

logo not found or type unknown

Bryan, ODR Project 2028 as Peak Construction Year for \$24 Billion Rebuild USVI Program

ODR Director Adrienne Williams-Octalien said most projects are in pre-construction, with full-scale activity expected by 2028. Early work begins in 2026 on major schools and hospitals, as officials warn of looming labor shortages and stress local training

Disaster Recovery / **Published On October 28, 2025 06:47 AM /**

Janeke Simon **October 28, 2025**

Image not found or type unknown



The Virgin Islands' massive Rebuild USVI initiative is moving steadily from planning to execution, with officials projecting that 2028 will mark the height of construction and labor demand across the territory.

According to Adrienne Williams-Octalien, director of the Office of Disaster Recovery (ODR), the next three years will see hundreds of projects advance from early groundwork into full-scale

building. “Many of the projects are in the pre-construction stage,” she said on Monday at the Gov’t House press briefing, explaining that contractors are currently completing “early work packages,” which include critical earthwork and site preparation.

Based on timelines reviewed by the Public Finance Authority Board, these preliminary phases are expected to be completed within 18 to 24 months, setting the stage for widespread activity beginning in 2026.

“We looked at our projections and our timelines, and we expect that the height of the construction will be about 2028, where all of the projects that we have outlined will be full construction,” Williams-Octalien stated. Those projects include reconstruction of schools, hospitals, fire stations, and the undergrounding and rehabilitation of water and power infrastructure throughout the territory.

The initiative, funded by approximately \$24 billion in federal disaster recovery allocations, already has more than \$20 billion in active contracts, according to ODR and the Public Finance Authority. Among the key undertakings now moving forward are the Juan F. Luis Hospital, Charlotte Amalie High School, Central High School on St. Croix, and E. Benjamin Oliver Elementary on St. Thomas. “We will be seeing construction shortly on the Charlotte Amalie High School, the Central High School on St. Croix,” Williams-Octalien said. “The Juan F. Luis Hospital will be...first moving to demolition and then to construction,” she added, noting that work on these projects will begin in early 2026 before ramping up toward the 2028 peak.

As the rebuild accelerates, officials are preparing for what could become the largest labor demand in Virgin Islands history. Williams-Octalien warned that the workforce challenge remains significant and stressed the need to upskill local labor to meet rising demand. “We will infuse outside workers to be able to support some of the specialized areas that’s needed for the reconstruction of these facilities,” she said.

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. echoed those sentiments, urging local contractors to collaborate rather than compete to meet the scale of work ahead. “It’s going to take us working together to really get these projects done, and trust me, there’s food on the table for everybody and then some,” he said, noting that the construction surge would benefit a wide range of professions — from engineers and architects to suppliers, accountants, and small business owners.

Officials say training programs are already being designed to strengthen the local construction workforce while coordinating with national and global firms capable of providing specialized expertise. The overarching goal, Bryan said, is not only to rebuild but to ensure that the Virgin Islands emerges from the recovery more resilient, economically stronger, and locally empowered.