

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Human Services Employee Arrested On Embezzlement And Related Charges

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ST. THOMAS -- A government employee at the Department of Human Services (DHS) has been advised of her rights on multiple embezzlement-related charges. [Shea Smith-Halliday](#), 44, above, of Estate Bordeaux appeared before Magistrate Henry Carr III on Thursday for her initial court hearing, the Department of Justice announced via press release this afternoon.

Assistant Director of the Bureau of Investigation at the V.I. Department of Justice, Special Agent Sehkeria Tyson, arrested Smith-Halliday on Wednesday on a warrant charging her with seven counts each of fraudulent claims upon the government; obtaining money by false pretense; embezzlement or falsification of public accounts; mutilation and

destruction of public records by officers; and aiding and abetting.

Magistrate Carr found that there was probable cause to sustain all of the charges and to move the case forward.

At the time of her arrest, Smith-Halliday was granted bail in the amount of \$35,000, which she was unable to post. Magistrate Carr revised the bail and allowed Smith-Halliday to be released from custody by posting a \$35,000 unsecured appearance bond. Smith-Halliday was also ordered to abide by a number of court-imposed bail conditions, which include having no contact with her co-workers and surrendering her passport. She was also ordered to continue her employment at the DHS.

According to the probable cause fact sheet filed by Special Agent Tyson, Smith-Halliday worked as an administrative officer who was responsible for managing, processing payments and initializing the procurement process as it relates to federal grants. She is accused of awarding several contracts to one vendor while creating and submitting fictitious documents to eliminate two other vendors from the bidding process in order to award a favored vendor with a contract. Investigation revealed that Smith-Halliday awarded grant funds in the amount of \$27,027.18 from fiscal year 2014 after DHS received federal grants from the U.S. Department of Education for the purchase of office equipment.

As stated in the probable cause fact sheet, Smith-Halliday also inflated prices for vendors whom she least favored to allow vendors that she favored to capture each and every bid in violation of the procedures established by the procurement process and standards under the U.S. Department of Education.

Attorney General Claude Walker stated, "These criminal allegations are disturbing because the Government of the Virgin Islands relies on federal grant money for numerous programs, especially the Department of Human Services which provides many services to senior citizens and children, and so, it is not too much to expect from the federal government that in return, we will do our part to ensure the proper administration of federal grant funds in accordance with all applicable federal requirements."

Smith-Halliday is scheduled to return to court on Dec. 1 for her arraignment hearing at which she will formally answer to the charges.