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Arrest of Former Chief Administrative Officer of Legal Services of Eastern Michigan

On December 16, 2022, a criminal complaint was filed and an arrest warrant was issued for Teresa Trantham, former Chief Administrative Officer, Legal Services of Eastern Michigan (LSEM). The complaint is based on a joint investigation conducted by the Office of Inspector General (OIG), United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the OIG for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC).

LSEM is a non-profit organization that provides free civil legal representation to qualifying individuals in Genesee County, Michigan. LSEM is a federally funded organization and annually receives over 1.5 million in federal dollars from LSC and HUD.

Trantham's scheme involved the embezzlement of funds belonging to LSEM from a bank account to which she had access, as well as the submission of fraudulent reimbursement requests to LSEM. Trantham also used her access to the program case management system to alter the former LSEM Executive Director's last will and testament (the will) after his death. Trantham altered the will, which was prepared by LSEM, in order to assign herself as the primary beneficiary of his estate. The potential loss amount in this case is approximately \$29,000.

Trantham was charged by the U.S Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Michigan, with Theft from a Program Receiving Federal Funds (18 USC 666(a), Theft of Government Property (18 USC 641), and Wire Fraud (18 USC 1343).

Roxanne Caruso, Acting Inspector General for LSC OIG, praised the work by the investigators and the U.S. Attorney's Office to bring charges in this case. Ms. Caruso stated that deterring fraud and the misuse of funds meant to support deserving clients in LSC supported civil legal aid grant programs is of the highest priority for the LSC OIG.

On December 21, 2022, *The Detroit News* issued an article on the criminal case. Please see the article at

<https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan/2022/12/21/teresa-trantham-stole-money-for-rv-trip-teeth-and-more-feds-say/69748449007/>