



Department of Justice

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COUNTY OF MENDOCINO AGREES TO REPAY THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE MORE THAN \$1.7 MILLION FOR FUNDS IT IMPROPERLY RECEIVED THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT'S SOUTHWEST BORDER PROSECUTION INITIATIVE

The County of Mendocino has agreed to repay the Department of Justice more than \$1.7 million for grant funds that it improperly received through the Department's Southwest Border Prosecution Initiative, United States Attorney Joseph P. Russoniello and Department of Justice Inspector General Glenn A. Fine announced.

SWBPI is a program in which the U.S. Justice Department reimburses the four Southwest Border states and local jurisdictions for the prosecution and pre-trial detention costs of federally initiated cases that are declined for prosecution by the U.S. Attorneys offices. Between fiscal years 2002 and 2007, The Justice Department awarded Mendocino more than \$1.9 million in SWBPI funds based on that county's submissions for 710 cases that it claimed were eligible for reimbursement. An audit by the Office of the Inspector General found that Mendocino incorrectly submitted claims for reimbursement for any case in which the defendant was an undocumented alien, regardless of whether the case was federally initiated. The OIG audit also found that the majority of these cases did not meet SWBPI's requirements for reimbursement because the cases were not federally initiated.

This is the sixth settlement the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of California has reached with county and local jurisdictions in Northern California related to improper claims submitted for reimbursement under SWBPI. In total, the Department of Justice has recovered more than \$10 million through the six settlements. In October 2008, the City and County of San Francisco agreed to repay \$5.2 million in SWBPI funds; in December 2008, the County of Lake agreed to repay \$989,605 in SWBPI funds, and Humboldt County agreed to repay \$416,986; and in January 2009, the County of San Mateo agreed to repay \$1.5 million in SWBPI funds, and the County of San Benito agreed to repay \$397,984.

Assistant United States Attorney Ila Deiss is handling the matter on behalf of the United States Attorney's Office, together with Rebecca Quinson, Assistant Regional Audit Manager, Office of the Inspector General, Audit Division, and Angel Gordon, Senior Special Agent, Office of the Inspector General, Investigations Division.