

V.I. Energy Office Expands VIBES Program to Support Larger Battery Systems, Increase Rebates

Residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands can now receive larger rebates and install bigger battery systems, with new support reaching up to \$6,000 to help enhance power resilience during outages

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The V.I. Energy Office has announced updates to the Virgin Islands Energy Storage (VIBES) program, aiming to boost energy resilience across the territory. As of November 8, residents can now apply for rebates on larger battery backup systems under this initiative, which was launched in May to assist homeowners and businesses in managing power outages effectively.

The federally funded VIBES program was established to encourage Virgin Islanders to invest in energy storage solutions that automatically activate during power interruptions, providing a reliable backup for essential needs. With the new updates, the VIEO has increased the maximum

rebate amount from \$4,000 to \$6,000, allowing greater financial support for residents installing battery backup systems and automatic transfer switches or smart critical load panels. These systems are designed to direct power to critical circuits or appliances, enabling users to sustain essential functions like refrigeration and water pumps during outages.

In a bid to broaden participation, the VIEO said it has also expanded the program's eligibility criteria. Battery systems with capacities up to 20 kWh are now eligible, and consumers have the option to purchase qualifying equipment from vendors outside of the territory. However, systems acquired from non-local suppliers will be subject to additional technical assessments by VIEO staff and must secure an approved Electrical Final Certificate from the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) before applying for the rebate.

Funded through an \$800,000 grant from the State Energy Program Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (SEPIL), the VIBES program operates on a first-come, first-served basis, according to the V.I. Energy Office. To qualify, applicants must be full-time residents of the Virgin Islands, own a property in the territory, hold an active account with the Water and Power Authority (WAPA), and install a battery backup system with a capacity between 3 kWh and 20 kWh.

Virgin Islanders interested in the VIBES program can find a comprehensive list of eligibility requirements and application information on the VIEO website at energy.vi.gov or by contacting the Energy Office at (340) 713-8436 on St. Croix or (340) 714-8436 on St. Thomas.