

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
EASTERN DISTRICT *of* LOUISIANA

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of Louisiana

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, June 17, 2016

Family Running Non-Profit Indicted for Conspiracy and Theft of Federal Funds Intended for Needy Individuals

Used Money to Pay for Football Tickets and Cruise Expenses

U.S. Attorney Kenneth A. Polite announced that **RICKEY ROBERSON**, age 48, his wife **ADA CRAIGE-ROBERSON**, age 42, and her mother **MELANIE DUPLCHAIN**, age 69, of New Orleans, were charged today in a three-count Indictment for conspiracy and theft of federal funds.

According to the Indictment, from at least 2009 to the present, **ROBERSON, CRAIGE-ROBERSON, and DUPLCHAIN**, 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.

Count 1 of the Indictment alleges that prior to in or around January 2009 and continuing through July 2015, **ROBERSON, DUPLCHAIN, and CRAIGE-ROBERSON**, and others, did knowingly and willfully combine, conspire, confederate, and agree to embezzle, steal or knowingly convert to their own use or the use of another, any money or thing of value of the United States or of any department or agency thereof, in excess of \$1,000.

Count 2 alleges that on or about June 20, 2011, **ROBERSON** willfully and knowingly did steal, purloin, and convert to his own use Community Development Block Grant funds, which were designated for use by Alternatives Living for program related expenses, and which were property of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, when he purchased football tickets to see the New Orleans Saints, totaling more than \$1,000.

Count 3 of the Indictment alleges that on or about December 29, 2012, **CRAIGE-ROBERSON** willfully and knowingly did steal, purloin, and convert to her own use Community Development Block Grant funds,

which were designated for use by Alternatives Living for program related expenses, and which were property of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, when she purchased personal travel expenses on the Royal Caribbean Cruise line, totaling more than \$1,000.

If convicted of the conspiracy in Count 1, **ROBERSON, CRAIGE-ROBERSON**, and **DUPLECHAIN** face a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment, a maximum fine of \$250,000 and a special assessment of \$100. If convicted of theft of federal funds in Counts 2 and 3, **ROBERSON** and **CRAIG-ROBERSON** respectively face a maximum penalty of ten years imprisonment, a maximum fine of \$250,000 and a special assessment of \$100.

U.S. Attorney Polite reiterated that the Indictment is merely a charge and that the guilt of the defendants must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

U.S. Attorney 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 with the assistance of the Louisiana Legislative Auditor's Office in investigating this matter. Assistant U.S. Attorney Sharan E. Lieberman is in charge of the prosecution.

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Topic:

Financial Fraud

[Download Rickey Roberson, Ada Craige-Roberson, Melanie Duplechain - Indictment.pdf](#)

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