

Webster Parish nonprofit director indicted for stealing more than \$1 million from feeding program

Western District of Louisiana

SHREVEPORT, La. – United States Attorney David C. Joseph announced today that Myrna Thomas Quarles, 58, of Cotton Valley, Louisiana, was indicted by a federal grand jury for taking more than \$1 million from a federal feeding program meant for low-income children.

Quarles was charged with five counts of theft of government property, five counts of forged securities of the states and private entities, and 27 counts of money laundering.

According to the indictment, Quarles was the director of the Greater Horizons Developmental Services, a nonprofit headquartered in Webster Parish. Greater Horizons received reimbursements from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Summer Feeding Service Program (SFSP), which was administered through the state of Louisiana. From 2014 through 2015, Greater Horizons submitted more than \$1 million in reimbursement claims that greatly inflated the number of eligible meals provided. Once Greater Horizons received the money, Quarles wrote checks that were purportedly payable to vendors and other third parties, but then deposited that money into a personal financial account.

If convicted, Quarles faces a maximum term of imprisonment of 10 years for each count of theft and forgery, and 20 years in prison for each count of money laundering. She also faces up to five years of supervised release, a \$500,000 fine and restitution. The government is also seeking to seize real estate and equipment purchased with the SFSP funds.

The FBI, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General, and State of Louisiana, Office of State Inspector General, conducted the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Brian C. Flanagan and First Assistant U.S. Attorney Alexander Van Hook are prosecuting the case.

An indictment is merely an accusation and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.