

PRESS RELEASE

Two Defendants Charged in Nationwide Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (“PUA”) Scheme

Friday, May 19, 2023

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Pennsylvania

PHILADELPHIA – United States Attorney Jacqueline C. Romero announced that Ardavan Alamoutinia, 33, of Hummelstown, PA, and Aryanah Davison, 23, of Harrisburg, PA, were charged by Indictment with one count of conspiracy to commit wire and mail fraud, ten counts of mail fraud, one count of theft of government money, and eight counts of aggravated identity theft, all stemming from their scheme to fraudulently obtain emergency funds meant for those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Indictment alleges that Alamoutinia and Davison used stolen identities to file over 500 fraudulent PUA applications. These over 500 fraudulent applications were filed using at least 375 identities of current or former employees of Company 1. A co-conspirator stole these identities from Company 1 and transferred them to Davison. After receiving the identities, Alamoutinia and Davison filed or caused to be filed the fraudulent PUA applications in 27 different states resulting in a loss of at least \$2,886,876.

According to the Indictment, after the fraudulent applications were filed, the respective state workforce agencies responsible for administering the PUA benefits dispersed funds based upon the fraudulent PUA applications either by direct deposits or mailing checks and PUA debit cards. Defendants then cashed the checks, deposited the checks, received the direct deposits into bank accounts controlled by them, and collected and possessed the PUA debit card issued on the applications. Defendants also made direct expenditures using the PUA debit cards, withdrew the money from those cards at ATMs, and transferred the money to financial accounts controlled by them.

The Indictment also alleges that Alamoutinia and Davison converted at least \$2,500,000 of the fraudulent proceeds in this case. Alamoutinia and Davison spent the fraudulent proceeds, in part, on hundreds of thousands of dollars in cryptocurrency purchases and on a luxury sports vehicle.

The case was investigated by the Department of Labor – Office of Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security – Office of Inspector General, United States Postal Inspection Service, National Aeronautics and Space Administration – Office of Inspector General, and the Social Security Administration – Office of Inspector General, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Timothy Lanni.

An indictment, information, or criminal complaint is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Persons 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 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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Topic

FINANCIAL FRAUD

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