

# NEWS

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United States Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney, District of New Jersey  
970 Broad Street, Seventh Floor  
Newark, New Jersey 07102

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***Christopher J. Christie, U.S. Attorney***

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***More Information?*** Call the Assistant U.S. Attorney or other contact listed below to see if more information is available.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Former Owner of Technical Training School Gets Year in Prison  
for Defrauding Departments of Education and Labor

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(More)

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NEWARK – The owner of Merit Technical Institute, a technical school formerly located in Newark, was sentenced today to a year and a day in federal prison for fraudulently obtaining approximately \$392,000 from the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Victor Mungai Kamunge, 53, of Newark, also paid over the balance owed in restitution – \$388,305 – to the government today at sentencing before U.S. District Judge Katharine S. Hayden.

Judge Hayden ordered Kamunge to turn himself in to the federal Bureau of Prisons by Dec. 28 to begin serving his custodial sentence.

Kamunge pleaded guilty on April 10 to a one-count Information charging him with embezzling from the United States, according to Assistant U.S. Attorney Donna Gallucio.

Kamunge admitted at his plea hearing from October 2001 to October 2003, as the president and owner of Merit Technical Institute, he knowingly applied for and received educational and training benefits of about \$392,000 for students who were unqualified and programs that were ineligible.

The school, formerly located on Commerce Street in Newark and now in Jersey City, trains students for jobs in the medical and computer software fields, according to Kamunge. The school received funds from the U.S. Department of Labor job-training program called the Workforce Investment Act, and the funds were distributed through the Newark Mayor's Office of Employment and Training, as well as the Essex County Economic Development Corp.

Merit also received funds from the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Family Education Program (FFEL).

Kamunge admitted that between October 2001 and October 2003 he submitted or had others submit false student transcripts and attendance records to qualify for Department of Labor funds. In doing so, Kamunge fraudulently received about \$182,700 from the Department of Labor program.

Kamunge also admitted that, during the same period, he fraudulently received approximately \$209,700 in Department of Education FFEL funds on behalf of students who were enrolled in courses that were ineligible for funding. To conceal the fraud, Kamunge admitted that he submitted false documents, including transcripts and attendance reports, to give the false impression that the students were enrolled in eligible programs.

Christie credited Special Agents of the Department of Education, Office of Inspector General, under the direction of Gary E. Mathison, Special Agent in Charge, Northeast area; and Special Agents of the Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, under the direction of Inspector General Gordon S. Heddell, with developing the case against Kamunge.

The Government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Gallucio, of the U.S. Attorney's Commercial Crimes Unit in Newark.

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Defense Attorney: Paul Brickfield, Esq., River Edge