

The Virgin Islands Consortium

U.S. Attorney's Office To Sponsor Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force Training For USVI And PR Law Enforcement Officers

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United States Attorney Gretchen C.F Shappert announced today that the Virgin Islands U.S. Attorney's Office is sponsoring training this week for prosecutors from the USVI and Puerto Rico and federal agents in the USVI who are dedicated to the investigation and prosecution of large-scale narcotics and organized crime targets.

"The Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) Program was established by the Department of Justice in 1982 to mount a comprehensive attack against organized drug traffickers, said Shappert. "Today, the OCDETF Program is the

centerpiece of the Department's drug strategy to reduce the availability of drugs by disrupting and dismantling major drug trafficking organizations and money laundering organizations and related criminal enterprises."

According to the release, the OCDETF Program operates nationwide and combines the resources of federal agencies and local law enforcement in a coordinated attack against major drug trafficking and money laundering organizations. OCDETF participants include the 94 U.S. Attorneys' Offices, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Internal Revenue Service, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the U.S. Marshals Service, the Criminal and Tax Divisions of the U.S. Department of Justice and numerous State and local agencies.

The OCDETF strategy focuses federal law enforcement resources on reducing the flow of illicit drugs and drug proceeds by identifying and targeting the major trafficking organizations, eliminating the financial infrastructure of drug organizations by emphasizing financial investigations and asset forfeiture, redirecting federal drug enforcement resources to align them with existing and emerging drug threats, and conducting expanded, nationwide investigations against all the related parts of the targeted organizations.

"Prosecutors and agents in the Caribbean region represent the tip of the spear in America's efforts to combat transnational drug trafficking organizations," Shappert said. "For that reason, we must continuously train and educate our OCDETF partners to address the emerging threats associated with drug cartels and organized crime. We are proud to support our OCDETF partners and to host this important training."