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\$1.5 Million Granted by HUD for HIV/AIDS Housing in U.S. Virgin Islands

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In a move to bolster housing support for HIV/AIDS affected individuals in the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Office of HIV/AIDS Housing under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has awarded \$1,510,082 to Meeting the Needs of Our Community Inc.

This allocation is part of the Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Renewal and Replacement Grant. This grant comes from a more extensive program that sees nearly \$30 million distributed nationwide, assisting with tenant-based rental assistance, supportive services, and other housing activities. The recent announcement marks the first in a series of two grant distributions.

HUD Secretary Marcia L. Fudge spoke on the significance of this initiative, stating, “Access to safe, stable, and affordable housing is a critical social determinant of health.” She went on to highlight HUD's dedication to preventing discrimination against those with HIV, widening the access to HIV housing and services, and, above all, reducing the stigma associated with the condition.

Deputy Regional Administrator Tiffany Cobb shed light on the broader societal challenges faced by those with HIV, noting, “Far too often, people living with HIV experience discrimination in many facets of their lives.” She emphasized that the present funding aims to “ensure that individuals with HIV not only have access to safe and affordable housing but also to the necessary resources and supportive services in the U.S. Virgin Islands.”

Research has underscored the pivotal role of stable housing for the well-being of those living with HIV. Such stability leads to better health outcomes, including viral suppression. Notably, when the viral load is undetectable, the virus is untransmittable. Besides housing, the grants will extend access to vital services like case management, mental health services, substance use prevention, and employment training. This combination of housing and support services plays a significant role in ensuring housing stability, improving health outcomes, and elevating the quality of life, further aiding those who can transition to the private housing market.

Since its inception in 1992, HUD's HOPWA Program has been a beacon of national leadership, providing resources that have been pivotal in developing and operating high-caliber supportive housing schemes. Through the HOPWA initiative, HUD has granted resources to cities, states, and nonprofit organizations, enabling them to offer housing assistance and supportive services to low-income individuals with HIV and their families. With its core aim to facilitate housing, ensure consistent medical care, and support intricate treatment regimens, the HOPWA program stands as a testament to HUD's commitment. Additional details on the HOPWA program can be found at <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/hopwa/>.