

Credit Repair or Credit Fraud? How a Long Island Strip Mall Business Orchestrated A Massive COVID Tax Fraud



At first glance, Credit Reset Me Inc., wedged between a pizzeria and a nail salon at **683 Hempstead Turnpike**, seemed like countless other credit repair businesses dotting Long Island's commercial strips.

But prosecutors say this modest storefront served as the command center for what may be the most audacious COVID relief fraud scheme yet uncovered: a breathtaking \$600 million attempt to defraud pandemic-era tax credit programs.

While some other credit repair companies focus on credit washing, selling CPN's and authorized tradelines, this company appeared to have set its sights on something far bigger and more lucrative.



The Architect and His Empire

Keith Williams, the architect of the scheme, built an elaborate network that prosecutors say transformed his credit repair business into a fraud factory.

Court documents reveal how Williams and his associates allegedly exploited two complex pandemic relief programs - the Employee Retention Credit (ERC) and the Sick and Family Leave Credit (SFLC) - by weaponizing their understanding of tax preparation and financial systems.

Inside the Scheme

The indictment details a sophisticated operation that combined modern technology with old-fashioned fraud techniques and engineering:

- The group filed more than **8,000 false tax returns**, each meticulously crafted to appear legitimate
- They used **Virtual Private Networks (VPNs)** to mask their digital footprints when submitting claims
- **Shell companies** were created or purchased specifically for filing fraudulent claims
- **Tax preparers** within the group allegedly falsified employment records and wage statements

- The operation spanned **multiple states**, with participants in New York, North Carolina, and beyond

The Manipulation Was Deep

The scheme went deep to collect as many benefits as possible for the claimants. For example, in one case detailed in court documents, the group claimed both sick leave credits and employee retention credits for the same nonexistent employees - a legally impossible double-dip that somehow slipped through government oversight.

The operation was so profitable that even the smallest claims yielded significant returns. One defendant, Jamari Lewis, allegedly secured over \$64,000 in tax credits for a single quarter through his Colorado-based company, Chakeetah LLC, despite having no genuine business operations.

A Staggering Amount of Money

The group's ambition extended beyond tax credits. Court records show they also targeted the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), with defendants allegedly submitting multiple fraudulent loan applications. In one instance, Williams received two separate \$20,833 PPP loans within weeks of each other, each based on fabricated payroll documents.

The scope of the fraud was staggering:

- Over \$600 million in fraudulent claims submitted
- Approximately \$45 million successfully obtained
- Multiple shell companies each claiming hundreds of thousands in credits
- Elaborate profit-sharing arrangements among conspirators