



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

TAMMY DICKINSON

Contact Don Ledford, Public Affairs | (816) 426-4220 | 400 East Ninth Street, Room 5510 | Kansas City, MO 64106

www.justice.gov/usao/mow/index.html

MARCH 18, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FORMER DIRECTOR OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER SENTENCED FOR \$400,000 FRAUD SCHEME

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Tammy Dickinson, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that the former director of a shelter for victims of domestic violence in Marshall, Mo., was sentenced in federal court today for embezzling more than \$100,000 from the shelter and defrauding the state on federal grants earmarked for victims of crime.

Deborah L. Wallace, 51, of Marshall, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Gary A. Fenner to two years and six months in federal prison without parole. The court also ordered Wallace to pay \$433,688 in restitution (including \$115,219 in restitution to the Lighthouse Shelter and \$268,468 in restitution to the Missouri Department of Public Safety).

On June 26, 2014, Wallace pleaded guilty to one count of stealing government property and one count of making false claims for reimbursement under a federal grant.

Wallace was the executive director of the Lighthouse Shelter, Inc., from April 1999 to April 2013. Wallace admitted that she embezzled money from Lighthouse, including money obtained from grants funded by the U.S. Department of Justice. Over a five-year period from 2008 through 2013, Wallace used Lighthouse credit cards to pay personal expenses. Wallace also made unauthorized payments on personal credit cards and her personal cell phone from the Lighthouse bank account.

In her position as executive director, Wallace certified that the grant applications submitted to the Missouri Department of Public Safety for federal grants – the Victims of Crime Act and the State Services for Victims Fund – were true and accurate statements in support of the grant applications. Wallace also certified that the monthly invoices made in support of disbursement of the grant monies were true and accurate. Wallace admitted that she submitted fraudulent monthly invoices. For example, she falsely claimed that employees who actually

performed other duties were working in positions funded under the grants.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul S. Becker. It was investigated by the FBI and the U.S. Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

<http://www.justice.gov/usao/mow/index.html>

Twitter:

http://www.Twitter.com/USAO_WDMO

Facebook:

<http://www.Facebook.com/USAOMOW>