

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chicago Man Indicted on Fraud Charges Related to Pandemic Unemployment Benefits

PITTSBURGH, PA – A former resident of Chicago, IL, has been indicted by a federal grand jury in Pittsburgh, PA on a charges of mail fraud, wire fraud, and aggravated identity theft, United States Attorney Cindy K. Chung announced today.

The seven-count Superseding Indictment, returned on Oct. 4, named Christian Matthews, 33, as the sole defendant.

According to the Superseding Indictment, Matthews fraudulently obtained personal identifying information belonging to other people and used it, without permission, to file claims for pandemic-related unemployment benefits in several states. The resulting benefits were sent via the United States mail and interstate commercial carriers to locations, including an office building in Pittsburgh, where Matthews could retrieve and use them.

The law provides for a maximum total sentence of 22 years in prison, a fine of \$500,000 or both. Under the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, the actual sentence imposed would be based upon the seriousness of the offenses and the prior criminal history, if any, of the defendant. The government is requesting detention.

Assistant United States Attorney Jeffrey R. Bengel is prosecuting this case on behalf of the government.

The United States Department of Labor Office of the Inspector General, United States Department of Homeland Security Investigations, United States Postal Inspection Service, and Findlay Township Police Department conducted the investigation leading to the Superseding Indictment in this case.

A superseding indictment is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Topic(s):
Coronavirus
Financial Fraud
Identity Theft

Component(s):
USAO - Pennsylvania, Western

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