

logo not found or type unknown

Federal Gov't to Provide Funding to Restructure, Rebuild and Revitalize Public Housing Across U.S. Virgin Islands

Government / **Published On January 13, 2023 05:31 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **January 13, 2023**

Image not found or type unknown



The Federal Emergency Management Agency has provided notification to the public of the intent of the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA to provide federal financial assistance to the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA), as recipient, and the Virgin Islands Housing Authority, as subrecipient, to restructure, rebuild, and revitalize the public housing communities across the territory.

This action is in response to the storms of 2017, hurricanes Irma and Maria, which devastated both the St. Croix and St. Thomas-St. John Districts. Irma was declared a major disaster on Sept. 7, 2017, while Maria received the same declaration on Sept. 20, 2017.

"These declarations allow federal disaster assistance to be available to affected communities and certain nonprofit organizations in accordance with the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1974 (Stafford Act; 42 U.S.C. 5172), as amended," FEMA said Monday. The Consortium [previously reported](#) on the federal agency's plan to provide the funding.

FEMA said the V.I. Housing Finance Authority is considering multiple projects involving renovation, redevelopment, relocation, and/ or demolition activities at existing housing complexes to improve the USVI's public housing communities. The need for these potential actions or types of activities is to address the shortfalls in existing conditions within public housing, according to FEMA.

As part of the funding, V.I.H.F.A will renovate and reconstruct units that will have additional improvements with planned recreational opportunities such as playgrounds, parks and community centers; relocate developments to more desirable or locations less vulnerable to natural disasters; and redevelop existing complexes as smaller developments with larger apartments. The objective of the housing improvements focuses on creating a better future for individuals and the communities of the USVI, FEMA said.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) has been prepared to assess the potential impacts of the proposed actions on the physical, biological, cultural, and human environments, the federal agency said. THE DHS-FEMA requirement of addressing floodplain management and wetlands protection in accordance with 44 CFR Part 9 is incorporated within the PEA. The PEA is available for public comment, and comments can be sent via email to FEMA-4340-Comment@fema.dhs.gov.

The PEA will be available for download from <https://vihousing.org/>; and on FEMA's website at <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/environmental-historic/nepa/programmatic-environmental-26>.

A hard copy of the PEA will be available at the following locations:

- VI Housing Authority St. Thomas Office
 - o 9900 Oswald Harris Court, St. Thomas
- VI Housing Authority St. Croix Office
 - o #5 Estate Upper Bethlehem, Kingshill, St. Croix

The comment period will end 30 days after the date of publication on both, the FEMA and VIHA websites listed above. Written comments on the PEA can be mailed or e-mailed to the contact below. If no substantive comments are received, the PEA will become final, and FEMA will sign a Finding of No Significant Impact. Substantive comments will be addressed as appropriate in any final documents. Contact: FEMA 4335-4340 JFO, Attn: Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation, 4500 Sunny Isle Shopping Center, Unit 37 and 38, Christiansted, VI 00820; or via email at FEMA-4340-Comment@fema.dhs.gov.