

Department of Justice
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District of Columbia

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Former D.C. Government Employee Sentenced to 12 Months and a Day in Prison for Fraud Scheme that Cost Government More Than \$880,000

WASHINGTON – Eugenia Rapp, 51, of Woodbridge, Virginia, a former D.C. government employee, was sentenced today to serve one year and a day in prison for defrauding the District of Columbia's Department of Disability Services out of more than \$880,000.

The announcement was made by Acting U.S. Attorney Michael R. Sherwin; James A. Dawson, Special Agent in Charge, FBI Washington Field Office, Criminal Division; Aaron R. Jordan, Assistant Inspector General for Investigations, Department of Education; and Daniel W. Lucas, Inspector General for the District of Columbia.

In June 2019, Rapp pled guilty in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to one count of conspiracy to commit mail fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 371.

From approximately 2008 through December 2016, Rapp worked as a vocational rehabilitation counselor with the District of Columbia's Department of Disability Services, Rehabilitation Services Administration ("DCRSA"). The DCRSA Vocational Rehabilitation program provides vocational rehabilitation benefits, like college tuition, to qualified individuals with disabilities to help them prepare for and engage in gainful employment. Individuals must be D.C. residents to be eligible for the benefits.

From 2012 through 2016, Rapp conspired with others to defraud the D.C. government by having benefits awarded to individuals who weren't eligible to receive them. In her role as a vocational rehabilitation counselor, Rapp was responsible for determining whether an individual was eligible to receive the benefits. Notwithstanding D.C. government policy regarding conflicts of interest, Rapp served as the vocational rehabilitation counselor for more than 20 individuals whom she described as being related to her. She knew these individuals were not eligible to receive benefits, but ensured that she was assigned to be their vocational rehabilitation counselor, so she could process and approve their applications. She also altered lease agreements and instructed individuals to get D.C. identification cards to show proof of D.C. residency even though they did not live in the District. As a result, the D.C. government awarded vocational rehabilitation benefits totaling approximately \$834,536 to Rapp's family members and friends.

Rapp also fraudulently awarded vocational rehabilitation benefits to an additional five individuals with whom she had no relationship. Those five individuals attended a nursing school in Florida whose president was Cleopha Tanis. In December 2019, Tanis, 53, of Naples, Florida, pled guilty to one count of mail fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1341, for his role in Rapp's scheme.

Towards the end of 2013, after one of Rapp's family members wanted to attend the Florida nursing school, Rapp worked with Tanis to get the school added as an approved vendor with the D.C. government. During that process, Tanis told Rapp that his school was struggling financially and asked her to use her position to help pay tuition for students at his school. Tanis knew that students had to be D.C. residents in order to be eligible to receive benefits, but worked with Rapp to get \$47,895 in benefits awarded to five students at his school who were not D.C. residents and who had no familial relationship to Rapp. In exchange, Tanis provided one of Rapp's relatives with a full scholarship to attend his school. Rapp also asked Tanis to provide money to that relative, which he did.

In March 2020, the Honorable Trevor N. McFadden sentenced Tanis to one month of imprisonment and seven months of home detention for his role in the scheme. He also ordered Tanis to pay \$47,895 in restitution and an identical amount in a forfeiture money judgment.

Today, Judge McFadden sentenced Rapp to one year and one day of imprisonment to be followed by one year of supervised release. He also ordered her to pay restitution in the amount of \$882,491.

In announcing today's sentence, Acting U.S. Attorney Sherwin, Special Agent in Charge Dawson, Assistant Inspector General Jordan, and Inspector General Lucas commended the work of those who investigated the case from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Education's Office of Inspector General, and the District of Columbia's Office of Inspector General. They also expressed appreciation for the work of Paralegal Specialist Mariela Andrade; former Paralegal Specialists Brittany Phillips and Jessica Mundi; and Assistant U.S. Attorney Kondi Kleinman, who prosecuted the case.