



City of Arts & Innovation

PRESS RELEASE

Police Department
LARRY V. GONZALEZ
Chief of Police

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 5, 2021

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SUSPECTS WANTED FOR UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT FRAUD

Riverside, CA – The Riverside Police Department's Economic Crimes Unit has recently completed several investigations of unemployment benefit fraud and are seeking the public's help to locate four suspects with outstanding warrants for their arrest. A fifth suspect had recently been arrested and her case filed in court.



TAIWO OLUWATUMININU, 31-years-old of Hawthorne, is wanted for 5 counts of false unemployment claim and 5 counts of identity theft. He is alleged to have stolen about \$100,000 in unemployment benefits.



MARKEL LASHAWEN JOHNSON, 24-years-old of San Jacinto, is wanted for 1 count of false unemployment claim and conspiracy to commit fraud. He is also currently on probation for auto theft. Mr. Johnson is alleged to have stolen about \$20,000 in unemployment benefits.



BRANDON WILLS, 35-years-old of Riverside, is wanted on 1 count of false unemployment claim and 3 counts of identity theft. He is also on probation for auto theft and alleged to have stolen almost \$23,000 in unemployment benefits.





PRESTON LAMAR LYNCH JR., 19-years-old of Riverside, is wanted on 1 count of false unemployment claim and conspiracy to commit fraud. Mr. Lynch is alleged to have stolen about \$20,000 in unemployment benefits.



JAZMIN UGALDE, 32-years-old of Riverside, is not currently wanted but has already been charged with 4 counts of false unemployment claim and 6 counts of identity theft. She is alleged to have stolen almost \$25,000 in unemployment benefits.

In August of last year, our Economic Crimes Unit noticed a dramatic increase in reported fraud in Riverside related to State of California Employment Development Department (EDD) benefits. Our community members were discovering their own information was being illegally used for fraudulent claims and that large amounts of mail from EDD were being sent to their homes in other people's names. To make matters worse, suspects would show up at these victims' homes either asking or demanding the EDD mail. Residents were asked to call the police and have an officer respond to collect the suspicious EDD mail to be given to our detectives to follow up and investigate. As a result of some of these investigations, arrest warrants have been issued for these 4 suspects, with the 5th already being charged in court.

Our Economic Crimes Unit will continue investigating allegations of EDD fraud occurring in our city. Many other suspects have been identified and detectives are investigating several crime rings actively committing unemployment benefit fraud. Anyone with additional information regarding these investigations and arrests should contact Detective Brian Money at (951) 351-7118 or BMoney@RiversideCA.gov.

Click on this link to view a video message from Detective Money regarding these investigations. <https://youtu.be/ATPWzdKwGzU>