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## Territory's Court Houses Receive \$1.5 Million From FEMA for Damage Caused By Hurricane Maria

Disaster Recovery / **Published On August 31, 2020 08:18 AM /**

Staff Consortium **August 31, 2020**

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**Supreme Court on Strand Street, Frederiksted, St. Croix. By. THE OFFICE OF DISASTER RECOVERY**

The Office of Disaster Recovery announced today that the Judiciary of the Virgin Islands has received an obligation of \$1,486,421 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Public Assistance Program. These funds will cover renovations and the cost to replace the contents for multiple facets of the district's operations, including both courthouses, vehicles, and the home of the Superior Court's Rising Stars Steel Band Orchestra, O.D.R. said.

According to the release, severe winds and rain allowed water to collect at the Mars Hill "Panyard", leading to irreparable damages. Most of the critical equipment needed to carry-out the

orchestra's tutorial and enrichment functions were destroyed.

The Superior Courthouse in Kingshill was the most impacted. The losses amassed to over \$1M, encompassing interior and exterior repairs, according to O.D.R. Frederiksted's Supreme Courthouse was also negatively impacted, incurring irreparable damages to the flooring on the second floor and the ADA elevator lift.

In order to safely continue the court's vital operations on St. Croix, repairs were made in advance of FEMA's obligation, according to the release.



**The V.I. Superior Court on St. Croix (Credit: Office of Disaster Recovery)**

Regina Petersen, administrator of courts, said, “The Judicial Branch Administrative Office had facilitated various repairs at all three facilities since the 2017 Hurricanes, starting with major remediation projects, and the replacement of damaged flooring, ceiling tiles, carpets, cubicles, furniture, fencing, and an elevator lift. In addition to the replacement of and/or repair of 13 of 26 damaged vehicles.”

She added, “The obligation and release of this funding by way of reimbursement will go a long way in providing critical funding assistance for continued repairs, including but not limited to the largest repair - the replacement of the roof at the R.H. Amphlett Leader Superior Court building in Kingshill.”

“Recovery must occur across all branches of government to allow the Territory to return to its full functionality,” said Office of Disaster Recovery Director Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien. “I am most pleased that our combined efforts have resulted in receiving funding to provide the Judiciary with resources to continue its recovery.”

The Judicial Branch will continue to solicit bids to complete the remaining repairs and renovations based on funding availability, O.D.R. said.

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