



THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of JUSTICE

United States Attorney's Office
District of Oregon

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Gresham Man Sentenced to Federal Prison for Stealing Covid Relief Funds

PORTLAND, Ore.—A Gresham, Oregon man was sentenced to federal prison today for stealing more than \$77,000 in funds intended to help small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Justin Allen Cunningham, 41, was sentenced to 10 months in federal prison and three years' supervised release. He was also ordered to pay \$81,207 in restitution.

According to court documents, in 2021, Cunningham learned about the opportunity to procure Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans guaranteed by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) by submitting fraudulent loan applications on behalf of fake business entities. The PPP program, originally authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act passed by Congress in March 2020, provided emergency financial assistance to American employers suffering the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting shutdowns.

To facilitate his scheme, Cunningham paid his friends for their help securing him a loan on behalf of a sole proprietorship he ran as a hobby: an online sneaker retailer called "JC shoe juice." Cunningham obtained an employer identification number from the IRS and opened an online business bank account. He provided this information to a friend who created bogus tax returns for Cunningham's company and submitted a PPP loan application on his behalf. The loan application falsely claimed that JC shoe juice had operated since 2015, had six employees, and generated more than \$460,000 in gross income in 2019. As a result of these false representations, Cunningham was issued a loan worth more than \$77,000.

On January 21, 2022, a federal grand jury in Portland returned an indictment charging Cunningham with one count of wire fraud. On October 14, 2022, he [pleaded guilty](#) to the single charge.

This case was investigated by the U.S. Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA), the SBA Office of Inspector General, and the FBI. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Ryan W. Bounds and Meredith D.M. Bateman prosecuted the case.

Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Justice Department's National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

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