

# Summary: BIE Employee Violated Ethics Laws and Regulations

**Report Date: June 27, 2024**

**Report Number: 23-0326**

The OIG investigated allegations that a Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) employee violated Federal ethics laws and regulations by owning and operating a personal business that received Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) contracts.

We determined that, over a 15-year period, the BIE employee co-owned a personal business with their spouse, which received BIA contracts valued at over \$480,000. The BIE employee bid on and received BIA contracts, and actively managed the personal business' contracts while serving as a BIE employee. We also found that the BIE employee's representations to and communications with BIA contracting staff, and the compensation received from the personal business' BIA contracts, violated criminal ethics laws. Additionally, we found that the employee violated the U.S. Office of Government Ethics' "Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch" by not obtaining the required prior written approval for outside employment with a prohibited source (the personal business became a prohibited source once it sought Government contracts with BIA).

We found no evidence that the employee had an unfair competitive advantage when bidding on BIA contracts, nor did the employee's position with BIE allow them to access proprietary contracting information. In addition, the BIE employee was not required to attend annual ethics training because of their position, and we found no evidence that the employee regularly received such training. The employee noted being unaware that these actions violated ethics laws, regulations, and U.S. Department of the Interior policy.

The U.S. Attorney's Office declined to prosecute this matter.

This is a summary of an investigative report we issued to the BIE Director.

