

Energy Office Launches Program to Help Medically Vulnerable Residents During Outages

The Virgin Islands Energy Office said the new program will distribute about 900 portable battery systems across the territory to help qualifying residents power medical devices and essential appliances during intermittent outages.

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As the territory approaches the 2026 hurricane season and continues to grapple with intermittent power outages, the Virgin Islands Energy Office says it is preparing a new program aimed at residents whose health and safety depend on uninterrupted electricity. Announced Monday, the Virgin Islands Resiliency Gateway, or ViRGE, is intended to support medically vulnerable people by providing portable battery systems capable of powering essential appliances and medical equipment during outages.

According to Energy Office Director Kyle Fleming, the program is specifically designed for residents who face heightened risks when electricity is lost.

“Access to reliable electricity can mean the difference between stability and crisis as we head into the 2026 hurricane season,” said Mr. Fleming. “Through this initiative, we will deploy portable plug and play battery systems directly to the homes of qualifying residents,” he announced.

He said the systems will give residents “the ability to power essential appliances and medical equipment during outages without having the long term consequences that they bring.”

Mr. Fleming explained that the units are mobile, can be moved from room to room, and include a deployable solar panel for recharging during extended outages.

He also said the Energy Office is working with the Department of Human Services to identify the residents most in need of the systems.

According to Mr. Fleming, special attention will be given to people who rely on refrigeration for insulin or electricity for CPAP machines, ventilators, and other medical devices.

“These solutions are going to provide that support during those intermittent outages that do occur,” Mr. Fleming assured.

Mr. Fleming said the ViRGE program will be funded through a strategic Department of Energy funding source that was reallocated by the Energy Office.

He said about 900 units are expected to be distributed across the territory, with relatively equal allocations planned for each district.

Procurement has not yet been finalized, he disclosed, but Director Fleming said he is confident that a “cost-effective and time-expedient” vendor will soon be engaged.