



Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Former Directors of Alameda Heights Community Outreach Center
Plead Guilty Following Investigation into Theft of Federal Grant Funds**

DALLAS — The former directors of a community outreach center in Dallas, whose trial was to begin yesterday, pleaded guilty this morning to federal felony charges stemming from a joint investigation by the Department of Justice - Office of the Inspector General (DOJ-OIG) and the Department of Labor - Office of the Inspector General (DOL-OIG) into theft of federal grant funds. The announcement was made today by U.S. Attorney Sarah R. Saldaña of the Northern District of Texas.

Elazada Mays, 69, of Oak Leaf, Texas, pleaded guilty to one count of federal program theft. She faces a maximum statutory penalty of 10 years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine. Artis Lee Dean, 77, of Red Oak, Texas, pleaded guilty to one count of misprision of a felony. He faces a maximum statutory sentence of three years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine. In addition, restitution may also be ordered. Both defendants are on bond; a sentencing date was not set.

Dean was the Executive Director of the Alameda Heights Community Outreach Center (AHCOC), located on Lyola Street in Dallas. Mays was the Program Director.

In 2009, DOJ's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) released funding for a three-year, \$8.8 million grant for one-on-one mentoring services for 16 to 18 year-old at-risk youth. YouthBuild USA administered the grants. As the grantee, YouthBuild USA qualified and selected community-based organizations to perform one-on-one mentoring services for mentees within local communities. AHCOC was selected, and in June 2010, Dean signed a contract for a \$45,000 grant, agreeing to match and mentor 25 mentees, stipulating that at least 15 of the mentees would complete the program within a 15-month cycle.

For various reasons, however, including the unwillingness of mentees to participate, some of the mentoring relationships ended shortly after the program began. In November 2010, AHCOC officials realized that mentee participation had fallen below the required number and that the remaining mentor/mentee meetings were not being documented and tracked in accordance with the grant's requirements.

To receive reimbursements, AHCOC was required to generate and submit payroll records to YouthBuild USA. Even though AHCOC employees and staff no longer worked on the mentoring program, fraudulent time sheets were created, transmitted and certified by Dean or Mays that certified work was being done in the program throughout the entire 15-month period.

In August 2011, Dean submitted an application for another 15-month cycle funding to YouthBuild USA, knowing that AHCOC did not comply with the requirements of the grant's first cycle. YouthBuild USA relied on Dean's false statements in awarding AHCOC with a second grant for \$75,000, with AHCOC committing to recruit and match 40 mentees. This second cycle of grant funding ran from December 1, 2011, to March 28, 2013, but by August 2012, AHCOC had expended all of its funds — a full six months before the end of the term.

Dean and Mays admitted that the invoices and timesheets submitted by AHCOC to YouthBuild USA were false because they did not accurately reflect the hours worked on the mentorship program by officials, staff and employees. Mays also admitted that during both cycles, AHCOC falsified records to indicate that the required number of students participated in and completed the mentorship program, when in fact, the required number of students neither participated in nor completed either of the cycles.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Aaron Wiley and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Vivian Lee are prosecuting.

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