

**UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS  
HOUSING FINANCE AUTHORITY**

**CDBG-DR NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY**

**NEIGHBORHOD REVITALIZATION PROGRAM**

**VERSION: 1.0**

**February 17, 2023**

Prepared by:

Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority - CDBG-DR Program  
Division



The purpose of this document is to provide a template for the structuring of Notices of Funding Availability (NOFAs). Each section should contain a **brief** description of the bulleted information to give the public an understanding of what is required to apply for funding.

## 1.0: SUMMARY

This Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) is officially announced for the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority's (VIHFA) Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Neighborhood Revitalization Program, which is subject to Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations [24 CFR § 570.201](#) and [§ 570.204](#). The Program will be comprised of two activities: Building Façade and Streetscape Enhancement and Small Business and Entrepreneurship Grant and Technical Assistance Grant Program.

The Building Façade and Streetscape Enhancement Program will provide funding to eligible businesses buildings, commercial or residential, to repair visible exterior damage and enhance downtown areas, high traffic areas, historic districts, etc. The goal is to increase investment and improve the aesthetic of local communities. Projects located within historic districts must follow guidelines prescribed by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

The Small Business Entrepreneurship Grant and Technical Assistance Program (SBETA) is comprised of two components: Small Business Grants and Technical Assistance. This program will fund recovery grants and technical assistance to aid small businesses and entrepreneurs to identify ways to rebound from the change in economic circumstances from the 2017 storms.

Interested applicants must provide evidence that their business sustained physical and/or financial damages from the 2017 Hurricanes Irma and Maria. The NOFA complies with the requirements as stated in the Action Plan and applicable policies and procedures.

The Program establishes the award process, the application acceptance period and threshold criteria.

## 2.0: FUNDING

The table below provides a summary of the available funding for this NOFA:

Type of Award:	Cooperative Agreement
Fiscal Year Funds	FY 2023
Approximate Total Funding:	\$14,032,915
Anticipated Award Date:	April 2023
Anticipated Project Completion Date:	April 2026
Minimum/Maximum Award Amount:	Based on Cost Estimate

VIHFA will award selected Applicants in accordance with funds made available by HUD and based on any applicable statutory/regulatory requirements at the time of award issuance. **All awards under this NOFA will be provided in the form of a forgivable loan over a 5-year period.**

### 3.0: ELIGIBILITY

The Neighborhood Revitalization Program aims to provide awards to eligible entities in the Virgin Islands that were impacted by Hurricanes Irma and/or Maria. The eligibility requirements for this NOFA are listed in the tables below, based on each Program Activity:

#### Building Façade and Streetscape Enhancement Program

Eligible Entities	Eligible Activities	Eligible Use of Funds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic Organizations</li> <li>• For-profit and Non-profit Entities,</li> <li>• Public and Private Entities,</li> <li>• Redevelopment agencies</li> <li>• Homeowners' associations</li> <li>• Local Community Development Organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 105 (a)(3)-Code Enforcement;</li> <li>• Section 105 (a) (4) Clearance, Rehabilitation, and Construction;</li> <li>• Public Services (HCDA Section 105(a)(8));</li> <li>• Special Economic Development Activity (24 CFR 570.203)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repair/replace exterior windows, roof spouting, exterior scarping or painting (within historic guidelines);</li> <li>• Signage on a building;</li> <li>• Physical improvements to courtyards, seating, landscaping, planters, benches, lighting;</li> <li>• Safety improvements (including lighting, security gates, surveillance system);</li> <li>• Recovery grants for small businesses affected by the 2017 Hurricanes;</li> <li>• Technical Assistance program to develop entrepreneurs and rebuild employment loss due to the storms.</li> <li>• Purchase of supplies and equipment</li> </ul>

#### Small Business Entrepreneurship Grant and Technical Assistance Program

##### *Small Business Entrepreneurship Grant*

Small businesses and microenterprises that suffered physical and/or financial losses due to the 2017 Hurricanes will be provided working recovery grants. The program's objectives are to increase economic recovery across the Territory by addressing the urgent need for assistance that many small businesses in the US Virgin Islands have as a result of damage caused by the storms.

Eligible Entities	Eligible Activities	Eligible Use of Funds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small businesses</li> <li>• Microenterprises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 105 (a) (15) Assistance to neighborhood-based nonprofit organizations, local development corporations, nonprofit organizations;</li> <li>• Section 105 (a) (22) For profit assistance for economic development;</li> <li>• Section 105 (a) (22) Microenterprise Assistance (HCDA, Section 570.201);</li> <li>• Special Economic Development Activity (24 CFR 570.203);</li> <li>• Section 105 (a) (12) (14) Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertising</li> <li>• License Fees (excluding operational business licenses)</li> <li>• Accounting expenses</li> <li>• Maintenance and repairs (costs cannot exceed determined grant award)</li> <li>• Office expenses (e.g., supplies)</li> </ul>

### *Small Business Technical Assistance*

The technical assistance component is designed to support entrepreneurs by providing specialized training to eligible businesses to build economic resilience and reduce future losses from disruptions.

<b>Eligible Entities</b>	<b>Eligible Activities</b>	<b>Eligible Use of Funds</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Certified technical assistance providers</li><li>• Public and Private, including non-profit and for profits.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Section 105 (a) (19) Technical Assistance;</li><li>• Section 105 (a) (17) For profit assistance for economic development;</li><li>• Section 105 (a) (22) Microenterprise Assistance (HCDA, Section 570.201);</li><li>• Special Economic Development Activity (24 CFR 570.203);</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Business plan development</li><li>• Financial management</li><li>• Marketing</li><li>• Inventory</li><li>• Skilled workforce development</li></ul>

## **4.0: APPLICATION SUBMISSION/REVIEW**

Applications can be found at our offices on St. Thomas and St. Croix (please see addresses below) or on our website at <https://cdbgdr.vihfa.gov/programs/economic-revitalization/>. All applications and supporting documentation must be submitted by **May 8, 2023**. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered. Applicants can submit their applications using the following methods:

- Electronic Application – Applicants must follow instructions provided within this document and submit their application package to [ERNR@vihfa.gov](mailto:ERNR@vihfa.gov).
  - Electronic applications are due by 11:59 pm Eastern Daylight Time (EDT).
- Hand delivered hard copies will be accepted from 8:00am to 5:00pm at the following locations:
  - 3202 Demarara Plaza, Suite 200, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00802 (Frenchtown VIHFA Office)
  - 100 Lagoon Complex, Suite 4, Frederiksted, Virgin Islands 00840 (Old Legislature Building)
- Postal mail can be sent to the addresses above and must be postmarked by **May 8, 2023**.

Applicants will receive a letter of intent to accept or reject the application based on adherence to the listed criteria. Deficient applications will be returned to the applicant, with written correspondence detailing the errors and required corrections. Five (5) business days will be provided from the date of written correspondence to make the required corrections to their application.

Two application orientation sessions will be held on \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ on Zoom for potential applicants wish to learn more about applying to the Program. **Applicants must attend one of these sessions.**

VIHFA reserves the right to fund, in whole or in part, any, all, or none of the applications submitted in response to this NOFA. Applications submitted for funding under this NOFA will be scored based on the following criteria.

### **Building Façade and Streetscape Enhancement Program**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Project Need (30) points</b>	Documentation of the need for the project and how it fits into a plan for community revitalization. Photos should be of buildings, streetscapes, courtyards, or gateways that will be part of the program as well as photos of the surrounding area.
<b>Project Impact (15 points)</b>	How will this project benefit the town, a community, or individual businesses?
<b>Project Plan (15 points)</b>	Describe the plan and the long-term vision for the community
<b>Project Feasibility (10 points)</b>	Evidence that the project can begin quickly and be completed within eighteen months of contract approval and that those managing the program are qualified.
<b>Community Support (10 points)</b>	At least 3 letters of support (from stakeholders, downtown organizations, community or neighborhood associations, elected or appointed officials)
<b>Cost Estimate (if applicable) (10 points):</b>	All proposed projects should be accompanied by a cost estimate provided by the applicant in order for the Program to conduct a cost-reasonableness analysis.
<b>Sustainability (10 points):</b>	Provide an outline of how program activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the program.

### **Small Business Entrepreneurship Grant and Technical Assistance Program**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Description of Business (30 points):</b>	Documentation of type of business, number of employees, pictures of location of area. Pictures excluded if business is located within a residence.
<b>Project Impact (15 points)</b>	How will this project benefit the town, the community?
<b>Project Plan (15 points)</b>	Describe the businesses long-term vision and if possible, how it impacts for the community
<b>Project Feasibility (15 points)</b>	Evidence that the project can begin quickly and be completed within eighteen months of contract approval and that those managing the program are qualified.
<b>Cost Estimate (if applicable) (10 points):</b>	All proposed projects should be accompanied by a cost estimate provided by the applicant in order for the Program to conduct a cost-reasonableness analysis.
<b>Sustainability (15 points)</b>	Provide an outline of how program activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the program.

## **5.0: UNDERWRITING CRITERIA**

The Program will underwrite projects in accordance with HUD requirements at [24 CFR 570.209](#) and [24 CFR Appendix A to part 570](#).

## **6.0: GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

Applicants that receive funding under this NOFA must adhere to all applicable cross-cutting and programmatic requirements.

Use of funds under the Neighborhood Revitalization Program option must either result in the creation of jobs primarily for low-to moderate-income persons in the Territory or provide goods or services to residents of an area, such that the number of low- and moderate-income persons residing in the areas served by the assisted businesses amounts to at least one low- and moderate-income person per \$350 of CDBG-DR funds used.

## **7.0: CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION**

Any activity funded under this NOFA will be governed by a written Subrecipient Agreement (Agreement) that identifies the terms and conditions related to the awarded funds. The Agreement will not be effective until executed by all parties to the Agreement. Any amendments must be in writing. The Agreement will include provisions to ensure compliance with 24 CFR Part 570.