

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Pennsylvania

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Monessen Woman Sentenced to Prison for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Fraud

PITTSBURGH, PA -- A former resident of Monessen, Pennsylvania, has been sentenced in federal court to 18 months' imprisonment to be followed by a three-year term of supervised release on her conviction of five counts of mail fraud, United States Attorney Cindy K. Chung announced today.

United States District Judge William S. Stickman IV imposed the sentence on Amanda Fairfax, age 37.

In order to combat the devastating impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on the United States, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was passed into law. The CARES Act created the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) Program, which provided unemployment benefits to individuals not eligible for regular unemployment compensation or extended unemployment benefits. Individuals are eligible for PUA if they were unemployed due to the pandemic and could accept a job if one were offered

According to information presented to the court, between June and July 2020, Fairfax knowingly filed claims for PUA benefits on behalf of five individuals, all of which contained fraudulent statements. The U.S. Postal Service transported the resulting benefits to two addresses associated with Fairfax. In total, Fairfax fraudulently obtained \$66,240.00 over the course of her scheme.

As part of the sentence imposed, the defendant was also ordered to pay a special assessment of \$500 and restitution in the amount of \$66,240.00.

Assistant United States Attorney Brendan J. McKenna prosecuted this case on behalf of the government.

United States Attorney Chung commended the United States Department of Labor – Office of the Inspector General and the United States Secret Service for the investigation leading to the successful prosecution of Amanda Fairfax.

Topic(s):
Coronavirus
Financial Fraud

Component(s):
[USAO - Pennsylvania, Western](#)