

The Virgin Islands Consortium

FEMA Names Native Virgin Islander Jacqueline Heyliger As Director Of USVI Recovery Office

VIC News / **Published On December 20, 2018 10:31 PM /**

Staff **December 20, 2018**



The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has selected Jacqueline J. Heyliger to serve as the first U. S. Virgin Islands Recovery Director for FEMA Region II, Caribbean Area Division (CAD) the federal agency announced Thursday.

Ms. Heyliger officially began on October 29 and will oversee more than \$8 billion in disaster recovery assistance with staff throughout the territory, FEMA said.

Ms. Heyliger and the CAD office will partner with the Government of the U. S. Virgin Islands and other federal agencies, private sector, nonprofits and academic institutions to develop and implement a more economically-viable and sustainable resilient recovery. "It

is indeed an honor to have the opportunity to return home to serve the community in the recovery and rebuilding efforts in the territory," she said.

While previously serving as FEMA chief of staff, Ms. Heyliger performed duties throughout the nation including, but not limited to, Hurricanes Irma-Orlando, Harvey-Houston, Sandy-New York, Nevada floods, South Carolina floods, American Samoa-Cyclone Gita.

In 1995, Ms. Heyliger's interest in emergency management peaked after Hurricane Marilyn devastated the U.S. Virgin Islands. At that time, she joined the American Red Cross to help and coordinate services for disaster survivors, FEMA said.

She joined the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) in 1998 and held various positions including assistant director, deputy director of operations, mitigation director and preparedness Coordinator. While at VITEMA, Ms. Heyliger worked with various territorial departments, the National Guard, federal agencies and private and nonprofit organizations where she coordinated the response to disasters such as fatal airplane crashes, chemical spills and major floods.

Also, while at VITEMA, Ms. Heyliger wrote and submitted grant applications which resulted in millions of dollars in grant funding awarded to the Territory. Working with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), she was a member of the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program (NTHMP). This program provided grants for tsunami preparation, training and exercise to the community of the U.S. Virgin Islands, according to FEMA.

A native Virgin Islander, Ms. Heyliger has been committed to ensuring a better quality of life for the people of the Virgin Islands. She was elected to the Board of Elections, is active with the Women's Coalition, and serves on the AARP Executive Council as well as many other community organizations.

As a Rotarian in District 7020 Heyliger served in various capacities and is currently District Disaster Chair assisting with formulating disaster plans, preparedness presentations and trainings. In addition to the U. S. Virgin Islands, the district includes Haiti, Cayman Islands, Turks and Caicos, Jamaica, Bahamas, St. Martin, Anguilla, St. Barthelemy, and British Virgin Islands, according to the release.

In the mid 90's, Ms. Heyliger was an adjunct professor at the University of the Virgin Islands and taught the courses introduction to marketing and advertisement and promotion and has been involved in various business ventures with the latest being a home care business. This business provided care for the elderly and disabled and afforded employment opportunities throughout the Virgin Islands.

Ms. Heyliger holds a bachelor of arts in business management from the University of the Virgin Islands and a masters of business administration in marketing from the Long Island University in New York.