

VIHFA Trains 170 Partners on Fraud Prevention as Agency Oversees Nearly \$2 Billion in Federal Recovery Funds

The VIHFA hosted Fraud, Waste,& Abuse sessions on St. Croix and St. Thomas, offering case studies, risk-management tools, and compliance guidance to subrecipients and staff as part of its effort to safeguard HUD disaster recovery and mitigation programs.

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The V.I. Housing Finance Authority last week brought more than 170 subrecipients, contractors, and staff together for a two-day Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Training initiative designed to reinforce the territory's oversight of nearly \$2 billion in federal disaster recovery and mitigation funds. The sessions, held November 12 on St. Croix and November 14 on St. Thomas, reflect VIHFA's continued effort to strengthen accountability across programs funded by the U.S. Department of

Housing and Urban Development.

As the official HUD grantee responsible for administering the territory's Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR), Mitigation (CDBG-MIT), and Electrical Grid programs, VIHFA convened participants involved in managing and implementing these federally funded efforts. The training was led by senior leaders from the Authority and featured presentations from Delia Thomas, Inspector General of the Virgin Islands Office of Inspector General, along with key VIHFA officials.

According to the Authority, the initiative underscores its commitment to transparency, compliance, and responsible stewardship of federal investments tied to housing and resilience. The curriculum offered an in-depth review of major fraud-prevention topics, including defining fraud, waste, and abuse; identifying and mitigating risks; detecting, reviewing, and reporting suspicious activity; and examining common fraud schemes affecting subrecipients. Presenters also walked attendees through real-world case studies and daily prevention strategies centered on internal controls and enforcement.

Participants engaged in scenario-based exercises, case reviews, and discussions focused on strengthening systemic safeguards. The sessions emphasized ethical decision-making, proactive risk management, and collaboration across agencies, aiming to equip employees and partners with the tools necessary to identify red flags and protect program integrity. VIHFA noted that heightened vigilance is essential to ensuring that federal disaster recovery and community development resources reach the residents and neighborhoods they are intended to serve.

“Integrity and accountability are at the heart of everything we do,” said VIHFA Executive Director Eugene Jones Jr. “By equipping our staff and subrecipients with the tools and awareness to detect and prevent fraud, we are not only protecting public funds but also strengthening trust in our mission to serve the people of the Virgin Islands.”

The Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Training was organized by VIHFA's Recovery and Resilience Programs and Regulatory Services Department. The Authority described the effort as part of a broader capacity-building strategy aimed at enhancing performance, reinforcing oversight, and supporting long-term goals of resilience, recovery, and equitable community development under its HUD-funded housing and infrastructure initiatives.