

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Novi Man Charged in Unemployment Insurance Fraud Scheme

DETROIT – A Novi man was charged in a criminal complaint with aggravated identity theft, mail fraud, wire fraud, and money laundering in a scheme to defraud the State of Michigan's (SOM) Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA), 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 and Timothy Kolar, Administrator of the Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency, Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity.

Charged is Terrell Dwayne Mason, 39.

The criminal complaint alleges that Mason defrauded the State of Michigan's Unemployment Insurance Agency by unlawfully using the identities of inmates in state and federal prison to file claims for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefits. To date, the investigation has shown that Mason allegedly filed over 40 fraudulent claims. Mason allegedly used his relationship with a State of Michigan Unemployment Insurance employee to process the bad claims through the state's UI system. The complaint further alleges that the claims resulted in payments of over \$300,000 and would have paid over \$800,000 if not detected by law enforcement.

Mason, who is on supervised release after serving a prison sentence for a prior federal conviction for conspiracy to commit wire and mail fraud, was tracked to and arrested by the United States Marshals Service in Oklahoma on a warrant for allegations he violated the terms of his release. Proceedings to address Mason's alleged violations of supervised release are pending before United States District Judge Robert H. Cleland.

The criminal complaint is a result of an investigation by the United States Department of Labor – Office of Inspector General and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Mark Chasteen.

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.

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