



### Why This Matters

St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office (Sheriff), received a \$5.09 million award from the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP), a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grantee, for damages caused by Hurricane Katrina, which occurred on August 29, 2005; Hurricane Rita, which occurred on September 23, 2005; and Hurricane Gustav which occurred on September 1, 2008. FEMA provides such assistance to state, Tribal and local governments, and certain types of private nonprofit organizations so that communities can quickly respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies declared by the President.

### DHS Response

FEMA generally agreed with our findings and recommendations. FEMA's written response is due within 90 days.

### For Further Information:

Contact our Office of Public Affairs at (202)254-4100, or email us at [DHS-OIG.OfficePublicAffairs@dhs.gov](mailto:DHS-OIG.OfficePublicAffairs@dhs.gov)

## FEMA Public Assistance Grant Funds Awarded to the St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office, Slidell, Louisiana

### What We Determined

The Sheriff did not account for and expend FEMA grant funds according to Federal regulations and FEMA guidelines. The Sheriff claimed unsupported and ineligible costs and did not obtain and maintain insurance for vehicles. As a result, we question costs totaling \$2,468,002 for Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Gustav, or 48 percent of the Sheriff's total award for these three disasters. In addition, FEMA should deobligate and put to better use \$49,487 (\$49,302 Federal share) in Federal funds that exceeded the actual amounts the Sheriff incurred and claimed for certain projects. Generally, these findings occurred because GOHSEP, as the grantee, did not effectively execute its responsibilities under these grants.

### What We Recommend

We recommend that the Acting Regional Administrator, FEMA Region VI: (1) disallow \$844,248 under Hurricane Katrina and \$336,654 under Hurricane Rita for unsupported force account labor unless the Sheriff can provide adequate documentation to support these costs; (2) disallow \$628,532 (\$565,679 Federal share) under Hurricane Gustav for unsupported force account labor unless the Sheriff can provide adequate documentation to support these costs; (3) disallow \$418,847 under Hurricane Katrina as ineligible costs for helicopter services or provide proof that flight services billed were for eligible work related to the Sheriff; (4) disallow \$239,721 under Hurricane Katrina as ineligible costs unless the Sheriff obtains and maintains insurance for the 10 vehicles purchased. An alternative would be for FEMA to (a) disallow the costs for the purchase of three trucks unless the Sheriff obtains and maintains insurance on them and (b) require the Sheriff to remit salvage value of the other seven trucks used for search and rescue based upon the market value at the time the vehicles were no longer needed for the disaster; (5) deobligate \$47,641 of unused Federal funds awarded for Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita and put those funds to better use; (6) deobligate \$1,846 (\$1,661 Federal share) of unused Federal funds awarded for Hurricane Gustav and put those funds to better use; and (7) require GOHSEP to submit closeout documentation for the Sheriff's projects under all three disasters as soon as practicable.