Daycare Owner Charged Over Fraud Scheme

A Minneapolis daycare owner has been charged with conspiracy to defraud the United States.

Fahima Egeh Mahamud, CEO of Future Leaders Early Learning Center, allegedly submitted 13,000 false claims to Minnesota's Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) between 2022 and 2025, a federal indictment explains.

According to the document, Mahamud "exploited changes in the program intended to ensure that underserved children received adequate nutrition during the COVID-19 pandemic to enrich herself by fraudulently misappropriating hundreds of thousands of dollars in federal child nutrition program funds." It says that the CEO "devised and carried out a scheme to defraud the United States by seeking reimbursement from the Child Care Assistance Program, a program designed to provide child daycare assistance to low-income families."

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The document goes on to explain that beginning around April 2020, Feeding Our Future, a Minnesota non-profit organization operating under the Child Care Assistance Program "dramatically increased the number of sites under its sponsorship as well as the amount of Federal Child Nutrition Program funds received by those sites." The filing notes that Feeding Our Future "went from receiving and disbursing approximately $3.4 million in federal funds to sites under its sponsorship in 2019 to nearly $200 million in 2021."

Journalist Nick Shirley published a video earlier this year documenting suspicious activity surrounding Minneapolis-area daycare centers.

Last month, federal agents raided more than 20 locations in Minneapolis on Tuesday, executing 22 federal search warrants as part of a sweeping fraud investigation centered on childcare businesses that allegedly billed the state for services never provided.

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