

Summary: NPS Employee Wrongfully Obtained Unemployment Insurance/Pandemic Unemployment Compensation

Report Date: October 24, 2023

Report Number: 22-0328

The OIG initiated this investigation based on our review of unemployment insurance (UI) data, including Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) information, that we received from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). We reviewed the data to determine whether any U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) employees fraudulently obtained UI benefits or FPUC. Our review identified a National Park Service (NPS) employee who applied for and received both UI and FPUC while he was a full-time Federal employee.

We found that, from April 2020 through July 2020, the NPS employee received \$11,295 in combined UI and FPUC benefits from Mississippi while he was a full-time Federal employee. Our review of his UI/FPUC application documents revealed that he falsely answered “no” to the question of whether he was employed with the Federal Government, which made him eligible to receive UI benefits. Additionally, he subsequently submitted 15 false weekly self-certifications to Mississippi, in which he identified himself as unemployed with no reportable earnings. These self-certifications allowed him to continue receiving the UI and FPUC weekly benefits.

On July 26, 2023, the NPS employee entered into a civil settlement agreement with the U.S. Attorney’s Office, Southern District of Mississippi, and agreed to pay back a total of \$13,554 in UI/FPUC benefits, which included assessed penalties.

