

**PRESS RELEASE**

# **Memphis Woman Sentenced to 41 Months in Federal Prison for Defrauding COVID-19 Relief Programs of Over \$560,000**

Thursday, January 22, 2026

**For Immediate Release**

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Tennessee

**Memphis, TN** – A Memphis woman has been sentenced to federal prison for defrauding two federal programs intended to help people survive the COVID-19 pandemic out of over \$560,000. D. Michael Dunavant, United States Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee, announced the sentence today.

**Deashley Tabor, 37**, was sentenced on January 16, 2026, to 41 months of incarceration to be followed by three years of supervised release by Chief United States District Judge Sheryl H. Lipman for conspiracy to commit wire fraud and making false claims against the U.S. Government.

According to information presented in court, Tabor and her co-conspirator defrauded the U.S. Government out of over \$560,000 by filing fraudulent applications for unemployment benefits in over 27 different states during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Tabor and her co-conspirator also defrauded the federally funded Tennessee Emergency Cash Assistance (ECA) program of approximately \$20,000 by creating fake employment termination notices for themselves and others. The ECA program was intended to provide financial assistance to families that had been significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic because of lost employment.

U.S. Attorney D. Michael Dunavant said: "Fraudulent schemes and crimes of dishonesty will be exposed and punished. This case represents our commitment to expose COVID-19 benefit fraud well beyond the pandemic, protect the integrity of the employment assistance system, hold offenders accountable for their dishonest criminal conduct, and to recover ill-gotten proceeds on behalf of victimized agencies."

"Deashley Tabor defrauded the U.S. Government and taxpayers in an unemployment insurance fraud scheme that targeted multiple State Workforce agencies, enriching

themselves when millions of Americans desperately needed the money,” stated Anthony P. D’Esposito, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General. “The Office of Inspector General is committed to protecting the integrity of the unemployment insurance program by vigorously pursuing those who commit this type of fraud.”

“These individuals exploited a public health emergency to steal money and resources intended for families in need,” said Kelly Blackmon, Special Agent in Charge at the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General (HHS-OIG). “This sentencing underscores HHS-OIG’s unwavering commitment, alongside our law enforcement partners, to protect taxpayer dollars and hold accountable those who defraud programs designed to help during times of crisis.”

The case was investigated by the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General.

The case was prosecuted on behalf of the government by Assistant U.S. Attorney Tony R. Arvin.

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