



OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL
JOSH SHAPIRO

AG Shapiro Charges Eight City of Philadelphia Employees For Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Fraud

Defendants Alleged to Have Submitted More Than \$300K in False Pandemic Unemployment Claims

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PHILADELPHIA – Attorney General Josh Shapiro announced [charges](#) against eight employees of the City of Philadelphia for allegedly providing false information in an attempt to illegally obtain Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) Act.

The investigation showed eight individuals while employed at the City of Philadelphia conspired to illegally obtain PUA funds in excess of \$300,000.

“These arrests are an important reminder that falsely applying for unemployment benefits is a serious crime. These individuals took money away from taxpayers, and we will fight to get those funds repaid. I commend the City of Philadelphia for investigating this fraud, and I encourage others to do the same,” said AG Shapiro.

Following a referral from the City of Philadelphia Office of Inspector General, agents with the Office of Attorney General allege that the eight defendants fraudulently applied for PUA benefits during the time of February 2020 and September 2020 claiming on their applications that their employment ended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Upon further investigation, prosecutors

allege that these individuals were all employed by the City of Philadelphia during the time they fraudulently applied for these benefits, and determined that each individual applied for and received between approximately \$20,000 and \$60,000 in PUA benefits.

“Public service is a privilege and it demands honesty. The City made every effort to protect its workforce during the pandemic, yet these individuals chose to misappropriate government benefits that were intended for people in need. We thank the Attorney General and his dedicated staff for holding these wrongdoers accountable,” said Alexander DeSantis, Inspector General, City of Philadelphia.

To date, the Office of Attorney General has charged 63 individuals across the Commonwealth for submitting fraudulent PUA applications amounting to approximately \$3.1 million in fraudulent PUA funds. Investigations into PUA fraud remain ongoing.

“If you made some extra cash during the pandemic by fraudulently applying for PUA benefits – turn yourself in and get on a payment plan to repay the taxpayer money stolen. Do the right thing, or potentially face criminal charges and prosecution. The Department of Labor & Industry has set up a Fraud Hotline at 1-800-692-7469 or benefits.uc.pa.gov so you can self-report this fraud. Don’t wait for us to knock on your door,” said AG Shapiro.

Any individual who has fraudulently received PUA benefits is urged to voluntarily repay the money before they are contacted by our agents. Anyone who received a letter from L&I indicating a balance owed should contact L&I and repay the money or face the possibility of criminal charges.

The eight defendants were charged with: Theft by Deception, Receiving Stolen Property and Tampering with Public Records. This case is being prosecuted by Senior Deputy Attorney General Tom Ost-Prisco, Deputy Attorney General Suzanne Edwards and Deputy Attorney General Kate McDermott. All charges discussed are accusations. The defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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