

FEMA Grants Prioritize Safety, Security for U.S. Virgin Islands

Release Date: Tháng 11 25, 2024

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – Several community partners across the U.S. Virgin Islands will be able to strengthen their safety and security with grants from FEMA. In total, just over \$1 million was awarded to houses of worship and community organizations through a competitive application process. These grants will fund structural enhancements to protect these institutions from threats.

Community engagement between FEMA, the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) and the U.S. Virgin Islands Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VI VOAD) was instrumental with the Nonprofit Security grants being awarded to six houses of worship across the territory. As well, a territorial and federal partnership paved a path for two organizations in the USVI to be awarded Nonprofit Security grants.

“Our strong partnerships with VITEMA and our community partners in the U.S. Virgin Islands has once again led to several houses of worship and other organizations to be recipients of security grants that will ultimately make their congregations and communities safer and more resilient,” said FEMA Virgin Islands Caribbean Area Office Acting Coordinator Aaron VanDoren. “We will continue to work with our faith-based and community partners to ensure they have the resources to keep their groups safe from threats that could harm them.”

The Nonprofit Security Grant supports funding for facility hardening and other physical security improvements and activities to organizations at risk of a terrorist or extremist attack.

“This is another example of our Territory, through VITEMA, leveraging our partnership with FEMA and our stakeholders resulting in this funding becoming available and awarded to our places of worship and to our nonprofit organizations,” said VITEMA Assistant Director Stephen M. DeBlasio Sr. “This funding will result in a stronger USVI and I am delighted to have seen the collaboration and coordinated efforts that resulted in this grant award. Our



VITEMA Grants Division will continue our coordination efforts through monitoring, and full execution of these projects. Another great opportunity that we have utilized to the fullest to make our community partners secure against a terrorist attack.”

FEMA’s Preparedness division in the Virgin Islands Caribbean Area Office promoted the grant and application process in an Organizational Preparedness workshop, trainings, and conversations throughout the year.

VITEMA provided critical stewardship to prospective applicants in this process. The collaborative partnership between VITEMA, the VI VOAD and FEMA resulted in an increase this year of the number of applicants in the Virgin Islands for these grants, leading to important funding awards for these critical community organizations in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

If your organization is interested in pursuing upcoming offerings for the Nonprofit Security Grant program, visit <https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/nonprofit-security> to learn more.

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