

**PRESS RELEASE**

# **Illegal Alien Indicted for COVID-Relief Fraud and Federal Assistance Benefit Fraud**

Monday, June 1, 2026

**For Immediate Release**

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

**Defendant allegedly used stolen identity to receive approximately \$30,000 in unemployment benefits and approximately \$14,000 in SNAP benefits**

BOSTON – A Dominican national unlawfully residing in Lowell has been indicted by a federal grand jury for allegedly using a stolen identity to fraudulently obtain pandemic relief funds and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, previously known as food stamps.

Arvaro Montero Diaz, 40, was indicted on two counts of wire fraud, two counts of aggravated identity theft, one count of theft of government money and one count of SNAP fraud. Montero Diaz was previously arrested and charged by criminal complaint on March 9, 2026. He was subsequently released on pretrial conditions following a detention hearing on March 12, 2026. Montero Diaz will appear in federal court in Boston at a later date.

According to the indictment, Montero Diaz – a citizen of the Dominican Republic who has been unlawfully residing in the United States since approximately 2007 – used the identity of a U.S. citizen to apply for and receive approximately \$30,000 in unemployment benefits made available under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act. It is further alleged that Montero Diaz also used this identity to apply for and receive approximately \$14,000 in SNAP benefits.

The charges of wire fraud and SNAP fraud each provide for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charge of theft of government money provides for a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charges for aggravated identity theft provide for a mandatory minimum sentence of two years in prison, one of

supervised released and a fine of up to \$250,00. 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.

United States Attorney Leah B. Foley; Charmeka Parker, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General, Northeast Region; Anthony P. D'Esposito, Inspector General, Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General; and Jeff Grimming, Acting Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in New England made the announcement today. Valuable assistance was provided by the Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General. Assistant U.S. Attorney John Potapchuk of the Major Crimes Unit is prosecuting the case.

[On March 26, 2026](#), United States Attorney Leah B. Foley announced the creation of the Benefit & Voter Fraud Team, a district-wide initiative established in response to the rampant fraud being uncovered across Massachusetts. The Team is led by two senior federal prosecutors serving as Fraud Coordinators, whose mission it is to aggressively investigate and prosecute misuse of taxpayer-funded benefits in Massachusetts.

Members of the public are encouraged to report suspected benefit fraud in Massachusetts by calling 1-855-SCAM-MA-1 (855-722-6621).

On April 7, 2026, the Department of Justice announced the creation of the [National Fraud Enforcement Division](#). The Fraud Division is investigating and prosecuting those who commit fraud against the American people. The Department's work to combat fraud supports President Trump's Task Force to Eliminate Fraud, a whole-of-government effort chaired by Vice President J.D. Vance to eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse within Federal benefit programs.

The details contained in the charging document are allegations. The defendant is presumed to be innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in the court of law.

*Updated June 1, 2026*