

PRESS RELEASE

Former Director of Boston Nonprofit Pleads Guilty to Fraud Charges

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Massachusetts

Monica Cannon-Grant diverted thousands donated to nonprofit to pay for personal expenses; defrauded Boston COVID-19 relief fund, Boston Office of Housing Stability, and Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, among others

BOSTON – The founder and former Chief Executive Officer of the local nonprofit Violence in Boston (VIB) pleaded guilty today in federal court in Boston to making misrepresentations in order to obtain thousands of dollars in donations to non-profit Violence in Boston (VIB) that she then diverted to pay for personal expenses, defrauding the City of Boston out of COVID-19 relief funds and rental assistance money, defrauding the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office out of Community Reinvestment Grant funds, filing false tax return for two years, and failing to file tax returns for two years.

Monica Cannon-Grant, 44, of Taunton, pleaded guilty to 18 counts: three counts of wire fraud conspiracy; 10 counts of wire fraud; one count of mail fraud, and two counts each of filing false tax returns and failing to file tax returns. U.S. District Court Judge Angel Kelley scheduled sentencing for Jan. 29, 2026. [In March 2023](#), Cannon-Grant was charged along with her co-conspirator and husband Clark Grant in a 27-count superseding indictment. Clark Grant's charges were dismissed in May 2023 due to his death. Cannon-Grant and Clark Grant had previously been charged in an 18-count indictment [in March 2022](#).

Cannon-Grant was the founder and CEO of VIB, an anti-violence nonprofit formally established in 2017, the stated purpose of which was to reduce violence, raise social awareness and aid community causes in Greater Boston, among other purposes.

“Monica Cannon-Grant repeatedly scammed multiple public financial programs and stole money donated by members of the public who believed their donations would aid in reducing violence and promote social awareness. Instead, Cannon-Grant used donations to satisfy her own greed, while falsely portraying herself as a legitimate

nonprofit organizer. She betrayed the trust of everyone who donated and the public who supported her fraudulent charity,” said United States Attorney Leah B. Foley. “Today’s plea demonstrates once again that no one is above the rule of law.”

“Today’s guilty plea underscores our commitment to investigating and holding accountable anyone who commits fraud. Ms. Cannon-Grant defrauded several state programs and exploited her position in the community to line her own pockets,” said Ketty Larco-Ward, Inspector in Charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service’s Boston Division. “This investigation showcases the results that postal inspectors strive to achieve in collaboration with our law enforcement partners. The successful resolution through a plea is a result of the strong investigative work, dedication and partnership of postal inspectors and the U.S. Attorney’s Office. I commend the relentless work and commitment to ensuring justice was achieved by all those involved.”

“Monica Cannon-Grant illegally enriched herself as part of a scheme that fraudulently diverted vital taxpayer resources away from those in need of unemployment insurance benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic,” stated Jonathan R. Mellone, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Northeast Region, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General. “Protecting the integrity of the unemployment insurance program remains one of our highest priorities, and we will continue to work closely with the U.S. Attorney’s Office and our other law enforcement partners to protect the integrity of U.S. Department of Labor programs and operations.”

As she admitted at today’s plea hearing, from 2017 through at least 2020, Cannon-Grant represented herself as an uncompensated VIB director to donors and other charitable institutions when, in reality, she and her late husband agreed to utilize their control over VIB’s accounts and funds to pay for personal expenditures by diverting VIB funds to themselves through cash withdrawals, cashed checks, wire transfers to personal bank accounts and debit purchases.

Over the course of the conspiracy, Cannon-Grant diverted thousands of dollars in donor money earmarked for VIB for her own personal use. She also applied for or certified the applications for grants offered by public and private entities that included materially false representations. For example, Cannon-Grant conspired to use VIB to defraud the Boston Resiliency Fund, a charitable fund established by the City of Boston to provide aid to Boston residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. After receiving approximately \$53,977 in pandemic relief funds, Cannon-Grant withdrew approximately \$30,000 in cash from the VIB bank account, made deposits of \$5,200 and \$1,000 into her personal checking account, and made payments on her personal auto loan and car insurance policy. Cannon-Grant did not disclose any of these personal expenses to BRF and,

instead, falsely reported to BRF that all of its grant funds had been appropriately expended.

In addition, Cannon-Grant conspired to defraud Boston's Office of Housing Stability by concealing thousands of dollars of household income in order to obtain \$12,600 in rental assistance from the City of Boston. Instead of truthfully reporting accurate information about the family's earnings and benefits, Cannon-Grant and her late husband misrepresented their actual household income to obtain rent relief funds that were intended to aid Boston residents who were facing housing insecurity.

Cannon-Grant and her late husband also conspired to defraud the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance by submitting a fraudulent applications for pandemic unemployment assistance and certifying on a weekly basis that they were not working and did not receive over \$89 in income during the prior week. In addition, Cannon-Grant filed false tax returns for 2017 and 2018 and failed to file tax returns for 2019 and 2020, omitting tens of thousands of dollars in income that Cannon-Grant received in salary from VIB and through work as a consultant.

The charges of wire fraud conspiracy, wire fraud, and mail fraud each provide for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, up to three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charge of filing false tax returns provides for a sentence of up to three years in prison, one year of supervised release and a fine of up to \$100,000. The charge of failure to file a tax return provides for a sentence of up to one year of prison, one year of supervised release and a fine of up to \$25,000. 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.

U.S. Attorney Foley; USPIS-IC Larco-Ward; DOL-IG SAC Mellone; Thomas Demeo, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation, Boston Field Office; Matthew M. Modafferi, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General; and Massachusetts Inspector General Jeffrey Shapiro made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Adam Deitch and Dustin Chao of the Public Corruption Unit are prosecuting the case.

On May 17, 2021, the Attorney General established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force to marshal the resources of the Department of Justice in partnership with agencies across government to enhance efforts to combat and prevent pandemic-related fraud. The Task Force bolsters efforts to investigate and prosecute the most culpable domestic and international criminal actors and assists agencies tasked with administering relief programs to prevent fraud by, among other methods, augmenting and incorporating existing coordination mechanisms, identifying resources and

techniques to uncover fraudulent actors and their schemes, and sharing and harnessing information and insights gained from prior enforcement efforts. For more information on the Department's response to the pandemic, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus>.

Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

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