



Memorandum



Miami-Dade County Office of the Inspector General
A State of Florida Commission on Law Enforcement Accredited Agency
601 NW 1st Court ♦ South Tower, 22nd Floor ♦ Miami, Florida 33136
Phone: (305) 375-1946 ♦ Fax: (305) 579-2656
Visit our website at: www.miamidadeig.org

To: The Honorable Carlos A. Gimenez, Mayor, Miami-Dade County
The Honorable Esteban L. Bovo, Jr., Chairman
and Members, Board of County Commissioners, Miami-Dade County

From: Mary T. Cagle, Inspector General 

Date: June 11, 2018

Subject: Former CAHSD Temp Employee Arrested for LIHEAP Fraud - IG16-0022-I

An OIG investigation concluded today with the arrest of Aracelia Najarro-Rodriguez, a former temporary contract employee assigned to work at the County's Community Action and Human Services Department (CAHSD). The employee, Aracelia Najarro-Rodriguez, was employed by PackPlus, a staffing agency, and had worked for nine years as an Eligibility Interviewer for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). LIHEAP is a federally funded initiative administered through CAHSD, which provides assistance to families with energy costs.

The OIG joint investigation with the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office (SAO) stemmed from an anonymous complaint alleging that Ms. Najarro-Rodriguez was using her position to provide financial assistance for utilities to ineligible family members. Although the OIG investigation was unable to find any evidence in support of this claim, it did find that Ms. Najarro-Rodriguez misappropriated a LIHEAP client's Florida Power and Light \$360 refund check and instead deposited the check into her personal bank account.

Ms. Najarro-Rodriguez was terminated from her position in May 2017 as a result of this investigation. A warrant was obtained for her arrest and Ms. Najarro-Rodriguez surrendered today to law enforcement authorities. She has been charged with one count of Grand Theft, a third degree felony.

The OIG appreciates the assistance of CAHSD during this investigation. For additional information, a SAO press release is attached.

Attachment

cc: Lucia Davis-Raiford, Director, Community Action and Human Services Department
Alex Ferro, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor
Cathy Jackson, Interim Commission Auditor and Director,
Audit and Management Services Department



**KATHERINE FERNANDEZ RUNDLE
STATE ATTORNEY**

**ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Temporary Miami-Dade County Employee Arrested For Fraud

Miami (June 11, 2018) - A joint investigation involving the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office and the Miami-Dade County Office of the Inspector General has led to the arrest of temporary Miami-Dade County (County) employee Aracelia Najarro-Rodriguez for conspiring to defraud a low-income client of the Miami-Dade County Community Action and Human Services Department (CAHSD) of his FL Power & Light (FPL) refund check.

Najarro-Rodriguez is employed by PackPlus, a staffing agency, and has been working as an Eligibility Interviewer for the County's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) for approximately nine years.

The criminal investigation of this matter commenced based on an anonymous complaint into allegations that Najarro-Rodriguez was using her position at CAHSD to fraudulently obtain federal funds, provide financial assistance for utilities to ineligible family members, and that Najarro-Rodriguez was the recipient of public assistance she was not entitled to receive.

Investigators reviewed and analyzed LIHEAP documentation, interviewed County employees, relatives of Najarro-Rodriguez and other witnesses, and subpoenaed Najarro-Rodriguez' bank records. Additionally, one victim who complained he had never received his \$360.00 Florida Power and Light (FPL) refund check cooperated with police and secretly recorded a conversation with Najarro-Rodriguez in which she admitted having placed her own home address on the victim's FPL refund application, receiving his check, and depositing it in her personal bank account at SunTrust Bank. A review of FPL's records and Najarro-Rodriguez' bank records confirmed the deposit into her account in the exact amount of the victim's refund request.

The investigation concluded that Najarro-Rodriguez betrayed her position as an Eligibility Interviewer with CAHSD by preying on an individual in need and received money to which she was not entitled

Aracelia Najarro-Rodriguez is being charged with 1 count of Grand Theft, a 3rd degree felony.

FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION CONTACT:

Ed Griffith, Public Information Officer
(305) 547-0535

EdGriffith@MiamiSAO.com