



MEDIA RELEASE

Investigative Unit

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Three Cleveland residents and one business indicted in food stamp fraud and theft charges

(Cleveland) – On June 5, a Cuyahoga County Grand Jury indicted a Cleveland business and three individuals on food stamp fraud related activity. The charges stem from a long-term food stamp fraud investigation, which began last summer, by agents with the Ohio Investigative Unit.

The Elk Avenue Grocery, 10130 Elk Avenue, in Cleveland was indicted on five felony counts of illegal use of food stamps and one count of theft. Cleveland residents Tyiana Hunter, 23; Tyrone Cromity, 44; and Benny Strozier, 65; were also indicted on five felony counts of illegal use of food stamps and one count of theft.

“The Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program (SNAP) is intended to do just that, provide quality food and nutrition to those families that are in need,” said Agent-in-Charge Greg A. Croft. “It was never intended for individuals such as these to de-fraud and cheat the system for their own personal gain.”

Agents conducted a search warrant in September 2014 at the location. Agents issued the liquor permit administrative citations on four counts each of illegal use of electronic benefits transfer (EBT), trafficking in EBT and theft. Agents also issued one citation for improper repackaging and/or splitting of beer. Once all criminal proceedings are complete, agents will present administrative charges to the Ohio Liquor Control Commission. The commission has the authority to issue penalties against the liquor permits such as fines, suspensions or revocations.

If you know of a location committing food stamp fraud, please notify the Ohio Investigative Unit by calling the #677 on your cell phone and your complaint will be investigated.

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The Ohio Investigative Unit agents are plain-clothed fully sworn peace officers. OIU is charged with enforcing the state's liquor laws and is the only state law enforcement agency specifically tasked with investigating food stamp fraud crimes. Agents also investigate tobacco violations. Follow OIU on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ohio-Investigative-Unit/165782203506269> and on Twitter by logging onto http://twitter.com/Ohio_OIU.