



Department of Justice

United States Attorney John W. Vaudreuil
Western District of Wisconsin

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CONTACT: RITA M. RUMBELOW
PHONE: (608) 264-5158
TTY: (608) 264-5006

INDIANA WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO THEFT OF GOVERNMENT FUNDS

MADISON, WIS. -- John W. Vaudreuil, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Lori Portner, 53, Lafayette, Ind., pleaded guilty today in U.S. District Court in Madison to theft of government funds.

For many years, Portner was the full-time office manager for the Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP) in La Crosse, Wis. DVIP received federal grant funds from the U.S. Department of Justice, Victims of Crimes Act, and they administered grant monies for domestic violence intervention. As the office manager, Portner was responsible for payroll as well as other administrative duties.

In June 2007, Portner's hours were reduced to part-time because she had a full-time job with a different employer. Portner continued to pay herself as if she were still working full-time at DVIP and from June 2007 to June 2010, she overpaid herself approximately \$116,000.

During that same time, Portner misused the DVIP credit card that was issued in her name. Portner used the credit card to purchase approximately \$27,000 of personal items for herself. In an attempt to avoid detection, Portner had the DVIP credit card statement sent to her home, instead of to the DVIP office.

U.S. District Judge William M. Conley scheduled sentencing for November 12, 2014, at 1:00 pm. Portner faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison. She has also agreed to pay \$116,000 in restitution. Portner previously reimbursed DVIP for the unauthorized credit card purchases.

The charge against Portner was the result of an investigation conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Inspector General and the La Crosse Police Department. The prosecution of this case is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Rita M. Rumbelow.

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