



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**July 9, 2012**

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services  
Contact: Benjamin Johnson  
Phone: (614) 466-6650  
Email: benjamin.johnson@jfs.ohio.gov

Ohio Attorney General  
Contact: Dan Tierney  
Phone: 614-466-3840  
Email: dan.tierney@ohioattorneygeneral.gov

**Program to Collect Repayments from Unemployment Compensation Fraud**

COLUMBUS, OHIO – Today, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) and Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine announced they will be cracking down on Ohioans who fraudulently receive unemployment benefits by withholding the federal income tax refunds of those who fail to repay what they owe.

Soon, Ohio will have the option of collecting unpaid, fraudulently obtained unemployment benefits through the Treasury Offset Program (TOP). This program allows state agencies to collect outstanding debts by intercepting federal income tax returns. Currently, 16 state unemployment programs participate in the TOP program, as do both the Ohio Department of Taxation and Ohio’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP, or food stamp) program.

“This is one more tool we can use to collect fraudulently obtained benefits,” said ODJFS Director Michael B. Colbert. “We are here to help jobless Ohioans, but we have no tolerance for those who attempt to defraud the system.”

“In these tough economic times, we cannot tolerate individuals who obtain benefits fraudulently at the expense of Ohioans in genuine need,” said Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine. “We want to make sure that those who cheat the system repay what they owe so that Ohioans who qualify for these important benefits have them.”

The Ohio Attorney General’s Office collects outstanding debts owed to state agencies.

In 2011, ODJFS identified more than \$30 million in fraudulent overpayments, out of nearly \$1.3 billion in benefits paid. When fraudulently obtained benefits are recovered, they are deposited back into the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund and used to pay future benefits.

In most cases, fraud occurs when people attempt to collect unemployment benefits while they are working or after they return to work. Fraud also can occur when people intentionally provide false information about the reasons they are no longer working, collect unemployment compensation from another state while also collecting from Ohio, or are not actively seeking work.

ODJFS fraud investigators conduct electronic cross-matching of employer new hire reports and quarterly employers’ wage reports. They share data with the ODJFS Office of Child Support and the Ohio Bureau of Workers’ Compensation, and investigate tips and leads from concerned citizens.

Other methods Ohio uses to collect fraudulently obtained benefits include state income tax refund offsets, state lottery award offsets, collection agencies and legal action. Anyone who believes an individual is collecting unemployment benefits to which he or she is not entitled should call the ODJFS fraud hotline at 800-686-1555 or visit [unemployment.ohio.gov/fraud](http://unemployment.ohio.gov/fraud).