

# Massachusetts man charged with pandemic unemployment and mortgage fraud

*Defendant allegedly obtained more than \$67,000 in pandemic unemployment benefits while at the same time working and collecting a full-time salary.*

A Taunton man was arrested today in connection with making alleged fraudulent Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) claims and for making false statements in support of a residential mortgage application.

Clark Grant, 38, was charged with one count of wire fraud and one count of false statements on a loan and credit application. Grant will make an initial appearance in Boston this afternoon at 3:30 p.m. before U.S. Magistrate Judge Judith G. Dein.

In March 2020, in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). The CARES Act created a temporary federal unemployment insurance program called Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), which in Massachusetts is administered by the Department of Unemployment Assistance. This program is designed to provide unemployment benefits for individuals who are not eligible for other types of unemployment benefits.

According to charging documents, from approximately May 2020 to September 2021, Grant fraudulently applied for and obtained approximately \$67,950 in PUA benefits while at the same time working and collecting a salary from his full-time job. In addition, from May 2021 to July 2021, Grant allegedly made false statements to a mortgage lender in order to fraudulently obtain a residential mortgage in the amount of approximately

\$410,000.

The charge of wire fraud provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, up to three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charge of false statements on a loan and credit application provides for a sentence of up to 30 years in prison, up to five years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$1 million. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Acting United States Attorney Nathaniel R. Mendell; Ketty Larco-Ward, Inspector in Charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service; Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Labor Racketeering and Fraud Investigation; Joleen D. Simpson, Special Agent in Charge of the Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigations in Boston; and Massachusetts Inspector General Glenn A. Cunha made the announcement today. The Taunton Police Department provided valuable assistance. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Dustin Chao and Adam Deitch of Mendell's Criminal Division are prosecuting the case.

On May 17, 2021, the Attorney General established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force to marshal the resources of the Department of Justice in partnership with agencies across government to enhance efforts to combat and prevent pandemic-related fraud. The Task Force bolsters efforts to investigate and prosecute the most culpable domestic and international criminal actors and assists agencies tasked with administering relief programs to prevent fraud by, among other methods, augmenting and incorporating existing coordination mechanisms, identifying resources and techniques to uncover fraudulent actors and their schemes, and sharing and harnessing information and insights gained from prior enforcement efforts. For more information on the Department's response to the pandemic, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus>.

Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

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