

New or Extended Federal Programs Available to Help Virgin Island Hurricane Survivors

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ST. CROIX, Virgin Islands – Several new or extended federal programs are available to help eligible Virgin Islanders recover from hurricanes Irma and Maria. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and its federal partners continue to support efforts by the U.S. Virgin Islands territorial government to help get hurricane survivors on the road to recovery. Survivors should be aware of these programs:

Food Assistance: Eligible survivors across the territory can begin applying for food aid under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP).

- Because of the unique needs of disaster survivors, D-SNAP uses different standards than the normal Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP). Those who would not normally qualify for SNAP, may qualify for D-SNAP.
- Virgin Islanders who have SNAP benefits will not need to register in order to receive this assistance.
- The Virgin Islands Department of Human Services is accepting D-SNAP applications at all of its application sites on St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas.
- The application period is Monday through Thursday, **November 6-9**, and Monday through Wednesday, **November 13-15**.

Help with Medicines: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is making the Emergency Prescription Assistance Program (EPAP) available for uninsured survivors to ensure they have access to medicines and medical equipment.

- The free program provides a 30-day supply of covered drugs and medical supplies that can be renewed every 30 days for as long as the program is



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Page 1 of 4

active.

- U.S. Virgin Islanders who do not have any form of prescription insurance should call the EPAP enrollment toll-free hotline at **855-793-7470**.

Disaster Unemployment Aid: The deadline to register for Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) has been extended until **December 29** for survivors who lost jobs as a result of Hurricane Irma or Hurricane Maria.

- The U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Labor is assisting applicants at its locations on St. Croix and St. Thomas and at the St. John Annex of the USVI Legislature.

Temporary Roof Repairs: Operation Blue Roof is carried out by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in partnership with FEMA and the U.S. Virgin Islands government to provide homeowners affected by the hurricanes with fiber-reinforced blue plastic sheeting to cover their damaged roofs until permanent repairs can be made.

- The deadline to apply for the Operation Blue Roof program has been extended until **November 23**.
- Homeowners must sign a right of entry (ROE) form with USACE, and not all roof types qualify for the program.
- For more information or to locate an ROE Center across the territory, survivors may call **888-ROOF-BLU (766-3258)**.

FEMA Individual Assistance: Hurricane survivors now have until **December 18** to register with FEMA for potential recovery aid under the Individual Assistance (IA) program, as FEMA has granted the territorial government's request to extend the registration deadlines for the two hurricanes and make them the same for both disasters.

- Survivors may register with FEMA for assistance at DisasterAssistance.gov, or by calling **800-621-3362**. Individuals who have a speech disability or hearing loss and use TTY should call 800-462-7585 directly. Those who use 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS) may call 800-621-3362.
- These toll-free telephone numbers operate from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. (local time) seven days a week. Operators are standing by to assist survivors in multiple languages.



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Page 2 of 4

Disaster Loans: The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has extended its deadline to **December 18** for homeowners, renters and business owners to apply for low-interest disaster loans for hurricanes Irma and Maria.

- Homeowners may borrow up to \$200,000 from SBA to repair or replace their primary residence. Homeowners and renters may borrow up to \$40,000 to repair or replace personal property. Businesses may borrow up to \$2 million for any combination of property damage or economic injury.
- Applicants may apply online using SBA's secure website at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>. Additional disaster assistance information is available at www.sba.gov/disaster-assistance.
- Applicants may call SBA's Customer Service Center at **800-659-2955** or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information on SBA disaster assistance. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing may call 800-877-8339.

Rental Repairs: To help disaster survivors find a safe and secure temporary place to live, FEMA's Multi-Family Lease and Repair (MLR) program is calling on owners of multi-family dwellings that are in need of repairs.

- The program provides funds to make rental units habitable again, and at the same time helps survivors of hurricanes Irma and Maria.
- To qualify for the program, the dwelling must have three or more units and it must have been previously used as rental property. Other criteria also apply.
- The needed repairs or improvements do not have to be hurricane- or flood-related.
- Property owners interested in having their rental property considered should contact the Multi-Family Lease and Repair Program by email at FEMA-USVI-MLR@fema.dhs.gov.

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Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-3362 (voice, 711/VRS - Video Relay Service) (TTY: 800-462-7585). Multilingual operators are available (press 2 for Spanish).



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Page 3 of 4

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

Following major disasters, the U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is the primary source of Federal funds for long-term recovery assistance. This assistance is in the form of low-interest loans and is available to non-farm businesses of all sizes, private nonprofit organizations, as well as homeowners and renters with property damaged by the disaster.

For official information on the recovery effort following the hurricanes, please visit www.informusvi.com or www.usviupdate.com. Follow us on social media at twitter.com/femaregion2 and www.facebook.com/FEMAUSVirginIslands.

To donate or volunteer, contact the voluntary or charitable organization of your choice through the National Voluntary Agencies Active in Disasters (NVOAD) at www.nvoad.org. For those who wish to help, cash donations offer voluntary agencies the most flexibility in obtaining the most-needed resources and pumps money into the local economy to help businesses recover. The Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands also has the "Fund for the Virgin Islands" at www.USVIrecovery.org



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Page 4 of 4