



March 2, 2017

Four Non-Alaskan Residents Indicted for Defrauding the Adult Public Assistance Program

Yesterday, a Kenai grand jury indicted four non-residents for allegedly defrauding the Adult Public Assistance Program and unlawfully collecting over \$50,000 of state funds that could have gone to Alaskan citizens in need. The Adult Public Assistance program is a State supplement to the Federal Supplemental Security Income Program. The Adult Public Assistance program (APA), which is funded entirely with state funds, is only available to Alaska residents.

All of the defendants in these cases were advised during the application process that they needed to contact the Division of Public Assistance (DPA) if they changed their state residence or left Alaska for more than 30 days. According to the allegations, all four individuals lived on the Kenai Peninsula at the time of their public assistance application. All four of the individuals eventually moved outside of Alaska but continued receiving the benefits without notifying DPA.

Gene Daniel Card, formerly of Homer and Kenai, and Margaret Wells, formerly of Sterling, were indicted for scheme to defraud and theft in the 2nd degree. Mr. Card is alleged to have stolen \$24,519.00 worth of public assistance, including APA. Ms. Wells is alleged to have stolen \$15,242.00 worth of APA. Tracie Ann Lee-Mercer, formerly of Soldotna, and John Thomas Adams, formerly of Homer, were indicted for theft in the 2nd degree. Ms. Lee-Mercer is alleged to stolen \$7,240.00 worth of APA. Mr. Adams is alleged to stolen \$9,088.00 worth of APA.

The scheme to defraud charges carry a possible sentence of up to 10 years in prison, a fine of up to \$100,000 and restitution to the State. The theft in the 2nd degree charges carry a possible sentence of up to 5 years in prison, a \$50,000 fine and restitution to the State of Alaska.

All of the charges discussed herein are merely allegations and are not evidence of guilt. All of the defendants are presumed innocent. All of the defendants are entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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