

Former CEO of Los Angeles-Based Anti-Poverty Nonprofit Agrees to Plead Guilty to Embezzling and Misusing Funds and Tax Offense

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Central District of California

LOS ANGELES – The former president and CEO of a Hollywood-based anti-poverty nonprofit agency has agreed to plead guilty to federal criminal charges for embezzling money from the nonprofit for his personal benefit and intentionally misapplying more than \$600,000 in grant money to pay for unauthorized expenses and lying on his tax returns, the Justice Department announced today.

Howard Dixon Slingerland, 53, of Studio City, has agreed to plead guilty to a two-count information charging him with conversion and intentional misapplication of funds from an organization receiving federal money, and subscribing to a false federal income tax return.

Both the information and plea agreement were filed today in United States District Court. Slingerland is expected to make his initial court appearance in the coming weeks.

According to his plea agreement, from 1996 until he was fired in September 2019, Slingerland was the president and CEO of Youth Policy Institute Inc. (YPI), a Hollywood-based nonprofit agency that worked to eradicate poverty in some of the highest needs neighborhoods in Los Angeles with a comprehensive approach addressing education, youth development, safety, job training, and health and wellness. In these roles, Slingerland had check-signing authority over YPI's bank accounts and was the personal guarantor of YPI's credit card.

From January 2015 to February 2019, Slingerland caused at least \$71,533 of YPI funds to be spent on unauthorized expenditures, including Slingerland's personal property tax bill that exceeded \$14,000, more than \$6,000 for a family dinner at a New York City restaurant, nearly \$11,000 for a family member's tutoring, and nearly \$2,000 on a home computer and software.

In July 2019, Slingerland caused approximately \$401,561 in funds YPI had received from a federal grant to be used for the unauthorized payment of YPI payroll. That same month, he also caused approximately \$201,466 in federal grant money to be illegally used to pay off YPI's credit card bill, including for expenses Slingerland had incurred.

Slingerland further admitted in his plea agreement that he underreported on his individual federal income tax returns more than \$100,000 in income each year for the tax years 2015 through 2018 by not reporting money he obtained from YPI including through the embezzlement. Slingerland admitted to owing the United States Treasury a total of approximately \$147,398 in unpaid taxes – not including penalties and interest – for these years.

After Slingerland enters his guilty plea, he will face a statutory maximum sentence of 10 years in federal prison on the conversion count and three years in federal prison on the tax count.

IRS Criminal Investigation; the FBI; the United States Department of Labor Office of Inspector General; the United States Department of Education Office of Inspector General; the United States Department of Justice Office of Inspector General; and the Los Angeles Unified School District investigated this matter.

Assistant United States Attorney Rane A. Katzenstein, Chief of the Major Frauds Section, is prosecuting this case.