

FEMA and Territorial Partners Conduct Community Points of Distribution Exercises

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ST. CROIX, U.S. Virgin Islands – Last month, FEMA led classroom and field exercises for the territory’s points of distribution managers and U.S. Virgin Islands logistics staff. FEMA’s Logistics staff could be used to monitor distribution sites for future events.

During the territory’s Hurricane Response Initiative and Capstone this past spring, it was clear that new points of distribution managers in the U.S. Virgin Islands needed to be recruited and trained.

“Coordination during this year’s Capstone workshops between FEMA and our partners in the U.S. Virgin Islands led to Community Points of Distribution training last month. Points of distribution managers now have the ability to organize and distribute commodities to support Virgin Islanders for their greatest time of need,” said Mark A. Walters, Coordinator for FEMA’s U.S. Virgin Islands Caribbean Area Office. “Even as we work together improve our ability to respond to disasters, it is still very important for Virgin Islanders to prepare themselves and their families with at least 10 days of food, water and medicines to survive until Community Points of Distribution can be established.”

Coordinated distribution of food, water, tarps, and blankets is critical to reduce human suffering and provide life-sustaining commodities for disaster survivors. Disasters including hurricanes and earthquakes often disrupt supply chains, close retail stores, and fill ports and roads with debris making access to food, water and other important supplies challenging.

The path to standing up Community Points of Distribution begins long before the onset of disasters. The responders who lead these critical operations must be trained and ready to help survivors when the moment arrives.



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Region 2's Incident Management Assistance Team supported the training for points of distribution managers at the request of the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency and the Virgin Islands Department of Human Services. The Virgin Islands National Guard provided personnel and vehicles for the field exercises.

"It is crucial for the U.S. Virgin Islands, and especially the Virgin Islands Department of Human Services to obtain the most up-to-date training in all areas of disaster preparedness and readiness, including the Community Points of Distribution," said Kimberley Causey-Gomez, Commissioner of the Department of Human Services. "We are truly thankful for our federal and local partners, FEMA and VITEMA and other local Emergency Support Function 6 support agencies to ensure effective outcomes for all types and sizes of threats and hazards, thereby improving resiliency locally. Enhancing public trust in our responsiveness before, during and post disaster is also important. We encourage our community to be diligent in preparing themselves and continuing to stay safe during all hazards," said Causey-Gomez.

The Virgin Islands Voluntary/Community Organizations Active in Disasters participated in the points of distribution training as well. A combined 56 students attended the training at St. Croix Educational Complex, Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School on St. Thomas and located at St. John Rescue.

"Having trained individuals in the community with knowledge on how to properly manage a community distribution point is essential. These sites become a key location for distributing food and water and keeping calm in our community following a natural disaster, such as a hurricane," said Daryl Jaschen, Director of VITEMA. "I am extremely pleased with the number of volunteers willing to participate and work together with VITEMA, National Guard, Department of Health, and FEMA to support such an endeavor, if ever the need arises," said Jaschen.

Even as FEMA and the GVI work to improve their ability respond to disasters, Virgin Islanders should prepare to be self-sufficient in the immediate aftermath of a hurricane and take steps to protect their property. Those with disabilities and others with access and functional needs may [have additional considerations](#). Find more ways to prepare at <http://vitema.vi.gov/ready/build-a-kit>.



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St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands, July 19, 2021 -- Daryl Jaschen, Director of the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency, (center), meets with members of Region 2's Incident Management Assistance Team, FEMA U.S. Virgin Islands logistics staff and partners from the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Human Services and Love City Strong during a Community Points of Distribution field exercise in Gifft Hill. FEMA/Geri Purvis



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St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, July 13, 2021 – Members of Region 2's Incident Management Assistance Team, FEMA Virgin Islands logistics staff and territorial partners from the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency and U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Human Services conduct a Community Points of Distribution field exercise at Educational Complex. FEMA/Geri Purvis



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St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, July 15, 2021 -- Members of Region 2's Incident Management Assistance Team lead a class on Community Points of Distribution for FEMA's U.S. Virgin Islands logistics staff and territorial partners from the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Human Services at Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School. FEMA/Geri Purvis

