

Ex-county official gets 3 years in jail and must pay up

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LOS ANGELES – A former Los Angeles County employee has been sentenced to three years in state prison and ordered to pay full restitution to her victims, the Franchise Tax Board announced.

Josefina C. Belleza, 58, pleaded guilty in February to two counts of misappropriation of public funds and one count of filing a fraudulent state income tax return.

According to court documents, Belleza conspired with Evelyn Tyson, 59, of Altadena to defraud Los Angeles County out of more than \$557,500 from 2001-2007.

Tyson was the owner of Tyson's Day Care Services, formerly known as Tyson's Family Day Care. Tyson submitted fraudulent claims to the county for child-care services not rendered, which Belleza, as a former eligibility supervisor, approved.

The scheme was discovered through an anonymous call to the Los Angeles County Fraud Hotline.

In addition, Belleza failed to claim the illegal income on her state income tax returns. All income is taxable, including income from illegal sources.

Belleza was ordered Tuesday to pay Los Angeles County full restitution of the embezzled funds and pay the Franchise Tax Board \$44,123, representing the unpaid tax, interest, penalties, and the cost of the investigation.

The court has ordered the sale of Belleza's home to pay the restitution.

Tyson was sentenced in June to 16 months in prison for her role in the fraud scheme and ordered to pay the tax board restitution of \$33,047.

-From wire services
