

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Virgin Islands' Residents Urged To Be Vigilant In Spotting And Reporting Disaster-Related Fraud To National Center For Disaster Fraud

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Acting United States Attorney Joycelyn Hewlett is urging Virgin Islands' residents to be aware of, and report suspected fraudulent activity related to hurricane relief operations and federal funding for hurricane victims. In the wake of the destruction wrought by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, millions of dollars in federal aid and loans have been approved for Virgin Islands' residents. As of November 29, FEMA has approved over \$27 million in Individual Assistance claims, and the Small Business Administration has approved over \$61 million in loans for homeowners and \$10 million for business owners.

“We have adopted a zero tolerance policy for disaster-related fraud,” Hewlett said. “Individuals, families, and businesses have suffered tremendous losses and need these funds to get back on their feet. If you suspect fraud, please call the National Disaster Fraud Hotline toll free number at (866) 720-5721. We don’t want anyone to become a double victim – a hurricane victim and a fraud victim as well.”

The U.S. Attorney’s Office has a Disaster Fraud Task Force comprised of federal and 1 territorial investigators and prosecutors ready to respond to credible allegations of fraud and abuse. The National Disaster Fraud Hotline is staffed by a live operator 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Reports of fraud, waste, abuse or allegations of mismanagement involving disaster relief operations also may be sent via email to disaster@leo.gov.

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