



Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office Press Release

February 21, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Richmond, Texas – District Attorney Brian Middleton announced today that Robin Laschae Williams, 32, was arrested for the alleged theft of \$30,000 to \$150,000 in COVID-19 relief and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) disaster funds. A Fort Bend County grand jury indicted Williams on February 6, 2023.

The indictment is the most recent obtained by the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Public Integrity Division, in an effort to recover funds that were intended to assist legitimate Fort Bend County businesses to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security Inspector General (DHS-OIG) investigated the case in conjunction with investigators from the District Attorney's Office.

"COVID-19 relief programs were designed to lift up our community during crisis, and due to the number of people and businesses that requested funding, some deserving small businesses were unable to benefit to keep their businesses operating," said District Attorney Brian Middleton. "Anyone considering similar schemes to steal government funds intended to assist citizens in need, should know my office will prosecute these offenses to protect our community."

FEMA, a component of DHS, assists the public during disasters such as hurricanes and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Joseph V. Cuffari, Inspector General for the Department of Homeland Security, stated, "This arrest sends a strong message to fraudsters. DHS OIG will continue to work with our law enforcement partners – federal, state, and local – to investigate allegations of conspiracies to defraud the government."

Middleton formed the Public Integrity Division in 2019, not only to investigate fraud against government programs, but also to investigate and prosecute crimes committed by government officials and employees. The division was expanded in 2021 through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to specifically target pandemic relief fraud.

Theft in this case is a second-degree felony with a punishment range of 2 – 20 years in prison and a fine up to \$10,000.

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