

Biscayne Building
19 West Flagler St., Suite 220
Miami, FL 33130
Phone: (305) 375-1946
Fax: (305) 579-2656
www.miamidadeig.org

**Office of the Inspector General
Miami-Dade County**

Memorandum

To: The Honorable Carlos Alvarez, Mayor
The Honorable Chairperson Joe Martinez
Members, Board of County Commissioners

From: Christopher Mazzella
Inspector General

Date: June 30, 2005

Re: Arrest of Executive Director of United People Counseling Ministry Services for
Defrauding DHS and OSBM of Grant Funds

Attached is a news release relating to the arrest of Maura Bailey (Bailey), Executive Director of the United People Counseling Ministry Services (UPCMS), on fraud related charges concerning the misappropriation of County funds awarded to UPCMS through the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Office of Strategic Business Management (OSBM).

Bailey headed UPCMS, an organization whose mission was to provide food to the poor and those afflicted with HIV. UPCMS applied for and received two County grants to operate a food pantry in the Southwest area of the County. One grant from DHS targeted assistance to the poor while the OSBM grant targeted assistance to individuals with HIV. Both grants operated as reimbursement grants.

Irregularities with the invoices submitted for reimbursement were first brought to the attention of the OIG by DHS following an annual review of UPCMS. The OIG investigation found that Bailey submitted numerous fraudulent and forged invoices to both grants. In total, Bailey fraudulently obtained in excess of \$28,000 in County funds. Due to the OIG investigation, the County withheld approximately \$12,000 in reimbursements. The OIG investigation also uncovered that Bailey spent the County's funds earmarked to help the disadvantaged and the ill in order to pay personal expenses and those of her friends and family.

The OIG appreciates the full cooperation given by DHS and OSBM throughout the course of the investigation.

cc: Mr. George Burgess, County Manager
Ms. Mae D. Bryant, Ph.D. Interim Director, Department of Human Services
Ms. Jennifer Glazer-Moon, Director, Office of Strategic Business Management
Ms. Cathy Jackson, Director, Audit & Management Services

Clerk of the Board (copy filed)



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

**Director of United People Counseling Ministry Services
Arrested - Food Program for Poor and HIV Patients Defrauded**

The Director of United People Counseling Ministry Services (UPCMS), an organization chartered to provide critical services to the poor, was charged with swindling Miami-Dade County Food Programs out of thousands of dollars in grant money.

Maura Bailey (Bailey), age 46, of Southwest Miami-Dade County, Florida, the Executive Director of UPCMS, was arrested yesterday for defrauding the County in connection with grants it awarded UPCMS. Bailey was charged with Organized Scheme to Defraud, Grand Theft, and Uttering a Forged Instrument.

The Office of the Inspector General and the Miami-Dade County State Attorney's Office started their investigation of Bailey's misappropriation of grant funds in June 2004. Bailey's elaborate fraud scheme is outlined in an affidavit prepared by a Special Agent of the OIG. According to the affidavit, UPCMS applied for County funds to operate a food pantry in the Southwest area of the County. Grants were awarded by two County departments, the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Office of Strategic Business Management (OSBM). The DHS grant was specifically awarded to provide unemployed families or those living below the poverty level with food. The OSBM grant was awarded to provide groceries and personal hygiene products to indigent individuals that were HIV positive. The OSBM grant operated as a reimbursement grant, that is, UPCMS submitted invoices and copies of checks for allowable expenses under the grant for reimbursement by the County. The DHS grant was subject to an end of year review of expenditures by the County.

An audit by DHS uncovered what appeared to be fraudulent invoices, and the OIG was alerted. The OIG investigation found that Bailey submitted numerous fraudulent and forged invoices to both grants, copies of checks that were never negotiated, phony salary checks and bogus bank statements for reimbursement. Bailey also double billed the County by submitting the same food invoices to both grants for payment. The OIG investigation determined that there were only seventeen (17) legitimate food purchase invoices from the Daily Bread Food Bank, totaling \$1,993.35. There appear to have been no further food purchases made by UPCMS. The County was provided with invoices from other food providers that were discovered to be fraudulent.

One alleged food supplier, 21 Century Foods, turns out to be a Florida Corporation owned and operated by Bailey and an employee of UPCMS, Ms. Karen Crapps. Bailey ran UPCMS out of the 21 Century Foods location at 10705 SW 216 Street, Suite D219. Bailey, on behalf of UPCMS, sublet office space from herself through 21 Century Foods, at double the amount of actual rent due. Bailey then inappropriately submitted the UPCMS rent expenses for grant funds. In total, Bailey stole in excess of \$28,000 in County funds. These funds were stolen during the period of March 2003 through June 2004.

The OIG investigation also uncovered that Bailey spent the County's funds earmarked to help the disadvantaged and the ill to pay both her own personal expenses and those of her friends and family. Bailey used the funds to pay mortgages on two different homes she owns and that of a relative's. Bailey also used County funds to pay her personal credit card, phone bill, water bill, electric bill, property taxes and plumbing bills on her residences.

In commenting on the arrests, Inspector General Christopher Mazzella expressed his dismay at the callousness of the scheme hatched by Bailey. Mr. Mazzella said that her greed in seeking personal gain ultimately victimized those people in our community that are in most need of help. Mr. Mazzella indicated that his Office will pursue recovering monetary losses suffered by the County and redressing any harm caused as a result of these alleged transgressions.

Copies of the arrest affidavit are available at the Office of the Inspector General, 19 West Flagler Street, Suite 220, Miami, Florida, telephone number (305) 375-1946, or at the State Attorney's Office, c/o Ed Griffith, 1350 N.W. 12 Avenue, Miami, Florida, telephone number (305) 547-0535.

Inspector General Mazzella will be available at the OIG for a media opportunity today, between 1:00 and 3:00pm.