

The Virgin Islands Consortium

HUD Approves USVI's \$243 Million Disaster Recovery Plan; Mapp To Host Press Conference Wednesday

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U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (H.U.D.) Secretary Ben Carson, seen above, today announced he is approving a disaster recovery plan to help citizens in the U.S. Virgin Islands recover from Hurricanes Irma and Maria. [In November](#), H.U.D. allocated \$243 million to the U.S. Virgin Islands to support long-term recovery efforts.

The approval represents a big win for the Mapp administration, which had been working with H.U.D. to ascertain the release of the funds. The funds also come at a time when the territory is in desperate need of it.

The U.S. Virgin Islands' action plan approved today is funded through H.U.D.'s Community Development Block Grant—Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program, which requires grantees to develop a thoughtful recovery program informed by local residents, H.U.D. said.

The Mapp administration has announced a press conference at Government House on St. Croix for 10:00 a.m. Wednesday. There, Mr. Mapp, along with department heads from Property and Procurement, Department of Public Works, Human Services, Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority, the V.I. Housing Authority and the Virgin Islands Port Authority will discuss plans for the funds.

"Planning is critical to recovery. Today, we begin the process of putting this plan to work," Mr. Carson said. "H.U.D. will continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our partners on the ground to help the citizens of the U.S. Virgin Islands to recover and rebuild their homes and their lives."

"This is a great day for the U.S. Virgin Islands," said Governor Mapp. "H.U.D.'s approval of our action plan marks a major milestone in our recovery. The approvals we received today will enable us to move forward quickly on major recovery activities across the territory including the dredging of our harbors. I want to express my personal thanks to President Donald Trump and H.U.D. Secretary Ben Carson for their tremendous support of the people of the Virgin Islands."

To address unmet needs, the U.S. Virgin Islands identified several housing, infrastructure and economic development recovery needs arising from Hurricanes Irma and Maria, H.U.D. said. The following programs have been designed to address those unmet needs and assist in the recovery:

- **Homeowner Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Program (\$10 million)** – This program is available to eligible homeowners for properties that were damaged by Hurricanes Irma or Maria.
- **New Construction for Homeownership Opportunity and First Time Homebuyer Assistance (\$10 million)** – This program is designed to address post-disaster housing affordability challenges and enable renters to become homeowners.
- **Rental Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (\$5 million)** – This program provides funds for the repair or replacement of damage to rental housing owned by the Virgin Islands Housing Authority, Virgin Islands Housing Finance Agency, and private landlords.
- **Public & Affordable Housing Development (\$32 million)** – These funds are targeted for the redevelopment and creation of new affordable housing, including subsidized and mixed-income rental units.
- **Supportive Housing & Sheltering Programs (\$15 million)** – The U.S. Virgin Islands recovery plan includes an effort for the rehabilitation, reconstruction, and development of housing for vulnerable populations, particularly among low-income seniors and those persons and families experiencing homelessness. This program also includes the development of emergency shelters for individuals and families who cannot shelter in place during disasters. The emergency shelter housing would also serve persons who require short-term housing because they are temporarily displaced.

- **Infrastructure (\$125,549,800)** – These funds are targeted for three infrastructure activities: 1) Local Match for Federal Disaster Relief Programs (\$50,549,800) to help finance educational facilities, energy, hospitals, telecommunications, transportation, waste management, and water/wastewater management; 2) Infrastructure Repair and Resilience (\$30,000,000) and 3) Electrical Power Systems Enhancement and Improvement (\$45,000,000).
- **Economic Revitalization (\$33 million)** – Through this program, the U.S. Virgin Islands seeks to revitalize the post-disaster economy, including (\$23 million) for Ports and Airports Enhancements, including harbor dredging to allow for larger cruise ships; 2) a Workforce Development Program to train low- and moderate-income residents to fill the construction and other jobs coming from recovery investments (\$5,000,000); and 3) the Tourism Industry Support Program (\$5,000,000), which will require a waiver by HUD, for marketing to communicate that the USVI is open for business.

In April, H.U.D. also allocated [an additional \\$1.621 billion](#) of CDBG-DR funding to the U.S. Virgin Islands for unmet need, infrastructure and mitigation purposes. H.U.D. said it will shortly issue requirements governing those funds, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, along with other states, will be required to submit plans addressing their use.