



# News Release

Timothy Jeffries, Director

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Judge Upholds \$2.1 Million in Restitution for SNAP Fraud**

*Largest SNAP fraud case in Arizona history*

**PHOENIX** – Director Timothy Jeffries announced today the court ordered restitution amount of \$2.1 million for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) fraud was upheld by the Superior Court of Arizona against perpetrator Bernard Barizoedu Le-Uh for benefit fraud.

On March 26, 2014, the Department of Economic Security (DES) initially reported the multiple-agency effort that culminated in the largest-ever Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) fraud case in Arizona history.

The DES Office of Inspector General (OIG) led an investigation in coordination with the United States Department of Agriculture – Office of the Inspector General (USDA OIG), the Glendale Police Department, and the Arizona Attorney General's Office, related to the activities of Bernard Le-Uh, owner of Nicben African Caribbean Market Plus (Nicben). The undercover investigation, which began in 2012 and continued through 2014, revealed Nicben had been trafficking SNAP benefits.

On March 6, 2015, Bernard Barizoedu Le-Uh pleaded guilty to felony charges of Fraudulent Schemes and Artifices, Money Laundering in the Second Degree, and Unlawful Use of Food Stamps. On April 10, 2015, Bernard Barizoedu Le-Uh was sentenced to serve six years in prison and ordered to pay restitution to the SNAP program.

Mr. Barizoedu Le-Uh challenged the restitution amount. The Superior Court of Arizona began hearings related to the restitution on January 8, 2016, with closing arguments submitted in May 2016.

On July 25, 2016, the Superior Court of Arizona issued a decision to uphold restitution in the amount of \$2.1 million.

*To report abuse of DES public benefits, call the Department's toll free hotline at 1-800-251-2436, or locally at 602-542-9449.*

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