

The Virgin Islands Consortium

USDA Making Grants of Up to \$40,675 Available for People in USVI Impacted by Massive Sargassum Influx in 2022

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Sargassum at the Divi Carina Bay Resort on St. Croix in July 2022. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development for Florida and the U.S. Virgin Islands State Director Lakeisha Hood today announced the availability of grants to help people repair their homes that were damaged by the water shortage and the health impacts from the unprecedented sargassum seagrass influx in 2022.

According to the USDA, the homes must be located in presidentially declared disaster areas. Residents of St. Croix Island may be eligible for the funding.

“When an unexpected crisis impacts our lives, it reminds us of our connection to our communities and to the places we call home,” Ms. Hood said. “That’s why the Biden-Harris Administration and USDA stand ready to help hundreds of people in the U.S. Virgin Islands access the resources they need to rebuild their homes, their communities and their lives.”

The grants are being made available through supplemental disaster funding under the Rural Disaster Home Repair Grant Program. Through this program, people may apply to receive grants of up to \$40,675 directly from USDA to repair their homes.

Funds will be available until expended.

They may be used to:

- Pay for home repair expenses that were a result of a Presidentially declared disasters in calendar year 2022.
- Prepare a site for a manufactured home.
- Relocate a manufactured home.

To be eligible:

- Applicants must have household incomes that do not exceed the low-limits based on their household size and county.
- Homes must be located in an eligible rural area.
- Homes must be located in a Presidentially declared disaster areas 2022.

For more information, go [here](#).

The Biden administration says it has championed the bill known as the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, that made this funding possible.

In the coming weeks and months, the USDA said it expects to announce additional funding availability under the bill to help rural people in presidentially declared disaster areas who were impacted by natural disasters in 2022.

This additional funding will assist eligible organizations help rural people repair and improve their homes. It will also help rural communities repair water infrastructure and essential community facilities.

Additional resources to support rural communities seeking disaster assistance are available [here](#).

Under the Biden administration, Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities, create jobs and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements;

business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural, Tribal and high poverty areas.

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