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Wednesday, November 2, 2016

Little Rock Man Sentenced to Prison for Role in Stealing USDA Funds Intended to Feed Hungry Children

LITTLE ROCK—Christopher R. Thyer, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, announced Wednesday that United States District Court Judge James M. Moody Jr., sentenced Reuben Nims, 52, of Little Rock, to prison for his role in the widespread scheme to steal money intended for feeding children in low income areas.

Judge Moody sentenced Nims, who pleaded guilty to conspiring to commit wire fraud on March 8, 2016, to 21 months' imprisonment, to be followed by three years of supervised release. He was also ordered to pay restitution of \$182,728.65.

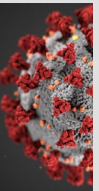
Nims is the second defendant sentenced who was charged with involvement in a scheme to fraudulently obtain United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) program funds intended to feed children in low income areas. Kattie Jordan was sentenced to 63 months in federal prison on March 15, 2016. Gladys Waits, Tonique Hatton, Christopher Nichols, Waymon Weeams, James Franklin, Francine Leon, Maria Nelson, Alexis Young, and Erica Warren have all pleaded guilty to conspiring to defraud USDA feeding programs and are awaiting sentencing. Jacqueline Mills, Dortha Harper, and Anthony Waits are scheduled for trial on March 27, 2017, before Judge Moody.

The USDA feeding programs in Arkansas are administered through the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS). Sponsors who want to participate in the feeding programs must submit an application to DHS for approval. After they are approved, they can provide meals as part of the feeding programs, and they are reimbursed for the eligible meals they serve.



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Nims was a sponsor for a feeding program through his organization called "Blessed Thru Success." Nims had one approved feeding site on Rodney Parham Road in Little Rock, where he claimed as many as 300 children were fed each day. No children were ever actually fed there. Nims was recruited by Anthony Waits. Waits' wife, Gladys Waits, worked for DHS and approved Nims' application. Nims paid Anthony Waits approximately 50% of the \$182,728.65 Nims received in the scheme.

Previous charges filed in the overall investigation detail alleged fraud involving more than \$11 million in USDA feeding program funds.

The investigation is ongoing and is being conducted by the USDA–Office of Inspector General, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Internal Revenue Service–Criminal Investigations, and United States Marshals Service.

If you are aware of any fraudulent activity regarding feeding programs, please email that information to USAARE.FeedingProgramFraud@usdoj.gov.

Topic(s):
Public Corruption

Component(s):
USAO - Arkansas, Eastern

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