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# LOCAL NEWS



Mary Holden Ayala, 59, stole \$1 million from a foster home agency serving the black community from a residential property on Northeast Rodney Avenue. Friday she was sentenced to prison and ordered to pay back the money. The house has since been purchased by the neighborhood to keep it from being demolished.

## Foster Mom Sentenced

### She stole \$1 million from agency serving black kids

Mary Holden Ayala, 59, of Portland, was sentenced Friday to 33 months in federal prison and three years' supervised release for stealing over \$1 million from a foster care agency serving the black community where kids under her care suffered from a lack of food and other neglect.

Ayala, the former president, executive director and primary agent for Give Us This Day, a private foster care agency and residential program for youth, was convicted in February after a trial before a

federal jury in Portland. She was also found guilty of money laundering and filing false personal income tax returns.

"Mary Holden Ayala was responsible for protecting and caring for children in Oregon's foster care system. Instead she callously stole from them," said Billy J. Williams, U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon. "Stealing from vulnerable children she was entrusted to serve with taxpayer money is a despicable act and warrants severe consequences."

The stolen monies were intended to provide support for juvenile foster kids entrusted in her care, but instead she spent the funds selfishly on a luxurious lifestyle, and then hid her personal use of the funds by filing false tax returns, said IRS Criminal Investi-

gation Special Agent in Charge Justin Campbell.

According to court documents, since its inception in 1979, Give Us This Day was primarily funded by the Oregon state and federal government for foster care services including hiring and screening foster parents for community placements, compensating foster parents for services and placing foster children in residential or group homes.

Prosecutors said from 2009 through 2015, Ayala exercised sole and complete control over the foster agency's finances and withdrew cash at will, using the organization's bank accounts as her own.

The stolen money was used

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## Police Enlarge Hiring Window

### Will now accept applicants without degrees

Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw has changed the bureau's hiring criteria to lower some standards, including college degrees, to enlarge the pool of applicants and make some progress on what the officials call a critical staffing shortage.

The Portland Police Bureau currently has 128 officer vacancies, with a large number of additional projected retirements in 2020, officials said. The changes to hiring practices is taking place as the bureau is actively recruiting and hiring



Chief Daniel Outlaw

officers and continues to review and refine its process.

Beginning July 1, Portland po-

lice will align with Oregon state law enforcement standards for certification, including its education requirement. The state requires a high school diploma or GED to be certified as a police officer and the Police Bureau will adopt this standard.

Outlaw said the Bureau will continue to provide incentive pay to officers who pursue higher education and earn degrees. PPB will also continue to develop training and learning opportunities to ensure all officers receive necessary education and tools to develop and advance.

The department will also align with the state in regard to the hiring test, which is administered through

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