



# Department of Justice

**United States Attorney Leah B. Foley  
District of Massachusetts**

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## **TWO VENEZUELAN NATIONALS PLEAD GUILTY TO SNAP FRAUD CHARGES**

*Defendants used fraudulent SNAP benefit cards to purchase food supplies to stock restaurant at no expense*

BOSTON – Two Venezuelan nationals pleaded guilty on June 12, 2026 in federal court in Worcester to using fraudulent Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit cards to illegally purchase food to stock a local restaurant. This criminal conduct is a part of a larger fraud scheme that used the stolen identities of more than 100 individuals to obtain \$440,000 in SNAP benefits from Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The stolen identities were used to create 24 “households” in SNAP applications. All of these applications, submitted in the names of over 100 people, were listed as living in two single-family apartments in Providence, R.I.

Roman Veqiz Fernandez, 32, a Venezuelan national and Coralba Albarracin Siniva, 24, also a Venezuelan national, both residing in living in Leominster, Mass. have pleaded guilty to use, transfer, acquisition and possession of SNAP benefits in an Unauthorized Manner. U.S. District Court Judge Margaret R. Guzman scheduled sentencings for Sept. 22, 2026. The defendants were [charged in February 2026](#) along with Joel Vicioso Fernandez and Raul Fernandez Vicioso.

The defendants and their co-conspirators allegedly used the fraudulent SNAP benefits cards to purchase large quantities of expensive bulk food items (such as multiple-pound packages of chicken, beef and pork) at various local wholesalers and food markets to stock El Primo Restaurant at no expense. With their supplies obtained for free through fraudulent SNAP

benefits, they prepared and then sold menu items at El Primo Restaurant at a complete profit, later wiring the fraud proceeds, among other places, to individuals living in Venezuela and the Dominican Republic.

On March 26, 2026, United States Attorney Leah B. Foley announced the creation of the Benefit & Voter Fraud Team, a district-wide initiative established in response to the rampant fraud being uncovered across Massachusetts. The Team is led by two senior federal prosecutors serving as Fraud Coordinators, whose mission it is to aggressively investigate and prosecute misuse of taxpayer-funded benefits in Massachusetts.

Members of the public are encouraged to report suspected benefit fraud in Massachusetts by calling 1-855-SCAM-MA-1 (855-722-6621).

On April 7, 2026, the Department of Justice announced the creation of the National Fraud Enforcement Division. The Fraud Division is investigating and prosecuting those who commit fraud against the American people. The Department's work to combat fraud supports President Trump's Task Force to Eliminate Fraud, a whole-of-government effort chaired by Vice President J.D. Vance to eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse within Federal benefit programs.

The charge of illegal acquisition or use of SNAP benefits provides for a sentence of up to five or 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and statutes which govern the determination of a sentence in a criminal case.

United States Attorney Leah B. Foley; Charmeka Parker, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Agriculture - Office of Inspector General, Northeast Region; Anthony P. D'Esposito, Inspector General, Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General; Thomas Demeo, Special Agent in Charge of the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation, Boston Field Office; and Jeff Grimming, Acting Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in New England made the announcement today. Valuable assistance was provided by the Social Security Administration - Office of Inspector General; U.S. Department of Homeland Security - Office of Inspector General; U.S. Postal Inspection Service; U.S. Department of State - Diplomatic Security Service; Rhode Island Office of Internal Audit - Fraud Detection & Prevention Unit; Massachusetts State Police; the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Rhode Island; and the Fitchburg and Leominster Police Departments. Assistant U.S. Attorney Danial Bennett of the Worcester Branch Office is prosecuting the case.

The details contained in the charging document are allegations. The remaining defendants are presumed to be innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in the court of law.

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