



Department of Justice

United States Attorney A. Brian Albritton
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CONTACT: STEVE COLE

PHONE: (813) 274-6136

FAX: (813) 274-6300

FORMER DELAND HOUSING AUTHORITY EMPLOYEE PLEADS GUILTY TO EMBEZZLEMENT

Orlando, Florida - United States Attorney A. Brian Albritton announces that Juanita Cruz (age 38, of Deland) pleaded guilty today to embezzlement of U.S. Government funds and five counts of aggravated identity theft. Cruz faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in federal prison.

According to court documents, for more than five years ending in September 2008, Cruz embezzled more than \$320,000 from the United States through two separate schemes. In one scheme, Cruz created a fictitious landlord and directed payments from the Deland Housing Authority to her bank account under the ruse that the payments were being made to a real landlord as a subsidy for actual Section 8 tenants. Also, under another scheme, Cruz directed payments to her mortgage company from the Deland Housing Authority, whereby she paid down over \$27,000.00 on her mortgage. Cruz worked at the Deland Housing Authority for more than thirteen years and was hired after being a section 8 tenant herself.

This case was investigated by the Deland Police Department and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of the Inspector General. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney J. Bishop Ravenel.