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## **FORMER ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION IN AMERICAN SAMOA PLEADS GUILTY TO THEFT OF FEDERAL GRANT FUNDS**

WASHINGTON – The former acting executive director of U’una’i Legal Services Corporation (ULSC) pleaded guilty today to stealing \$31,292 from the federally-funded organization in American Samoa, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Criminal Division; Jeffrey Schanz, Inspector General of the Legal Services Corporation, Office of Inspector General (LSC OIG); and Elise Chawaga, Special Agent in Charge of the Fraud Detection Office at the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General (DOJ OIG).

David Wagner, 47, of Maryland Heights, Mo., pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Carol E. Jackson in the Eastern District of Missouri to a one-count criminal information charging him with theft of federal grant funds.

According to court documents, from approximately 1998 through 2007, ULSC was a nonprofit organization operating in American Samoa. During this period, ULSC was the only nonprofit organization in American Samoa dedicated to providing free legal services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and sexual abuse. ULSC relied on various sources of federal grant funding, including funding from the Legal Services Corporation and the Department of Justice’s Office of Violence Against Women (OVW).

In pleading guilty, Wagner admitted that from approximately November 2005 through December 2006, he stole \$31,292 in federal grant funds from ULSC and OVW.

“Sadly, there are still far too many incidents of violence against women today. Victims in American Samoa were victimized yet again when funds intended to help provide free legal services to them were stolen by this defendant,” said Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer. “The Department of Justice is committed to working toward a future where domestic abuse, sexual assault, stalking and teen dating violence are eradicated – and to prosecuting those who defraud programs meant to help achieve this goal.”

“Today’s event represents a joint effort by the Criminal Division, the LSC OIG and the DOJ OIG in protecting funds that serve the legal needs of the poor,” said Jeffrey Schanz, Inspector General of the LSC OIG.

“The Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General is committed to holding grantees accountable who betray the trust placed in them by using federal grant funds for

personal gain rather than to assist victims of crime,” said Elise Chawaga, Special Agent in Charge of the Fraud Detection Office at the DOJ OIG.

Wagner faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine and payment of \$31,292 in restitution. Sentencing is scheduled for July 12, 2010.

The case is being prosecuted by Trial Attorney Edward J. Loya Jr., of the Criminal Division’s Public Integrity Section. The case is being investigated by special agents of LSC OIG and DOJ OIG.

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