



CDBG-MIT Notice Funding Availability Commercial Hardening and Financing

VERSION: 1.0
January 29th, 2024

Prepared by:

CDBG-Mitigation Program Division
Economic Resilience and Revitalization

The purpose of this document is to provide a template for the structuring of Notices of Funding Availability (NOFA). 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 Mitigation (CDBG-MIT), which is subject to Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations [24 CFR §570.202](#). The Commercial Hardening and Financing (CH&F) program's intent is to upgrade eligible commercial/private buildings and return them to business uses and ensure the ability for such facilities to operate during emergencies. Additionally, private ports may be eligible for project funding. CH&F will be comprised of two project activities: Commercial Resilience and Façade and Maritime Industrial Harbor Improvements. The program meets the following mitigation community lifelines:

- Safety and Security,
- Hazardous
- Communications, and
- Food, Water and Sheltering.

The Commercial Resilience and Façade Renaissance provides funding to eligible commercial facilities to improve the aesthetics and exterior hardening buildings for emergencies. The program will reinforce, enhance, and hardened the visible appearance of commercial facilities downtown, high traffic, and historic areas. The facilities should be occupied by small businesses or microenterprises. Additionally, non-profit community organizations attached to churches/schools may apply if the entity meets the criteria of owning small business facilities. Projects located within historic districts must follow guidelines prescribed by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Marine Industrial Harbor Improvements provides funding alternate harbor/port sites that should improve the delivery of life-saving operations and inflow of supplies needed to assist residents on each island. Additionally, the improvement of alternate harbor/port sites may result in the increase in harbor capacity and growth of the marine and tourism/charter yacht industry.

Interested applicants must provide evidence that projects meet the criteria of the program. 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 2024
Approximate Total Funding:	\$40,000,000
Anticipated Award Date:	June 2024
Anticipated Project Completion Date:	June 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 an 8-year period.**

3.0: ELIGIBILITY

The Commercial Hardening and Financing aims to provide awards to eligible entities in the U.S. Virgin Islands to mitigate downtime of privately owned commercial or industrial buildings or ports (marinas/boats slips). The eligibility requirements for this NOFA are listed in the tables below, based on each Program Activity:

Commercial Resilience and Façade Renaissance

Eligible Entities	Eligible Activities	Eligible Use of Funds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For-profit businesses Non-profit Entities, Units of Government, including its autonomous and semi-autonomous instrumentalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 105 (a)(1)- Acquisition of Real Property; HCDA Section 105(a)(4) Public Facilities and Improvements Section 105 (a)(4) Clearance, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, and Construction of Building; Public Services (HCDA Section 105(a)(8)); Section 105 (a) (12) Planning Section 105 (a) (14) Activities Carried Out through Nonprofit Development Organizations Section 105 (a) (15) Eligible nonprofit organizations Section 105 (a) (17) For profit assistance for economic development Section 105 (a) (19) Provision of technical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace exterior windows with storm windows doors and shutters (within historic guidelines), Removal Hazardous Materials (abatement of asbestos, remediation of mold, ead abatement, paint hazards, evaluation) Drainage and Stormwater/Surge Management for Commercial Areas Generators for Commercial Facilities Infrastructure Hardening of Building Exterior and improved facility for Community Outreach/Education efforts

	<p>assistance to public or nonprofit entities to increase the capacity of such entities to carry out eligible Neighborhood Revitalization or economic development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 105 (a) (22) Assistance to public and private organizations, agencies, and other entities to facilitate economic development • Special Economic Development Activity (24 CFR 570.203) 	
--	--	--

Maritime Industrial Harbor Improvements

The Maritime Industrial Harbor Improvements provides funding to alternate port sites that should improve the delivery of life-saving operations and inflow of supplies needed to assist residents on each island. Additionally, the improvement of alternate port sites may increase harbor capacity and growth of marine and tourism/charter yacht industry.

Eligible Entities	Eligible Activities	Eligible Use of Funds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For-profit businesses • Non-profit Entities, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 105 (a) (3) Code Enforcement • Section 105 (a) (4) Clearance, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, and Construction of Buildings, • Section 105 (a) (11) Public Services (HCDA, 105 (a) (8); • Special Economic Development Activity (24 CFR 570.203) • Section 105 (a) (12) Planning • Section 105 (a) (14) Activities Carried Out through Nonprofit Development Organizations • Section 105 (a) (15) Eligible nonprofit organizations • Section 105 (a) (17) For profit assistance for economic development • Section 105 (a) (19) Provision of technical assistance to public or nonprofit entities to increase the capacity of such entities to carry out eligible Neighborhood Revitalization or economic development • Section 105 (a) (22) Assistance to public and private organizations, agencies, and other entities to facilitate economic development; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boat ramps and improved shoreline • Port and Harbor Improvements • Harden Infrastructure to mitigate against future disasters in key commercial areas • In conjunction with improvements , utilize job placement programs for trainees improvements • Infrastructure Improvements to ports that will increase Territory’s capacity to receive tourists

--	--	--

4.0: INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The following are NOT eligible for funding under the program:

- Funding is not authorized buildings being utilized for the general conduct of Government
- Activities that fail to meet a National Objective
- Enlargement of a dam or levee beyond original design
- Assistance to private utilities
- Forced mortgage payoff
- Emergency Response Services (ERS) funds may be used only to enhance the resilience of the facilities

5.0: 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 [Economic Revitalization \(Commercial Hardening/Small Business\) - Competitive Selection Application \(jotform.com\)](#). All applications and supporting documentation must be submitted by **Friday, April 5th, 2024**. 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 vihfamit@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 **April 5th, 2024**.
- Two application orientation sessions will be held on Wednesday, February 28th, 2024 on, and on Wednesday March 6th, 2024, from 6pm 8-pm (am/pm) on Zoom for potential applicants wish to learn more about applying to the Program.
- In-person Townhall and Technical assistance meetings will be held on St. Thomas, Monday, March 4th, 2024, on Tuesday, March 5th, 2024 at the St. John at the Julius E. Sprauve School

Cafeteria at 6 pm-7 pm. On the island of St. Croix, Virgin Islands Elections Office on Friday, March 8th, 2024 at 6pm- 8pm. **Eligible 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.

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Description
Project Need (30) points	Applicants will be required to complete and submit a questionnaire describing their CDBG-MIT-related needs. Supporting documentation, including photos, must be uploaded for validation.
Project Impact (15) points)	How will this project benefit the town, a community, or individual businesses?
Project Plan (15) points)	Describe the plan and the long-term vision for the community
Project Viability (15) points)	Evidence that the project can begin quickly and be completed within 24 months of contract approval and that those managing the program are qualified.
Community Support (15) points)	Choose a or b: a. Evidence in the application that the community is supportive of the project, three letters of support from stakeholders and area businesses in the impacted community. b. Provide a 50-signature petition of community members (adults only) requesting or benefiting project impact. requesting or benefiting project impact.
Cost Estimate (if applicable) (10) points):	All proposed projects should be accompanied by a cost estimate provided by the applicant. A CBG-MIT program will conduct a cost-reasonableness analysis. Note: CDBG-MIT will conduct a cost-reasonableness analysis to verify cost-estimates
Sustainability (10) points):	a. Provide an outline of how program activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the program and meets the identified Community Lifeline. b. Provide a maintenance plan that details sustainability for 8 years after project-completion.

6.0: ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The projects funded as a result of this NOFA are subject to the environmental review process as described in [24 CFR Part 58](#).

7.0: 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](#).

8.0: GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

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

9.0: 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.