



News Release

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Social Security Representative Payee Sentenced for Fraud

Omayra Santiago Made False Statements to Wrongfully Receive \$146,000 in SSI

The Inspector General for the Social Security Administration (SSA), Gail S. Ennis, is announcing the sentencing of Omayra Santiago yesterday in the District of Connecticut for theft and conversion of public money. Santiago was sentenced to three months of imprisonment and three years of supervised release, and ordered to pay \$146,752.86 in restitution to SSA. Santiago pleaded guilty to the charges in October 2019.

Santiago served from 2005 to 2018 as the representative payee for her three children's Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and was required to report to SSA information about her household income, resources, and living arrangements. According to the plea agreement, Santiago admitted that she had reported to SSA multiple times that she lived alone with her children, and paid rent to a landlord, when in fact, she lived with the father of her children, who owned the home they lived in.

Furthermore, in January 2017, Santiago received \$220,000 from a civil settlement, and failed to disclose those resources to SSA as required by law. She put the money in a savings account, and received more than \$12,000 in SSI in 2017.

In all, from 2005 to 2018, Santiago improperly received more than \$146,000 in SSI payments that her children were not eligible to receive.

"Representative payees for minor children fulfill a critical role in reporting information to SSA that affects eligibility for need-based benefits," said Tonya Perkins, Special Agent-in-Charge, SSA Office of the Inspector General, Boston Field Division. "We will aggressively pursue those who knowingly game the system for personal gain, and we will work to recover funds for SSA and all taxpayers."

The SSA District Office in Waterbury, Connecticut referred this matter to the OIG. Inspector General Ennis thanked the U.S. Attorney's Office, and Assistant United States Attorney Margaret Donovan in particular, for their efforts that led to today's sentencing. The Department of Justice press release is online [here](#).

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

Members of the press may make inquiries to Social Security OIG at oig.dcom@ssa.gov or (410) 965-2671.