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**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of Louisiana

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, December 20, 2017

## **Chief Financial Officer of Non-Profit Sentenced for Theft of Federal Grant Funds**

Acting U.S. Attorney Duane A. Evans announced that **RICKEY ROBERSON**, age 49, of New Orleans, was sentenced today after previously pleading guilty to one count of theft of federal grant funds.

U.S. District Judge Kurt D. Engelhardt sentenced **ROBERSON** to 13 months imprisonment, restitution in the amount of \$84,308, three years supervised release, and a \$100 special assessment. In addition, **ROBERSON** will be placed on home detention with ankle monitoring for six months once released from prison.

According to court documents, from at least 2010 to the present, **ROBERSON** and his wife operated Alternatives Living, Inc., a non-profit that received federal funds from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the form of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Alternatives Living provided affordable housing to the elderly, families who were homeless, and individuals suffering from mental disabilities. As a condition to receiving federal funds, Alternatives Living agreed to comply with applicable rules and regulations governing the manner and use of the CDBG funds. Applicable program rules, including OMB Circular No. A-122, prohibited the use of CDBG funds for entertainment purposes (i.e., social activities and tickets to shows and sporting events), fundraising, personal tuition costs, and costs of goods or services for personal use. Rules allowed reimbursement for travel costs and conferences only if those costs were related to the mission of the organization and consistent with those costs normally allowed.

**ROBERSON** pled guilty to using CDBG federal grant funds to pay for his daughter's cellphone bill in the amount of \$4,663. As part of his plea agreement, **ROBERSON** agreed that he also used federal grant funds to pay for his son's cellphone bill, personal travel, satellite radio, concert tickets, medical bills for his children, cruise expenses, and repairs to a personal Cadillac Escalade and Audi TT. **ROBERSON** agreed that the total amount of restitution that he owes exceeds \$84,000.

Acting U.S. Attorney Evans praised the work of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General, the Office of State Inspector General, and Louisiana Legislative Auditor's Office in investigating this matter. Assistant U. S. Attorneys Sharan E. Lieberman and Brian M. Klebba, both of the Fraud Section, were in charge of the prosecution.

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**Topic(s):**

Financial Fraud

**Component(s):**

USAO - Louisiana, Eastern

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