

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Ritz-Carlton, Set For October Reopening, Announces Hiring Opportunities

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ST. THOMAS -- The Ritz-Carlton, damaged badly in 2017 by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, has been working feverishly on repairs and is set for a grand reopening in late October.

In light of this, the hotel has launched what it's calling the Hiring Opportunity Program (H.O.P.), which it has deemed the beginning of the Ritz-Carlton's long-term strategic commitment to employee recruitment and hiring, career services, customized training, on-boarding and comprehensive on-the-job training.

According to the Economic Development Authority, which was on hand for a June 25 announcement of the H.O.P. program, individuals unemployed due to Hurricanes Irma

and Maria are especially encouraged to learn more about career opportunities at the hotel.

Representatives of Restoring Futures, a program funded by a \$4.9 million National Dislocated Worker Grant and awarded to ICF for the U.S. Virgin Islands by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, was also present for the program's launch, which was held at the University of the Virgin Islands' Sports and Fitness Center.

The hotel anticipates hiring hundreds of well-qualified individuals to serve their guests when it reopens in late October 2019.

"What's unique about the Ritz Carlton is that we're not just looking for individuals looking for a job, we're looking for individuals looking for a career," said Carol Baker-Robinson, director of finance at the hotel. "We have many legacy employees at the Ritz-Carlton. We have seen several Virgin Islanders in the diaspora interested in coming back that were displaced from the storms."

During the term of H.O.P., Ritz-Carlton professionals will provide information on the array of available employment opportunities when the hotel reopens this fall.

Kamal I. Latham, EDA chief executive officer, reflected on his enthusiasm from the onset about the H.O.P. initiative, according to the E.D.A.

"A seed was planted during a listening session back in January 2019 with ICF - Restoring Futures, and different companies in the territory. We are pleased to see that hundreds of Virgin Islanders attended with interest. We are excited for this kick-off and look forward to expanding into the St. Croix district at an accelerated speed," Mr. Latham said.

The Ritz-Carlton is a beneficiary of the Economic Development Commission's Tax Incentive Program.

Ed Trumbull, project director of Restoring Futures and vice president of ICF, said, "We are steadily working in the background. This is a large recruitment effort that is being driven by the employer, but also adding to the Virgin Islands Department of Labor database for dislocated workers. Working in collaboration with V.I. D.O.L. and our other partners, we are interested in building capacity and providing assistance to dislocated workers."

To learn more about H.O.P., go [here](#).