



# Department of Justice

United States Attorney David R. Dugas  
Middle District of Louisiana

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## **ANOTHER INDICTED IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA, ON DISASTER RELIEF FRAUD CHARGES**

BATON ROUGE, LA – United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced that a federal grand jury in the Middle District of Louisiana returned an indictment today against GERALDINE J. FRANKLIN, age 49, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, charging her on disaster relief fraud charges.

FRANKLIN, a United States Postal Service (USPS) employee, was charged in a three-count indictment with making false claims and making false statements. The indictment alleges that in September of 2005, FRANKLIN, while a USPS employee, filed a false and fraudulent claim with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance benefits, falsely misrepresenting her address at the time of the storm and falsely claiming that the storm caused her to have an essential need for food, clothing, and shelter. The indictment further alleges that FRANKLIN also filed a false and fraudulent claim with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for Hurricane Katrina disaster food stamp assistance. If convicted, FRANKLIN faces a maximum sentence of five years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both, per count. The case was investigated by the U.S. Postal Service's Office of Inspector General, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Inspector General.

Today's indictment brings the total number of individuals who have been charged in the Middle District of Louisiana with violations related to hurricane disaster relief funds to one hundred fifty-seven.

In September 2005, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, designed to deter, investigate and prosecute disaster-related federal crimes such as charity fraud, identity theft, procurement fraud and insurance fraud. The Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force – chaired by Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division – includes the FBI, the U.S. Inspectors General community, the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Executive Office for United States Attorneys and others.

For further information, contact David R. Dugas, U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Louisiana, or Lyman Thornton, First Assistant U.S. Attorney, at (225) 389-0443. Anyone suspecting criminal activity involving disaster assistance programs can make an

anonymous report by calling the toll-free Hurricane Relief Fraud Hotline, 1-866-720-5721, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, until further notice. Information can also be emailed to the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force at [HKFTF@leo.gov](mailto:HKFTF@leo.gov) or sent by surface mail, with as many details as possible, to Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4909.

NOTE: An indictment is a determination by a grand jury that there is probable cause to believe that offenses have been committed by the defendant. The defendant, of course, is presumed innocent until and unless she is proven guilty at trial.

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