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Biden Administration Grants Nearly \$1.4 Million to USVI as Part of 'Internet for All' Initiative

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The U.S. Virgin Islands is set to receive a grant of \$1,249,952.00 from the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) as part of the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program.

This initiative is under the umbrella of the Biden administration's "Internet for All" strategy. In addition to this grant, NTIA recently announced an allocation of \$150,000 in Digital Equity planning grant funding for the USVI.

This federal funding brings USVI's total to nearly \$1.4 million, granted through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, to facilitate the development and implementation of affordable, equitable, and reliable high-speed Internet services across the territory.

Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo expressed that "everyone in the U.S. Virgin Islands deserves access to affordable, reliable, high-speed internet service." She further emphasized that this funding, part of Biden's Investing in America agenda, will advance the territory's digital infrastructure, ensuring every household has access to reliable Internet and the tools necessary to prosper in today's digital economy.

Governor Albert Bryan echoed these sentiments, stating, "One of the cornerstones of the Bryan-Roach initiatives for growing the workforce and promoting a stronger USVI economy is high-speed internet access for all of our residents."

He added that the BEAD grant would enable the territory to extend affordable broadband access to even the most remote parts of the islands, ensuring all Virgin Islanders can benefit from the digital economy.

The BEAD program, along with the Digital Equity Act program, has awarded planning grant funding to all 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and all eligible territories. The NTIA has distributed more than \$309 million in such grants.

Under the BEAD Program, USVI will employ the awarded \$1,249,952.00 to fund various planning activities, including enhancing the capacity of the broadband office, creating a Five-Year Action plan to close the digital divide, and researching unserved and underserved locations to better understand barriers to adoption.

The territory also received a \$150,000 Digital Equity Act grant, which will fund the development of a Territory Digital Equity Plan aimed at closing the digital equity gap.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law invests a historic \$65 billion to expand affordable and reliable high-speed Internet access across the U.S. Coupled with the Federal Communications Commission's Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which offers significant discounts on Internet service for eligible households, these initiatives represent substantial strides toward digital inclusivity.