

Project to Strengthen Walter I.M. Hodge Pavilion's Resilience Against Storms Moves Forward

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ST. CROIX, U.S. Virgin Islands – The Territory's partnership with FEMA continues to move forward on initiatives to guarantee public housing communities have hazard mitigation measures in place to make dwellings safer for families and better resist future storms. The Virgin Islands Housing Authority can now proceed with its plans to harden roofs, doors, and windows at the housing complex in Frederiksted, thanks to FEMA's approval of \$24.4 million for the second phase of a wind retrofit project for Walter I.M. Hodge Pavilion.

Through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, a \$24.4 million obligation brings the total financing allocated for the wind retrofit project to \$25.3 million. In 2021, \$835,903 was obligated for the first phase of the Hodge Pavilion wind retrofit to fund engineering and design for the project.

The Hodge Pavilion wind retrofit project is a major step in the development of resilience for the public housing community in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The hurricane-resistant windows and doors will be installed in the housing development's 20 apartment structures, office building, and community center.

The project's scope of work includes installation of hurricane impact window systems, wind-rated apartment entry and storefront doors at all building entry porticos, roof retrofit and protection, continuous load path retrofit, and hardening of electrical and mechanical equipment, gutters and downspouts, and other exterior equipment.

The wind retrofit project will allow the Housing Authority to better protect Virgin Islanders and more specifically residents living in or near Hodge Pavilion.

“We are pleased to support the Territory’s vision to strengthen the resilience of public housing communities across the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Housing



Authority's plans to strengthen windows, doors and roofs at Hodge Pavilion will make homes safer for families during future storms," said U.S. Virgin Islands Recovery Director Kristen A. Hodge. "We are looking forward to the overall revitalization of Hodge Pavilion and supporting the transformation of public housing across the territory," said Hodge.

"The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program plays an important role in the Territory's efforts to build back better. The mitigation team has obligated over \$137 million to ensure that critical structures like our housing communities are built to withstand future weather events," said Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien, Director of the Office of Disaster Recovery.

"The Virgin Islands Housing Authority is excited to receive FEMA approval of the \$25 million for wind retrofit. This funding is the final piece to a complex \$116 million private and public sector funded project which will facilitate a comprehensive rehab allowing 248 families in St. Croix, with pride and dignity, to call the new Walter I.M. Hodge community - their "HOME," said Virgin Islands Housing Authority Executive Director Robert Graham. "Our families will move into elegantly redesigned apartments in 22 buildings over a 27-month period, with completion in 2024. With this FEMA funding, our families will be secure in a modern, resilient and hurricane-hardened community. Our residents will also participate in a new resident service delivery model that will advance household equity, education and wellness."

As of May 11, 2022, FEMA has obligated \$137 million toward Hazard Mitigation Grant Program projects in the Territory since hurricanes Irma and Maria. FEMA's continued partnership with the Territory will ensure the Territory builds smarter and stronger, and public housing communities withstand future hurricanes.

