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Housing Authority Gets \$7.6 Million From FEMA to Repair Marley Homes

Disaster Recovery / **Published On September 02, 2021 05:51 PM /**

Staff Consortium **September 02, 2021**

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The Office of Disaster Recovery announced Thursday that the Virgin Islands Housing Authority (VIHA) has been obligated \$7,613,710 to complete repairs to Marley Homes and Additions in Frederiksted. The funds obligated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency through the Public Assistance Program have been allocated to refurbish nineteen residential structures, as well as the community center, office and Head Start buildings.

According to the release, after Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, the authority worked to execute immediate repairs to ensure that the residents of the community had safe and habitable homes. These initial renovations addressed fencing, flooring, roofing, and electrical work, as well as solar water heater replacement and various bathroom renovations.

In furtherance of this work, VIHA has procured O'Reilly Plumbing and Construction to complete additional permanent roofing repairs to the hurricane-damaged sections of the waterfront property. The target completion date is October 30. The appropriate solicitations to complete the outstanding portions of the scope will be drafted and released to the public.

"The Housing Authority is pleased to be at the point that we can provide relief in the form of repairs to our very patient residents of Marley Homes and Additions," stated Robert Graham, executive director for the Virgin Islands Housing Authority.

The Marley Head Start location traditionally provided early childhood education through the Department of Human Services Head Start Program to families who resided in the town of Frederiksted. Now shuttered due to extensive damages by the storms, FEMA's obligations will allow for the full restoration of the facility and services to the surrounding neighborhoods.

"Completion of our housing communities and their auxiliary facilities is essential to bringing relief and routine to the daily lives of residents," said Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien, O.D.R. director. "The revitalization of public housing is a top priority. We will continue to work collectively with the Virgin Islands Housing Authority and FEMA to rebuild resilient communities throughout the territory."

To date, the authority has been obligated just over \$192 million, and with the infusion of mitigation funding, residents should feel safer knowing that measures will be instituted to prevent similar damages from occurring.