

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Contractors Say EnVision Tomorrow Payment Delays Are Stalling Repairs and Forcing Work Stoppages

Firms working under the USVI's housing recovery program say millions in unpaid invoices have accumulated, leaving projects on hold and homeowners waiting, as ODR disputes the scale of arrears and cites compliance, permitting, and federal approval hurdles.

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Contractors working under the U.S. Virgin Islands' EnVision Tomorrow housing recovery program say long-standing payment delays are disrupting construction schedules, forcing work stoppages, and leaving homeowners waiting as millions of dollars in outstanding invoices remain unpaid.

Information obtained by V.I. Consortium indicates that both small local contractors and larger firms subcontracting local labor have been affected, with some companies reporting that the unpaid balances matter "has been ongoing for several years." The delays, contractors say, are preventing them from covering operational costs, paying subcontractors, and completing repairs on homes damaged by Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017.

"We don't know what's the holdup, it's a bunch of bureaucratic mess with ODR and HFA," said an employee of one company contracted under the program, speaking on condition of anonymity. "This has been ongoing for several years."

According to that source, outstanding payments now total millions of dollars, affecting not only the company he works for but other contractors performing work directly through the Office of Disaster Recovery and the Housing Finance Authority. "A lot of houses are being put on hold, the homeowners are affected, and a lot of contractors are walking off the job," he said. Some contractors, he added, have issued stop-work notices due to nonpayment.

The individual also disputed public statements about the program's progress. Claims made during legislative hearings about rapid advancement, he said, do not reflect the reality on the ground. "That's not true," he said. "That's not true...that's a political stunt, political show...a dog and pony show."

The EnVIsion Tomorrow program was created to provide permanent housing repair and reconstruction for homeowners impacted by the 2017 hurricanes. The program [initially struggled](#) with labor shortages and has faced ongoing criticism for [bureaucratic delays and permitting challenges](#). In September 2025, Adrienne Williams-Octalien, executive director of the Office of Disaster Recovery, acknowledged slow progress while expressing [cautious optimism](#) that momentum was increasing, even as contractor and funding challenges persisted.

Following the allegations, V.I. Consortium journalists spoke directly with Williams-Octalien on Friday to seek clarification on contractor payment concerns, including issues raised about Persons Services, a prime contractor under the EnVIsion Tomorrow program.

According to Williams-Octalien, just over \$2 million is currently owed to Persons Services—not the more than \$5 million The Consortium was told. She noted that ODR takes contractor payments "very seriously," explaining that the payment process involves a two-step flow in which funds move from ODR to the V.I. Housing Finance Authority before being disbursed to contractors.

Williams-Octalien noted that Persons Services holds a master contract and manages multiple subcontractors. She also stressed that the payment delays are not due to indifference but rather to the scale and complexity of the program and its compliance requirements.

As of January, Williams-Octalien reported that 80 homes have been completed, 10 additional homes are nearly finished, more than 100 homes are currently under construction, and additional projects are in the process of mobilization. She described the

scope of EnVIsion Tomorrow as an “immense task,” noting that each home must meet strict federal standards before funding is approved.

Part of the delay, she explained, stems from requirements imposed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which necessitate detailed contract reviews, corrections, and approvals before payments can be released. “There’s a lot of work to do before HUD approves the funding,” she said, adding that ODR staff often work directly with contractors to bring documentation into compliance.

Williams-Octalien also pointed to the territory’s permitting process as another contributing factor, citing the need for approvals from multiple agencies, including the Department of Planning and Natural Resources and the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority, which can further slow construction timelines.

Contractors, however, say those explanations do not account for the length or scale of the delays. According to an individual with knowledge of the payment issues affecting Persons Services, the last substantial payment was made in December 2025, when the balance owed had already reached approximately \$5 million. That payment totaled about \$800,000. As previously noted, ODR maintains that the amount owed is just over \$2 million.

“So they’re asking you for more homes,” the contractor said, referring to requests from government officials to increase construction numbers ahead of the Governor’s upcoming State of the Territory address Monday night. “Are they paying money? No.”

He added that new invoices cannot even be submitted because of the backlog. “We have a lot of invoices we can’t even submit...the number is increasing.”

While ODR maintains that the payment pipeline is functioning and that contractor support remains a priority, contractors say the financial strain is becoming untenable and is directly impacting homeowners still waiting for repairs.