

SARASOTA COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Office of Financial Management

TO: Sarasota County Commission
THROUGH: Jonathan R. Lewis, County Administrator
FROM: Kimberli Radtke, Director, Office of Financial Management
DATE: May 5, 2026
SUBJECT: **Resilient SRQ – Venice Theatre Request and Unallocated Funds**

RECOMMENDED MOTION(S) OR ACTION(S):

- A. To receive an update on the Venice Theatre “Expansion of the Raymond Center for Education” infrastructure project, awarded \$2,000,000.00 in CDBG-DR funding from Hurricane Ian, and provide direction related to the subrecipient’s requested adjusted project scope;
- B. To receive an update on the Resilient SRQ programs and consider options and provide direction on \$18,686,248 in unallocated funds remaining from 2024 Storms.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

On May 18, 2023, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) published a Federal Register Notice (FRN) allocating \$201,535,000.00 in Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds to Sarasota County to support Sarasota County’s recovery and mitigation efforts following Hurricane Ian in 2022. On January 16, 2025, HUD published a Federal Register Notice (FRN) which included a direct allocation of \$210,094,000.00 CDBG-DR funds to Sarasota County to support Sarasota County’s recovery and mitigation efforts following the 2024 storms Debby, Helene, and Milton.

The combined CDBG-DR funds, \$411,629,000.00, are managed through the Sarasota County “Resilient SRQ” program as according to the HUD-approved Action Plans, to include those for housing rehabilitation, reconstruction, and reimbursement; infrastructure and public facilities; multi-family affordable housing; voluntary buyout; and, career-trades training. At this time, across all program areas and storm allocations, all programs have officially launched, and projects have been selected and awarded funds by the Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners (Board). Excluding the housing rehabilitation, reconstruction, and reimbursement program, the “Resilient SRQ” program is administering:

- 37 infrastructure, dredging, and public facility type projects for public entities and non-profits.
- 13 multifamily affordable housing development projects for developers and non-profits.
- 1 career trades training project for the school district.
- 2 voluntary buyout projects (3 properties) for public entities.

Staff members of Resilient SRQ regularly monitor the Board-awarded projects for progress, grant compliance, advancement towards meeting its Board-approved applications for funding, and ensure timelines are adhered to, including meeting overarching HUD expenditure timeframes.

Venice Theatre – Expansion of Raymond Center for Education - \$2,000,000 Hurricane Ian Award

On May 22, 2024, the Board selected public entity and non-profit infrastructure and public facilities for CDBG-DR funding from the Hurricane Ian allocation. For this funding opportunity, the Venice Theatre was an applicant for the “Expansion of the Rayment Center for Education” project, requesting \$5,000,000 in CDBG-DR funding; however, the project was not selected for funding. On July 7, 2025, due to available funds for repurposing from Hurricane Ian, the Board directed these available funds towards previously unfunded applications for funding – the Venice Theatre “Expansion of Raymond Center for Education” was partially awarded CDBG-DR funds for \$2,000,000.

Since the conditional award of these funds by the Board, staff have initiated a kickoff meeting, environmental site inspection and review, drafting of a subrecipient agreement for execution, and supporting the subrecipient in the development of policy documents to ensure the resulting facility supports low-to-moderate income clientele (LMC), a requirement of HUD funding. Over this period, staff have learned that the subrecipient has repurposed other funds that were previously committed to this project, is lessening the project scope due to the partial CDBG-DR funds awarded and extending the timeframe when the project will be completed.

On March 3, 2026, staff brought the information and project changes to the Board for awareness and additional direction. The Board subsequently directed staff to further work with representatives from the Venice Theatre on the changes to the project and receive this information from the Venice Theatre no later than March 31, 2026. Following this direction, staff met with representatives from the Venice Theatre at the Resilient SRQ Office on March 11, 2026, and issued a request for information on the project the same day, to be provided no later than March 31, 2026. The Venice Theatre responded to the requested information on March 27, 2026, and as advised by staff, the information came in the form of a request. On April 3, 2026, the Venice Theatre responded with additional information regarding their proposed programs. With this information, staff are now seeking Board direction.

Unallocated Funds - \$18,686,248 2024 Storms

At this time, there are unallocated funds to be considered for the 2024 Storms programs of Resilient SRQ. Origins of these unallocated funds are broken down below:

- 2024 Storms Program
 - \$3,075,248 – Multifamily Affordable Housing Program
 - These funds were considered for the Ekos Coconut project at the U.S. Recycling Plant site but were unable to move forward. These funds remain unallocated.
 - \$15,611,000 – Forest Lakes Floodplain Creation / Mitigation Initiative
 - This project was unable to move forward due to the inability to purchase the property for the resulting project improvements. These funds are now unallocated.

With these funds, staff have prepared a series of (3) options for the Board’s consideration. Those options include the following.

- Option 1: Temporary Pause
 - This option includes a temporary pause in an allocation of funds until a later date. Staff are presenting this option due to the ongoing work effort on the Housing Recovery Programs for both Hurricane Ian and 2024 Storms. Furthermore, Resilient SRQ projects currently funded include major projects that are entering the design stages and there may be funds needed for future construction. Finally, unmet needs from the storm events continually change and evolve and future needs may emerge for consideration.
- Option 2: Home Hardening Program / Other New Program

- This option includes consideration of establishing a new program, such as a Home Hardening Program. The Housing Recovery Program of Resilient SRQ has demonstrated continued unmet needs in the area of single-family homes. Additionally, equivalent programs administered by the State of Florida are very popular, often having more applicants from Sarasota County than what’s available. Such a program may be considered and/or a new program under Resilient SRQ.
- Option 3: Repurpose Funds to Unfunded Projects / Reopen Applications for Programs
 - This option includes returning to previously applied for but unfunded projects for both the Hurricane Ian and 2024 Storms programs and application cycles. Additionally, this option can include reopening application cycles for respective programs to accept new applications and projects for consideration. A copy of funded and unfunded project applications is attached to this item.

As it relates to these options, some considerations include but are not limited to substantial / non-substantial amendment requirements of the respective storm’s Action Plans; research needed for applicants, new or prior, to confirm that there are no duplication of benefits, there remains a viable project (if applied for before), and that funds requested remain an unmet need; and Board direction being narrowed into the respective storm’s allocations (over an interest to combine) due to the different grant requirements governing both sets of funds and expenditure timelines.

Staff have prepared a presentation to discuss the information outlined above and to receive Board direction as to the next steps on these matters.

RELEVANT PRIOR BOARD ACTION:

1. May 24, 2023 – Staff provided a presentation on the Hurricane Ian Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery grant, or “Resilient SRQ” providing details on the eligible activities, timeline, and actions taken (No Vote).
2. July 11, 2023 – The Board considered a presentation on the Hurricane Ian Resilient Sarasota (SRQ) CDBG-DR Program and draft funding uses. The Board considered proposed Resolution No. 2023-142, delegating authority to the County Administrator or designee to take all actions necessary to manage, administer, allocate, and expend CDBG-DR funds and manage and administer the programs related thereto; and authorizing acceptance of electronic signatures for CDBG-DR Applications, Agreements, and related documents. The Board authorized the selected CDBG-DR projects and project allocations, based on the adjusted spreadsheet figures, for public comment, and to be brought back to the Board in September, which included the below breakdown (carried by a 5-0 vote).

Program/Project		Total by Project	Total by Program
Housing	Voluntary Buyouts	\$6,458,250	\$101,458,250
	Homeowner Reimbursement	\$15,000,000	
	Housing Rehabilitation/Reconstruction	\$40,000,000	
	New Multifamily affordable housing	\$40,000,000	

Infrastructure and Public Facilities	Sarasota County, municipalities, not-for-profits	\$45,000,000	\$70,000,000
	South River Road Evacuation Corridor	\$25,000,000	
Economic Recovery	Career/trades training	\$15,000,000	\$15,000,000
Planning/Administration	Planning	\$5,000,000	\$ 15,076,750
	Administration	\$10,076,750	
		\$201,535,000	\$201,535,000

3. September 12, 2023 – Staff presented the public comments received and approved the final Hurricane Ian Action Plan for submission to HUD (carried by a 5-0 vote).
4. January 30, 2024 – The Board approved the Hurricane Ian Infrastructure and Public Facilities eligibility and scoring criteria to determine program eligibility and scoring of project applications (carried by a 5-0 vote).
5. February 21, 2024 – The Board approved the Hurricane Ian Multifamily Affordable Housing eligibility and scoring criteria to determine program eligibility and scoring of project applications (carried by a 5-0 vote).
6. March 19, 2024 – The Board received a presentation on an update on the Hurricane Ian Resilient SRQ program (No Vote).
7. April 23, 2024 – The Board approved the Hurricane Ian Economic Recovery eligibility and scoring criteria to determine program eligibility and scoring of project applications (carried by a 5-0 vote).
8. May 22, 2024 – The Board selected and approved conditionally awarded projects to the Hurricane Ian Infrastructure and Public Facilities program (carried by a 5-0 vote).
9. July 10, 2024 – The Board selected and approved conditionally awarded projects to the Hurricane Ian Multifamily Affordable Housing program (carried by a 5-0 vote).
10. September 10, 2024 – The Board selected and approved conditionally awarded projects to the Hurricane Ian Economic Recovery program (carried by a 3-2 vote).
11. October 22, 2024 – The Board approved the eligibility and scoring criteria for applications to the Hurricane Ian Voluntary Buyout program and approved a Hurricane Ian request from McDowell Housing Partners to change the application funding from construction to property acquisition (carried by a 5-0).
12. January 28, 2025 – The Board received an update on the new 2024 Storms CDBG-DR HUD allocation under the County Administrator Report (No vote).
13. February 11, 2025 – The Board delegated authority to County Administrator or designee to take all actions necessary to manage, administer, allocate, and expend 2024 Storms CDBG-DR funds. The Board approved Budget Amendment No. B2025-025, amending the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget to appropriate funding for the 2024 storms CDBG-DR allocation (carried by a 5-0 vote).
14. February 25, 2025 – The Board approved Hurricane Ian requests from Lincoln Avenue Communities to increase the project scope, adjust the site location, and change the awarded sub-recipient on the project to Fairview Housing Ltd. The Board approved a request from McDowell

Housing Partners to change the awarded sub-recipient to Fairview Housing Ltd. (carried by a 5-0).

15. February 25, 2025 – Staff provided a presentation on the draft 2024 Storms Action Plan and included results of the Unmet Needs Assessment Survey and proposed funding allocations. The Board approved the proposed funding allocations to be in the draft action plan (carried by a 5-0 vote), which included the following:

Program/Project		Total by Project	Total by Program
Housing	Homeowner Rehabilitation/Reconstruction	\$25,000,000	\$63,300,000
	Homeowner Reimbursement	\$8,300,000	
	New Multifamily Affordable Housing	\$30,000,000	
Infrastructure and Public Facilities	Sarasota County, Public Entities, Non-Profits	\$57,089,300	\$132,089,300
	Dredging of Phillippi Creek	\$60,000,000	
	Dredging of Major Waterways	\$15,000,000	
Planning/Administration	Planning	\$4,200,000	\$ 14,704,700
	Administration	\$10,504,700	
		\$210,094,000	\$210,094,000

16. April 22, 2025 – Staff provided a presentation on the final proposed programs and allocations for inclusion in the final 2024 Storms Public Action Plan for submission to HUD. The Board approved the final proposed funding allocations to be in the final Public Action Plan (carried by a 5-0 vote), which included the following:

Program/Project		Total by Project	Total by Program
Housing	Homeowner Rehabilitation/Reconstruction	\$25,000,000	\$63,300,000
	Homeowner Reimbursement	\$8,300,000	
	New Multifamily Affordable Housing	\$30,000,000	
Infrastructure and Public Facilities	Sarasota County, Public Entities, Non-Profits	\$57,089,300	\$132,089,300
	Dredging of Phillippi Creek	\$45,000,000	
	Dredging of Major Waterways	\$30,000,000	
Planning/Administration	Planning	\$4,200,000	\$ 14,704,700
	Administration	\$10,504,700	

\$210,094,000	\$210,094,000
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17. July 9, 2025 – The Board provided direction regarding available Hurricane Ian funding for re-purposing, designating these funds for infrastructure and affordable housing projects not previously awarded funding (carried by a 5-0).
18. June 4, 2025 – Staff provided a presentation of an update on the Resilient SRQ Program for 2024 Storms. The Board approved the recommended eligibility and scoring criteria for the Resilient SRQ 2024 Storms Infrastructure & Public Facilities and Multifamily Affordable Housing Programs (carried by a 5-0 vote).
19. January 13, 2026 – The Board approved selected and conditionally awarded projects to the 2024 Storms Multifamily Affordable Housing program and directed staff to work with McDowell Housing Partners and the City of Sarasota on the Ekos Cocoanut project and tentative award of funds (carried by a 5-0 vote).
20. March 3, 2026 – The Board received an update on the Venice Theatre, Ekos at Arbor Park II, and Ekos Cocoanut projects and directed staff to work with representatives with the Venice Theatre on their requested changes; rescinded the conditional award of \$1,000,000 to McDowell Housing Partner’s Ekos at Arbor Park II; and reallocated funds from McDowell Housing Partner’s Ekos Cocoanut project to bring back to the Board (carried by a 5-0 vote).

OUTREACH:

Since the publication of both federal register notices, staff have conducted a significant outreach effort to spread awareness of this disaster recovery opportunity and receive feedback from stakeholders, including the general public (individuals), the business community, non-profits, and governmental entities. Additional outreach was conducted to eligible applicants for each program including information sessions, handouts, e-mails, and media engagements.

PROCUREMENT ACTION:

N/A

FUNDING:

Funding is allocated directly to Sarasota County through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. There are no additional county match requirements for use of these funds.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

Goal: Great Place to Live

Objective: Maintain a safe and healthy community – reality and perception

NEXT STEPS:

Staff will take the required next steps as directed by the Board on the Venice Theatre project and the options proposed for unallocated funds of the Resilient SRQ program.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION(S):

Staff recommend the Board provide direction on next steps for the Venice Theatre project and request.
Staff recommend the Board provide direction on unallocated funds of the Resilient SRQ program.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Presentation – Resilient SRQ – Venice Theatre Request and Unallocated Funds
2. Letter – Resilient SRQ Request for Information to Venice Theatre
3. Letter – Venice Theatre Response and Request to Adjust Project
4. Letter – Venice Theatre Follow-up Response on Proposed Programs
5. Awarded Application – Venice Theatre Raymond Center for Education
6. Awarded Applications and Projects of the Resilient SRQ Programs
7. Unawarded Applications and Projects of the Resilient SRQ Programs