



# News Release

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL ALAN WILSON  
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

For Immediate Release  
Jan. 15, 2016

Contact: J. Mark Powell  
(803) 734-3670

## **Attorney General Alan Wilson Says State to Recover \$337,392.47 from Food Stamp Fraud Cases**

(COLUMBIA, S.C.) Attorney General Alan Wilson announced today that restitution totaling \$337,392.47 has been ordered in 99 cases involving food stamp fraud in South Carolina. These are the results produced during the first year of operation by a special partnership targeting abuse of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), commonly known as the Food Stamps Program. The project was funded in part with federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It enables the Department of Social Services to investigate abuse cases, and for the South Carolina Attorney General's Office to prosecute them.

Since its launch on Jan. 2, 2015, 99 defendants have entered guilty pleas in court. Fraudulent Acquisition or Use of Food Stamps is a felony, punishable upon conviction by a maximum of five years in prison and or a fine of up to \$500.

"When food stamp fraud occurs, criminals steal from both rightful SNAP benefit recipients and the citizens of South Carolina whose taxes support this program," Wilson said. "This new effort shows how a coordinated approach to a common problem can produce effective results. By working together, we are finding and prosecuting criminals who abuse the SNAP program for their personal benefit."

Of the \$337,392.47 total ordered returned to the state in 2015, more than \$19,663.31 has been paid so far.

A \$318,840 federal grant provided startup funding. To date, those efforts have produced court-ordered restitution of more than \$18,000 beyond the program's cost.

Some 855,000 South Carolinians receive SNAP benefits. Recipients can use them to buy unprepared food items, such as milk and meat, bread, beans and rice to feed their families. Wilson noted that while the majority of SNAP recipients use the program as intended, those who abuse it divert funds from families who rely on the program.

If you know or suspect someone who is committing food stamp fraud, please report it by calling a special tip line at 1-800-616-1309.

###