THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OFFICE OF DISASTER RECOVERY
VIRGIN ISLANDS PUBLIC FINANCE AUTHORITY

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ODR Announces New Program
Giving Non-Profits Access to Funding for Stalled Recovery Projects

U.S. Virgin Islands – The Office of Disaster Recovery announces the development of a new initiative to assist non-profits with expending its FEMA disaster recovery funding. The Public Assistance Advance Funding Program will allow eligible charitable organizations who received FEMA funding to apply for advances to begin their disaster recovery projects.

Several non-profits expressed hardships surrounding getting their projects started despite having funds obligated to their organizations. The FEMA Public Assistance Program is a reimbursable program requiring non-profit organizations to expend funds up front and then submit receipts for reimbursement. However, many non-profits do not have the working capital to commence projects. Thus, many projects are still sitting in disrepair despite having funds obligated.

Currently, $18.9M has been obligated to non-profits for the recovery of Hurricanes Irma & Maria, and a total of $13.4M remains unspent. The Public Assistance Advance Funding Program is expected to address this shortfall. Non-profit community leaders also expressed these challenges to Governor Albert Bryan, Jr., who charged the Office of Disaster Recovery to develop a solution to address the problem.

“The non-profit community is an important stakeholder filling many voids that our government cannot fulfill. It is important for us as an administration to support them as they provide those much-needed services. As we continue to rebuild, our non-profit entities cannot be left behind,” said Governor Bryan.

The Landmarks Society served as a demonstration project for this initiative. Sonia Jacobs-Dowe, Executive Director, shared her organization’s gratitude. “The Landmarks Society is very appreciative of the kind assistance provided by the team at the Office of Disaster Recovery (ODR). We are ecstatic that the Whim Museum, research library, and every eligible structure on our 12-acre site in Estate Whim will finally begin the process of being repaired. In 2017, Landmarks re-opened the museum less than two months after Hurricane Maria. Now our community can look forward to every space being accessible as we continue our work to preserve St. Croix’s cultural heritage. Landmarks Society’s trustees, staff, and volunteers are thankful to Governor Bryan, ODR, and all who believe in and support our work.”

The Office of Disaster Recovery has invited all non-profit entities with open projects to participate in a virtual training session scheduled for **Wednesday, August 17, from 2:00 to 3:00 pm** to explain how to request an advance of public assistance funds for awarded projects. Applicants are required to submit a written request, not to exceed $50,000, before initiating procurement action or executing a contract.

"The Office of Disaster Recovery is eager to share this new opportunity with all of our non-profit organizations. Establishing new policies to move projects forward is a critical part of our mission and our goal to facilitate the start and completion of recovery projects," said Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien, Director of the Office of Disaster Recovery. "Invites have already been circulated to non-profit applicants with open project worksheets, and those who are not registered are encouraged to do so."

Please email info@usviodr.com or call (340)202-1221 to register and ensure that your organization is included on the invite for subsequent training opportunities.

The Office of Disaster Recovery
"Building a Legacy of Resilience"

For news on this and other disaster recovery initiatives, visit http://www.usviodr.com.
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The Bryan-Roach Administration is committed to transparency, stabilizing the economy, restoring trust in the government and ensuring that recovery projects are completed as quickly as possible. Visit transparency.vi.gov