



United States Department of Justice

Offices of the United States Attorneys

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
EASTERN DISTRICT *of* ARKANSAS

U.S. Attorneys » Eastern District of Arkansas » News

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of Arkansas

SHARE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, February 28, 2018

## Pine Bluff Man Sentenced to Prison for His Role in Stealing Funds Intended to Feed Hungry Children

### Elbert Harris to Repay More Than \$1,000,000

LITTLE ROCK—Cody Hiland, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, announced today that United States District Court Judge Kristine G. Baker sentenced Elbert Harris, 58, of Pine Bluff, to federal prison for his role in a widespread scheme to steal money intended for feeding children in low income areas in Arkansas.

Judge Baker sentenced Harris, who pleaded guilty to conspiring to commit wire fraud on October 10, 2017, to 33 months' imprisonment, to be followed by three years of supervised release. Harris was also ordered to pay \$1,084,130.13 in restitution and to forfeit property he bought with money he acquired during the scheme.

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.

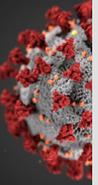
Harris was a sponsor for a feeding program through an organization called "Greater Faith Ministries." Harris had 14 approved feeding site locations, which were located in Pine Bluff, Altheimer, and Wabbaseka. Harris submitted fraudulent claims to DHS, claiming to have fed many more children than were actually fed, and then DHS would reimburse him for that amount. Harris submitted claims of up to 165 children per day at some of his feeding sites, but fewer than 20 children were actually fed at these locations.

Harris is the 16th defendant sentenced who was charged in connection with a scheme



### REPORT COVID-19 CRIME

Contact the National Center for  
Disaster Fraud Hotline:  
866-720-5721 or  
[Justice.gov/DisasterComplaintForm](https://www.justice.gov/DisasterComplaintForm)



Our nation-wide  
commitment to reducing  
gun crime in America.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Help us combat the  
proliferation of sexual  
exploitation crimes  
against children.

[LEARN MORE](#)

to fraudulently obtain USDA program funds intended to feed children in low income areas. Other defendants 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 (3 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 20, 2017); Jacqueline Mills (150 months imprisonment on December 6, 2017); Dorothy Harper (33 months imprisonment on January 9, 2018); and ); and Waymon Weeams (15 months imprisonment on February 15, 2018).

Debora Washington was indicted on conspiracy and fraud charges related to this scheme on February 1, 2018, and is awaiting a jury trial in front of United States District Judge J. Leon Holmes. Also, Nigel Hall has pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit wire fraud in relation to the same feeding programs and is awaiting sentencing before Judge Holmes at a later date.

The investigation is still ongoing and continues to be conducted by the USDA–Office of Inspector General, IRS–Criminal Investigations, and the FBI. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Jana Harris, Allison W. Bragg, and Cameron McCree.

If you are aware of any fraudulent activity regarding feeding programs, please email that information to [USAARE.FeedingProgramFraud@usdoj.gov](mailto:USAARE.FeedingProgramFraud@usdoj.gov).

**Topic(s):**  
Public Corruption

**Component(s):**  
USAO - Arkansas, Eastern

Updated February 28, 2018

**LAW ENFORCEMENT  
COORDINATING  
COMMITTEE**



Training and seminars for Federal, State, and Local Law Enforcement Agencies.

[LEARN MORE](#)

**Victim Witness  
Assistance**



Learn about victim notification and rights, witness information, and helpful resources.

[LEARN MORE](#)

OFICINAS DE LOS FISCALES DE  
LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS  
**EN ESPAÑOL**

- HOME
- ABOUT
- NEWS
- MEET THE U.S. ATTORNEY
- PROGRAMS
  - Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee (LECC)
  - Project Safe Childhood
  - Project Safe Neighborhoods
  - Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council (ATAC)
- VICTIM WITNESS
  - Victims' Rights Information For Victims In Large Cases
  - Crime Victims' Rights Ombudsman
  - Resources
  - Restitution
  - Witness Information
  - Justice 101
  - Frequently Asked Questions
- CONTACT US

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

- Accessibility
- Justice.gov
- FOIA
- USA.gov
- Privacy Policy
- Legal Policies & Disclaimers