




Memorandum



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To: The Honorable Daniella Levine Cava, Mayor, Miami-Dade County
The Honorable Anthony Rodriguez, Chairman
and Members, Board of County Commissioners, Miami-Dade County

From: Felix Jimenez, Inspector General 

Date: May 28, 2025

Subject: Miami-Dade Aviation Department (MDAD) Employee Sentenced for COVID-19 Relief Fraud, Ref. IG24-0020-I

George Arestuche, an MDAD refrigeration/AC mechanic was sentenced today, in federal court in connection with his fraudulent application for a Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act small business relief loan of approximately \$160,000. The case was investigated by the FBI's Miami Area Corruption Task Force, which includes investigators from the Miami-Dade County Office of the Inspector General (OIG), and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Office of Inspector General - Investigations Division Eastern Region.

Mr. Arestuche, who pled guilty in February, was sentenced on one count of Conspiracy to Commit Wire Fraud. Mr. Arestuche was prosecuted by the United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida. He appeared today before Senior U.S. District Judge Paul C. Huck and was sentenced to 5 years of probation with 7 months of home confinement with electronic monitoring. Prior to today's sentencing, Mr. Arestuche paid \$50,000 in restitution. As part of his sentence, Mr. Arestuche will have to pay \$114,679, the remaining balance, with interest. His sentence also includes a minimum of 750 hours of community service.

The CARES Act, enacted in March 2020, provided emergency financial assistance to individuals and eligible small businesses, sole proprietorships, and independent contractors experiencing substantial financial hardships due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the CARES Act, the SBA provided Mr. Arestuche with an Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) in the amount of \$149,900 and a \$10,000 EIDL advance.

EIDLs provided necessary funds to small businesses during the pandemic until normal operations could be resumed. To obtain an EIDL, a qualifying for-profit business was required to submit an application to the SBA and provide information about its operations, such as the number of employees, gross revenues, and cost of goods sold for the 12-month period preceding January 31, 2020. Applicants were required to certify under penalty of perjury that all information in the EIDL loan application was true and correct. Applicants could submit the EIDL application via the SBA's on-line application website.

Mr. Arestuche conspired with another individual to submit a fraudulent EIDL application to the SBA. In the fraudulent application he claimed to be an independent contractor and 100% owner of an automotive repair business operating under the legal and DBA name “george.” Mr. Arestuche, with the assistance of his co-conspirator, falsely claimed that for the 12-month period prior to January 31, 2020, “george” had gross revenues of approximately \$600,000, \$184,000 in costs of goods sold, and ten employees. Additionally, a fraudulent 2019 IRS Form 1040 and Schedule C were also submitted in support of the fraudulent application, claiming that Mr. Arestuche’s business had gross receipts of \$725,000 and a net profit of \$706,151. Mr. Arestuche paid his co-conspirator \$17,275.

During the investigation the OIG determined that Mr. Arestuche never provided MDAD a *Request to Engage in Outside Employment*, nor did he file any *Outside Employment Statements*. Mr. Arestuche’s claim of owning a business was false—in reality—he did not own any business. Mr. Arestuche has been with Miami-Dade County since 1996, when he began his employment at the Water and Sewer Department. He has been with MDAD since 1998.

cc: Ralph Cutié, Director, Aviation Department
Gerry Bonzon-Keenan, County Attorney
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