



THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of JUSTICE

United States Attorney
Eastern District of Washington

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 12, 2025
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Federal Jury Convicts Former Assistant Director of Spokane Tribe's Division of Child and Family Services of Twenty-Five Counts of Bank Fraud and Embezzlement

Spokane, Washington – United States Attorney Pete Serrano announced that on September 11, 2025, a federal jury in Spokane, Washington, convicted Tawhnee Willow Colvin, of Davenport, Washington, of twenty-five counts of Bank Fraud and one count of Embezzlement from the Spokane Tribe of Indians committed while she was employed by the Tribe.

As evidence presented at the trial established, Colvin was employed as Assistant Director of the Spokane Tribe of Indians' Department of Health and Human Services and Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS). As part of her position as Assistant Director of DCFS, Colvin had access to the Spokane Tribe of Indians bank account which held per capita funds to be used for the care of needy children who were in temporary custody of the Tribe. Between October 2019 and November 2023, Colvin abused her position of trust to make more than seventy fraudulent money transfers, starting with small transfers until she eventually transferred thousands of dollars at a time, totaling over \$50,000, from the DCFS bank account to her own personal bank account. She also took out over \$50,000 cash from the same bank account. Colvin was terminated from her position at the Tribe on October 23, 2023, but even after her termination she continued to fraudulently transfer funds to her personal account.

"For years, Ms. Colvin abused the faith placed in her as a public servant to steal tribal funds intended to care for children in foster care," said W. Mike Herrington, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Seattle field office. "For her own personal gain, she stole more than \$100,000, leaving the account almost completely drained. Every one of these dozens of transfers diverted resources away from the most vulnerable members of our society and into her pockets. The FBI is committed to holding accountable fraudsters who choose greed instead of safeguarding the funds under their stewardship."

"In an egregious breach of trust and solely for her own personal interest, Ms. Colvin exploited her position as the Assistant Director of DCFS for the Spokane Tribe of Indian to steal thousands of dollars from vulnerable children over a period of years," stated United States Attorney

Serrano. “Brazenly, Ms. Colvin continued her crimes even after the Tribe terminated her employment. Sadly, it remains unknown how many children Ms. Colvin harmed through her crimes. The United States Attorney’s Office is grateful for the diligent efforts of the FBI who investigated this case, the trust and collaboration of the Spokane Tribe of Indians, and the prosecutors and staff at our office who ensured Ms. Colvin was brought to justice.”

A press release was previously issued by the Spokane Tribe of Indians who thanked the FBI and US Attorney’s Office for their work in bringing this important case to a close.

Colvin’s sentencing is scheduled for December 15, 2025.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Frieda K. Zimmerman and Jeremy J. Kelley.

2:24-CR-0148-RLP