



# Department of Justice

United States Attorney David R. Dugas  
Middle District of Louisiana

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

BATON ROUGE, LA – United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced that another Louisiana resident pled guilty today in federal court to fraud charges related to hurricane disaster relief programs. YOLANDA V. KING, age 42, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, pled guilty today to a two-count bill of information charging her with making a false writing and document (Count One) and wire fraud (Count Two).

In response to Hurricane Katrina, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provided funding for a variety of disaster-related programs, including rental assistance payments to qualified individuals in need of such assistance. According to the plea agreement, KING created a fraudulent claim to FEMA in that from on or about January 12, 2006, through on or about August 31, 2006, KING submitted fraudulent documentation to FEMA claiming she was in need of disaster related rental assistance due to damage caused by Hurricane Katrina to her home and personal property. The fraudulent documentation submitted to FEMA by KING to support claims for rental assistance benefits caused funds totaling \$6,166 to be mailed by FEMA to KING.

Also as a result of Hurricane Katrina, FEMA provided funding for Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA). The Louisiana Department of Labor (LDOL) administered the DUA program for residents of the State of Louisiana. DUA provided financial assistance to individuals whose employment had been interrupted or lost as a direct result of a major disaster declared by the President of the United States. The plea agreement between KING and the United States of America also charged her with filing fraudulent claims for DUA benefits, wherein she falsely claimed she was unemployed due to Hurricane Katrina. It is alleged that the filing of these false claims caused funds to be transmitted from the LDOL into a Chase debit card account set up by LDOL for access by KING.

The charges resulted from an investigation conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Inspector General. If convicted on Count One, KING faces a maximum sentence of five (5) years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both. In convicted on Count Two, KING faces a maximum sentence of twenty (20) years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both.

The number of individuals who have been charged in the Middle District of Louisiana with violations related to hurricane disaster relief funds stands at one hundred seventy-four.

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 the Assistant Attorney General of the U.S. Department of Justice’s 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.

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