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Tuesday, January 9, 2018

## England Woman Sent to Prison for Role in Scheme to Steal USDA Funds Intended to Feed Hungry Children

LITTLE ROCK—Cody Hiland, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, announced Tuesday that United States District Court Judge James M. Moody Jr., sentenced Dorothy Harper, 52, of England, to prison for her role in a multi-million dollar scheme to steal money intended for feeding children in low income areas.

Judge Moody sentenced Harper on Tuesday to 33 months' imprisonment followed by three years of supervised release. She was also ordered to pay \$1,300,702.29 in restitution. Harper pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud on March 24, 2017.

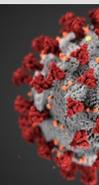
The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) feeding programs in Arkansas are administered through the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS). Sponsors who want to participate in the feeding programs must submit an application to DHS for approval. After they are approved, they can provide meals as part of the feeding programs, and they are reimbursed for the eligible meals they serve.

Harper was a sponsor for a feeding program through an organization called "Kingdom Land Youth Outreach Ministries" between June 2013 and May 2014. Prior to June 2013, Harper met Anthony Waits, who was married to former DHS employee Gladys Waits. Harper agreed to pay Anthony Waits in exchange for Gladys Waits' assistance in the program. Waits was recently sentenced to 175 months' imprisonment for his involvement in the fraud after his conviction at trial, while Gladys Waits received a 108-month sentence following a guilty plea.



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While Harper was in the program, approximately 15 inflated claims for Harper’s sites were submitted to DHS. The inflated claims reported to DHS higher numbers of children fed than the true number of children who were actually fed. Because of the inflated claims, Harper’s program received just over \$1.3 million.

Harper is the 14th defendant to be sentenced for their involvement in a scheme to fraudulently obtain USDA program funds intended to feed children in low income areas. Other defendants sentenced include: Kattie Jordan (63 months’ imprisonment on March 15, 2016); Reuben Nims (21 months’ imprisonment on November 2, 2016); Tonique Hatton (108 months’ imprisonment on January 4, 2017); James Franklin (24 months’ imprisonment on January 10, 2017); Maria Nelson (30 months’ imprisonment on January 31, 2017); Michael Lee (30 months’ imprisonment on May 1, 2017); Christopher Nichols (three years’ probation on May 16, 2017); Gladys Waits (108 months’ imprisonment on July 17, 2017); Alexis Young (18 months’ imprisonment on August 18, 2017); Erica Warren (18 months’ imprisonment on August 18, 2017); Francine Leon (34 months’ imprisonment on September 21, 2017); Anthony Waits (175 months’ imprisonment on October 19, 2017); and Jacqueline Mills (150 months’ imprisonment on December 6, 2017).

Waymon Weeams has pleaded guilty to conspiring to defraud USDA feeding programs. Elbert Harris has pleaded guilty to wire fraud in relation to the same feeding programs. Both are awaiting sentencing.

In this investigation, law enforcement has uncovered more than \$13 million in fraud related to these USDA Arkansas feeding programs. Although everyone initially charged in this scheme has now been convicted, the investigation is still ongoing, and continues to be conducted by the USDA–Office of Inspector General, IRS–Criminal Investigations, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Jana Harris, Allison W. Bragg, and Cameron C. McCree. If you are aware of any fraudulent activity regarding feeding programs, please email that information to USAARE.FeedingProgramFraud@usdoj.gov.

###

**Topic(s):**  
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**Component(s):**  
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