PRESS RELEASE

Three Indicted for Wire Fraud Conspiracy Involving PPP Loans

Tuesday, April 14, 2026

For Immediate Release
U.S. Attorney's Office, Northern District of Indiana

HAMMOND – On April 14, 2026, a federal Grand Jury in Hammond, Indiana, approved a two-count Indictment charging Charleasa Johnson and Micah Franklin of St. John, Indiana, and Ebony Star Wilson, of Jonesboro, Arkansas, with conspiracy to commit wire fraud related to fraudulently obtaining Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans. The Indictment alleges that as part of the conspiracy, the defendants collectively assisted in submitting more than 80 fraudulent PPP loan applications, resulting in the distribution of fraudulent PPP loan funds in an amount over $2 million.

The Indictment also charges Charleasa Johnson and Micah Franklin with conspiracy to commit money laundering.

The public is reminded that an indictment is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

As part of the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee (PRAC) Task Force, this case is being investigated by the U.S. Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Kevin F. Wolff.

The PRAC was established to promote transparency and facilitate coordinated oversight of the federal government's COVID-19 pandemic response. The PRAC's 20 member Inspectors General identify major risks that cross program and agency boundaries to detect fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement in the more than $5 trillion in COVID-19 spending, including spending via the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), and Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program. This case was also supported by the PRAC which applies the latest advances in analytic and forensic technologies to help OIGs and law enforcement pursue data-driven pandemic relief fraud investigations.

Updated April 28, 2026