



# Mississippi Department of Human Services Press Release



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## MDHS Investigators Uncover over \$300,000 in Fraud

(JACKSON, Miss.) — In recent months, Mississippi Department of Human Services, Program Integrity investigators helped bust individuals across the state trying to defraud a program that provides assistance to those in need. With these recent arrests, restitution and fines to be repaid this fiscal year total over \$300,000.

SNAP and TANF fraud are usually the result of a client withholding income or household information that could deem them ineligible to receive benefits. Disqualification periods for SNAP fraud can range from 12 months for the first violation to permanent disqualification. Ineligibility is determined by state and federal mandates and can be ordered by the courts as part of sentencing.

MDHS Director of Fraud Investigations Kenneth Palmer said, “SNAP is designed to help low-income people put food on the table. SNAP fraud, however, hurts everyone. The local store where purchases would have been made loses revenue and, of course, the family suffers because of the loss of benefits that would have allowed for appropriate food purchases.”

Small “mom and pop” grocers are usually the type of stores targeted by those trying to defraud a system in place to help those who are at risk of food insecurity, such as the elderly and children. Local residents can help spot fraud in their grocery stores. If you suspect a store owner, clerk or client is misusing SNAP benefits, call the Fraud Hotline at 1-800-299-6905. SNAP fraud is a crime.

### SPRING 2013 SNAP/TANF ARRESTS

Name, Location	Restitution, Fees, Fines	Sentence	Disqualification Period
Attala County: Kimberly G. Reyes, Kosciusko	\$7,096	1 year probation	12 months
Clarke County: Brandi A. Moulds, Quitman	\$15,292	3 years suspended; 5 years probation	12 months
Desoto County: Denitral Gibson, Nesbit	\$16,400	5 years probation	12 months
Desoto County: Mary K. Kellum, Horn Lake	\$741	10 days suspended	TANF fraud
Hinds County: Jessica Jefferson, Jackson	\$11,867	3 years probation	12 months
Hinds County: Kisheenia Lindsey, Jackson	\$8,897	3 years probation	12 months
Lee County: Amber N. Dunaway, Saltillo	\$10,941	5 years probation	12 months
Lincoln County: Teresa Palmer, Brookhaven	\$12,098	3 years probation; 3 years suspended	24 months

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Neshoba County: Sera Johnson, Philadelphia	\$8,046	3 years probation; 3 years suspended	12 months
Newton County: Amy D. Wansley; Decatur	\$7,836	Sentenced to 2 years; 1 year to serve, 1 year suspended	24 months
Panola County: Julie Austin, Oxford	\$7,529	2 years probation	12 months
Union County: Gwen A. Simpson, New Albany	\$10,664	3 years probation	12 months
Washington County: Misery M. Brothers, Greenville	\$10,275	5 years probation	12 months
Washington County: Shareda W. Ratliff, Greenville	\$6,565	Pre-Trial Diversion Program, not less than 18 months or more than 3 years	24 months
Winston County: Apryl M. Triplett, Noxapater	\$6,025	3 years probation	24 months

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