

Department of Justice

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Western District of New York

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MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO STEALING FEDERAL BENEFITS

BUFFALO, N.Y. - U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Juan Ortiz-Santiago, 63, of Buffalo, New York, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Richard J. Arcara, to theft of government money. The charge carries a maximum sentence of ten years in prison, a fine of \$250,000 or both.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Russell T. Ippolito, Jr., who is handling the case, stated that the defendant admitted stealing \$35,778.00 from the United States by obtaining Social Security Administration benefits under two different names. Ortiz-Santiago applied for and obtained disability benefits from the Social Security Administration in 1977 under the name Juan Ortiz. He then applied for and obtained Supplemental Security Income benefits from the Social Security Administration in 2007 under the name Juan Santiago. The defendant was not entitled to receive either Social Security Disability or Supplemental Security Income benefits.

The plea is the result of an investigation by Special Agents of the Social Security Administration - Office of Inspector General, under the direction of Special Agent-In-Charge Edward Ryan.

Sentencing is scheduled for January 5, 2012 at 1:00pm in Buffalo, N.Y. before Judge Arcara.