



Officials from Home Elevation Program Plead Guilty to Conspiracy

U.S. Attorney's Office

February 23, 2012

Eastern District of Louisiana

(504) 680-3000

NEW ORLEANS—WANDA ACKER WILLIAMS, age 33, and BRIANNA LAFRANCE, age 31, both of New Orleans, Louisiana, pled guilty as charged before U.S. District Judge Jane Triche Milazzo to one count bills of information charging each with conspiracy to commit bribery concerning programs receiving federal funds, announced U.S. Attorney Jim Letten.

According to the court documents, prior to March 25, 2011, LAFRANCE was an agent of the Office of Community Development/Disaster Recovery Unit (OCD/DRU) (State of Louisiana) in her capacity as a mitigation analyst of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program where she was tasked with ushering homeowners through the process to get federally funded grants to elevate their homes.

On or about March 25, 2011, LAFRANCE left her employment as a mitigation analyst and went to work for Rickey Davis and took with her a list of the homeowners whom she had been assigned to usher through the process of getting an elevation grant. LAFRANCE and Rickey Davis solicited the homeowners from this list to enter elevation contracts with Rickey Davis' elevation company partners. Rickey Davis told LAFRANCE that once the projects began and money started flowing he would pay her \$20,000, but Rickey Davis did not pay her for the list of names that she took with her from the HMGP program.

Upon exhaustion of LAFRANCE's list of homeowners, Rickey Davis told her to solicit WILLIAMS, who was still employed as a Mitigation Analyst in the New Orleans HMGP Office, to get another list of eligible homeowner names. WILLIAMS agreed to use her position as a Mitigation Analyst to mine the HMGP database of homeowners eligible for federal elevation dollars and then provided those names to LAFRANCE and Davis in exchange for money. WILLIAMS received up to a \$1,000.00 per 100 name list she gave to Davis.

Davis then used some of these lists to solicit homeowners to enter contracts with general or sub-contractors he was associated with. According to the court documents, on at least one occasion, on or about August 26, 2011, Davis attempted to sell one of the lists for \$80,000 to a contractor with whom he had previously conducted business.

WILLIAMS and LAFRANCE will be sentenced on May 24, 2012 at 10:00 a.m.. Each face a maximum term of imprisonment of five years, a fine of \$250,000.00, and three years of supervised release following any term of imprisonment they receive.

The case was investigated by Department of Homeland Security-OIG with assistance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Emily K. Greenfield and Matthew Coman.