

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Northern District of Iowa

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, August 25, 2021

Marion Man Sentenced to Federal Prison for COVID-19 Unemployment Benefits Fraud

A man who received over \$13,000 in fraudulently obtained CARES Act unemployment funds was sentenced today to nine months in federal prison.

Brian Lynn Whorton, age 55, from Marion, Iowa, received the prison term after a January 25, 2021 guilty plea to one count of wire fraud.

Information from sentencing and a criminal complaint showed that Whorton received over \$13,000 in unemployment funds to which he was not entitled from the State of Arizona. Whorton withdrew some of the funds in cash and used a Bitcoin ATM to send the funds to other participants in the scheme. Whorton kept some of the funds for himself.

Whorton was sentenced in Cedar Rapids by United States District Court Judge C.J. Williams. Whorton was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment. He was ordered to make \$13,740 in restitution the Arizona Department of Economic Security. He must also serve a two-year term of supervised release after the prison term. There is no parole in the federal system.

Whorton was released on the bond previously set and is to surrender to the United States Marshal on September 10, 2021.

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

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Kyndra Lundquist and investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the United States Department of Labor Office of Inspector General.

Court file information at <https://ecf.iand.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/login.pl>.

The case file number is 20-CR-64.

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Topic(s):

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