



U. S. Department of Justice

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NORTHERN FLORIDA U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE AND FEDERAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATORS RECOGNIZED BY THE FINANCIAL CRIMES ENFORCEMENT NETWORK (FinCEN) AT ANNUAL AWARDS PROGRAM

FinCEN Tools Used To Detect And Dismantle COVID-19 Related Elder Fraud Scheme

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA – Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) Director Kenneth A. Blanco hosted a virtual ceremony on October 29, 2020, to recognize the recipients of this year's FinCEN Director's Law Enforcement Awards which included a new category of honors, "Recognition of COVID-19 Efforts." He also applauded the swift and tremendous efforts of law enforcement, prosecutors, financial institutions, and others to confront wide scale fraud and money laundering associated with COVID-19 pandemic.

Assistant United States Attorney (AUSA) Justin Keen and investigators from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Criminal Investigations, the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), and the Small Business Administration (SBA) Office of Inspector General were applauded for their work in uncovering a far-reaching scheme to steal the identities of elderly Floridians for the purpose of fraudulently obtaining federal COVID-19 relief funds. Lawrence Keefe, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida, made the announcement.

"I couldn't be prouder of AUSA Keen and our partners at IRS-Criminal Investigations, the FBI and the SBA," said U.S. Attorney Keefe. "Protecting senior citizens from financial predators is a top priority for the Department of Justice, and this team used every tool available to ensure they left no stone unturned. We appreciate the work of the dedicated professionals at the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network for making this vital financial intelligence available to our investigators and prosecutors."

The mission of the FinCEN is to safeguard the financial system from illicit use, combat money laundering and its related crimes including terrorism, and promote national security through the strategic use of financial authorities and the collection, analysis, and dissemination of financial intelligence. FinCEN serves the interests of the financial, law enforcement, and regulatory communities. FinCEN analysts provide case support to more than 165 federal, state, and local

agencies, issuing approximately 6,500 intelligence reports each year. Using advanced technology and a variety of data sources, FinCEN links together various financial elements of the crime, helping federal, state and local law enforcement find the missing pieces to the criminal puzzle.

“Because of the secretive nature of many financial crime investigations, the general public may never know about all of our many successful cases; however, this award highlights the important work that we and our law enforcement partners do to thwart fraud and other crime that involves America’s financial system,” said Assistant U.S. Attorney Keen. “Protecting our citizens – especially our seniors – from financial harm is an important part of our mission and would not be possible without the help of professionals at FinCEN and those who work at our local banks and credit unions.”

The Northern District of Florida case recognized by FinCEN at yesterday’s program is still being actively investigated, and is just one example of many cases that have been built with the help of financial intelligence. More information will be provided at the conclusion of the investigation.

The United States Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of Florida is one of 94 offices that serve as the nation’s principal litigators under the direction of the Attorney General. To access public court documents online, please visit the [U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida](#) website. For more information about the United States Attorney’s Office, Northern District of Florida, visit <http://www.justice.gov/usao/fln/index.html>.

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