

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Here Are the Provisions for the U.S. Virgin Islands in Congress's \$1.5 Trillion Spending Bill

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The U.S. House of Representatives Wednesday night overwhelmingly approved a \$1.5 trillion spending bill to fund the federal government. The bill includes \$14 billion in aid for Ukraine and has considerable funding for the U.S. Virgin Islands, including appropriations to avert the Medicaid funding cliff in the territory by extending the increased rate of federal funding (83 percent) for Medicaid in the USVI through December 13, 2022.

The measure is expected to win bipartisan approval in the Senate as well.

According to Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett, whose office fought for local priorities, the extension of the increased rate of federal Medicaid funding for the territory prevents what

would have been a sharp decline in the overall Medicaid offerings in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Below are the funding priorities secured in the bill for the territory according to Ms. Plaskett:

- \$659,000 to purchase forensic equipment for use by the Virgin Islands Department of Justice Medical Examiner's Office on St. Croix
- \$960,000 for the Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority to improve residential wastewater collection sewers across the territory
- \$750,000 for improvements to the DPNR marine enforcement pier at Krum Bay on St. Thomas
- \$750,000 for improvements to the DPNR marine enforcement pier at Gallows Bay on St. Croix
- \$1,120,000 for the Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority to improve wastewater treatment facilities across the territory
- \$1,200,000 for the Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority to improve municipal water security infrastructure across the territory

"The legislation also contains the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2022, which reauthorizes programs enacted under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and includes my amendment to double the minimum amount of funding made available to the Virgin Islands (and the other small U.S. territories) under the Sexual Assault Services Program and the Transitional Housing Assistance Program. These programs are essential for the protection and support of women who have been assaulted and/or abused and need to rebuild their lives," said Ms. Plaskett.

She added, "The Community Project Funding, along with the Medicaid match and VAWA funding that I and my team were able to secure in this bill responds to some of the most pressing needs in our territory. These investments support underserved areas and foster economic development, making a real difference in the lives of so many in our community."

The measure, also called the omnibus spending bill, would appropriate \$730 billion in non-defense funding which represents a \$46 billion increase over fiscal year 2021 and the largest in four years. The bill also appropriates \$782 billion in defense funding—an increase of \$42 billion over fiscal year 2021, according to the Wall Street Journal.