



Department of Justice

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Southern District of Mississippi**

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**FORMER MISSISSIPPI VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROJECT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PLEADS GUILTY TO CONVERTING FEDERAL FUNDS**

Jackson, Miss – Shirley Mae Williams, 47, of Jackson, Mississippi, former Executive Director of the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project (MVLP), in Jackson, MS, entered a plea of guilty for the theft of federal funds on November 12, 2014. MVLP received Legal Services Corporation (LSC) grant funds as a sub-grantee of both North Mississippi Rural Legal Services (NMRLS) and Mississippi Center for Legal Services (MCLS). From January 2009 through December 2012, Williams, while employed as the Executive Director, converted federal funds from MVLP to pay for a portion of her family's cellular phone expenses, a family health club membership, and fraudulent monthly payments to a cleaning company owned by her husband, announced U.S. Attorney Gregory K. Davis, and Jeffrey E. Schanz, Inspector General, LSC, Office of Inspector General.

In a statement issued by Jeffrey E. Schanz, Inspector General, LSC, Office of Inspector General, he states "today's events represent a joint effort by the Department of Justice and the Legal Services Corporation Office of Inspector General in bringing justice to those who steal funds to serve the legal needs of the poor."

Williams will be sentenced on January 21, 2015 at 2:30 p.m. and faces a maximum penalty of 1 year in prison and a \$100,000.00 fine.

This case was investigated by Legal Services Corporation Office of Inspector General and prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jerry Rushing.

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