

# Progress Accelerates on Energy, Education Projects in U.S. Virgin Islands

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**ST. CROIX, U.S. Virgin Islands** — Collaboration between FEMA and the territory toward strengthening a culture of resilience led to the approval of \$14.5 million toward permanent work in February to support recovery projects from the 2017 hurricanes. The \$14.5 million includes \$10.3 million to strengthen the territory's power grid and \$3.3 million for repairs to school facilities.

Energy projects approved last month through the Public Assistance Program include \$10 million for repairs to the East End Substation on St. Thomas. The substation, which distributes electricity to St. Thomas' East End and St. John, was damaged by wind-driven rain mixed with saltwater during hurricanes Irma and Maria.

The substation project includes \$9.7 million in hazard mitigation measures to replace its switchgear with a gas-insulated switchgear, construct a building to house the protection relays and communications devices to facilitate protection for electrical equipment.

Repairs to the substation also include installation of an emergency generator and generator room, and construction of a concrete switchgear building to replace the existing aluminum buildings.

A switchgear controls, protects and isolates electrical equipment. A relay is a switch that monitors the current and voltage to send a signal to a circuit breaker to prevent damage to equipment in the substation's Gas Insulated Switchgear building.

FEMA approved \$334,377 as well last month for repairs to the substation's distribution transformer, which helps the station transmit power to St. Thomas' East End and St. John. Restoration of the substation strengthens the reliability of the electrical system and allows for quicker power restoration on St. Thomas' East End and St. John.



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Collaboration between FEMA and The University of the Virgin Islands on hurricane repairs gained momentum last month with \$2.9 million approved for projects at the university's Orville E. Kean Campus on St. Thomas.

Projects approved for the university's St. Thomas campus include repairs to the contents for the Reichhold Center for the Arts, the Wellness Center Building and Dining Pavilion. The Reichhold Center, which has hosted renowned artists such as Natalie Cole, Itzhak Perlman, Ray Charles and Celia Cruz, has remained closed since it was damaged during the 2017 hurricanes.

- Repairs to the Reichhold Center's contents will include the African Art Room, the box office, director's office, stage, control booth and dressing rooms. The federal cost share for the project is \$1.3 million, the non-federal cost share is \$148,784 and insurance proceeds are \$537,781.
- The project to repair the university's one-story Dining Pavilion includes \$330,196 in hazard mitigation measures to protect air conditioning units from wind-blown debris and flooding, installation of 6-inch stainless-steel downspouts, roof replacement, a fence around the kitchen exhaust fan and upgrading solar panels to withstand storm-force winds.
- An \$84,103 project was approved last month to replace the Wellness Center Building's roof, ceiling, wall and windows at the university's St. Thomas campus. The federal cost share for the project is \$53,593, non-federal cost share is \$5,954 and insurance proceeds will cover \$24,554 for repairs to the Wellness Center.

Collaboration with the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Education led to the approval last month of \$97,178 for repairs to the school lunch warehouse on St. Croix. The project includes \$4,614 in hazard mitigation measures for installation of caging for camera components to reduce damage from flying debris, wind-resistant downspouts and gutters, a wind-resistant door and wind-resistant siding for the warehouse.

FEMA continues to work with private schools in the territory as well on recovery from the 2017 storms. Reimbursement for repairs through Public Assistance were approved last month for Memorial Moravian School Corporation and Antilles School, Inc.



FEMA will provide \$947,533 for repairs to the Moravian School's two-story brick building built in 1882 in Charlotte Amalie.

- A hazard mitigation measure for the Moravian School project includes replacement of 32 damaged glass jalousie windows to impact-resistant windows for resilience from wind-related damage from future storms.
- FEMA will provide the Antilles School \$586,976 for repairs to the library and Mark C. Marin Building on its Frenchman's Bay campus on St. Thomas. The library's carpet, walls and ceilings, books, and furnishing received mud and water damage, and the Marin Building's basement was flooded for two weeks after Maria passed in 2017.

Momentum on projects to strengthen the resilience of the territory's health care infrastructure continues as well. In February, FEMA approved a \$797,796 project for hurricane repairs to the John S. Moorehead Communicable Disease Administration Building and the facility's generator building on St. Thomas. The Moorehead Building, built in 1910 as a portion of the old Dutch hospital, was damaged by wind and wind-driven debris from Irma and Maria.

The Moorehead complex's roofs, windows and doors will be replaced along with repairs to its reception area and administrative offices.

As of February 24, FEMA has obligated \$3.8 billion through Public Assistance toward the territory's recovery from the 2017 hurricanes. The \$3.8 billion includes \$1.8 billion for emergency protective measures, \$1.5 billion for permanent work and \$508.3 million for administrative costs.

The Public Assistance projects for permanent work include \$622.8 million in hazard mitigation measures to help make the infrastructure in the U.S. Virgin Islands more resilient against disasters.

Recipients of Public Assistance are responsible for managing the funds obligated to them by FEMA, including disbursement to applicants. FEMA will continue to monitor the recovery's progress to ensure the timely delivery of eligible assistance for the whole community and compliance with federal laws and regulations.





FEMA obligated \$10 million in February for the transformation of the East End Substation on St. Thomas. The substation's hurricane repairs include \$9.7 million in hazard mitigation measures to strengthen the reliability of the electrical system and allow for quicker power restoration on St. Thomas' East End and St. John.  
*FEMA/Eric Adams*



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