



**U.S. Department of Justice**

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**Department of Justice**  
**Office of Public Affairs**  
**NEWS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Monday, July 15, 2019**

***U.S. Attorney for the Virgin Islands to Spearhead Disaster Fraud Training***

On Thursday, July 18, U.S. Attorney for the Virgin Islands Gretchen C.F. Shappert will kick off a two-day training session for HUD Community Development and Block Grant – Disaster Recovery grantees, sub-grantees and contractors, and law enforcement agencies.

The training is being hosted in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General (HUD OIG). It will include presentations from staff from the Inspectors General of U.S. Department of Homeland Security and HUD. Representatives from HUD and the National Center for Disaster Fraud will also provide remarks.

The devastation impacted by Hurricanes Maria and Irma in the U.S. Virgin Islands resulted in disaster aid from the federal government of more than \$1.8 billion to date.

This training will highlight HUD’s disaster assistance program requirements, and risks, as well as, familiarize Virgin Islands’ grant personnel and members of the law enforcement community on issues related to disaster fraud investigations.

“The investigation and prosecution of government programs fraud and procurement fraud are priorities of this U.S. Attorney’s Office,” Shappert said. “Taxpayers have every right to expect that fraudsters and scam artists will suffer the consequences of their criminal actions. We are grateful that HUD OIG has agreed to provide this valuable training in the USVI. This is a tremendous opportunity for prosecutors and law enforcement officers to study effective investigative techniques and to learn from one another.”

“In developing these training forums, it is our objective to leverage the knowledge and expertise from many resources,” said Lisa R. Gore, Special Agent in Charge for Disasters, HUD OIG. “It is our intent that these sessions offer jurisdictional specific awareness to staff on the ground and create the best learning opportunity available.”

During the forum, attendees will hear speakers discuss:

- The National Center for Disaster Fraud longstanding expertise in disaster aid deception
- HUD’s CDBG-Disaster Recovery Program Life-cycle
- Develop an understanding of audit “control weaknesses” and key indicators of fraud risks
- The most common audit findings of disaster grantees
- Common fraud schemes in HUD disaster programs
- Issues related to the prosecution of disaster fraud investigations; and,
- Investigative case studies from HUD OIG, and DHS OIG

At the conclusion of the training, all attendees must attest to their awareness that grantees, sub-grantees, and contractors must adhere to the controls, standards, processes, corrective actions, and procedures as described in Title 24 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 570 governing U.S. Housing and Urban Development regulations concerning Community Development Block Grants.

If you suspect fraud in HUD’s Disaster Recovery programs, please email the HUD OIG at: [HOTLINE@hudoig.gov](mailto:HOTLINE@hudoig.gov), or contact the National Center for Disaster Fraud at the number listed below.

