

# U.S. Virgin Islanders, FEMA Speaks Your Language

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**ST. CROIX, Virgin Islands** – Virgin Island hurricane survivors who speak a language other than English should know that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has many ways to help. One of FEMA’s top priorities is to ensure equal access for all Virgin Islanders affected by hurricanes Irma and Maria – and that language is not a barrier to receiving federal assistance.

If you or someone you know needs to apply for assistance or speak to a FEMA representative in a language other than English, you want written materials in your preferred language, or you need an American Sign Language interpreter, FEMA can help in several ways:

- **Through the FEMA Helpline:** Survivors who call the Helpline at 800-621-3362 will be asked to press “1” for English, or “2” for Spanish. Callers who wish to speak to a representative in another language should remain on the line for an English-speaking operator who will connect them to a translator in the language they request. Survivors in need of an ASL interpreter may also call the FEMA Helpline, using an assisted technology device if needed. Disaster survivors who are deaf, hard-of-hearing or have a speech disability and use a TTY may call 800-462-7585 to register. Those who use 711 or Video Relay Service may call 800-621-3362.
- **At a Disaster Recovery Center (DRC):** Many FEMA employees are bilingual or multilingual and can assist survivors in their preferred language at DRCs in St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas. All DRC staff can help survivors connect to the FEMA Helpline in any language they request. DRCs can also help arrange for a translator or ASL interpreter to accompany a FEMA housing inspector during a visit to your home. All recovery centers are accessible and equipped with assistive technology tools to accommodate communication accessibility for survivors who need the support. To locate one of the DRCs across the territory, go to <http://asd.fema.gov/inter/locator/home.htm>.



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- **From Disaster Survivor Assistance (DSA) Teams:** DSA teams canvassing neighborhoods make an effort to identify and help survivors who may need assistance in a language other than English. DSA personnel can also arrange for translators to facilitate conversations between FEMA staff and survivors. Some teams in St. Croix and St. Thomas include ASL interpreters.
- **Informational Leaflets:** Disaster registration materials, informational fliers, health and safety tips and more are being distributed by hand throughout the territory in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole, and can be provided in other languages or large print upon request. These materials are available at DRCs and from DSA teams throughout the islands.
- **Through Newspapers, Radio and TV:** FEMA has distributed news releases, public service announcements and fact sheets with important information for hurricane survivors to U.S. Virgin Island media outlets in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole.
- **Via FEMA.gov:** News releases and other information for survivors that have been translated into Spanish and Haitian Creole are available for survivors to read on our hurricane-specific web pages. Visit [www.fema.gov/hurricane-irma](http://www.fema.gov/hurricane-irma) or [www.fema.gov/hurricane-maria](http://www.fema.gov/hurricane-maria) and click on your language of choice under the U.S. Virgin Islands header.
- **On FEMA's U.S. Virgin Islands Facebook Page:** The page, at [www.Facebook.com/FEMAUSVirginIslands](http://www.Facebook.com/FEMAUSVirginIslands), has videos in ASL about how to register for FEMA assistance and more. Furthermore, Facebook users who choose Spanish or Haitian Creole as their primary language in their profile and "follow" FEMA's Virgin Islands Facebook page, will see some posts with links directly to FEMA's translated news releases about hurricane recovery efforts.
- **On the Disaster Assistance Web Page:** Spanish speakers can register for assistance and get questions answered on our Spanish-language page at [DisasterAssistance.gov/es](http://DisasterAssistance.gov/es). The English-language site is [DisasterAssistance.gov](http://DisasterAssistance.gov).

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*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. 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-*



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621-3362 (voice, 711/VRS - Video Relay Service) (TTY: 800-462-7585).  
Multilingual operators are available (press 2 for Spanish).

For official information on the recovery effort following the hurricanes, please visit [www.informusvi.com](http://www.informusvi.com) or [www.usviupdate.com](http://www.usviupdate.com). Follow us on social media at [twitter.com/femaregion2](https://twitter.com/femaregion2) and [www.facebook.com/FEMAUSVirginIslands](https://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](http://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](http://www.USVIrecovery.org).



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