

# Parks, Public Libraries Get on Path to Recovery Across U.S. Virgin Islands

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Release Date: Tháng 9 27, 2022

**ST. CROIX, U.S. Virgin Islands** – Parks and public libraries serve communities throughout the U.S. Virgin Islands by providing a source for recreation, community, education and historical and cultural environments. An interruption in operations at these facilities can disrupt many routines and a closure of public libraries can limit and often times prevent a student’s ability to perform their schoolwork without a dedicated, structured environment.

FEMA's whole-community approach to recovery includes collaborating with the territory on projects for parks and public libraries to recover from the damage caused by hurricanes Irma and Maria in September 2017. Parks, recreational facilities and libraries play important roles in a community’s well-being, providing an opportunity to stay active. As well, libraries encourage learning, exposure to arts and crafts, opens them to the world through books and are historical and cultural landmarks across the territory.

FEMA has committed \$26.4 million for repairs to 56 sports, parks and recreational facilities across the territory.

“The Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation is grateful to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for providing the funds that allow us to repair and, in some cases, reconstruct the territory’s recreational facilities. The grants awarded by FEMA’s Public Assistance Program support our efforts to provide high-quality recreational spaces and activities to our community,” said Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation Commissioner Calvert White.

Projects on St. Croix include repairs to Pedro Cruz Ballpark in Kingshill, Isaac Boynes Ballpark in Frederiksted and Cramer’s Park Pavilion.

Other repair and restoration projects are planned for St. John and St. Thomas. On St. John, the Winston Wells Ballpark, the Orville Brown basketball court and the Cruz Bay tennis court will undergo improvements. The Emile Griffith Ballpark,



**FEMA**

Lionel Roberts Stadium and completed Joseph Aubain Ballpark on St. Thomas will also benefit from restoration efforts.

While the revitalization of the territory's parks and recreational facilities can benefit the entire community, so can the restoration of libraries. "Libraries create a conducive environment to learning and lay the groundwork toward the development of strong communities," said FEMA U.S. Virgin Islands Recovery Director Kristen A. Hodge. "Working with the V.I. Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation and the V.I. Department of Planning and Natural Resources to rebuild these important community institutions will leave a legacy for future generations," said Recovery Director Hodge.

FEMA is obligating \$5.8 million to five public libraries in the U.S. Virgin Islands for hurricane repairs. Library repairs will include \$669,400 in hazard mitigation measures to infrastructure damaged by the 2017 storms.

FEMA's \$1.8 million obligation to the Florence A. Williams and Athalie M. Petersen libraries' repairs on St. Croix includes \$608,200 in hazard mitigation measures, such as the installation of ceramic flooring to replace carpet and vinyl flooring and door dams to stop further flooding at the Williams site.

The Charles W. Turnbull Regional Public Library on St. Thomas will receive \$2.9 million toward renovations.

The restoration of Charlotte Amalie's Enid M. Baa Library and Archives highlights the importance of historic preservation in disaster recovery. Enid Baa, born in 1911 on St. Thomas, was a librarian, educator and historian. She was a leading advocate for the establishment and administration of libraries in the territory.

After repairing the site, VI DPNR intends to use the Baa Library building as a community gathering space and visitor welcome center. FEMA has obligated \$706,000 for Baa Library repairs. Stainless-steel doors, wire caging to protect air conditioners from flying debris and strengthening windows with hardware to withstand storm-force winds are among the \$61,100 approved hazard mitigation measures for the library.

FEMA obligated \$271,200 for hurricane repairs to the Elaine I. Sprauve Library and Museum in Cruz Bay on St. John. This project will include American Disability



Act-compliant push buttons on exterior and interior doors.

FEMA will continue to collaborate with the territorial departments of Sports, Parks and Recreation and Planning and Natural Resources to ensure FEMA Public Assistance projects to repair recreational facilities and public libraries will benefit the entire community equitably.



The Virgin Islands Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation is managing repairs to Emile Griffith Ballpark in Charlotte Amalie on St. Thomas. FEMA has committed \$1.4 million for repairs to the park, which was damaged from hurricanes Irma and Maria in September 2017. Hazard mitigation measures of about \$32,595 funded through the Public Assistance Program include new fabric for the park's batting cage and infield to improve drainage from rains. FEMA/Eric Adams





Hurricane repairs began in March at the Elaine I. Sprauve Library & Museum in Cruz Bay on St. John. The library, which is managed by the V.I. Department of Planning and Natural Resources, was damaged during hurricanes Irma and Maria in September 2017. FEMA is providing \$271,200 for the building's repairs.  
FEMA/Eric Adams

