



News Release

Timothy Jeffries, Director

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DES Office of Inspector General Obtains Indictment for Food Stamp and Medical Benefits Fraud *Bullhead City resident Heidi Rinehart Arrested*

PHOENIX -- Director Timothy Jeffries announced today the recent arrest of Ms. Heidi Rinehart of Bullhead City, Arizona, for unlawful use of food stamps and medical benefits fraud. From December 2012 through June 2014, Heidi Rinehart falsified her residency on her SNAP and AHCCCS applications by claiming to have lived in Kingman and Bullhead City, Arizona, when she was actually residing in Laughlin, Nevada.

"Fraud on any level is a serious crime," said Director Jeffries. "Benefits fraud is a crime against the poor. It's not only illegal, it's a special kind of bad. It's extremely unethical to steal benefits from children and families. It violates just about every precept of good that one can find. Consequently, I have directed the DES Office of Inspector General to vigorously pursue all evildoers who commit fraud and steal from those in need."

"The Office of Inspector General will continue to work vigorously to maintain the integrity of DES programs and services," said Inspector General Juan J. Arcellana. "This investigation, and the resulting criminal sentence, is an example of the hard work of all those committed to combatting the efforts of those who seek to defraud the State of Arizona."

On November 9, 2015, Ms. Rinehart was indicted on 4 counts of Fraudulent Schemes and Artifices, 2 counts of Theft, 1 count of Application Fraud and 3 counts of Unlawful Use of Food Stamps. During the course of the investigation, the DES Office of Inspector General found that Ms. Rinehart had submitted falsified information to DES regarding household composition and income in order to unlawfully obtain SNAP benefits. As a result, the Department of Economic Security suffered a loss of \$10,218.00 (SNAP) and \$29,020.99 to AHCCCS.

Ms. Rinehart was scheduled for arraignment on January 7, 2016; however, she failed to appear and an arrest warrant was issued. On April 24, 2016, Ms. Rinehart was arrested in Nevada and extradited to Arizona. Her indictment and subsequent arrest were the result of a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits fraud investigation conducted by the DES Office of Inspector General.

To report abuse of food stamps or other 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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