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Tuesday, January 10, 2017

## Marianna Man Sentenced to Prison in Scheme to Steal USDA Funds Intended to Feed Hungry Children

LITTLE ROCK—Christopher R. Thyer, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, announced Tuesday that United States District Court Judge D. Price Marshall Jr., sentenced James E. Franklin, Jr., 34, of Marianna, to prison for his role in a widespread scheme to steal money intended for feeding children in low income areas.

Judge Marshall sentenced Franklin, who pleaded guilty to conspiring to commit wire fraud on September 16, 2016, to 24 months' imprisonment, to be followed by two years of supervised release. He was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$380,055.36.

The United States Department of Agriculture (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.

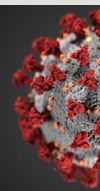
Franklin is the fourth defendant sentenced who was charged with involvement in a scheme to fraudulently obtain these USDA program funds intended to feed children in low income areas. Eight others have pleaded guilty and are awaiting sentencing. Jacqueline Mills, Dorothy Harper, and Anthony Waits are scheduled for trial on March 27, 2017, before United States District Court Judge James M. Moody, Jr.

Franklin was a sponsor for a feeding program through an organization called "JL&N Outreach." Franklin had two approved feeding site locations, one in Hughes, Arkansas



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and the other in Brinkley, Arkansas. Franklin claimed that he fed as many as 244 children a day in Hughes and as many as 287 children a day in Brinkley. According to witnesses, no more than 10 children per day were fed in Brinkley and no more than 15 children per day were fed in Hughes.

Franklin was recruited by Anthony Waits. Waits’ wife, Gladys Waits, worked for DHS and approved Franklin’s application. Franklin paid Anthony Waits approximately 40% of the \$380,055.36 Franklin received in the scheme.

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. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Jana K. Harris, Allison W. Bragg, and Cameron McCree.

If you are aware of any fraudulent activity regarding feeding programs, please email that information to [USAARE.FeedingProgramFraud@usdoj.gov](mailto:USAARE.FeedingProgramFraud@usdoj.gov).

**Topic(s):**  
Public Corruption

**Component(s):**  
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