



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
EASTERN DISTRICT *of* NEW YORK

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, June 10, 2021

Five Individuals, Including Current and Former JetBlue Employees, Charged with Covid-19 Related Fraud

Defendants Falsely Claimed They Employed Dozens of Employees, Then Stole Emergency Relief Funds Earmarked for Small Businesses Suffering Economic Effects of the Pandemic

A criminal complaint was unsealed today in federal court in Brooklyn charging Orlando Sanay, Keimi Nunez and his twin brother Keily Nunez, Michael Pimentel Veloz and Fanny Plasencia with wire fraud in connection with false statements they allegedly made to obtain loans pursuant to the Economic Injury Disaster Loan program ("EIDL"). The defendants were arrested today and will make their initial appearances this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge Roanne L. Mann.

Mark J. Lesko, Acting United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, and Peter C. Fitzhugh, Special Agent-in-Charge, Homeland Security Investigations, New York (HSI), announced the arrests and charge.

"As alleged, the defendants brazenly lied and stole more than \$1 million in taxpayer funds from a program designed to help small businesses and their employees who were struggling to stay afloat and make ends meet during the pandemic," stated Acting United States Attorney Lesko. "Our Office will continue to ensure that criminals who divert pandemic-related relief to line their own pockets are held accountable for their greed."

"It's alleged that the five arrested today schemed to defraud the government by falsely obtaining over one million dollars in loans from the Economic Injury Disaster Loan program under the COVID Relief Act. This is a team of fraudsters who didn't just skim from a government agency, but stole much needed relief from the hands of those who depended on it most," stated HSI Special Agent-in-Charge Fitzhugh. "HSI New York worked closely with IRS--Criminal Investigations, the SBA's Office of Inspector General and JetBlue Corporate Security to apprehend these individuals and ensure they face the consequences of their actions."

The EIDL program provides qualifying small businesses with low-interest loans. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security ("CARES") Act expanded EIDL to provide economic support to help offset the temporary loss of revenue experienced by businesses due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As alleged in the complaint, between April 2020 and August 2020, the defendants applied for EIDL loans for eight separate entities. In those applications, the defendants falsely represented the number of employees associated with the entities and misstated the gross revenues for the entities for the 12 months prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, Sanay submitted a loan application to the Small Business Association (“SBA”) in July 2020 claiming that he was the owner and chief executive officer of Sanay Venture Capital LLC (“SVC”). In the application, Sanay falsely claimed that SVC had 26 employees, gross revenues of \$839,000 and cost of goods sold of \$560,000 for the relevant period. Sanay and Keimy Nunez submitted the application from the IP address of their employer, JetBlue Airways, to the SBA’s online portal. The SBA approved SVC’s application and on August 4, 2020 wired \$139,400 to Sanay’s personal bank account. In contrast to the claims made in the application, New York Department of Labor records showed that SVC has never reported having any employees. Internal Revenue Service records further reveal that SVC has never filed a tax return since its formation in 2014. There is no evidence to date that the EIDL funds provided to SVC were used for business purposes. Keily Nunez is no longer employed by JetBlue.

Based on these false representations, the Small Business Administration approved more than \$1 million in loans that were deposited into the defendants’ bank accounts.

In addition to making false statements to obtain the loans, the defendants did not use the relief funding for ongoing business expenses as the EIDL program requires. Instead, they withdrew hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash from bank accounts that had received EIDL loan funds.

The charge in the complaint is an allegation, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. If convicted, the defendants each face up to 20 years’ imprisonment.

The case is being handled by the Office’s Business and Securities Fraud Section. Department of Justice Trial Attorney Patrick J. Campbell is in charge of the prosecution.

The Defendants:

ORLANDO SANAY

Age: 39

Elizabeth, New Jersey

KEILY NUNEZ

Age: 41

Jamaica, New York

KEIMI NUNEZ

Age: 41

Woodhaven, New York

MICHAEL PIMENTEL VELOZ

Age: 40

Garfield, New Jersey

FANNY PLASENCIA

Age: 20

Jamaica, New York

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 21-MJ-668

Attachment(s):

[Download Sanay et al. Covid-19 fraud complaint](#)

Topic(s):

Coronavirus

Financial Fraud

Component(s):

USAO - New York, Eastern

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