

Former Executive Director Debarred Following Guilty Plea

Closed 06/01/21

Christopher Coleman served as the Executive Director (ED) of Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House (LBDNH). LBDNH is a non-profit, faith-based organization in East St. Louis, IL, and a sub-recipient of CNCS AmeriCorps funds through Serve Illinois. As ED, Coleman was responsible for overseeing the operations of the non-profit, including its fiscal affairs. An investigation conducted by the Southern Illinois Public Corruption Task Force, which consisted of agents with the FBI, Internal Revenue Service/Criminal Investigation, and the Illinois State Police, found that Coleman misused his position of trust at LBDNH to embezzle funds, by creating false invoices for payment to a company that he owned and concealing his ownership in the business.

On June 4, 2019, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Illinois indicted Coleman for embezzlement of CNCS's Federal program funds, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 666.5. Coleman ultimately pleaded guilty to one count of embezzlement. Coleman was sentenced to 18 months in prison and ordered to pay \$270,000 in restitution. CNCS-OIG recommended debarring Coleman for three years based upon his guilty plea. In March 2020, CNCS followed the OIG's recommendation and debarred Coleman for three years.

Case ID 2018-025