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# Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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President

## **ST. CROIX FOUNDATION OPENS FARM-TIENDA GRANT APPLICATION TO SUPPORT AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND RECOVERY**

**ST. CROIX, U.S.V.I., MAY 8, 2019** – St. Croix Foundation, in partnership with The Coca-Cola Company, is pleased to announce the opening of the Farm Tienda Grant Application Cycle to support local farmers as they continue to rebuild from Hurricanes Irma and Maria. The Grant Cycle opened April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019 with all applications due by May 31, 2019 to St. Croix Foundation.

Through this program, the Foundation will award durable, eco-friendly container farm stands, or “Farm-Tiendas,” to eligible farmers to help bring their businesses back on-line following the 2017 hurricanes. The word tienda means ‘store’ in Spanish. Four “Farm-Tiendas” will be awarded to successful applicants through the initial pilot. Made from steel containers that may also be outfitted with solar panels, Wi-Fi, and potable water, the farm stands will allow farmers to stabilize and expand their businesses while also serving as resiliency hubs for neighboring communities in the aftermath of future storms.

Following Hurricane Maria which devastated the U.S.V.I. and Puerto Rico, The Coca-Cola Company committed to supporting local communities and customers in a meaningful way. Because many small businesses, which are the backbone of their communities, were significantly impacted in the U.S. Caribbean, Coca-Cola conceived of a Pop-Tienda program to support the islands’ recovery. Grants were awarded to local nonprofits, like the Hispanic Federation in Puerto Rico, to lead the pilot. The Puerto Rico project, “Pop-Tienda,” provided container ‘stores’ to Puerto Rican mom-and-pop small business owners who lost their businesses in the storm. St. Croix Foundation received a \$100,000 grant from Coca-Cola to replicate the project.

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Over the course of the past year, the Foundation worked with partners at Coca-Cola to retool the Pop-Tienda concept. Having assessed the St. Croix community's most pressing needs immediately following the storms, the Foundation, working in concert with its Nonprofit Consortium, its sponsored Project, Virgin Islands Good Food Coalition Inc., and Coca-Cola, determined that one of the most vulnerable populations and, in turn, economic vulnerabilities in our community was and remains our local St. Croix farmers. The Foundation and Coca-Cola rebranded the small business container concept into "Farm-Tienda."

According to St. Croix Foundation President, Deanna James, "The Foundation is committed to building partnerships that nurture resilience in our community. Through initiatives like the Farm-Tienda, we are connecting stakeholders with resources to support their needs as we continue to amplify our platform around social equity. It's truly exciting to pioneer new pathways for addressing long standing issues." "Over the next year, the Foundation will be collecting data in order to evaluate the impact of each Farm-Tienda on the farmer's business. This data will help to inform our research on resilience, food security, and environmental stewardship in the aftermath of future disasters," James continued.

"Supporting the communities we live in and serve has been a part of Coca-Cola's way of operating since the beginning," said Shannon Sellman, Director of Public Affairs and Communications at The Coca-Cola Company. "Through our partnership with St. Croix Foundation, it is our hope that the durable Farm-Tiendas will help local farmers rebuild their businesses and also provide community hubs when needed."

The Foundation has worked closely with Coca-Cola and the Virgin Islands Good Food Coalition to develop sound criteria for awarding the farm-tiendas and all applications will be reviewed by the Foundation's Grants Review Committee. Two grant information sessions will be held at the St. Croix Foundation, Monday, May 20, 2019 at 1:00 PM and 6:00 PM. Submissions for grants must be completed online by May 31<sup>st</sup> online using the Foundation's grant and scholarship website portal at <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=scf>. Funding decisions will be announced June 30, 2019 and the grant term will begin July 30, 2019- August 1, 2020.

St. Croix Foundation wishes to extend its appreciation to The Coca-Cola Company, the Virgin Islands Good Food Coalition, and the Department of Agriculture for their support and collaboration.

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For more information about how to support and expand the Farm-Tienda Grant & Pilot program, please visit [www.stxfoundation.org](http://www.stxfoundation.org) or contact the Foundation directly at 340.773.9898.

### **About St. Croix Foundation**

St. Croix Foundation is a 28-year-old place-based philanthropy which has been spearheading strategic philanthropic investments within the U.S. Virgin Islands by advancing holistic community development as a pathway to economic prosperity, self-sufficiency and sustainability. Established in the wake of Hurricane Hugo, since its inception, the Foundation has been a conduit of over \$41 million private and public sector dollars invested into the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Foundation has also received national recognition in almost every priority area- from economic development and community revitalization to public health, education reform, and nonprofit development.

### **About The Coca-Cola Company**

The Coca-Cola Company (NYSE: KO) is a total beverage company, offering over 500 brands in more than 200 countries. In addition to the company's Coca-Cola brands, our portfolio includes some of the world's most valuable beverage brands, such as AdeS soy-based beverages, Ayataka green tea, Dasani waters, Del Valle juices and nectars, Fanta, Georgia coffee, Gold Peak teas and coffees, Honest Tea, innocent smoothies and juices, Minute Maid juices, Powerade sports drinks, Simply juices, smartwater, Sprite, vitaminwater and ZICO coconut water. We're constantly transforming our portfolio, from reducing sugar in our drinks to bringing innovative new products to market. We're also working to reduce our environmental impact by replenishing water and promoting recycling. With our bottling partners, we employ more than 700,000 people, bringing economic opportunity to local communities worldwide. Learn more at Coca-Cola Journey at [www.coca-colacompany.com](http://www.coca-colacompany.com) and follow us on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn.