ketty Larco-Ward, Inspector in Charge of the Boston Division of the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS); and Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent in Charge, New York Region, United States Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General (USDOL-OIG).

Johnson [pled guilty](#) in February 2022 and admitted to receiving personal identifying information from other people and using it to file false unemployment insurance applications in other people's names on NYSDOL's online systems. She then collected the resulting unemployment insurance benefits, including by driving a Maserati sport utility vehicle to Capital Region banks and withdrawing cash using debit cards containing the benefits.

Senior United States District Judge Lawrence E. Kahn also imposed a 3-year term of supervised release, to begin after Johnson is released from prison, and ordered her to pay \$701,441 in restitution to the State of New York. He also ordered Johnson to forfeit the Maserati, more than \$200,000 in cash, and multiple jewelry items.

Judge Kahn had previously sentenced three of Johnson’s co-conspirators, Thomas Brace, Taliek [Lanier](#), and Errol [Murray](#), to terms of imprisonment of time served, 12 months, and 12 months, respectively. Johnson’s co-conspirators all admitted that they had provided her with personal information of others that Johnson used to file false unemployment insurance applications.

This case was investigated by the New York State Inspector General’s Office, HSI, USPIS and USDOL-OIG, with assistance from the NYSDOL Office of Special Investigations, the Capital Region Crime Analysis Center, the Albany County Department of Social Services, and the United States Marshals Service. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Joshua R. Rosenthal and Joseph S. Hartunian prosecuted this case.

On May 17, 2021, the Attorney General established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force to marshal the resources of the Department of Justice in partnership with agencies across government to enhance efforts to combat and prevent pandemic-related fraud. The Task Force bolsters efforts to investigate and prosecute the most culpable domestic and international criminal actors and assists agencies tasked with administering relief programs to prevent fraud by, among other methods, augmenting and incorporating existing coordination mechanisms, identifying resources and techniques to uncover fraudulent actors and their schemes, and sharing and harnessing information and insights gained from prior enforcement efforts. For more information on the Department’s response to the pandemic, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus>.

Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice’s National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

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