

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Northern District of New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rensselaer Man Sentenced to 70 Months for Pandemic-Related Fraud

ALBANY, NEW YORK – Hector J. Sanchez, age 30, of Rensselaer, New York, was sentenced today to 70 months in prison for defrauding pandemic-related unemployment insurance and small business loan programs.

The announcement was made by United States Attorney Carla B. Freedman; Ketty Larco-Ward, Inspector in Charge of the Boston Division of the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS); Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent in Charge, New York Region, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General (USDOL-OIG); and Matthew Scarpino, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the Buffalo Field Office of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI).

As part of his prior [guilty plea](#), Sanchez admitted to making false unemployment insurance claims to the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) using the identifying information of other people and personally receiving \$131,560 in pandemic-related benefits. He also admitted to obtaining a \$12,500 Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan for a non-existent car wash business. Sanchez agreed to pay restitution to NYSDOL and the PPP lender.

United States District Judge Mae A. D'Agostino ordered Sanchez's federal sentence to be served consecutive to undischarged New York State terms of imprisonment for separate firearms and narcotics offenses. Judge D'Agostino also imposed a 3-year term of supervised release, to begin after Sanchez is released from prison.

The case was investigated by USPIS, USDOL-OIG, and HSI, with assistance from the NYSDOL Office of Special Investigations and the Albany Police Department. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney John T. Chisholm.

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 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

Topic(s):
Coronavirus
Financial Fraud

Component(s):
[USAO - New York, Northern](#)