

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
EASTERN DISTRICT *of* CALIFORNIA

[U.S. Attorneys](#) » [Eastern District of California](#) » [News](#)

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of California

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, October 17, 2022

Siskiyou County Man Sentenced to 1 Year in Prison for Major Fraud Against the United States for Taking FEMA Grant Funds

Grant Administrator Misused More Than \$1 Million Intended for Recruiting and Training New Firefighters

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Samuel Thomas Lanier, 40, of Dunsmuir, was sentenced today to 12 months and one day in prison for seven counts of major fraud against the United States, U.S. Attorney Phillip A. Talbert announced. A restitution hearing is set for Dec. 12, 2022.

According to court documents, from approximately June 2013 to March 2018, Lanier engaged in a scheme to defraud the United States by submitting, or causing to be submitted, false reimbursement requests to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in connection with federal grants awarded to Siskiyou and Shasta County Fire Chiefs Associations to assist them in recruiting and training new firefighters.

In June 2013 and June 2014, respectively, the Siskiyou and Shasta County Fire Chiefs Associations were awarded grants as part of the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program. Each grant was over \$1 million. The purpose of these grants was to assure that communities have adequate protection from fire-related hazards, and to help the recipients attain and maintain 24-hour staffing.

Lanier, as an owner or executive of two companies located in Dunsmuir, was hired by the Fire Chiefs Associations to administer these grants. In this capacity, Lanier knowingly submitted to FEMA false and fraudulent reimbursement requests, seeking and obtaining reimbursement for goods and services that were not, in fact, actually obtained on behalf of the fire associations. According to court documents, Lanier misappropriated over \$1.2 million by both submitting false reimbursement requests to FEMA and diverting additional funds that should have been used to support the firefighters.

"This fraud scheme siphoned vital federal funds from fire departments supporting communities devastated by wildfires. This sentencing sends a clear message that the theft of federal funds meant to support our front line firefighters and first responders will not be tolerated," stated Dr. Joseph V. Cuffari, Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security.

This case was the product of an investigation by the Major Frauds & Corruption Unit of the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General. Assistant U.S. Attorney Veronica M.A. Alegria prosecuted

the case.

Topic(s):

Disaster Fraud

Component(s):

USAO - California, Eastern

Updated October 17, 2022