

Summary: Investigation of Theft of Healy Lake Funds

Report Date: May 6, 2016

OIG has completed a joint investigation with the Federal Bureau of Investigation into allegations that Joanne Lorry Polston, First Chief and Tribal Administrator, Healy Lake Village (HLV), AK, misappropriated Federal funds awarded to HLV by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

Our investigation found that Polston, while serving as the tribal administrator, stole between \$49,000 and \$56,000 from HLV between 2009 and 2012. She frequently wrote checks to herself from HLV's accounts and claimed double reimbursement for many of her official trips.

On September 9, 2015, Polston pleaded guilty to one count of conversion of Government funds and one count of conversion of tribal funds. She was sentenced to 90 days' home confinement and 3 years' probation, and was ordered to pay \$4,577.61 in restitution to BIA and \$102,860.20 to HLV. She also resigned from her position as HLV's first chief and tribal administrator.

In addition, on September 16, 2014, the U.S. Department of the Interior suspended Polston from conducting any business with the Federal Government. She was later debarred from conducting business with the Government for a period of 1 year, beginning December 2, 2015.

We provided a summary of our report to BIA and did not require a response.

This is a summary of that investigative report.

