



U.S. Department of Justice

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For Immediate Release:
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July 16, 2009

Event: Sentenced

Defendant: Secelia Joseph

FORMER SOCIAL SECURITY EMPLOYEE SENTENCED

Secelia Joseph, 60, of Southfield and former employee of the Social Security Administration, was sentenced by United States District Judge Nancy G. Edmunds to 15 months in prison after pleading guilty to defrauding the Social Security Administration of \$77,437, announced United States Attorney Terrence G. Berg. Mr. Berg was joined in the announcement by William J. Cotter, Special Agent In Charge of the Chicago Field Division of the Social Security Administration, Office of the Inspector General.

The fraud occurred over a two and a half year period between November 2003 and the end of March, 2006. During that time Joseph worked as a Claims Representative for the Social Security Administration. Joseph committed the fraud by accessing the Social Security Administration computer database to divert the Supplement Security Income (SSI) funds to a co-defendant, Thomas Hooks, who previously pled guilty to theft of government property and sentenced to three years probation. Hooks then paid Joseph part of the money fraudulently obtained from the Social Security Administration.

As part of her sentence Joseph must pay \$77,437 in restitution to the Social Security Administration.

United States Attorney Berg said: “Federal employees owe a high obligation to the public not to abuse their offices for personal gain. Today’s 15-month sentence shows the gravity of the offense of an federal employee defrauding the government.”

Mr. Berg commended the Social Security Administration, Office of the Inspector General for their investigation. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Pamela Thompson.