



SIGTARP

Office of the Special Inspector General
For The Troubled Asset Relief Program

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Vallejo Woman Agrees to Resolve False Claims Act Allegations Involving Food Stamp and Unemployment Mortgage Assistance Programs

U.S. Attorney Phillip A. Talbert announced today that **Dorothy Natividad**, of Vallejo, California, has paid \$116,900 in damages and civil penalties to resolve allegations that she knowingly made false statements to obtain benefits from both the Food Stamp/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the “Keep Your Home California” Unemployment Mortgage Assistance Program.

The “Keep Your Home California” Unemployment Mortgage Assistance Program (UMA) was a federally funded program to help California homeowners struggling to pay their mortgages due to financial hardships. Keep Your Home California was funded by the Hardest Hit Fund, which was established in 2010 to provide targeted aid to families in states hit hard by the economic and housing market downturn caused by the financial crisis. This settlement resolves allegations that between April 2014 and August 2016, Natividad concealed more than \$100,000 of household income that would have disqualified her from receiving aid through this mortgage assistance program. The United States similarly alleged that Natividad concealed income that would have disqualified her from participation in SNAP.

“The False Claims Act is a valuable tool for assuring that public assistance program funds are expended only on eligible individuals,” said U.S. Attorney Talbert. “This settlement demonstrates how the pursuit of civil remedies under the FCA and interagency cooperation can be used to recover fraudulently obtained benefits that should have gone to truly vulnerable families.”

“Natividad lied to get thousands of federal dollars for both mortgage assistance and SNAP by concealing income that would have disqualified her from receiving aid. SIGTARP, USDA and the United States Attorney’s Office have brought justice for a defendant who defrauded the Hardest Hit Fund, a federal program that helped unemployed homeowners stay in their homes,” said Melissa Bruce, Deputy Special Inspector General for the Troubled Asset Relief Program. “She has agreed to and repaid the improperly obtained funds as well as a penalty.”

“The accurate accounting and administration of federal feeding programs is essential to ensuring those in need of assistance receive it,” said Dustin Cladis, Special Agent in Charge, USDA OIG. “This settlement is a clear message that our agency along with our federal partners will protect the integrity of USDA programs and pursue those who submit false claims.”

The civil settlement resulted from a joint investigation by the United States Department of Agriculture Office of the Inspector General (USDA OIG) and SIGTARP. Assistant U.S. Attorney Emilia P. E. Morris handled the case for the United States. The claims resolved by the settlement are allegations only, and there has been no determination of liability.

About SIGTARP

SIGTARP was created as an independent law enforcement agency to investigate fraud, waste, and abuse related to the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act (EESA). To date, SIGTARP investigations have resulted in the recovery of over \$11.3 billion, 406 criminal convictions and 315 defendants sentenced to prison.

To report a suspected crime related to TARP, call SIGTARP's Crime Tip Hotline: 1-877-SIG-2009 (1-877-744-2009). To receive alerts about reports, audits, media releases, and other SIGTARP news, sign up at www.SIGTARP.gov/pages/press.aspx. Follow SIGTARP on Twitter @SIGTARP.

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