

## Department of Justice

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### **Former Grant Administrator and Legal Assistant of American Samoa Non-Profit Legal Aid Corporation Plead Guilty to Stealing More Than \$150,000 in Federal Grant Funds**

*Funds Intended to Benefit Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse*

WASHINGTON – A former grant administrator and her daughter pleaded guilty yesterday to stealing more than \$150,000 in federal grant funds awarded to a non-profit corporation in the U.S. territory of American Samoa, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Justice Department's Criminal Division.

Julie Matau, 49, of San Francisco, pleaded guilty to one count of wire fraud before U.S. District Judge Claudia Wilken. Andrea Matau, 28, also of San Francisco, pleaded guilty to one misdemeanor count of theft of federal funds before Judge Wilken. A federal grand jury in the Northern District of California returned an indictment against Julie and Andrea Matau on Dec. 16, 2010. A third defendant, David Wagner, pleaded guilty on March 11, 2011, in the Eastern District of Missouri.

According to court documents, U'una'i Legal Services Corporation (ULSC) was a nonprofit corporation operating in American Samoa from approximately 1998 to 2007. During this period, ULSC was the only nonprofit organization in American Samoa that was dedicated to providing free legal services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and sexual abuse. Between approximately August 2005 and September 2007, ULSC received more than \$1.2 million in federal grant funds from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Violence Against Women and the Legal Services Corporation.

According to court documents, David Wagner served as ULSC's acting executive director, and Julie Matau served as ULSC's grant administrator, from May 2005 and September 2007. Julie Matau, with Wagner, was responsible for submitting applications for federal grant funding, managing the federal grant funds awarded to ULSC and arranging for employee payroll checks to be issued. Andrea Matau worked as one of ULSC's legal assistants and reported directly to Julie Matau.

According to their guilty pleas, between September 2005 and September 2007, Julie Matau and Wagner arranged for themselves, Andrea Matau, and relatives of Julie and Andrea Matau to receive federal grant funds to which they were not legally entitled. According to court documents, Julie Matau unlawfully received \$65,649 in federal grant funds; Andrea Matau

unlawfully received \$24,634 in federal grant funds; Wagner unlawfully received \$31,292 in federal grant funds; and the Mataus relatives received \$38,188.

Julie Matau admitted that she knew that she and others had no legal entitlement to receive these federal grant funds and that their receipt of the federal funds violated the terms and conditions of the grants. Julie Matau also admitted that she had no intention of repaying the money to ULSC or the federal government, or of requiring others to repay the money. Andrea Matau admitted that she participated in the theft by receiving money to which she was not lawfully entitled and by permitting Julie Matau to deposit her unlawful payments in Andrea's personal bank account and their joint bank accounts. In his guilty plea, Wagner admitted to receiving "salary advances" and other payments to which he was not lawfully entitled, and to signing blank checks for Julie Matau. Wagner is awaiting sentencing.

The charge of wire fraud carries a maximum prison sentence of 20 years and a maximum fine of \$250,000. The misdemeanor charge of theft of federal funds carries a maximum prison sentence of one year and a maximum fine of \$100,000. Sentencing has been scheduled for March 27, 2012, before Judge Wilken.

The case is being prosecuted by Trial Attorneys Edward J. Loya Jr. and Monique T. Abrishami of the Criminal Division's Public Integrity Section. Senior Trial Attorney Mary K. Butler and Trial Attorney Maria N. Lerner, also of the Public Integrity Section, participated in the investigation of this matter. The case is being investigated by special agents of the Department of Justice's Office of Inspector General and the Legal Services Corporation's Office of Inspector General, with assistance from special agents of the FBI-Honolulu Division, American Samoa Resident Agency.

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Criminal Division