

PRESS RELEASE

Memphis Woman Sentenced to Federal Prison for Scheme to Defraud Federal COVID-19 Relief Program

Thursday, August 21, 2025

For Immediate Release

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

Memphis, TN – A Memphis woman was recently sentenced to federal prison in connection with her scheme to defraud the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) “Emergency Cash Assistance” program which was administered by the State of Tennessee to provide emergency cash assistance to families who lost jobs or substantial income due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Joseph C. Murphy, Jr., Interim United States Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee, announced the sentence today.

According to information presented in court, **Rochelle L. Turner, 32**, created and submitted fraudulent unemployment letters falsely indicating that she and others had lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Turner attempted to defraud the Emergency Cash Assistance program out of over \$15,000 and caused an actual loss of \$6,000 to the program.

Turner pled guilty to a one-count information charging her with making false claims against the United States on May 8, 2025. On August 14, 2025, Chief United States District Judge Sheryl H. Lipman sentenced Turner to five months in federal prison and five months of home detention. Turner was also sentenced to three years of supervised release and ordered to pay restitution to the United States. There is no parole in the federal system.

This case was investigated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General and the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General. Assistant United States Attorney Tony Arvin prosecuted this case on behalf of the government.

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