

The Virgin Islands Consortium

U.S. Attorney Shappert Announces Partnership With Faith-Based Community In Latest Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative

Community Center / **Published On September 26, 2019 10:59 AM /**

Staff **September 26, 2019**



United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert for the District of the Virgin Islands announced this week a partnership between the USVI Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative and members of the faith-based community to encourage information-sharing and coordination as a means of combatting gun-related violence.

The announcement follows meetings in St. Thomas and St. Croix on Monday, where representatives of various churches and faith-based organizations, the St. Croix Long-Term Recovery Group, the Virgin Islands Police Department, and the U.S. Attorney's

Office discussed how best to address violence in the territory, according to the release.

“Today’s meetings represent a concerted effort by faith and community leaders in St. Thomas and St. Croix who are committed to working closely to break the cycle of violence,” Shappert said. “Speakers at today’s meetings stressed the need to ‘break out of our silos’ and share valuable information about pressing needs and available resources.”

Building upon the success of a recent St. Croix Long-Term Recovery Group workshop in St. Croix, Monday’s discussions emphasized the importance of meeting the needs of students who lack after-school learning and recreational opportunities; persons in correctional facilities who would benefit from education and mental health resources; and unemployed young people who require mentoring and vocational opportunities.

“What became apparent in today’s meetings, is that we all need to focus on identifying what resources are currently available in the territory and what federal grants and other resources may be available to fill specific needs. One of the faith-based leaders emphasized the need for ‘wrap-around services,’ and that’s exactly what we will be looking for,” Shappert said.

Shappert added, “Project Safe Neighborhoods is the centerpiece of our crime reduction strategy. It is a tested and proven program to invest in our communities and foster vital partnerships. PSN enables the United States Attorney’s Office, together with our law enforcement partners, to target and prioritize criminal prosecutions on the most violent people in the most violent areas. Second, we engage with a wide variety of stakeholders—from federal and local law enforcement, to community groups, educators, faith-based organizations, and victims’ advocates—in order to identify the needs specific to our communities and to develop strategies to reduce crime.”

Individuals wanting to know more about Project Safe Neighborhoods should [visit the website](#). For those wishing to participate in the PSN initiative, contact the U.S. Attorney’s Office, 340-774-5757.