



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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**QUEENS COUPLE PLEAD GUILTY TO FEDERAL CHARGES
IN CONNECTION WITH PUBLIC BENEFITS SCAM**

Jocelyn E. Strauber, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), issued the following statement on the guilty pleas of a Queens couple in connection with the theft of state and federal benefits. Today, MIRELA SELIMOVIC, 47, pled guilty to the theft of government funds before U.S. District Judge Peggy Kuo in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York and on Friday, January 10, 2025, her husband, SEAD SELIMOVIC, 54, pled guilty to conspiracy to defraud the United States government before U.S. District Judge Nicholas G. Garaufis in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York. As part of their plea agreements, prior to their sentencing dates in April 2025, MIRELA SELIMOVIC is ordered to forfeit \$22,869, and SEAD SELIMOVIC is ordered to forfeit \$58,040.12. Collectively, the couple was also ordered to pay restitution of \$112,707. DOI investigated this matter in collaboration with the United States Postal Inspection Service's New York Office and the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York, which is prosecuting this case.

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, "These defendants conspired to defraud three public programs to obtain benefits to which they were not entitled, depleting the funds available to the programs' intended recipients. I thank the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York for their commitment to protect these funds and hold accountable those who seek to obtain them through fraud."

According to the criminal complaint, the defendants provided false information that included understating family income and the type, and number of residences they owned, in order to obtain public benefits they were not entitled to, from three public benefits programs: the Disabled Homeowners' Exemption ("DHE") program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP"), and the New York State Medicaid program. Between February 2017 and January 2023, the defendants received approximately \$40,707 in DHE benefits, approximately \$51,091 in SNAP benefits, and approximately \$20,090 in Medicaid benefits to which they were not entitled.

DOI Commissioner Strauber thanked John J. Durham, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, and his staff for their partnership in the investigation and prosecution of this matter, which is being handled by Assistant United States Attorney Chand Edwards-Balfour. Commissioner Strauber also thanked the New York Office of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service Inspector in Charge of the New York Office for its partnership on this investigation.

Anastasia Plakas, formerly the Assistant Inspector General of DOI's Office of the Inspector General for the Department of Finance (currently DOI's Director of Vendor Integrity) investigated this matter, along with Investigative Auditors Carmen Wong and Yanyan Wang. They were supervised by Inspector General Ann Petterson, Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Initiatives Christopher Ryan, and Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country and New York City's corruption watchdog. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City. DOI's strategy attacks corruption comprehensively through systemic investigations that lead to high-impact arrests, preventive internal controls and operational reforms that improve the way the City runs.

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