

PRESS RELEASE

Former Postal Employee Sentenced to 20 Months in Prison for Fraud in Connection with Unemployment Insurance Benefits

Thursday, October 15, 2026

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Michigan

DETROIT – A former U.S. Postal Service (USPS) employee has been sentenced to 20 months in prison by United States District Judge Susan K. DeClercq for fraudulently obtaining unemployment insurance benefits, U.S. Attorney Jerome F. Gorgon announced today.

Gorgon was joined in the announcement by Tammy Hull, Inspector General, United States Postal Service, Felicia George, Detroit Division Inspector, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and Anthony P. D'Esposito, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General.

Christopher Powell, 37, of Detroit, worked as a letter carrier with the USPS and previously pleaded guilty to two counts of wire fraud. At the time of his guilty plea, Powell admitted that from July 2020 through January 2024, he submitted fraudulent unemployment insurance (UI) claims in multiple states using his own personal identifying information and made false certifications to obtain and maintain such benefits.

Powell also admitted that he directed mail related to at least one fraudulent claim to an address on his mail route. In July 2023, after spending the stolen benefits associated with one false claim, Powell falsely reported to his bank that he never received the UI funds, prompting the bank to issue him even more money he was not entitled to.

In addition to the prison term, Judge DeClercq imposed three years of supervised release and ordered Powell to pay restitution in the amount of \$166,366.53 and a forfeiture money judgment in the same amount.

This case was investigated by the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Kelly Fasbinder.

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