



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Robert E. O'Neill
Middle District of Florida

Tampa

Orlando

Jacksonville

Fort Myers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: STEVE COLE

August 29, 2008

PHONE: (813) 274-6136

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/flm/pr>

FAX: (813) 274-6300

FORMER TAMPA HOUSING AUTHORITY OFFICIAL
SENTENCED IN SECTION 8 FRAUD SCHEME

Tampa, Florida - U.S. District Judge Elizabeth A. Kovachevich, today sentenced former Tampa Housing Authority (THA) official CALVIN COLEMAN, age 44, to 50 months' imprisonment and 3 years' supervised release for conspiracy and theft of government funds. COLEMAN was also ordered to pay more than \$486,000 in restitution to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). COLEMAN pleaded guilty on April 22, 2008 to one count of conspiracy, nine counts of theft of government funds, and two counts of theft of government funds by an agent of an organization and of a state and local government.

According to court documents and information provided at the sentencing today, the Tampa Housing Authority ("THA") receives hundreds of thousands of dollars each year from HUD to subsidize housing for low-income families, the elderly, and disabled individuals as part of the Housing Choice Voucher Program, previously known as Section 8. COLEMAN was employed as a "Section 8 counselor" with the Tampa Housing Authority ("THA"), and was responsible for administering the Housing Choice/Section 8 program. From approximately August 2003 to June 2005 COLEMAN used his position as a Section

8 counselor to pilfer over \$486,000 from public funds for his personal use.

COLEMAN, along with other former THA officials CARLTON MILES and MARIO LOVETT, recruited numerous individuals to serve as bogus landlords, even though they neither owned approved rental properties nor had leases with legitimate Section 8 approved tenants. In all, COLEMAN entered or caused to be entered the names of at least six different individuals as bogus landlords. Once the landlords had received their fraudulent subsidy check, COLEMAN took a substantial “kickback” from the proceeds. In addition to the bogus landlord scheme, COLEMAN also misappropriated HUD funds by fraudulently issuing utility allowance payments to fictitious tenants, taking bribes from non-qualified individuals to enroll them in the Section 8 program.

Since December 2007, nineteen individuals, including former THA officials CARLTON MILES and MARIO LOVETT, have been charged with theft of federal housing subsidy payments through the bogus landlord scheme. Seventeen of those defendants have pleaded guilty to felony charges. Only four remain to be sentenced. LOVETT was previously sentenced to 18 month’s imprisonment and MILES to 24 months’ imprisonment for their roles in the scheme.

The case was investigated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development-OIG. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Cherie L. Krigsman and Thomas N. Palermo.