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Work Ongoing Territory-Wide With \$26.4 Million of FEMA-Committed Funds on Sports, Parks and Recreational Facilities

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FEMA has committed \$1.4 million for repairs to the Emile Griffith Ballpark in Charlotte Amalie on St. Thomas, which was damaged from hurricanes Irma and Maria in September 2017. By. FEMA/ERIC ADAMS.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency said Tuesday that it has committed \$26.4 million for repairs to 56 sports, parks and recreational facilities across the territory.

FEMA said these facilities serve communities throughout the USVI by providing a source for recreation, community, education and historical and cultural environments. It said interruptions in operation at these facilities can disrupt many routines and a closure of public libraries can limit

and often times prevent a student's ability to perform their schoolwork without a dedicated, structured environment.

"The Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation is grateful to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for providing the funds that allow us to repair and, in some cases, reconstruct the territory's recreational facilities," said Calvert White, DSPR commissioner. "The grants awarded by FEMA's Public Assistance Program support our efforts to provide high-quality recreational spaces and activities to our community."

Projects on St. Croix include repairs to Pedro Cruz Ballpark in Kingshill, Isaac Boynes Ballpark in Frederiksted and Cramer's Park Pavilion, according to FEMA.

Other repair and restoration projects are planned for St. John and St. Thomas. On St. John, the Winston Wells Ballpark, the Orville Brown basketball court and the Cruz Bay tennis court will undergo improvements. The Emile Griffith Ballpark, Lionel Roberts Stadium and completed Joseph Aubain Ballpark on St. Thomas will also benefit from restoration efforts.

While the revitalization of the territory's parks and recreational facilities can benefit the entire community, so can the restoration of libraries, the federal agency said. "Libraries create a conducive environment to learning and lay the groundwork toward the development of strong communities," said FEMA U.S. Virgin Islands Recovery Director Kristen A. Hodge. "Working with the V.I. Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation and the V.I. Department of Planning and Natural Resources to rebuild these important community institutions will leave a legacy for future generations."

FEMA is obligating \$5.8 million to five public libraries in the U.S. Virgin Islands for hurricane repairs. Library repairs will include \$669,400 in hazard mitigation measures to infrastructure damaged by the 2017 storms.

FEMA's \$1.8 million obligation to the Florence A. Williams and Athalie M. Petersen libraries' repairs on St. Croix includes \$608,200 in hazard mitigation measures, such as the installation of ceramic flooring to replace carpet and vinyl flooring and door dams to stop further flooding at the Williams site.

The Charles W. Turnbull Regional Public Library on St. Thomas will receive \$2.9 million toward renovations.

The restoration of Charlotte Amalie's Enid M. Baa Library and Archives highlights the importance of historic preservation in disaster recovery. Enid Baa, born in 1911 on St. Thomas, was a librarian, educator and historian. She was a leading advocate for the establishment and administration of libraries in the territory.

After repairing the site, VI DPNR intends to use the Baa Library building as a community gathering space and visitor welcome center. FEMA has obligated \$706,000 for Baa Library repairs. Stainless-steel doors, wire caging to protect air conditioners from flying debris and strengthening windows with hardware to withstand storm-force winds are among the \$61,100 approved hazard mitigation measures for the library.

FEMA obligated \$271,200 for hurricane repairs to the Elaine I. Sprauve Library and Museum in Cruz Bay on St. John. This project will include American Disability Act-compliant push buttons on exterior and interior doors.

FEMA said it will continue to collaborate with the territorial departments of Sports, Parks and Recreation and Planning and Natural Resources to ensure FEMA Public Assistance projects to repair recreational facilities and public libraries will benefit the entire community equitably.

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