



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

PRESS RELEASE

7/11/17

**FORMER HHSA EMPLOYEE SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR
EMBEZZLEMENT AND WELFARE FRAUD**

Today in Department 10 of the Tulare County Superior Court, Visalia Division, Judge Kathryn Montejano sentenced Yvonne Hernandez, age 43, of Hanford, to four years in state prison for multiple financial crimes. On March 14, 2017, Hernandez pleaded guilty to 31 counts of embezzlement of public monies and 18 counts of welfare fraud.

Between July of 2009 and October 2013, Hernandez created 18 fraudulent welfare accounts while working as a Self Sufficiency Counselor at the Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA). She used the benefits from the accounts for her personal gain in the amount of \$145,071.88.

HHSA initiated the investigation after receiving a complaint from a member of the public and then worked with Investigators from the Office of the District Attorney to determine the full extent of the fraud committed by Hernandez.

In addition to her prison sentence, Hernandez was ordered to pay full financial restitution in the amount of \$145,071.88 to Tulare County HHSA.

“Taking advantage of both the taxpayer and those who need a helping hand the most is a clear violation of the public trust,” said District Attorney Tim Ward. “This office will continue to vigorously prosecute those who commit fraud against our communities.”

This year, the District Attorney’s Welfare Fraud Division has filed 41 cases of fraud totaling \$341,917.00. The Division consists of a dedicated prosecutor, nine welfare fraud investigators including a Supervising Investigator, and two investigative aides.

The case was prosecuted by Senior Deputy District Attorney Rodney Blaco of the Financial Crimes Division and investigated by Roselyn Oakes from the District Attorney Bureau of Investigations – Welfare Fraud Division.

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