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PFA Renews Ernst & Young and Witt O'Brien Contracts Worth Up to \$46.8 Million a Year

The board approved a two-year extension for Ernst & Young at up to \$25.6 million a year and Witt O'Brien at up to \$21.2 million a year, as ODR said both firms remain critical to managing compliance, cash flow, project delivery and federal recovery work.

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The V.I. Public Finance Authority on Wednesday approved two major contract extensions for the Office of Disaster Recovery, authorizing up to \$25,632,361 per year for Ernst & Young and up to \$21,197,777 per year for Witt O'Brien as the territory continues managing large-scale federally funded recovery work.

The board also approved a separate resolution amending the current Ernst & Young contract by \$5.7 million for reconciliation, cash-flow analysis and other financial management support services.

ODR Director Adrienne Williams-Octalien told the board that Ernst & Young has been involved in the recovery effort from the beginning and continues to play a central role in reviewing payments, contracts, documentation and cash-flow planning tied to the territory's disaster recovery funding.

She said the firm helps review payments to ensure the required documentation is in place and also reviews contracts so they are structured in a way that supports federal reimbursement. The firm additionally supports the Department of Finance by assessing liquidity, forecasting cash flows, analyzing budgets and producing weekly reports tied to incoming federal funding and changing assumptions, the ODR director stated.

Williams-Octalien said the territory currently has the benefit of [FEMA's Validate as You Go](#) status, which she described as a designation given to high-performing jurisdictions whose systems and processes have been found to be sound. According to Ms. Williams-Octalien, that status allows the territory to move projects forward without added scrutiny beyond the required documentation.

During discussion of the cost, board members acknowledged that the annual amount is large. Williams-Octalien said the work requires specialized expertise and that the territory is dealing with layered funding streams and highly complex compliance requirements. She said if the work had to be staffed up locally, it would probably require another 30 people.

She also told the board that the level of work being handled is not the type of assignment suited for entry-level accountants, but for people with experience managing complex financial operations and federal program requirements.

The Ernst & Young extension runs from May 1, 2026 through April 30, 2028. Williams-Octalien said the current annual not-to-exceed value is \$16,836,836 and that the extension and amendment were needed to continue services and align prior authorizations tied to additional cash-flow work.

The board separately approved a two-year extension for Witt O'Brien, which Williams-Octalien said has supported the territory's recovery effort since the early phase following Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

She told the board the firm has helped the territory increase projected federal recovery funding from \$8 billion to \$24 billion and has assisted in moving projects through FEMA processes and toward obligation.

According to Williams-Octalien, Witt O'Brien continues to provide staff augmentation and technical support for WAPA projects, including generator replacement and other utility work, as well as projects involving the Department of Education, the Waste Management Authority and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

The Witt O'Brien contract is administered on a task-order basis, allowing ODR to control costs and tailor assignments to specific programmatic needs, the director said. She said the territory still needs that support as it moves from obligation into construction and works through environmental and regulatory requirements tied to project implementation.

The Witt O'Brien extension also runs from May 1, 2026 through April 30, 2028.

Both resolutions were approved by the board without opposition.

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