



# News Release

Timothy Jeffries, Director

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**March 4, 2016**

**MEDIA CONTACT**  
**Tasya Peterson**  
**602-542-4296**  
[TasyaPeterson@azdes.gov](mailto:TasyaPeterson@azdes.gov)

## ***DES Office of Inspector General, Arizona Attorney General and U.S. DEA Bust Fraud Ring in Southeastern Arizona***

*Seven people arrested - drug trafficking, money laundering, SNAP Fraud*

**PHOENIX** – The Department of Economic Security’s (DES) Office of Inspector General (OIG) successfully partnered with the Arizona Attorney General’s Office and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) on an investigation that culminated in the arrest of seven individuals suspected of facilitating drug trafficking, money laundering, and committing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit fraud.

“On behalf of the Department of Economic Security, I’d like to thank the Arizona Attorney General’s Office and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration for the collaboration which led to the arrest of the seven individuals,” said Director Timothy Jeffries. “Those who commit fraud and steal from the poor will be found and held accountable to the fullest extent of the law.”

“The DES Office of Inspector General (OIG) will leverage its partnerships with other law enforcement entities, and invoke the full force of its authority, to maintain the integrity of DES programs,” said Inspector General Juan J. Arcellana. “The OIG will not allow a suspected drug trafficking organization to steal from DES clients who truly need DES benefits and services.”

The U.S. DEA executed arrest warrants March 2 in Tucson, Sierra Vista and Huachuca City. The agency successfully placed seven individuals in custody. Approximately 1,600 pounds of marijuana and other drugs were seized by authorities.

The DES OIG successfully investigated members of the drug trafficking organization for SNAP benefit fraud. Individuals of the organization are suspected of submitting falsified information regarding income in order to obtain SNAP and AHCCCS benefits. Two former DES clients, Erick Erives and Sorina Morales, are suspected of committing SNAP fraud totaling \$4,687 and Arizona Health Care Cost Containment Systems (AHCCCS) fraud of \$14,124. Erick Erives is the alleged leader of the organization.

The investigation into this matter is ongoing.

###