

## Summary: Former Bingo Hall Manager Embezzled from Alaska Native Organization

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Report Number: 24-0092

The OIG investigated allegations that Mesepa Tagovailoa, the former Manager of Chena Bingo in Fairbanks, Alaska, embezzled funds from the tribally operated gaming establishment. We substantiated these allegations. We found that between 2019 and 2023, while working as Chena Bingo's Manager, Tagovailoa embezzled approximately \$1.1 million by entering false refunds into the establishment's gaming register system and stealing the cash refunds for personal use.

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Alaska prosecuted this case. On June 5, 2024, Tagovailoa entered into a pre-indictment plea agreement and pleaded guilty to one count of 18 U.S.C § 1163, Embezzlement and Theft from an Indian Tribal Organization. On June 18, 2025, the court sentenced Tagovailoa to nine months of imprisonment followed by 36 months of supervised release. On January 12, 2026, Tagovailoa was ordered to pay \$300,000 in restitution to Chena Bingo.

This is a summary of an investigative report we issued to the Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

