

PRESS RELEASE

Leessa Augustine, Former Sewerage & Water Board Special Agent and New Orleans Police Officer, Pleads Guilty to Multiple Fraud Schemes

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Louisiana
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NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA – LEESSA AUGUSTINE (“AUGUSTINE”) age 46, a resident of New Orleans, pleaded guilty on June 10, 2025, to several charges related to her involvement in fraud schemes while employed as a Sewerage & Water Board of New Orleans (“S&WB”) Senior Special Agent. In this role, **AUGUSTINE** was tasked with investigating the alleged misconduct of other Sewerage & Water Board employees.

According to court records, in one scheme, **AUGUSTINE**, who also served as a New Orleans Police Department reserve officer, billed a police detail customer for hours not actually worked. During some of the times **AUGUSTINE** was supposed to be working the police detail for the Downtown Development District, she used her S&WB-issued computer to conduct a second fraud scheme, that involved obtaining a mortgage loan and federally funded assistance for low-income homebuyers. In that home-purchase scheme, **AUGUSTINE** created fake documents, including a fake W-2 form, fake pay stubs, and fake bank statements. In a third scheme, **AUGUSTINE** obtained federally funded unemployment benefits by concealing her Senior Special Agent income. Finally, in a fourth scheme, **AUGUSTINE** obtained federally funded emergency rental assistance from the City of New Orleans, by submitting a fake lease and a termination letter from a fictitious employer. At various times during the schemes, **AUGUSTINE** provided her S&WB-issued cellphone number as a contact number for three different persons she impersonated. As a result of her fraud schemes, **AUGUSTINE** pled guilty to three counts of wire fraud. She also pled guilty to one count of making false statements, for lying to investigators.

The wire fraud charges are each punishable by up to 30 years' imprisonment, which may be followed by up to five years of supervised release. The false statement charge is punishable by up to five years' imprisonment, which may be followed by up to three years of supervised release. Each count may also include a fine of up to \$250,000 and a \$100 mandatory special assessment fee. Sentencing is set for September 16, 2025.

Acting U.S. Attorney Simpson expressed his appreciation for the valuable assistance and contributions of the New Orleans Office of Inspector General, and the New Orleans Police Department in connection with this case.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Office of Inspector General - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Office of Inspector General - U.S. Department of Labor, and the Office of Inspector General – U.S. Department of Homeland Security. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Chandra Menon of the Public Integrity Unit.

Contact

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United States Department of Justice

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