

**Department of Justice**  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
District of Montana

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Ex-board member of Montana Native Women's Coalition admits to theft of grant funds**

BILLINGS –A former board member of the Montana Native Women's Coalition admitted on Jan. 21 to stealing grant funds for unapproved travel to Las Vegas, Nevada, Acting U.S. Attorney Leif Johnson said today.

Barbara Mary Daychief, 43, of Browning, pleaded guilty to theft of federal funds. Daychief was a board member of the Montana Native Women's Coalition. Daychief faces a maximum of 10 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, and three years of supervised release.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Timothy J. Cavan presided. Judge Cavan continued Daychief's release pending further proceedings. A sentencing date has not yet been set.

The prosecution said in court documents that the purpose of the Lame Deer-based Coalition is to help Native American victims of domestic and sexual violence. The Coalition receives funding from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), which provides grants for victim services.

While serving on the Coalition's board, Daychief received travel advances for travel to various locations. In November of 2017, Daychief claimed \$1,874.18 in travel money for a trip to Las Vegas, Nevada. All travel funds provided to Daychief were funds from OVW.

Although initially intending to travel to the claimed destinations, Daychief ultimately did not travel as planned. Rather than pay back the travel advances as required, Daychief kept the money for herself. When interviewed by law enforcement, Daychief admitted she obtained travel advances despite not traveling as claimed. Because Daychief has kept the federal funds for approximately three years, her actions intentionally deprived OVW from using the federal funds for other desired purposes.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Ryan Weldon and Bryan Dake are prosecuting the case, which was investigated by the Department of Justice's Office of the Inspector General.

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