

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Houston woman charged for helping others falsely apply for government assistance

HOUSTON – A 22-year-old Houston resident is set to appear in federal court for conspiracy to commit wire fraud, announced U.S. Attorney Jennifer B. Lowery.

Desiree Coleman is expected to make her initial appearance before U.S. Magistrate Judge Dena H. Palermo at 2 p.m.

Coleman is charged with one count of conspiracy. She allegedly filed false online applications for government assistance in exchange for a fee from March to December 2020. Some included Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds for rentals, personal property and critical needs, according to the charges.

The criminal information alleges the funds were designed for disaster assistance.

As part of the conspiracy, Coleman also allegedly helped others apply for unemployment claims and economic injury disaster loans meant for certain businesses and non-profit organizations that the pandemic had affected.

If convicted, she faces up to five years of imprisonment and a possible \$250,000 maximum fine.

The Department of Homeland Security-Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted the investigation with the assistance of the Department of Labor-OIG, Secret Service, (FEMA and the Houston Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorney Rodolfo Ramirez is prosecuting the case.

***A criminal information is a formal accusation of criminal conduct, not evidence.
A defendant is presumed innocent unless convicted through due process of law.***