

**Department of Justice**  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Eastern District of Michigan

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Fourteen Individuals Charged in Multi-State Unemployment Fraud Scheme**

DETROIT - An indictment and criminal complaints unsealed by the United States Attorney's Office today charge 14 people with wrongfully obtaining pandemic unemployment assistance benefits in multiple states, announced Acting United States Attorney Saima Mohsin.

Mohsin was joined in the announcement by Irene Lindow, Special Agent-in-Charge, Chicago Region, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, Timothy Waters, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Liza Estlund Olson, acting director of the Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency, Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity.

Charged in the indictment are:

- Sharodney Harrison, 36, of Detroit;
- Seandrea Crawford, 27, of Detroit;
- Sharrell Harrison, 33, of Eastpointe;
- Sha-Ron Harrison, 31, of Harper Woods;
- Sharease Harrison, 35 of Detroit;
- Edward Taylor, 36, of Detroit;
- James Mayfied, 36, of Detroit;
- Frank Jennings, 43, of Dearborn Heights; and
- Sharonda Griffin, 31, of Center Line.

Criminal complaints in related cases charge:

- Brandi Randall, 35, of Detroit, with conspiracy to commit wire fraud;
- Eric Matthews, 27, of Detroit, with wire fraud;
- Lenora Calliway, 35, of Highland Park, with conspiracy to commit wire fraud;
- Steven Johnson, 32, of Detroit, with wire fraud; and
- Tyshia Coleman, 37, of Detroit, with conspiracy to commit wire fraud.
- Another criminal complaint charges Sharodney Harrison with being a felon in possession of firearms.

The indictment alleges that nine defendants conspired together to commit wire fraud by filing fraudulent unemployment insurance claims in the names of people who were not aware their names were being used, or who were not eligible for benefits, often in several states for the same person.

“These defendants are charged with exploiting the pandemic to steal unemployment benefits earmarked for the people of the State of Michigan for their own personal gain. These allegations are serious, and my office is committed to prosecuting any person who attempts to use the Covid-19 crisis to defraud the people of Michigan or the United States,” stated Acting United States Attorney Saima Mohsin.

"An important mission of the Office of Inspector General is to investigate allegations of unemployment insurance fraud. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to investigate these types of allegations," stated Special Agent-in-Charge Irene Lindow, Chicago Region, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General.

“Since the beginning of the pandemic, the FBI has investigated criminals from Michigan and across the country who found ways to steal from unemployment insurance programs,” said Timothy Waters, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI’s Detroit Field Office. “Unfortunately, the conduct alleged in these indictments is not unique and resulted in the loss of millions of dollars meant for Americans throughout the country. The FBI and its law enforcement partners will continue to devote significant resources to prevent unemployment insurance fraud and to hold accountable those who have already stolen taxpayer dollars meant for out-of-work Americans.”

“Many Michiganders have had to rely on unemployment benefits during these difficult economic times due to the pandemic and taking those benefits illegally hurts the workers who need them the most,” said Liza Estlund Olson, acting director of the Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency. “We will continue to work with the U.S. Attorney’s Office and all our partners to investigate and identify suspected fraud in Michigan and hold the people who commit these acts accountable.”

The charges in this case are the result of a joint investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Labor—Office of Inspector General, and the Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Meghan Sweeney Bean and Mark Chasteen.

Since June 2020, a total of 37 defendants have been charged in the Eastern District of Michigan with federal crimes relating to fraudulently seeking pandemic unemployment insurance benefits. Six defendants have entered guilty pleas; the remaining 31 cases are still pending. Collectively, these defendants are alleged to have submitted over \$20 million in fraudulent pandemic unemployment insurance claims to the workforce agencies in Michigan and other states.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. Each defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government’s burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. Similarly, a complaint is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. Trial cannot be held on felony charges in a complaint. When the investigation is completed a determination will be made whether to seek a felony indictment.

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 (NCDFF) Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDFF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>

**Component(s):**

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