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Deal In Housing Whistle-Blower Suit

SEATTLE - The King County Housing Authority has settled a lawsuit with six current and former employees who say they were demoted or forced from their jobs after they reported shady dealings within the agency to federal investigators.

Representatives of the housing authority would not disclose terms of the settlement.

Ed Budge, representing the whistle-blowers, described it as a "satisfactory settlement" but would not give details. The workers were seeking lost wages and damages from the agency responsible for running public housing in the county.

The settlement was announced yesterday, about a week after jurors found in favor of the employees. Lawyers were to argue over the size of the award yesterday.

The whistle-blowers - Jeanette Hill, Roger Barry, Kevin Barber, Jerry Hopkins, Bill Noble and Steve **Kesling** - said they were harassed by supervisors after going to federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) investigators.

Investigations by HUD and The Seattle Times found cases of supervisors falsifying time sheets to bill taxpayers for time not worked and using public supplies, employees and equipment to install a swimming pool in a top official's backyard. There also were cases of nepotism.