

# U.S. Virgin Islands Storm Strong Program

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Under leadership from the University of the Virgin Islands, the Virgin Islands Marine Advisory Service, and the non-profit Long-Term Recovery Groups, this project will create the "U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) Storm Strong Program." This will be the Territory's first sustained, community-based, hurricane hazard preparedness program. To date, minimal efforts have been made to engage the USVI community in hurricane education and preparation. As a result, USVI communities face significant, but often preventable, storm risks.

The USVI Storm Strong Program will engage underserved and underrepresented, middle- and high-school youth and their families on all the Territory's main islands – St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix. Participants in the Program will be empowered as environmental leaders and change agents within their communities. Creation of the program is timely, given the significant impacts resulting from Hurricanes Irma and Maria, two Category 5 hurricanes that devastated the USVI in September 2017. These storms provide a window of opportunity to improve environmental literacy and extreme weather hazard preparedness in the Territory, through new and strengthened strategic partnerships and the development of a long-term, high-impact, community-based program. Partners from the NOAA's Marine Debris Program will share lessons and materials to their networks, allowing for national dissemination and impact.



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