



**Fresno County Sheriff's Department**  
**Richard Pierce, Sheriff**  
**News Release**

**August 25, 2005**

Sergeant Michael Lancaster  
Vice / Intelligence Unit  
559-452-1295

## **Identity Theft and Fraud Ring Arrested**

A joint investigation between the Fresno County Sheriff's Department and the U.S. Department of Education-Office of Inspector General Agents resulted in ten arrests warrants issued for individuals living throughout the county of Fresno. The arrest warrants were served on Wednesday, August 24, 2005 by the two agencies.

The 31-count criminal complaint was filed on August 24, 2005 in the Superior Court of California, County of Fresno. The complaint listed the defendants as WANDA L. BOURNES, age 31, PAULETTE PULLEN, age 33, LATASHA M. MAJOR, age 26, AURELIO R. SANTIAGO JR., age 22, MONIQUE L. GRANT, age 36, SABRINA L. GORDON, age 28, LAWANA PEARSON, age 28, NICOLE WHEELER, age 32, SHARICE WILLIAMS, age 31, and ALICE WILLIAMS, age 52, all of Fresno.

The investigation developed that the group used their identities and others' identities to fraudulently obtain approximately \$20,000 in Federal Student Aid funds and State Board of Governors fee waivers through Fresno Community College in the 2003-2004 school year. The grand theft charges involve theft of credit cards and/or bankcards of other individuals. The grand theft total is estimated to be approximately \$40,000.

The U.S. Department of Education Office of Inspector General and the State Community College Police located at Fresno City College initially investigated the fraudulent scheme. The financial aid portion of the investigation was initiated after an anonymous tip was received. The identity theft and grand theft portion of the investigation was initiated after a county employee noticed suspicious charges on their bankcard.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents with the Department of Education Office of the Inspector General, detectives from the Fresno County Sheriff's Department Vice/Intelligence Unit, and is being prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Roger Wilson.