



# Press Release

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## **Former Arizona Police Officer and Wife Sentenced for SSI Fraud**

*Jared and Amanda Palacios fraudulently received over \$82,000 in public money*

The Inspector General for the Social Security Administration (SSA), Gail S. Ennis, announced the sentencing of Jared Palacios yesterday in Phoenix, Arizona, to 7 months of probation for theft of public money. His wife, Amanda Palacios was sentenced on April 15 to 24 months of probation for making false statements. In addition, the couple was ordered to repay \$82,720 jointly and severally to SSA. They pleaded guilty to these charges in February 2021, as the result of an SSA Office of the Inspector General (OIG) investigation that found evidence the couple fraudulently received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments on behalf of their children.

According to a plea agreement filed with the Court in February 2021, SSA suspended SSI eligibility for two of Amanda Palacios' children in 2011 due to her and her husband's combined household income. Amanda then applied again for all three children, and knowingly concealed Jared's income. Once the children were approved for SSI, Amanda served as their representative payee, receiving the money on their behalf.

In addition, Jared and Amanda concealed from SSA Jared's residence in their home to maintain the children's SSI eligibility. Amanda falsely reported to SSA that Jared was her landlord and she paid him monthly rent, and she did not know where he lived. In reality, they lived together in the home and she did not pay him rent.

In a plea agreement, Jared admitting signing the form Amanda completed showing him as her landlord, and providing a P.O. Box as his address. As part of his guilty plea, Jared agreed to resign his position as a police officer. The couple improperly received a total of \$82,780 in SSI payments on behalf of their children.

"SSI is a critical safety net for low-income disabled or elderly individuals throughout the United States," said Inspector General Ennis. "My office will continue to hold people accountable, particularly those in positions of trust, when they defraud SSA's programs for personal gain."

"We must remain vigilant in our efforts to prevent and detect fraud, and I appreciate the Social Security employees who identified and referred this case to the OIG," said Andrew Saul, Commissioner of Social Security. "If you suspect someone of attempting to defraud the Social Security Administration, I urge you to report it so we continue paying benefits only to people who are eligible."

The SSA OIG's San Francisco Field Division investigated this case under the supervision of Special Agent-in-Charge Robb Stickley. Inspector General Ennis thanked SSA for referring this matter to the OIG for investigation, and the U.S. Attorney's Office for its support of this investigation and efforts to bring these individuals to justice and recover taxpayer funds.

Members of the public are encouraged to report suspected Social Security fraud to the OIG at <https://oig.ssa.gov>.