

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Airbnb Activates Open Homes Program In U.S. Virgin Islands And Puerto Rico For Hurricane Dorian Through September 15

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Airbnb has activated its Open Homes Program www.airbnb.com/hurricanedorian to help displaced residents and relief workers deployed to the regions impacted by Hurricane Dorian, the company announced Friday. The Open Homes Program recruits hosts who are willing and able to provide their homes for \$0 to displaced residents and disaster relief workers in the activation area including Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. The program is currently available through September 15, 2019.

This hurricane season, Airbnb said it is committed to continuing to help communities across the country affected by natural disasters. The concept for the Open Homes Program dates back to 2012, when in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, hosts came up with the idea to offer their space for free to those in need. Since 2012, Open Homes has been activated over 10 times for hurricanes and storms in the United States as well as US territories, including Hurricane Harvey in 2017 and Tropical Storm Barry earlier this year.

“Airbnb’s Open Homes Program has been activated to assist residents displaced by and relief workers deployed to respond to Hurricane Dorian. Through the program, those in need of temporary accommodations can connect with Open Homes hosts in the area free of charge. The program extends through September 15, 2019 and is available in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. Since its inception in 2012, the Open Homes program has housed 30,000 people in 61 countries. We hope those in need will take advantage of the program and that those who can open their homes will do so in the days ahead,” said Kellie Bentz, Airbnb’s Head of Global Disaster Response and Relief.

Dorian approached the U.S. Virgin Islands as a tropical storm, but strengthened to a Category 1 hurricane when it arrived. The St. Thomas-St. John District experienced the brunt of the storm's wrath, while St. Croix, Puerto Rico and the British Virgin Islands were mostly spared.

Now Dorian is headed to Florida where it is expected to touch down as a dangerous Category 4 hurricane.

Airbnb said it has supported a number of hurricane and tropical storm relief efforts, including:

- ? Hurricane Sandy (2012)
- ? Hurricane Matthew (2016)
- ? Hurricane Harvey (2017)
- ? Hurricane Irma (2017)
- ? Hurricane Maria (2017)
- ? Hurricane Michael (2018)
- ? Hurricane Florence (2018)
- ? Tropical Storm Gordon (2018)
- ? Tropical Storm Barry (2019)

Since its inception in 2012, the Open Homes program has housed 30,000 people in 61 countries. For Hurricane Florence in 2018, over 700 hosts housed nearly 1,000 people in need, and for Tropical Storm Michael, 1,000 hosts provided temporary housing to over 700 people in need, Airbnb said.