

Summary: Land Transfers Approved Without Proper Authority

Report Date: March 29, 2021

Report Number: 19-0342

The OIG investigated allegations that Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) realty specialists processed and approved 15 land transfer gift deeds from a tribal member to his sister without the proper authority. The complaint also alleged that the deeds contained forged signatures and improperly backdated documents.

We confirmed the realty specialists processed the gift deeds for the tribal member, and we found that they did not follow the BIA's delegation of authority procedures and issued the gift deeds without proper review and approval.

The BIA later processed corrections to two of these gift deeds. We established that the tribal member signed the 15 original gift deeds, but we could not determine who signed the corrected documents. We noted significant differences between the signatures on the original documents and the signatures on the corrected documents. We also collected contradictory statements about the corrected documents from the tribal member and the realty specialists involved. In addition, we confirmed that realty specialists improperly backdated the corrections to the gift deeds.

The BIA ultimately determined the gift deeds were not properly authorized and voided all the transactions.

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

