

PRESS RELEASE

Dunkirk men charged with defrauding the United States and theft of government funds

Wednesday, September 24, 2025

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of New York

BUFFALO, N.Y. –U.S. Attorney Michael DiGiacomo announced today that a federal grand jury returned an indictment charging Lamont Brown, 37, and Jesus Ramos, 41, both of Dunkirk, NY, with conspiracy to defraud the United States and theft of government funds, which carry a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Franz M. Wright, who is handling the case, stated that according to the indictment, between July and October 2020, during the Covid pandemic, Brown and Ramos conspired with others to defraud the United States and Puerto Rico Department of Labor and Human Resources. Brown and Ramos recruited individuals who had never lived or worked in Puerto Rico to use their personally identifiable information ("PII"), including their names, social security numbers, and dates of birth, to apply for, obtain, and attempt to obtain Unemployment Insurance benefits from the Puerto Rico Department of Labor. They provided the PII to individuals in Puerto Rico to complete applications for unemployment insurance and utilized existing bank accounts or opened new bank accounts to deposit the unemployment checks received. The banking institutions included Lake Shore Savings Bank, Key Bank, and Inner Lakes Federal Credit Union.

Brown and Ramos stole, or attempted to steal, a total of \$67,000 from the Puerto Rico Department of Labor and Human Resources.

Brown and Ramos were arraigned before U.S. Magistrate Judge Michael J. Roemer and were released on conditions.

The indictment is the result of an investigation by Homeland Security Investigations, under the direction of Special Agent-in-Charge Erin Keegan, and the U.S. Department of

Labor Office of Inspector General, under the direction of Special Agent-in-Charge Jonathan Mellone, Northeast Region.

The fact that a defendant has been charged with a crime is merely an accusation and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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