

**STRATEGIC TWO-YEAR  
STATE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT PLAN**

*FOR*

**TITLE I**

*OF*

**THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT OF 1998**

*AND*

**THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT**

**TERRITORY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS  
OF THE UNITED STATES**



**For the Period of**

**July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2009**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

I. STATE VISION. . . . . 3

II. STATE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT PRIORITIES. . . . . 11

III. STATE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE. . . . . 13

IV. ECONOMIC AND LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS . . . . . 20

V. OVERARCHING STATE STRATEGIES . . . . . 25

VI. MAJOR STATE POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS . . . . . 29

VII. INTEGRATION OF ONE-STOP SERVICE DELIVERY . . . . . 30

VIII. ADMINISTRATION AND OVERSIGHT . . . . . 33

IX. SERVICE DELIVERY . . . . . 40

X. STATE ADMINISTRATION . . . . . 54

XI. ASSURANCES . . . . . 60

SIGNATURE PAGE. . . . . 63

## **I. STATE VISION**

The economy of the United States Virgin Islands continues to grow. The last two years have shown a strong steady growth in the production and delivery of goods and services, unemployment rates have declined; inflation rates remain stable and the development of new projects is on track. It is anticipated that this growth trend will continue during the next few years.

A new administration has taken over the reigns of government in the US Virgin Islands and their operational vision is a proactive one. Working within the current growth market the administration has seen fit to expand the role of workforce development in the Territory and make it a vital part of the overall economic development strategy. The mission is to create a workforce that will be a catalyst for the attraction of new businesses and provide employment opportunities that will ensure the highest possible standard of living for all Virgin Islanders.

The Governor's vision describes an economy that supports economic opportunity for all. Focusing on the growth of existing businesses while promoting the creation of new ones, the existing infrastructure will be redesigned to facilitate a more welcoming atmosphere for businesses. Several infrastructure development projects are scheduled to begin or to be continued during the next two years. They include the modernization of port facilities on all three islands, which will allow for increased tourism, the staple of the VI economy, as well as increased shipping and transportation services; development of the marine industry which includes the mega-yacht, charter boat and charter yacht industry, boat building and commercial and recreational water sport activity. Other projects include the creation of small business incubator facilities that allow entrepreneurs – both old and new – to operate at reasonable costs through shared resources that lower overhead and allow business owners to focus on production; and the development of convention centers and sports complexes on both islands aimed at drawing more visitors to the islands; some who may choose to stay and/or invest in the growing economy.

The following goals have been developed as part of the strategy that creates a flexible and friendly environment for growth:

- Empower the workforce investment board as the primary entity on workforce issues – this will ensure coordination among agencies and organizations that are working toward the same goal;
- Create a work-ready talent pool that is technologically literate, and prepared to meet new local as well as global challenges;
- Encourage public private partnerships to help leverage funds and reduce service duplication;
- Ensure that the workforce system is responsive and adaptive to the needs of the populace as well as business community.

The VI Workforce Investment Board will play a pivotal role in attracting, retaining and participating in the growth of business throughout the Territory. By working with the Governor and the Economic Development Authority, the Workforce Board will not only direct its WIA and non-WIA resources towards training in the areas slated for growth, but will also work with employers to help create an environment that is business and worker friendly.

The Governor envisions a dynamic talent development system that develops and sustains a career driven, adaptable and technologically literate workforce. This will be achieved in nine key areas:

### **Aligning services with current, transitional and emerging job demand**

#### *How:*

- ♦ Identify demand sectors;
- ♦ Identify dying occupations;
- ♦ Assess services currently offered to sectors;
- ♦ Identify partners;
- ♦ Map and create job pathways that lead from nothing to a career;
- ♦ Add, amend and restructure services to suit.

#### *Support/Resources:*

- ♦ Bureau of Labor Statistics
- ♦ Bureau of Economic Development

#### *Outcome:*

- ♦ Able to forecast and produce workforce that meets our current and future needs resulting in less importation of skilled workers.

### **Coordinating resources with workforce partners to build a stronger education pipeline that allows for lifelong learning opportunities**

#### *How:*

- ♦ Identify workforce training partners in the Territory;
- ♦ Audit services provided
- ♦ Bring major employers to table to establish pipeline;
- ♦ Ensure frontline staff can see pipelines and utilize them;
- ♦ Influence partners to change curricula to address needs of employers and job seekers;
- ♦ Market career education in schools and in workplace.

#### *Support/Resources:*

- ♦ Workforce Partners
- ♦ \*Education
- ♦ \*University of the VI – Community Engagement and Lifelong Learning

#### *Outcome:*

- ♦ Customers who began with no GED or high school credential emerging as skilled workers who have gained employment in a demand sector relative to their training

*\*Specific Partners*

**Operating as a talent development system that is work ready**

*How:*

- ♦ Focus individual development;
- ♦ Use employer services coordinator as a value added product for employers;
- ♦ Market “One-Stop” as a place to grow your career options;
- ♦ One stop to become resource center for incumbent worker training;
- ♦ Strengthen ties with UVI, UVI Cell and vocational school;
- ♦ Create partnerships with Tourism, EDA and Hotel Association to operate Hospitality and Customer Service Training School;
- ♦ Attract more jobs through collaboration with employers which will attract more job seekers.

*Support/Resources:*

- ♦ In-house training
- ♦ Knowledge base of educational resources
- ♦ Marketing plan
- ♦ Coordination of interagency efforts

*Outcome:*

- ♦ Myriad resources that can be accessed from the One-Stop Centers, the hub of the system. One-Stops should evolve into the premier choice for career development counseling and placement.

**Providing incumbent workers with continuing education, training and certification programs that further career development**

*How:*

- ♦ Reinstate wage board and revitalize apprenticeship program through collaborations with DLCA;
- ♦ Establish relevant apprenticeships with DLCA and construction industries;
- ♦ Initiate incumbent worker GED program (especially in government);
- ♦ Assist in the creation of Government Training Academy to unify training in Government

*Support/Resources:*

- ♦ Coordinator of Employer and Business Services
- ♦ Government cooperation
- ♦ Commissioner of Education

*Outcome:*

- ♦ Noticeable increase in the level of entry level employment and movement of entry level workers to management positions.
- ♦ Increased movement in the labor pipeline.

**Fostering initiatives that facilitate access into the workforce for all individuals – with emphasis on those with barriers to entry**

*How:*

- ♦ Offender Workforce Development program
- ♦ GED TV
- ♦ Literacy Link
- ♦ Hovenssa Partnership
- ♦ Job Corps

*Support/Resources:*

- ♦ Dept. of Justice
- ♦ Legislation
- ♦ Employer incentives

*Outcome:*

- ♦ Decrease in recidivism among offenders and a higher placement rate
- ♦ Successful migration to self-sufficiency among TANF recipients

**Working with employers to develop career development ladders within each industry**

*How:*

- ♦ Job Corps
- ♦ Hovenssa Partnership
- ♦ Government employees career development in conjunction with the Dept. of Personnel
- ♦ Hospitality training school cooperative between EDC Hotel beneficiaries

*Support/Resources:*

- ♦ Agency Collaborative
- ♦ HOVENSA buy in

*Outcome:*

- ♦ Actual career path initiatives that lead to full time permanent employment.
- ♦ Increase in traffic from discouraged job seekers who are actually confident in the workforce system's ability to find careers for them

**Enabling job seekers to pursue career, rather than job opportunities;**

*How:*

- ♦ Market benefits of continued career development
- ♦ Utilize waivers to refocus commitment of dislocated workers

*Support/Resources:*

- ♦ Marketing Plan
- ♦ UVI/UVI-Cell

*Outcome:*

- ♦ Increased knowledge of employment offerings in the territory by the general public
- ♦ Higher demand for career specific training by incumbent workers
- ♦ Better skilled private and public sector employees

**Operating a “Youth Net” to identify and recapture youth dropouts***How:*

- ♦ Establish external Youth Net Council
- ♦ Adopt council as sub committee of the WIB
- ♦ Create Youth One-Stop Center on each island
- ♦ Establish database to track youth dropping out of school

*Support/Resources***WIB**

- ♦ Sites for One Stop

*Outcomes*

- ♦ Decrease the percentage of high school dropouts in the territory
- ♦ Provide more skilled and educated job seekers

**Transparency and accessibility to all stakeholders***How:*

- ♦ Improve all access points including facilities, email and web
- ♦ Enhance employer ability to access data and services
- ♦ Map systems to provide visuals for system

*Support/Resources:*

- ♦ Mapping
- ♦ Web help
- ♦ Marketing plan

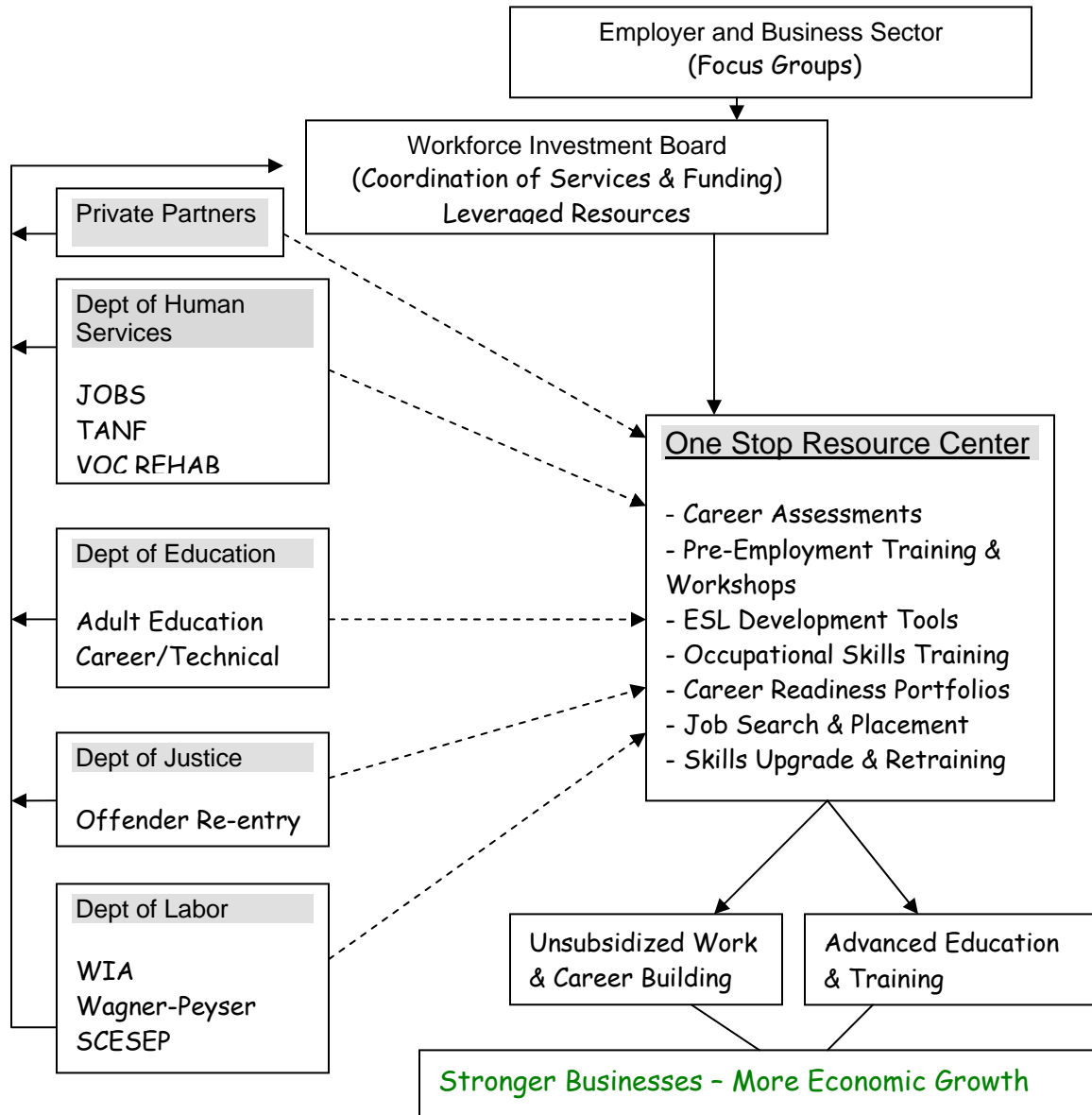
*Outcome:*

- ♦ Provide a workforce system that is known, user-friendly and utilized by all stakeholders

The Workforce Investment System through its partnerships with other agencies, faith and community based organizations and the private sector will make accessible employment development tools and programs that assist employees to engage in career development planning, emphasizing, but not limited to the VI’s high growth areas such as construction, hospitality, healthcare and information technology; that assist ex-offenders in re-entering the workforce, through planned programming that builds not only on occupational skills but more importantly on life skills such as communication and self-esteem; that assist individuals with disabilities to navigate barriers that preclude their securing viable work positions through the use of assistive equipment and work assisted counseling; and that provides the resources that allows for the functionally illiterate and individuals with limited English proficiency to develop the skills needed to function within their chosen profession while continuing to advance their skill sets and continue their education.

In order to ensure that these goals are met with the minimum of ease the partnerships between agencies and organizations will continue to leverage their funds with the workforce system. The Territory is committed to the consolidation of resources through interagency agreements that identify whether resources are in the form of rent, equipment services or programs.

By pooling these resources individuals that enter through any door can access the Territory’s workforce development system and access the means to a viable set of academic and occupational skills as well as support and developmental services.



As depicted in the chart, the Workforce Board will operate as the filter for agencies and organizations ready to plug into the workforce system through the One Stop service delivery mechanism. Government and Private sector interest will have a sounding board that addresses their work related needs both current and projected and an avenue by which to direct resources through agreements brokered by the Board.

The Governor's vision also calls for a continuum of education and training opportunities that support a skilled workforce. One of the methods chosen to address the fast moving world of technology is in the selection of Information Technology as one of the demand sectors slated for growth. A critical One-Stop partner is the University of the Virgin Islands-CELL (Community Engagement and Lifelong Learning) center. It is the community-training arm of the University and offers technology training from entry-level end user courses to high-end certifications. As the need occurs UVI-CELL willingly creates courses of study for specialized employer requested needs. Working with the employer, they create a course package that complements the specific workplace skill set. Course packages can be created for both the entry-level worker and the incumbent worker.

Strategies such as these can be applied to other service providers as well responding to other sectoral development such as Construction, Healthcare and Hospitality. The workforce system facilitates this process by including the following goals in its processes as it acts as a convener for collaborative activities:

- Utilization of the workforce board to create and develop policy to support a continuum of education and training in the Territory;
- Support of institutions that foster training in career and technical fields, as well as the demand sectors;
- Partnerships built on public-private alliances that complement existing resources and funds; and
- Alignment of existing education and training initiatives with current and emerging workforce needs.

The State Workforce Investment Board in consultation with the Governor and his cabinet will spearhead the collaboration effort. The membership of the State Board consists of the commissioners of the major workforce agencies including the Departments of Labor, Education and Human Services. Additionally, representatives from the economic development authority, labor organizations, faith and community-based organizations, and leaders of business/industry serve on the Board. The members contribute their collective knowledge and expertise to determine the best mix of local and federal funds, leveraged in a manner that maximize resources and serve the greater public in the most efficient way possible.

The Governor has commissioned a dynamic workforce board that has in its representation not only members from areas previously mentioned, but that also serve dual roles on other boards and commissions. For example, the Commissioner of Labor serves as the chairperson of the Economic Development Authority and there are three members of the Workforce Board that also serve on the Career and Technical Education Board. The business and industrial sector have first hand knowledge of the changing needs of the workforce and can readily identify the challenges to the system. Their input is solicited through focus groups, employer surveys and Board member interaction with community groups such as the Rotary and the Chambers of Commerce.

The greatest challenge faced by the workforce development and to some extent economic development efforts in the Virgin Islands is its geography. Access between the three major islands is restricted to air travel which is very costly. Employment opportunities therefore are limited to the island on which one resides. Duplication of services is a direct result of limited access between islands and resources often cannot be spread equally between the districts. Regionalism is contained and therefore presents the challenge of developing talent based on availability rather than interest.

The Governor's vision recognizes that youth preparation is essential for the continued growth of any economy. Services to prepare youth to grow into new roles as contributors to the community must be diverse and relevant to their talents and interests. These services must be reflective of a joint effort between educators, workforce professionals and employers who collaborate on syncing high school curricula with real world experiences. These partnerships have already begun to occur in the Territory through programs such as the Hovensa Training program – a program that works with high school youth from 9<sup>th</sup> grade and prepares them for entry level work in the oil refining industry; successful graduates are offered a job and an opportunity to continue their education in this field. Beginning this school year the Career and Technical high school will be offering core courses in the construction and manufacturing trades that will result in a nationally recognized credential.

In an effort to recruit and provide additional services to out-of-school youth a new initiative will be unfolded in the upcoming program year entitled "Youth Net" whose aim is to recapture dropouts and re-introduce them into the workforce development system through training and alternative education. The Youth Net is a collaborative between the Departments of Human Services Justice, Education, and the Housing Authority and is spearheaded by the Department of Labor.

These agencies will create policy and goals that:

- ✚ Allow for collaboration on programs and activities to encourage students to stay in school;
- ✚ Create a "Net" or tracking system that will rapidly identify youth in crisis and capture them in the system;
- ✚ Create programs that will identify youth in the juvenile justice system that are viable candidates for rehabilitation services; and
- ✚ Provide a consolidated array of counseling, training and education services for youth.

This initiative is slated to operate in conjunction with already established WIA youth services; however it will be flexible enough to allow activities above and beyond the constraints of current youth programs now operated by separate entities.

## **II. WORKFORCE PRIORITIES**

*The new National Strategic Direction emphasizes that the connection of three key elements – talent, infrastructure and investment will determine the ultimate success of economic growth based on regional competitiveness. The Governor’s vision connects all three by setting workforce priorities that can be fostered, enhanced and measured.*

*Economic growth can be actualized by investing in the talent development of workers at every level, the youth, the long term, entry-level employee, the incumbent worker, the transitional worker and the displaced worker. By coordinating with new and existing businesses, identifying their production needs, identifying their skill gaps, and working to create education and training networks, the workforce system can offer a core curricula of universal skills that branch out into a lattice of employment opportunity. The governor has identified three priorities that facilitate talent development.*

**❑ Educating Youth and Community on Current and emerging career opportunities**

As the Territory’s economic viability is strengthened it is imperative that local workers are not left out of the supply pipeline to high-growth companies. One way of ensuring that the workforce need is met is to continually offer glimpses into regionally available career pathways. Identifying growth areas is the first step – showcasing them to the youth and the community on a consistent basis that speaks not only to the easily identifiable “jobs” but more so to the often overlooked career lattices that inspire individuals to develop a career plan is the second and most important step.

**❑ Aligning Education Initiatives with Career Development and Lifelong Learning**

Recognizing that learning strategies for Youth and Adults must be flexible strategies will be developed that offer more entry and exit points to the educational process thereby ensuring that learning is continuous, relevant to work activity and up to date with regional and global trends.

**❑ Refocus formula funds to address the needs of incumbent workers**

Beginning this program year, more individuals will have access to Intensive and Training services as the focus moves to incumbent workers, allowing them to advance in their chosen career fields. More opportunities for advanced work related training will increase the “supply pipeline” for new workers who will now be afforded entry-level positions once closed due to worker stagnation. Workers trapped in declining industries will be tapped for career transition as will seasoned workers opting for more challenging opportunities in their occupations.

*An important part of creating a competitive workforce is to create a solid infrastructure within the One-Stop framework. To do so, two priorities have been set. Universal access to the services provided must be available to the job seeker as well as the employer, and a means to manage and track the relationship between services offered and careers attained is critical to the level of confidence the public will have in the workforce system.*

**❑ Enhancing Management Information Systems and Performance Accountability.**

An additional level of data management is set to begin development this program year. This step will include information gathering from workforce agencies to create a single user-friendly database that enables workforce professionals to compile and query database to produce the most complete information on workforce development trends. The information gathered will also allow the State Board, Workforce agency and all partners' access to fact-based statistics that will allow them to make more informed decisions on the direction of training and education initiatives in the Territory.

**❑ Providing universal access to a demand-driven workforce investment system.**

Products and resources relevant to demand occupations will be readily available to all customers within the One-Stop setting. The Workforce Information System provides up-to-date information on “where the jobs are” and what skills are necessary to get these jobs. It highlights the latest trends and the newest technology that keeps business on the cutting edge and the best practices for introducing these new skills to their workforce. This labor market information is made available through the use of the Internet, bulletin boards, newsletters, general mailings, and print and electronic media.

*The greatest investment any locale can make to its economic growth is producing a talent pool of qualified workers that by their knowledge and skill become businesses most sought after asset. To build that kind of confidence in business, career awareness and education have to start at the earliest levels of the education spectrum. Thereafter, education, business and workforce professionals must link what is learned in the classroom to what is expected in the workplace. In addition to a resume, all workers should have a living workforce portfolio that chronicles their educational attempts and achievements. Four priorities that speak to this continuum have been identified.*

**❑ Increased focus on Workforce Education and Training**

Educational strategies will be geared to reducing the amount of workers in the Virgin Islands without a High School diploma or its equivalent by emphasizing career goals throughout the education process relating the acquisition of the high school credential with successful career development. Efforts will also be focused on literacy programs for adults as well as youth from the classroom to the workplace where functional literacy is essential.

**❑ Increased opportunities for out-of school youth that enable them to become a viable link in the workforce pipeline**

With the focus now shifted to Youth most-in-need, primarily out-of-school youth, the Territory seeks to adopt successful industry tested “alternative methods” of gaining the trust and attention of young people. Youth experts will work with employers, educators and youth mentors to create meaningful experiences that allow youth a safe place to address their deficiencies while building skills needed to succeed in the workforce. Strategies will include on-the-job training and apprenticeships where available.

❑ **Building strategic partnerships between business, education, community, economic development and workforce agencies.**

The alliances formed in the past have worked best when all partners took the time to collaborate – usually on specific, but isolated projects. With that in mind the manner and time periods in which these collaborations occur will be increased – with specific projects and outcomes to be attained. These partnerships will include a link to faith based and community organizations. In addition to providing direct training, the developmental strategies used in FBCO’s program designs offer grounding elements that complete the support services component necessary to help at-risk individuals commit to their career development.

❑ **Create a Client Career Development Profile**

In a response to the business/employer community that have long cited discrepancies between what a customer has on their resume and the actual skill proficiency the One Stop system will introduce in the coming program year. A Client Career Development Profile will be created for each individual that transition through the One-Stop system. This profile will document the education and training levels undertaken, completed, or discarded by each customer. It will list certifications – attempted and received, and work experience paid or unpaid, where applicable. The profile will be a portable document that will be given to prospective employers so that may gauge exactly what level of skills/knowledge an individual possesses.

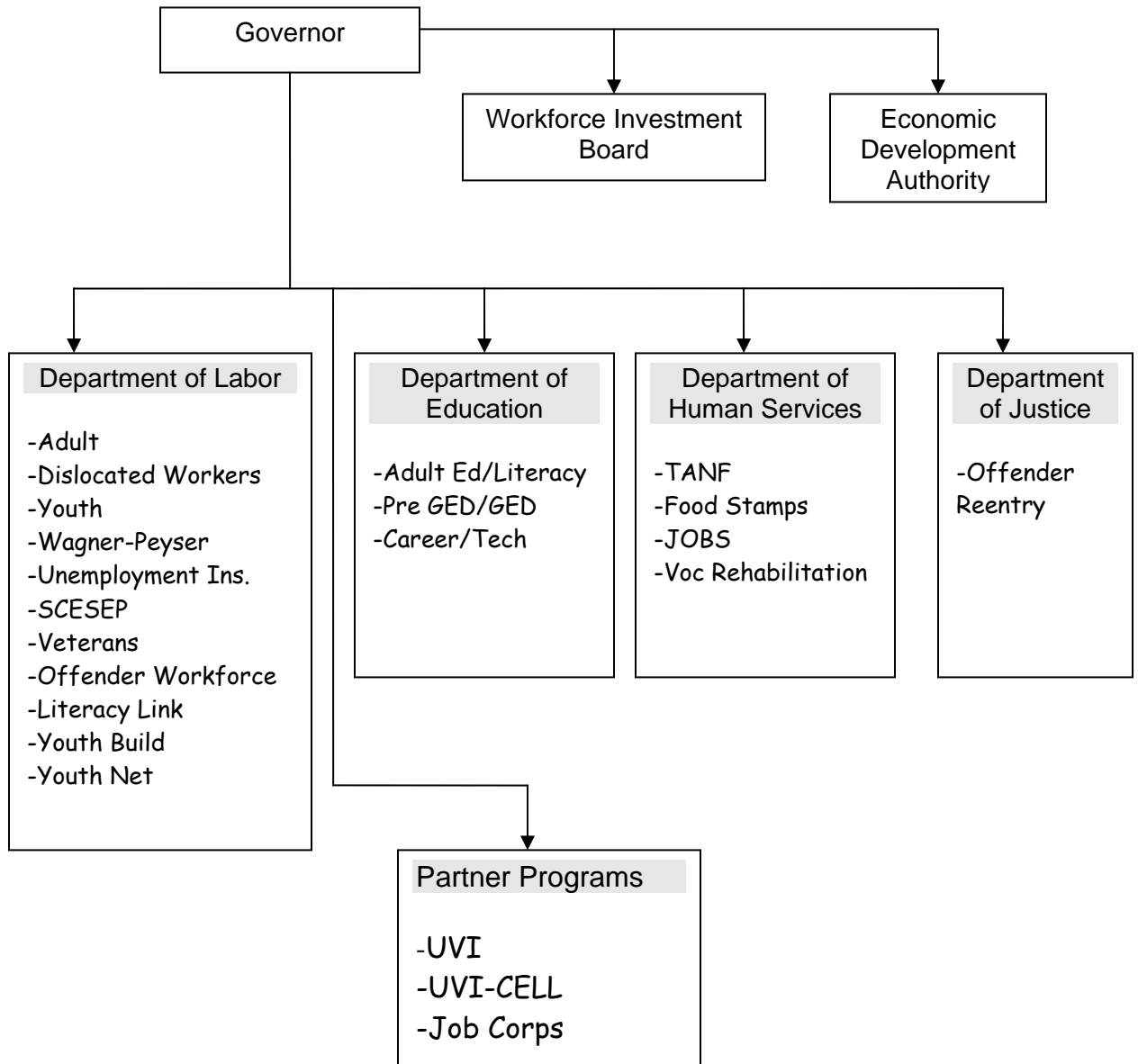
### **III. STATE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE**

The Governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands is the chief executive officer in the Territory. There are no local layers to the government such as mayors, councilmen, district representatives or the like. The Commissioners of Agencies comprise the Governor’s cabinet. They report specifically to him, some through the Office of the Lieutenant Governor.

#### **III.A.**

The agencies that comprise the public workforce investment system include the Departments of Labor, Education, Human Services, and Justice. The University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) and its community development arm UVI Community Engagement and Lifelong Learning (UVI-CELL) are semi-autonomous but, are also included in the public workforce system. The Workforce Investment Board and the Economic Development Authority comprise the advisory and policy development segment of the Workforce system. The Governor of the Virgin Islands provides the vision and the mission that the agencies and advisory boards must then translate into viable activities that becomes the product to which the business community and the jobseeker public avails itself. The chart below is reflective of the VI Workforce Investment System.

**VI PUBLIC WORKFORCE SYSTEM  
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**



*State Workforce Investment Board*

The Virgin Islands Human Resource Investment Council operates as the Territory’s State Workforce Investment Board in accordance with section 111(e)(1) of the Workforce

Investment Act of 1998. The Virgin Islands Human Resource Investment Council has met all requirements needed for composition as a State Workforce Investment Board.

The organizations and entities currently represented on the State Workforce Investment Board, includes:

- Eleven representatives from Business Organizations;
- One representatives of organized labor;
- One representative from Community-based organization;
- One representative from a Faith based organization;
- One local legislator;
- Commissioner of Labor;
- Commissioner of Education;
- Commissioner of Human Services;
- Assistant Commissioner for Employment & Training;
- Director of Adult and Career and Technical Education;
- Administrator, Vocational Rehabilitation
- Senior Official of the University of the Virgin Islands;
- A representative from the Economic Development Agency;

In an effort to make the Workforce Board a more relevant and effective organization given the Governor’s vision, the Executive Order, which authorizes the Board’s activities, is being revised and will include changes in its membership composition that reflects a 51% business majority. Included in the business membership will be representation from both Chambers of Commerce. Other business members will be representative of the demand sectors discussed in this plan specifically, a representative from the local oil refinery, from the hotel and hospitality industry, the construction industry, the automotive industry, the information technology field, a healthcare representative, the marine industry and the director of the Research and Technology Park. The two members from faith and community based organizations are also members of the business community and will function in dual capacity. Finally, the Administrator of Vocational Rehabilitation will become a full member of the Board. This reorganization will exclude the Housing Authority representative, principal of the career and technical education school and reduce the labor organization representation from two to one.

The Commissioner of Labor and the Assistant Commissioner of Employment and Training represent the Virgin Islands Department of Labor whose oversight authority extends to programs authorized under WIA Title I including adult, dislocated workers and youth programs, the employment service, and the unemployment service. The Commissioner of Human Services and the administrator of Vocational Rehabilitation represent programs under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 – Vocational Rehabilitation and title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965. The Commissioner of Education and the State Director of Career and Technical Education represent adult education and literacy activities authorized under title II of WIA, they also represent career and technical programs and literacy services for youth. There are no post-secondary vocational education activities authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and

Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 in the Territory. All entities described have and will continue to be involved in the Workforce Investment System.

### *III.B.*

The Governor of the Virgin Islands is ultimately responsible for determining membership on the State Board. As vacancies occur current members recommend individuals from the business sector who have maximum policy making authority and who are current with the changing needs of the workforce. Final approval of these recommendations is reserved for the Governor. All non-government members serve staggered two to three year terms. Commissioners or senior staff members are chosen from government agencies to serve on the workforce board. Their terms last for the duration of their office unless or until the Governor chooses to replace them.

The State Workforce Board is charged with implementing and maintaining the overall integrity of the Workforce System. In this multi-faceted system, the diversity of the Board will provide continuity by aligning goals among agencies and organizations. Board members bring to the table not only their expertise in their area of operation but also from their alliances with other organizations – for example, members of the State Workforce Board are active members of the Career and Technical Education Board, the Vocational Rehabilitation advisory group, Offender Reentry Advisory Committee, Rotary organizations, Chambers of Commerce and many other community-based groups.

Board staff participates in workgroups with the Offender Reentry program, Women’s Bureau and Secondary Education & Transition Strategic Planning committee. Alliances have also been formed with the Virgin Islands Advocacy Agency – the local administrator of the Ticket to Work program, the Business Advisory Council formed through a community-based organization that is the recipient of a Projects with Industry grant and other community-based organizations. Participation in and affiliations with these groups allow the board to make informed decisions on workforce issues that strengthen the workforce system. As the system moves toward a demand-driven economy, input from all segments of the community are critical in determining policy and offering relevant skills that meet the needs of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The State Workforce Board performs all the functions as described in § 111(d) as is relevant to the US Virgin Islands Workforce System. There however are no local workforce areas since the US Virgin Islands is a single workforce area therefore any reference to local activities is disregarded.

The Workforce Board in consultation with the Governor develops the State Plan. The Board is comprised of two major committees: the Strategic Planning Committee and the Operational Committee. All activities relating to the operation of the One-Stop service delivery system, performance reporting and general oversight of the statewide employment statistics system is managed through the Operational committee. Strategic planning, policy development and direction, community linkages and demand driven

regional economic development initiatives are under the purview of the Strategic Planning Committee.

The State Workforce Board holds quarterly meetings that are announced at least two weeks in advance. *Currently, Board meetings are being held monthly to allow the new cadre of members to fully understand and engage in activities of the workforce investment system.* To ensure that the meetings are accessible to those who wish to attend, meetings are held at public venues that are accessible to the general public including individuals with disabilities. Within the next few months the Board will have its own website where pertinent information and documents will be readily available to the general public.

In order to ensure the integrity of programs and services provided to the customers of the Workforce Investment System, and eliminate ‘conflict of interest’ issues, a Board member may not vote on a matter under consideration by the Board:

- regarding the provision of services by such member (or by an entity that such member represents);
- that would provide direct financial benefit to such member or the immediate family of such member; or
- engage in any other activity determined by the Governor to constitute a conflict of interest.

The United States Virgin Islands has been designated a Single State Local Workforce Investment Area by the Governor. The Human Resource Investment Council, operating as the Workforce Investment Board will therefore perform the duties of both the State and Local Boards.

Currently the State Board operates on the five percent (5%) allotted to the Board under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. Additionally, a small allotment is designated by the local government to assist with the One-Stop operations. This allotment is not consistent however and has not been made available during the past few years when the local economy was in a precarious economic state. The Board currently has one full time staff person who reports directly to the Board. The Management Information System (MIS) unit is also under the general management of the Board, allowing members a direct handle on performance statistics that influence policy direction for the system.

### *III.C.*

#### *Collaboration and Communication*

The Virgin Islands is a Single Local Workforce Investment Area. The State Board performs the functions of both the state and local board. Because the Board membership consists of senior level administrators and chief operational officers, decisions can be made readily once adequate facts and documentation are presented. Also, memoranda of agreement exist between the State Board and the workforce agencies, all of which are represented on the Board.

In the event that duplication of services or other experiences exist between programs that create barriers to operating a seamless system rather than a coordinated one, the Operational Committee of the Board is designated to review the details of each individual situation and mediate a remedy acceptable to all parties. The Operational Committee of the Board is largely comprised of senior officials of the agencies represented on the Board. Their first hand knowledge of operations and their day-to-day contact with line staff qualify them to negotiate alternative solutions to barriers that may occur.

In addition to the regularly scheduled Board meetings, committee meetings and staff level coordination meetings with members of partner agencies occur on an “as needed” basis. Through the use of electronic media and inter-agency mail, information is shared with partners and participating organizations. Multi-agency conferences and workgroups are often held by partner agencies when new policy or programs are introduced in their respective areas. This practice not only enhances coordination of and prevents duplication of services but also keeps all partners abreast of new developments in all workforce areas.

To ensure open and effective sharing of information among the State agencies responsible for implementing the vision for the public workforce system and between the State agencies and the state workforce investment board, the Governor has assigned his Chief of Staff (responsible for the day-to-day operations of government) as liaison to the departments of Human Services, Education and Labor. These three departments contain many of the WIA mandated partners such as, TANF, SCSEP, the Veterans Program, Labor Exchange, Adult and Career & Technical Education, the Dislocated Worker program and Unemployment Insurance. The Chief of Staff monitors the activities of these agencies by reviewing reports and making contact regarding issues identified in reports, distributing, by facsimile, information received by the Governor from federal agencies and arranging meetings to discuss courses of action necessary to correct deficiencies noted locally and in compliance reviews and or audits.

Additionally, the Governor has established lines of communication for open and effective sharing of information among state agencies and the Workforce Investment Board by appointing heads and senior officials of the following agencies as members of the Board:

- a. VI Department of Education – Commissioner
- b. VI Department of Education – Director of Adult and Career & Technical Education
- c. VI Department of Human Services – Commissioner
- d. VI Department of Human Services – Administrator of Vocational Rehabilitation
- e. University of the Virgin Islands – Vice President
- f. VI Department of Labor – Commissioner
- g. VI Department of Labor – Assistant Commissioner for Employment & Training

At quarterly meetings representatives usually give updates on their agency's activities, issues that they are encountering and along with other members of the Board develop recommendations for continuous improvement. Federal guidance is usually disseminated to the One-Stop Career Center through the Office of the Assistant Commissioner for Employment and Training. The Workforce Investment Board issues guidance to the system through General Administrative Letters signed by the Governor or the SWIB Chairperson.

A new initiative being launched by the VI Department of Labor for Program Year 2007 is entitled *Youth Net*. The intent of the initiative is two-fold, first, to assist youth most in need, specifically drop outs, youth offenders and youth aging out of foster care, by providing a "safety net" that allows them to regroup and refocus their life's goals; and second, to create a network of agencies (Departments of Labor Education, Human Services, Justice and the Housing Authority) that will provide support through counseling, education, training and rehabilitation.

The workforce system offers a variety of services to all youth ages 14 to 21. Youth are referred to the workforce system by school counselors, health and human services professionals, juvenile at-risk agencies and concerned parents. Walk-ins are also encouraged and welcomed.

In-house programs, conducted either by workforce staff or designated youth service providers, are offered to 14-16 year old in-school youth. They provide a comprehensive arrangement of academic and life skills and are designed to keep youth in school and help them achieve at or above grade level competency in math, language and writing skills. Youth are also offered computer literacy training, life skills workshops that address adolescent issues and career planning. Job shadowing and mentoring services precede work experience which can be either paid or unpaid. In-school youth services are provided year-round as after-school programs during the school year and in a more concentrated all day format during the summer. For those youth most at-risk or those experiencing emotional problems referrals are made to certified counselors in the Education or Health and Human Services agencies.

Out of school youth have access to similar services and programs. Programs designed for them include High School diploma or GED preparation, basic skills courses and occupational skills training. Career preparation and planning include portfolio building, resume writing, workplace etiquette and workplace survival workshops. Education and training services will be offered for longer periods of time allowing youth the time and resources to explore all their options and prepare for careers rather than jobs. Lifelong learning is integrated into all youth preparation activity as they are encouraged to continue on to advanced education and training after initial exposure to the workforce.

#### **IV. ECONOMIC AND LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS**

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The economic base of the US Virgin Islands is made up of Tourism, Manufacturing, Construction, Trade, Transportation & Utilities, Business & Financial Services and Leisure and Hospitality.

The strongest performing sectors of the VI economy, such as tourism, leisure and hospitality, construction, which includes heavy industry and manufacturing are expected to continue to grow over the next few years.

The tourism sector continued to perform well in both cruise and air travel, albeit not as strongly as in years past which is largely attributable to a fall-off in cruise passengers. Hospitality related businesses such as hotels, restaurants, tourist attractions, shopping and recreational facilities benefit from the surge in tourism and spawn expansion in such services. This sector is our fastest growing and is expected to continue in this pattern.

Several capital development projects planned by the VI government are expected to trigger growth in the construction sector, as is the maintenance of the infrastructure to include the upgrade and expansion of roads, housing and seaports. The regular repair and maintenance contracts for the heavy industry market also solidify growth in construction and provide much needed high wages even if for finite time periods due to the cyclical nature of this market.

The once strong financial services market took a hit due to recent congressional reform of the laws that govern it. Though there are still a few good opportunities for professionals and support staff in this area it can no longer be considered a constant for workforce projections. The future of this sector is yet unknown.

Healthcare service is a rising growth area in the Territory. Due to the aging of the population there has been a rise in the use of long-term care facilities, private nursing residential facilities, hospice and home health care. Two Veterans Administration clinics have been established, one on each of the major islands.

The local hospitals have been expanding their product – with one Island’s set of facilities now a Regional Health Care Facility. A new Cancer Institute opened last year on the island of St. Thomas and a Cardiac Center is currently being built on St. Croix with plans to open sometime next year. Both facilities are slated to serve not only the US Virgin Islands but the entire Caribbean region.

Another area slated for growth, due mostly to the global economy and more directly to the areas of growth within the US Virgin Islands is Information Technology. The University of the Virgin Islands is home to a Research and Technology Park that is primed to tap into the global ecommerce market. The island of St. Croix is already a part of the Global Crossing Network, a network of high fiber bandwidth hubs that span the world. Partnerships between private enterprise and government agencies have been and continue to be developed that will allow for this avenue of technological expansion.

Tourism, construction, financial services and healthcare have all been affected because of the advances in technology, each in its own discipline. New programs, software and operating systems are established and/or upgraded annually. The area of Information Technology will continue to grow in tandem with all of the other performing sectors and offer competitive wages and opportunities to the Territory's workforce.

The Manufacturing sector has shown some marginal gains over the past few months mostly due to increased volume and value of its major export – refined petroleum. Another large export is due to rum production also increasing in both volume and value. Smaller manufacturing companies have remained leveled in their production, however it is anticipated that job growth will increase during the next few years as the local EDC program is expanded to attract more manufacturing companies to the Virgin Islands.

Overall an improvement in job availability can be seen across the Territory's workforce target areas. A comparison of employment between the fourth quarter of 2005 and the fourth quarter of 2006 show that despite fluctuations within industries, employment opportunities remain steady. Also evident are the areas where additional training is necessary to foster continued growth.

INDUSTRY	4 <sup>TH</sup> QUARTER 2005 EMPLOYMENT			4 <sup>TH</sup> QUARTER 2006 EMPLOYMENT		
	October	November	December	October	November	December
CONSTRUCTION	2,503	2,511	2,585	3,460	3,470	3,544
MANUFACTURING	2,255	2,261	2,253	2,351	2,371	2,371
RETAIL TRADE	5,982	6,090	6,237	5,938	6,053	6,210
ACCOMMODATION & FOOD SERVICE	6,243	6,528	6,703	6,002	6,209	6,341
HEALTHCARE SVC.	1,348	1,342	1,372	1,373	1,365	1,399
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	890	896	888	796	799	800
MANAGEMENT	533	544	538	400	396	395

Most critical to the Territory's economy is job growth within the leading economic sectors:

- ✓ Leisure and Hospitality;
- ✓ Construction and Heavy Industry;
- ✓ Business Services and Information Technology.

These sectors promise jobs in hotels, restaurants, retail establishments, recreational and sports facilities. They foster skills in carpentry, masonry, welding, pipefitting, electrical and building maintenance. High wages can be earned in bookkeeping, accounting, computer repair and maintenance, and information technology.

Skills needed to prepare a world-class workforce run from basic computer and office management to administrative executive and senior management level; from construction

trades helpers to “master” status in those areas. Soft skills include customer service, time management, money management and “people appreciation”.

Skills assessment is an on-going project for the Bureau of Labor Statistics and other groups interested in workforce development. The chart below details some of the skills often discussed by employers when citing immediate workforce needs.

OCCUPATIONAL SECTOR	SKILLS NEEDED	PROJECTED JOB AVAILABILITY
Leisure & Hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic to advanced math and reading comprehension</li> <li>• Workplace health and safety</li> <li>• Product and service awareness</li> <li>• Customer service</li> </ul>	Office Managers Night Auditors Front desk clerks Food & beverage personnel Retail clerks & managers
Construction & Heavy Industry - (Industrial Maintenance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic to advanced math and reading comprehension</li> <li>• Basic to advanced occupational skill knowledge</li> <li>• Basic computer skills</li> </ul>	Electricians Carpenters Masons Millwrights Instrument fitters Process operators Welders/Pipefitters
Business Services and Information Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advanced literacy skills</li> <li>• Basic and advanced computer skills</li> <li>• Knowledge of systems operation and hardware</li> <li>• Bookkeeping and accounting certificates/degrees</li> <li>• Multi-tasking flexibility</li> </ul>	Administrative Staff Program Managers/Administrators Financial Account Managers Program analysts Information systems operators

The following statistics reflect characteristics of the general U.S. Virgin Islands population. The WIA population is derived from this general group as well as those not recorded for various reasons.

The U.S. Virgin Islands has a population of approximately 111,459 (Eastern Caribbean Center - University of the Virgin Islands 2004 U.S. Virgin Islands Community Survey).

As of January 2007, 51,632 made up the Virgin Islands Labor Force (*includes both employed and unemployed*). Below are statistics taken from the 2000 Census that impact the performance of WIA in the US Virgin Islands.

- ❖ 18.5% of the population 25 years of age and older have less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education. 20.9% of the population 25 years of age and older have a 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade education with no diploma.
- ❖ 16.9% of individuals between the ages of 16-19 are not enrolled in school and are not high school graduates.
- ❖ 12.6% of individuals between the ages of 16-19 are unemployed or not in the labor force.
- ❖ 25.3% of the population speaks a language other than English at home and of that number 8.7% speak English less than well.
- ❖ 18.8% of the population between 21 and 64 years of age has a disability.
- ❖ The family median income was shown at \$28,553, in the 2000 Census yet 28.7% of families in the Territory live below the poverty level.

As with many small communities, aspiring adults and young people whether upon completion of high school or becoming of “legal age”, choose to leave the Virgin Islands to broaden their horizons or simply to get a better job. One of the biggest drawbacks in the job market for the U.S. Virgin Islands is that they are islands with a finite number of occupations or job availability. In addition, the U.S. mainland, the nearest English speaking US destination, is over 1,100 miles away. Once young persons leave the Islands they often establish residency in the U.S. or in other destinations and whatever skills and knowledge they have accumulated over the years go with them.

The Territory’s strategy for ensuring that there are sufficient training opportunities to meet the demand of the projected occupational growth areas include the following:

- Partnering with business/industry that are projected for growth through the next decade to assist with workforce development plans that move workers up the career ladder from entry-level to better paying more meaningful career opportunities
- Working with higher education to develop advanced training in market driven occupational areas in order to meet the needs of incumbent workers.
- Providing business/industry with accurate labor market information to assist them in their workforce decision-making process.
- Providing information on projected high growth business/industry needs to all WIA partner agencies in order to capitalize on all services that may be necessary to potential workers to facilitate their entry into or continuance in their workplace experience.

In the upcoming program year, the Territory plans to reassess the economic environment and determine the targeted high-growth, high-demand sectors by conducting a scan that will:

- Assess the skills gaps currently experienced by the local workforce and projected skills gaps in the demand occupations.
- Determine the best practices available to the local population for addressing the basic skills deficiencies that hinder workforce customers from succeeding in demand occupation areas.
- Determine what resources are readily available and which will have to be developed to meet high growth demands;
- Determine education resources that need to be developed or tapped into to offer industry-recognized credentials; and
- Determine strategies that assist in attracting, retaining and expanding business involvement especially in high-growth industries.

After an analysis of the current workforce system, several issues related to the continuing development of the system have been identified. The Territory will continue developing strategies that:

- Ensure that both youth and adult service providers, in all occupational training areas provide customers with industry-recognized credentials to ensure the portability of skills.
- Strengthen the basic skills component of the One-Stop to include more intensive programs that build language, literacy and math skills.
- Ensure that youth competencies developed are in concert with employer-based work standards set for the Territory's demand occupations.
- Increase collaboration between local and federally funded programs specifically for youth.
- Strengthen the employer base within the One-Stop system by reducing the bureaucratic barriers that hinder participation.

Most important to the economic growth of the U.S. Virgin Islands is the availability of high level training programs that allow for progression past entry-level positions. The local workforce continues to face the challenges brought about by importing workers for specific short and long-term projects because their skill level and/or educational level is more in concert with what employers expect. While the present level of training programs

offer the opportunity for initial entry into the workforce, advanced training – specifically in the industrial and technical fields is needed.

## V. OVERARCHING STATE STRATEGIES

### V.A.

#### *Leveraging Funds*

WIA Title I funds constitute the greater part of consistent available funds for workforce development and training in the U.S. Virgin Islands. However, WIA Title I funds are maximized through partnerships with One-Stop partners, faith and community-based organizations and locally funded training programs.

The majority of funds leveraged will be in the form of in-kind services. Shared space will lessen the administrative responsibilities for providing services under WIA thus maximizing the use of program funds. Partners will join resources for providing like services across program lines such as job development, pre-employment services, job search practices and staff training.

- WIA, Wagner-Peyser and Unemployment Insurance currently share space.
- Common Intake forms are used WIA Title I, and other One-Stop partners.
- Private and governmental agencies regularly include staff of other agencies in their training, for example, sensitivity training offered by Vocational Rehabilitation and
- The local government funds a local youth job development and training program to complement the youth activities under the Workforce Investment Act. In 2005-6, \$1.2 million dollars in local funds was provided.
- Share resources (documentation, provider lists) with partner agencies to minimize the duplication of services

### V.B.

#### *Workforce Strategies*

Throughout the early part of PY'07 the State Board will work with business and partner agencies to flesh out the possibilities of the new national strategic direction. As the focus shifts to talent development and regional economic development the Board will begin in October 07 an asset mapping project to determine specific needs in the target growth areas such as talent availability and interest, training requirements of business and employees in these fields and defining the gaps that connect the two.

The following outcomes have been or are being explored to address the national strategic direction. Policy will be developed based on the results of this assessment.

- ❑ Updated list of Demand Occupations in the Territory.

- ❑ Selected targeted areas of local high growth industries to include Hospitality, Manufacturing, Construction, Information Technology, Homeland Security and Healthcare.
- ❑ Provide more opportunities for advancement for incumbent workers.
- ❑ Conduct study on new growth areas from a workforce preparatory perspective.
- ❑ Coordinate with current industry initiatives to address current and future workforce shortages.
- ❑ Seek additional funds and resources from national community and sectoral grants.
- ❑ Enhance educational outreach efforts to inform general public about local job opportunities within each given high growth target area.

Through its role as the coordinating entity for workforce issues, the Workforce Board has developed policy to:

- Initiate steps to involve the business community in the planning stages of workforce preparation and training issues.
- Assure that the procedures that exist to facilitate access to all workforce systems by employer customers are flexible to the systems that they were set up to assist.
- Assure that the procedures that exist to ensure accountability standards are met are not time-consuming and/or constitute a barrier to employer participation in the workforce system.

*V.D.*

The Virgin Islands Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Economic Development agency conduct periodic analyses of the Territory's economic climate. Working with the State Board, the information compiled by these agencies help determine the strongest segments of the economy, the ones most likely to grow their workforce, and the specific segments within each sector that are experiencing worker shortages. In addition, independent researchers are contracted by the State Board on an "as needed" basis to conduct more in-depth studies on specific cause factors that lead to either occupational growth or decline, determine specific numbers of jobs available in a sector and in what specific areas of that sector, and the types of training needed to assist employers grow their business.

In order to identify and target industries and occupations within the Territory's high-growth, high-demand industries the following priorities have been set.

- ❑ Conduct an analysis of potential high-growth areas based on studies by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Economic Development Bureau.
- ❑ Determine the areas where skill shortages are most prevalent.
- ❑ Identify current training resources comparatively with training resources needed to produce a high-skilled work pool.

- ❑ Strengthen the data collection system in order to accurately capture information that helps the State improve on its product.
- ❑ Recruit eligible training providers and encourage customized training in targeted high-demand occupational areas

Strategies being developed to promote and maintain strategic partnerships that address the challenges that occur with the transition to a demand-driven system include the following:

- Encouraging board members and staff's participation in boards and committees of partner and other agencies that promote workforce growth and excellence.
- Formalizing relationships with members of faith-based and community-based organizations involved in workforce preparation to work with the State Board and the One-Stop system.
- Responding to federal solicitations to secure additional funding directed to meeting the National Strategic Direction.
- Continuing the regularly scheduled meetings of implementation level One-Stop partners including WIA, Wagner-Peyser, Justice, Vocational Rehabilitation, TANF, SCSEP, Vocational and Adult Education and University of the Virgin Islands' workforce arm – UVI-CELL (University of the Virgin Islands – Community Engagement and Lifelong Learning center).

In a demand-driven system, single-sourced responses do not provide strong outcomes. Building and strengthening these partnerships offer a more comprehensive approach to determining solutions for workforce challenges as they arise.

The State Board in conjunction with the Governor will determine policies that prioritize the use of the workforce system's resources, both staff-based and financial. During the last two years, initial priority was placed on capacity building for workforce staff; targeting and working with high-growth, high-demand employers to determine training needs and offering training programs, designed with multiple levels of increasing difficulty. During the next two years, resources (financial) will be focused on providing high-skilled training sets. Funds provided through WIA adult, dislocated workers, youth and statewide streams will be accessible to customers through Individual Training Accounts and customized training programs. Cooperative agreements between the Workforce System, higher education and employers and/or training providers will also be utilized to develop incumbent worker training programs designed to help Virgin Islanders' upward mobility within their chosen occupations.

The Virgin Islands is a small community with dedicated resources for specific projects. As partner efforts are combined to address high-growth, high-demand workforce sectors,

WIA funds will be leveraged with additional partner programs and locally funded programs thus maximizing the spectrum of available training opportunities. Also, community and faith-based programs seeking to supplement their training efforts are encouraged to partner with the One-Stop system and provide a step in the training sets being offered.

*V.F.*

A large part of the Territory's economic base is built on small business. Many are by-products of the large multi-faceted tourism market and heavy industry – construction market. Though the Territory's workforce system does not provide start up capital or funds to sustain a business, employers can request funding to prepare or enhance their workforce. The Virgin Islands One-Stop system will begin this year to offer more business services to the employer community. Job search, job referral, and incumbent worker training initiatives are some of the services available to them through the One-Stop system. These products can be customized to assist the small business owner provide better services to the larger market their business feed into.

*V.G.* Currently, there is no strategy for the use of Statewide funds to provide incentives to the entities that make up the State's workforce system.

*V.H.* The State Workforce Board has an ad hoc committee to address issues concerning youth. This committee is responsible for designing strategies that meet the requirements of the new direction for youth. The Board has already developed a policy for this initiative that states that "in addition to Board members, the youth ad hoc committee will consist of youth providers that offer innovative and alternative program ideas to serve the needs of "at risk" youth." A comprehensive approach with a stronger counseling component will be encouraged in new program designs for youth. Also, this year, with the introduction of the Youth Net initiative, workforce entities will have another vehicle through which to connect youth with "real time" workforce development.

*V.I.* There are no State laws, regulations or policies that impede the development of any workforce goals set forth by the State Workforce Board.

*V.J.* \*This year the State has requested the extension of waivers received in 2005 namely,

- ✓ Retention of the 40% transfer of funds between adult and dislocated worker programs; and
- ✓ Retention of the use of individual training accounts for older and out-of-school youth.

Additionally, this year we are requesting the following waivers:

- A waiver of the language limiting the authority to provide the activities at WIA 134(a)(1)(B) to statewide reserve funds to permit the use of a portion of the funds reserved for rapid response activities (50%) at WIA Section 133(a)(2) to provide incumbent worker training.

- A waiver of the reporting requirements at 20 CFR 667.300(a) to provide relief in the collection of certain participant data elements for incumbent workers trained with local area WIA formula funds.
- A waiver of the required 50% percent employer match for customized training at WIA Section 101(8)(C) to permit a match based on a sliding scale.
- A waiver of WIA Section 101 (31)(B) to permit states to reimburse the employer on a graduated scale based on the size of the business.
- A waiver of the provision at WIA Section 181 (e) that prohibits the use of funds for economic development activities that are not directly related to training for eligible individuals.
- A waiver for the use of Common Measures only reporting.

Employer Services, specifically providing employers with the tools to develop their workforce is a vital part of the Strategic Plan direction for the next two years. The waivers being requested will build the business enrichment portion of the Territory's workforce system and enable employers to develop a competitive edge in the larger business community. It also offers greater flexibility to employees both the entry level and the incumbent worker who need to remain at work while seeking to advance in their chosen occupation.

\*Please see complete Waiver Plan in Attachment A

## **VI. MAJOR STATE POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS**

The Virgin Islands operates as a Single State Workforce Investment Area under WIA; state policies are designed to address the entire system. There are general administrative letters (GAL's) in place that address common data collection and reporting, integrated service delivery and performance management. All WIA, Employment Services and Unemployment Insurance services are already co-located therefore no policy exists to address this. Policies already guiding the system include the following:

- Memoranda of Understanding were developed between the State Board and One-Stop partners. These memoranda remain in effect until or unless one party requests termination. The Governor and the State Board are charged with resolving any controversial issues that may arise throughout the life of the Agreement if consensus cannot be reached by the partner(s) and the Board. Specific elements of the memoranda may be modified upon request of any party.
- Universal access is required at the comprehensive One-Stop center and all satellite centers.

- The Workforce Investment Board will not directly operate any programs.
- Common data collection and reporting processes, information management and performance management are functions of the workforce systems' MIS unit. This information is gathered and collected through America's One Stop Operating System – the system's automated data management service and reports as well as performance information is garnered from this system.
- Performance information provided by eligible training providers, on-the-job and customized training program providers should conform to state and federal requirements and will be evaluated based on compliance with such.
- In the event that the local market weighs more heavily towards services for one customer segment, but available funds are not sufficient to meet that demand – the Board may, on approval from the Governor, transfer not more than forty (40%) percent of the funds allocated for a fiscal year between adult employment and training activities and dislocated workers employment and training activities. Transfers are granted at the request of the WIA administering agency.
- Dedicated staff will be available to assist customers who receive “priority assistance” such as low-income individuals under WIA, recipients of public assistance, veterans or other groups under the Wagner-Peyser Act.
- Policies related to displaced homemakers, nontraditional workers, older workers, low-income individuals and disabled individuals have been developed to ensure that the priority status is continued. The One-Stop will feature promotional material and activities to encourage these customers to take advantage of the services available to them.
- The State Board has defined policy guiding the use of Individual Training Accounts.

A complete list of all State Policies is attached.

## **VII. INTEGRATION OF ONE-STOP SERVICE DELIVERY**

*VII.A.* The State Workforce Board has developed policy to ensure the quality of service delivery through One-Stop Centers for all customers.

The Virgin Islands Career Network (*VI Can Work*), slogan has been developed for partners and service providers to the VI One-Stop Service Delivery System. Partners and providers may use this brand to identify themselves as members of the network and alert the general public that access to their specific services includes linkages to the other services and resources available at the One-Stop Center.

The One-Stop Service Delivery system shall provide services to job seekers and employers that are unified in its approach and serve to produce quality outcomes to both groups in the workforce development experience. Each One-Stop Center shall have for public use a fully functional resource room; provide all customers access to workforce and labor market information in order to make informed decisions; utilize self-help and customer assisted services; and provide access to partner services and resources.

*VII.B.* Competencies for One-Stop Center staff and a certification process policy are currently being developed.

Services to job seekers shall:

- Be unified throughout all One-Stop locations;
- Be designed to expedite customer flow;
- Be tailored to the needs of each individual customer;
- Be presented in a manner that allows for maximum customer choice; and
- Meet the standards required to enter or grow in the local workforce demand occupation areas.

Services to employers shall:

- Offer unified general services throughout all One-Stop locations;
- Be developed through an “action plan” created to meet the individual employer customer’s need;
- Be provided by a trained team of employer representatives knowledgeable about the local economic factors, specifically high-growth, high-demand areas;
- Include relevant and “real time” labor market information;
- Maintain a database that tracks employer preferences and growth needs to facilitate employer’s interaction with the Center.

Services to Partners and Providers shall:

- Be consistent in theory and delivery;
- Be designed to assist in the reduction of paperwork and reporting requirements;
- Be developed with input from a representative group of partners and service providers.

The One-Stop System provides universal access to core services by different partners and linkages to intensive and training services. Customers can access local labor market information – making informed choices as they prepare for a first job, change careers or transition into new areas.

For customers who need training, there will be sufficient information available for them to make informed choices as to the type of training that best suits their individual needs.

The Eligible Provider List (EPL) allows the customer to choose the preferred provider and the Individual Training Account (ITA), will afford them the resources they need to obtain the services.

Universal job seeker services available at the One Stop include:

SERVICES
Directory of Services
Intake/Assessment
Resource Referral
Job Service/Employment Information
Labor Market Information
Unemployment Insurance
Adult and Dislocated Workers Training
Special Programs Information

Services are also available for employers that seek to develop their business interests. They include:

SERVICES
Directory of Services
Resource Referral
Job Applicant Data Bank
Labor Market Information
Economic Development
Employer Education and Support Service
Recruitment, Screening and Testing
Services to Incumbent Workers

The Wagner-Peyser and Unemployment Insurance services are both housed within the Virgin Islands Department of Labor – as are the services to be provided under the WIA Title I. Further they are co-located in the same offices in both districts. The One-Stop system advocates a “no wrong door” policy. The automated America’s One Stop Operating System is used to create customer files, manage their job search activities, track their job exploration and training process and match them with employers seeking their specific skills.

The VI One Stop system uses a common intake form that is shared among partner agencies including the departments of Human Services and Education. The use of this form reduces duplication of services and allows for general information to be collected from shared customers once with agency specific information being the only additional information collected if a customer is referred elsewhere. The One-Stop system also shares the Eligible Training Provider list. Although it is maintained by the Department of Labor (the WIA administrative entity), all partners have access to and are encouraged to refer customers as necessary.

The One-Stop service delivery system is supported through funds provided by WIA Title I programs, Wagner-Peyser, Unemployment Insurance and Title V Older Americans Act of 1965.

Other partners to include Career and Technical and Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation and the University of the Virgin Islands – Community Engagement and Life Long Center provide in-kind services that contribute to the development of the infrastructure; in-kind services range from shared space and technology to providing customer assessment tools. Statewide funds are used to promote pilot programs or to supplement exceptional programs. They are also used to support capacity building.

The One-Stop system is retooling its Business Services unit this year to better meet the needs of businesses and employers. There will be dedicated staff, account representatives that address the needs of their client portfolio. They will act as the single point of contact for business addressing their human resource issues as well as providing updates on labor market information, and coordinating service delivery.

### **VIII. ADMINISTRATION AND OVERSIGHT OF THE LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM**

The United States Virgin Islands was designated a Single State Workforce Investment Area in 1999. That designation has not changed. There are no local or sub-state area designations in the Virgin Islands therefore there are no local boards, local service providers or locally operated One Stops centers.

#### *VIII.F.*

As a Single State Local Workforce Investment Area, the Virgin Islands do not distribute funds among “local” areas. Funds are allocated throughout the Territory as required by the Act. Proposed allotments for Program Year 2007 are as follows:

<b>ESTIMATED FORMULA ALLOTTMENTS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF ALLOCATION*</b>	<b>ESTIMATED FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR SERVICES</b>
\$ 619,870	75% Adults	\$464,903
\$ 644,493	75% Youth	\$483,370
\$1,055,762	60% Dislocated Workers	\$633,457

*\*after State and Local Administration*

WIA Formula funds are distributed by category: Statewide administration, local administration and direct training. Formula funds for Adults are broken into 15% Statewide administration, 10% Local administration and 75% training services. Youth funds follow suit with 15% Statewide administration, 10% Local administration and 75% training services. Training and services funds are further divided into 40% In-School Youth and 60% Out of School Youth. Dislocated Worker funds are allotted into 15%

Statewide Administration, 10% local administration and 60% training; the additional 15% is reserved for Rapid Response activities.

Preliminary Allotment for the Employment Service (Wagner-Peyser) in Program Year 2007 is \$ 1,374,641.

#### *VIII.G.*

##### *Provider Selection Policies*

An entity, organization or individual may qualify as an Eligible Training Provider in two instances: (1) automatic eligibility; (2) established eligibility.

(1) The Workforce Investment Act extends **automatic eligibility** to a provider that is:

- a postsecondary educational institution that is eligible to receive Federal funds under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and provides a program that leads to an associate degree, baccalaureate degree, or certificate; or
- an entity that carries out programs under the Act commonly known as the National Apprenticeship Act.

Providers that meet these criteria must submit an application to the local board that contains:

- ◇ a description of training services to be provided; and
- ◇ the duration and cost of program to be conducted.

(2) Public or private providers of a program of training services who wish to **establish initial eligibility** and receive funds as determined under the WIA shall submit an application to the workforce board. Included in this category are:

- ◇ post-secondary educational institutions that wish to receive training funds for programs not described in section 122 (a)(2)(A); and
- ◇ providers of service under the National Apprenticeship Act that wish to receive training funds for programs that are not currently registered with the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training.

Providers that meet these criteria must submit an application to the workforce board that contains:

- ◆ a description of the training services to be provided;
- ◆ the duration and cost of the program;
- ◆ program design information must demonstrate a need for such training services to be provided in the local area where training is being held; and
- ◆ previous performance information that will include statistical information that demonstrates the provider's ability to deliver services effectively.

After the workforce board has reviewed the application and has been determined that all criteria has been met, a list of eligible applicants will be created and submitted to the Virgin Islands Department of Labor, the administrative entity of the Workforce Investment System. The list will include program design, performance and program costs information on each eligible provider.

The Virgin Islands Department of Labor will:

- ◆ Verify all information provided by each applicant;
- ◆ Compile a single list of eligible providers and disseminate such list to the One-Stop delivery system;
- ◆ Maintain the provider list.

Approved eligible providers may provide services for a period not to exceed one year from the date of approval.

#### **SUBSEQUENT ELIGIBILITY**

**ALL** providers of a program of training whether determined automatically eligible or having established initial eligibility, are subject to subsequent eligibility determination.

Providers of training services will be required to provide all information required for initial certification, plus:

- 1) The percentage of WIA participants who have completed the program and have been placed in unsubsidized employment.
- 2) The percentage of WIA participants who are still in unsubsidized employment six months after the first day of employment.
- 3) The hourly wages of WIA participants six months after the first day of employment.
- 4) The rate of licensure or certification, attainment of academic degree or occupational skills credentials or other measurable skills.
- 5) Other verifiable program-specific information as may be locally determined.

#### **REMOVAL FROM THE ELIGIBLE PROVIDER LIST**

- A training provider may be denied re-certification for a training program by the Department of Labor if it is determined that:
  - The provider does not meet the expected levels of performance.
  - The training program does not support the demand occupations for the area
  - Other requirements for training providers of the Workforce Investment Act have not been met.
- The State Board may remove a training provider from the approved provider list if it is determined that:
  - The provider of training intentionally supplied inaccurate information.
  - The provider of training substantially violated any requirement under the Workforce Investment Act.

- An agency submitting an application that was automatically eligible due to its being a post-secondary educational institution or carrying out programs under the National Apprenticeship Act with the requirements set forth in Section 122 (a)(2), may not be removed from the Eligible Providers List. For such an agency, a specific program may be removed for non-performance, but the agency remains eligible.

Upon determination that an application by a training provider does not meet the eligibility requirements, a notice denying eligibility will be issued. The notice of denial will be mailed to the training provider at the address listed on the application and to the attention of the contact person identified on the application. The denial notice shall also clearly state that the training entity has the right to appeal the decision within fourteen (14) calendar days of the date that the denial notice is mailed.

#### **APPEALS PROCEDURE**

A provider of training services, who is removed from the Eligible Provider List, may appeal the decision by following the procedures listed below:

- 1) A written request for a hearing should be made to the State Board
- 2) The State Board will conduct a hearing within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the request; at which time the provider may present all information that shows cause for eligibility to be reinstated.
- 3) The State Board will give its decision within fifteen (15) calendar days of the hearing.
- 4) If the provider of service finds the decision of the State Board unacceptable, an appeal may be made in writing to the Governor.
- 5) The decision of the Governor is final.

The Administrative Agency (VI Department of Labor), may offer corrective action or technical assistance to a provider of training service who has been removed from the Eligible Provider's List for non-performance. Corrective action or technical assistance may also be offered to providers of training services that fail to comply with the Act. Providers receiving corrective action assistance or technical assistance may reapply for the Eligible Providers List after the period of one (1) year.

The eligibility of a provider of training service determined to have intentionally supplied inaccurate information, will be terminated for a period of time not to exceed two (2) years.

Grants and contracts for the Workforce Investment Act Title I activities will be awarded in accordance with Title 31 Section 239 of the VI Code relating to procurement rules and regulations; OMB Circular A-102 and A-110; and other provisions consistent with the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and its regulations. An eligible provider list will be developed by the State Board and administered and maintained by the VI Department of

Labor. Providers who wish to be on the eligible provider list will be required to provide the following information:

- adequate technical and financial resources;
- a well defined program design that relates to the needs of the local economy;
- the ability to meet program design specifications at a reasonable cost;
- a satisfactory record of past performance; and
- a satisfactory record of fiscal accountability, organization and operational controls;

The disqualifying factors for bidders under the competitive process include:

- Providers with a history of poor past performance;
- Providers that fail to establish linkages to local market demands;
- Providers that fail to demonstrate adequate goals and structure in youth program design.

Sole source procurement shall be minimized and awarded only in specific situations to include if:

- Service is only available from a single source or that the provider is uniquely qualified to secure such service;
- The public exigency or emergency need does not allow for a lengthy competitive solicitation period; or
- After the solicitation process, competition is deemed inadequate.

Customized training and on-the-job training providers will be noted as such and information on their programs and services will be maintained within the One-Stop system. Customized training and on-the-job training providers must meet the same performance standards as the other providers in order for them to be considered for subsequent funding. They are not however, subject to the other requirements of the eligible provider system.

#### *VIII.H. One-Stop Policies*

The agencies and programs listed below constitute the VI One Stop System of services. Access to these programs with the exception of Youth programs is available at any One-Stop center and may be initiated at any of the partner agency locations. The agencies share a common intake form, which gathers general information on customers. Agency specific information is gathered once the customer is referred to the partner that can provide the most appropriate service. Core services for each of the partner programs is accessible the One-Stop centers to the extent possible. At this time all partners are not physically co-located at the VI One-Stop Centers, therefore a referral system is utilized. Customers are referred out with common intake information sheets and a general description of the type of services already provided and goals or services needed are cited so that the agencies to which they are referred can continue to provide services as seamlessly as possible. Wagner-Peyser Act funds are used to provide initial assessment

services for all customers. Services to customers who are job ready and/or self-sufficient are also provided through this funding stream.

### **AGENCY/WORKFORCE PROGRAM/TARGET GROUP**

#### Department of Labor

- WIA
- Wagner-Peyser
- Older Workers
- Youthbuild
- Youth Job Development
- Individuals seeking entry-level, transitional or incumbent worker training
- Job Seekers
- Individuals over 55 years of age
- Disadvantaged or basic skills deficient youth

#### Department of Education

- Career and Technical Ed. Programs
- Adult Education
- Literacy
- Youth and Adults pursuing training in Career and technical education fields (formerly vocational ed.)
- Adults pursuing GED/High School credentials/reading and comprehension skills

#### Department of Human Services

- TANF (includes AFDC, JOBS, Emergency Assistance and Food Stamps)
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Individuals on Public Assistance
- Individuals with disabilities

#### Department of Justice

- Offender Reentry Program
- Incarcerated individuals within one year of parole

#### Housing Authority

- Family Self-Sufficiency Program
- Housing Choice Voucher Participants

#### Other Initiatives

- Community-based federally subsidized programs
- Faith-based programs
- Job Corps

#### VIII.I

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*Oversight/Monitoring*

The Monitoring and Compliance unit of the VI Department of Labor operates on an established schedule of planned and random inspections of Eligible Service Providers to audit course material, adherence to proposed services, delivery of course goals and attendance and participation patterns of students. The Monitoring unit depends on MIS for verification of placement statistics, performance information and other data for the evaluation of the training offered. Inspections checklists, procedures and operational criteria are approved by the Compliance and Standards sub-committee of the Workforce Board to ensure that proper assessment and standards of operations are followed.

On a quarterly basis the Department of Labor shall submit the following reports to the sub-committee for Compliance and Standards:

1. WIA/W-P Common Measures Performance Report
2. Training Activity Report
3. Rating report on all active ESP's within a given quarter
4. Any other related reports

These reports will be used to evaluate the workforce system and the Eligible Service Providers. The sub-committee will prepare a report summarizing their quarterly review and submit it to the Board for appropriate action.

*VIII.J. Grievance Procedures*

The grievance procedures are attached under GAL WIA 12-01.

*VIII.K. Sixth Eligibility Criterion*

The Youth system targets all “at-risk” youth specifically out-of-school youth who are basic skills deficient, homeless, aging out of foster care, pregnant or parenting, adjudicated, disabled or have limited English proficiency. Sixty percent of WIA youth funds have been designated for services for this population and that will be initially leveraged with funds available from the local Youth training program also housed within the Department of Labor. As the Departments of Justice, Education and Human Services as well as private partners work with youth in “at-risk” categories, funds from within their varied programs will also be leveraged to create a Youth-Net that captures the most at risk. The 19-21 year old group will specifically receive additional counseling and career guidance since many are ready to or have already entered the workforce. Keeping them employed and upwardly mobile in their education and career training is the greatest priority; therefore addressing their supplemental needs will be the standard in any type of program they attend.

**IX. SERVICE DELIVERY**

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The overall direction for One-Stop Operations is set by the State Board and refined by the Partners group. Issues such as coordination of services to reduce duplication, streamlining functions to enhance work productivity and general office design are some of the issues now being redesigned to improve the current product.

#### *IX.A.*

##### *One-Stop Service Delivery Strategies*

One of the best selling points of the One Stop System is the ease of service delivery. In the US Virgin Islands, WIA Title I partners – Adult, Dislocated Workers and Wagner-Peyser as well as Unemployment Insurance comprise the in-house services of the One-Stop Center. Other partners, Vocational Rehabilitation, Vocational and Adult Education, Department of Justice’s Offender Reentry Program, and the Senior Community Program connect to the One-Stop by providing literature, program applications, electronic links to the services they provide, and holding workshops on their product offerings.

All partners offer core services or access to core services through the One-Stop. Services are designed to complement not compete with each other. Specifically, the One-Stop’s method of service delivery is moving toward being more function driven rather than program driven. Staff is being cross-trained to learn multiple functions yet retain their program specific knowledge in order to deliver superior services.

Youth programs are currently funded through the competitive bidding process. A waiver has been granted to allow the use of vouchers through Individual Training Accounts (ITA’s) for older and out-of-school youth to increase their options for services. Basic youth services, such as assessment and counseling are provided through in-house services and are also available through Youth specific partners and providers.

Partner agencies also offer access to the pre-GED, GED, career and technical and basic skills training. All youth customers have access to the resource room – computer skills training, information search and other research materials to which they may not otherwise have access, is available to them there. At one location, there is a resource room dedicated to providing youth services.

In an effort to make the services of the One-Stop uniform, several standards of operation are recommended.

- A three-tiered method of assessment is applied to every customer that enters the One-Stop. Customers are assessed to determine the level of services they need.
  - A. Career Explorers – No work history; long term absence from the labor market. (Intensive assistance, development of a service plan, possibly training)
  - B. Career Advancers – Inconsistent work history; work history showing no advancement. (Some assistance, development of plan, supportive services likely)
  - C. Employment Express – Currently working, or solid/progressive work history - without frequent breaks or multiple jobs. (Minimal assistance or self help)

- All centers must have a fully functional resource room.
- It is recommended that all partners use a common intake form to capture universal information about each customer. Program specific data is captured when the customer connects with a particular service.

### *IX.B.*

#### *Workforce Information*

The State Board receives regular updates from the local Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) at quarterly Board meetings. In addition, BLS distributes employment statistics monthly and posts that and other labor market data on the V.I. Department of Labor's (VIDOL) website ([www.vidol.gov](http://www.vidol.gov)). The information obtained is used by the Board to determine trends in the economic environment thereby projecting viable avenues toward which workforce activities may be most beneficial.

To ensure that information is distributed to all interested parties, (employers, job seekers and employment counselors) in an accurate and timely manner, an annual report is prepared which, includes information on unemployment wages, growth trends, comparisons to prior months and years, comparisons to states/cities with similar demographics are used to determine job trends, training needs, identify skill shortages and solicit providers for specific services. Supplemental reports are prepared during the year and are distributed either by print or electronic media sources.

As described in the Workforce Information Core Products and Services Plan, the Bureau of Labor Statistics hosts' yearly conferences for employers, job seekers and One-Stop staff to give information and share best practices. This allows all customers to make informed choices on employment and/or training direction. Workshops are conducted to instruct all customers on useful techniques on using labor market information. BLS consults with the State Workforce Board to ensure that goals are synchronized. The Board also recommends funding levels for specified products and services that help define the overall strategic direction of the workforce system.

For the upcoming program year an e-newsletter is planned, as is an upgrade to electronic data gathering and increased visibility of statistics specifically geared to the workforce population.

Links to national workforce information tools including America's Career Information Network and Career Voyages appear on the VI Department of Labor's website. These links open the customer to profiles of different skilled trade occupations, additional links to education, skills, earning potential and training requirements for each occupation. They also provide specialized resources for youth, career changers, adults and career advisors.

### *IX.C.*

#### *Adults and Dislocated Workers*

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The Territory's One Stop Centers have the convenience of both WIA and Wagner-Peyser services being co-located. In addition to sharing space, the services provided by both are seamless to the customer, with Wagner-Peyser providing many of the core services and some of the intensive.

Employment and training activities that will be carried out with the adult and dislocated worker funds received by the State will include:

#### CORE SERVICES

- Eligibility Determination;
- Outreach, intake (which may include worker profiling) and orientation to the information and other services available;
- Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities and supportive service needs;
- Job search and placement assistance – career counseling when necessary;
- Provision of employment statistics information; including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas;
- Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services;
- Provision of local performance information;
- Provision of accurate supportive services information including transportation and child care;
- Provision of information regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation;
- Assistance establishing eligibility for welfare-to-work activities available in the local area;
- Follow up services, including counseling.

All core services will be available through the One-Stop Centers, with linkages to both intensive and training services. To ensure universality, access to these services is required in the comprehensive One-Stop center and all satellite centers. Each One-Stop Center shall have for public use a fully functional resource room; provide all customers access to core services as defined in the Act; provide access to current workforce and labor market information in order to make informed decisions; utilize self-help and customer assisted services; and provide access to partner services and resources.

Intensive and training services are available to individuals that still experience difficulty attaining or retaining employment after accessing core services. There is no required number of core services that must be accessed or any specific length of time that must pass before intensive and/or training services become available. What is required is a detailed service strategy that individually maps a plan of action for each customer.

#### INTENSIVE SERVICES

- Comprehensive and specialized assessment of the skill levels and service needs;

- Development of an individual employment plan, to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives and appropriate combination of services;
- Group counseling;
- Individual counseling and career planning;
- Case management for participants seeking training services;
- Short-term prevocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct.

#### TRAINING SERVICES

- Occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment;
- On-the-job training;
- Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs;
- Training programs operated by the private sector;
- Skill upgrading and retraining;
- Entrepreneurial training;
- Job readiness training;
- Adult education and literacy activities provided in combination with services described;
- Customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training.

Policy is being developed that expands the access to training for incumbent workers. This policy will detail the means by which employers can train and grow their workforce through a flexible array of training options designed to embrace lifelong learning. The Territory is applying for waivers that will enable businesses and employers the flexibility needed to ensure that their individual workforce needs are met.

#### *Individual Training Accounts*

WIA mandates that all training services (except for on-the-job training and customized training) be provided through the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITA) and that eligible individuals shall receive ITA's through the one-stop delivery system.

The One-Stop system is the basic delivery system for adult and dislocated worker services. Through the One-Stop system adults and dislocated workers in need of training will be provided an Individual Training Account and access to lists of eligible providers of training. Participants may purchase training services from eligible service providers they select in consultation with their case managers.

Customer Choice: Individual Training Accounts allow customers to choose the provider of training service based on the specific information (prerequisites, costs, location, duration, certification received) listed by the provider.

- The *amount* of the Individual Training voucher shall not exceed \$3,230.00, except in the instance of an **approved** specialized or technical program.
- The *duration* of an Individual Training voucher shall not exceed twelve (12) months, except in the instance of an **approved** specialized or technical program.

Linkage to occupations in demand: Training services shall be directly linked to occupations that are in demand in the local area, or in another area to which an adult or dislocated worker receiving such services is willing to relocate.

#### EXCEPTIONS

- Providers of *Customized training* or *On-the-Job* training are not subject to the Individual Training Accounts policy.
- Also, there are certain circumstances that allow for mechanisms other than Individual Training Accounts to be used; specifically:
  - A Board decision that determines that there are an insufficient number of eligible providers in the local area to accomplish the purpose of the system; and
  - There is a training program of *demonstrated effectiveness* offered by a FCBO or other private organization to serve *special participant population* that face multiple barriers to employment.

*On-the-Job Training* means training by an employer that is provided to a paid participant while engaged in productive work in a job that:

- ◇ Provides knowledge or skills essential to the full and adequate performance of the job;
- ◇ Provides reimbursement to the employer of up to 50 percent (50%) of the wage rate of the participant, for the extraordinary costs of providing the training and additional supervision related to the training; and
- ◇ Is limited in duration as appropriate to the occupation for which the participant is being trained.

*Customized training* is training that is:

- ◇ Designed to meet the special requirements of an employer;
- ◇ Conducted with a commitment by the employer to employ individuals on successful completion of the training; and
- ◇ For which the employer pays for not less than fifty percent (50%) of the cost of the training.

*Special participant populations* for the VI One Stop system include:

- Individuals with substantial language or cultural barriers;

- Offenders
- Homeless individuals; and
- Other hard-to-serve populations – as determined by the Governor.

Criteria to describe programs of *demonstrated effectiveness* may include:

- Financial stability;
- Demonstrated performance; and
- Local area demand occupation.

To build a demand-driven system that provides more access to training, the State will partner with high-growth, high-demand employers and business to design specific training programs that address specified skill shortages within the industry. Customers will be able to use their ITA's to access this targeted training.

The Territory's Registered Apprenticeship program, which has been inactive for a time, is being revitalized and should be fully functional by the beginning of the 2008 program year. Policy will be developed to ensure integration into the workforce system. Its operation will provide another needed avenue to develop talent in the high-growth, high-demand areas.

#### *Eligible Training Provider List*

All customers have access to program and performance information for training programs on the Eligible Training Provider List. This list is accessible at the resource rooms, waiting areas and electronically at each One Stop location. The list is not yet available through the Internet.

Program information includes:

- Description of the type of training available;
- Location of the training;
- Cost of the program;
- Daily schedule and duration of the training program; and
- Credential received upon successful completion.

Performance information includes:

- Completion rates;
- Wage at placement;
- Percentage obtaining license, certificate or degree, if applicable;
- Rate of retention in unsubsidized employment.

#### *Specific Populations*

Customers from specific populations, to include displaced homemakers, low income individuals, individuals interested in non-traditional occupations, veterans, public assistance recipients, individuals with limited English-speaking ability and individuals with disabilities will be served through the development of an individual service strategy. Once their needs have been identified, services and programs will be structured to ensure

that they benefit from intensive and training services, when needed. Through case management their progress will be revisited periodically to ensure adherence to the prescribed course of action or to make needed adjustments. All resources of the One-Stop are accessible to all populations, with accommodations for the disabled available.

Services offered to Worker Profiling and Reemployment claimants will be carried out in accordance with section 3(c)(3) of the revised Wagner-Peyser Act. They will include job search assistance, job placement services such as counseling, testing, providing occupational and labor market information, as well as assessment, job club, job preparation workshops, and referrals to employers.

The Job Service and Unemployment Insurance offices are co-located in both districts. An information system is established between the two areas that share data on services provided to referred claimants, referred claimant participation and employment outcomes. Services provided to UI claimants are reported back to the Unemployment Insurance in a monthly report, *Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services Activity*. This report gives a breakout of profiled claimants; profiled claimants referred and reporting services; profiled claimants referred and completing services.

The work test and feedback requirements are conducted for all UI claimants in a similar manner to that previously described for profiled claimants. A monthly report lists the services provided to claimants including job placements, negative referrals, identification of claimants who are unlikely to return to work before exhausting their benefits and other information that may affect a claimant's eligibility for benefits.

To integrate services to dislocated workers provided through the WIA rapid response and WIA Dislocated Worker programs, assistance is made available to eligible individuals by providing basic readjustment services, retraining services and needs related payments as described below.

**Basic Readjustment Services** will include the following:

- Outreach and intake;
- Early readjustment assistance;
- Testing
- Assessment, including evaluation of education attainment and participant interests and aptitudes;
- Development of individual readjustment plans for participants in programs under this title;
- Determination of occupational skills;
- Orientation
- Job or career counseling;
- Labor market information;
- Job clubs;

- Job development;
- Supportive services, including child care;
- Pre-layoff assistance;
- Relocation assistance; and
- Programs conducted in cooperation with employers or labor organizations to provide early intervention in the event of closures of plants or facilities.

Once the dislocated individual has been deemed eligible for retraining, the Division of Training will make referrals to the most appropriate mix of employment and training services. **Retraining Services** may include but is not limited to the following:

- Classroom training;
- Occupational skill training;
- On-the-job training;
- Basic and remedial education;
- Entrepreneurial training;
- Out-of-area job search;
- Literacy and English for non-English speakers; and
- Other appropriate training activities directly related to appropriate employment opportunities in the area.

The Division of Training will coordinate with the Unemployment Insurance to ensure that dislocated worker enrolled in employment and training programs continue to receive **needs-related payments** while in training. The Division of Training will also assume the responsibility for providing needs-related payments to dislocated workers once it has been determined that unemployment compensation payments have been exhausted. The Unemployment Insurance must approve training activities. Payments will continue as long as the dislocated worker continues to be enrolled in an approved training program. Payments will continue at the same level established by the Unemployment Insurance and at the same interval until training is completed and the worker is re-employed.

When the rapid response team receives notification of a closing or mass lay-off of significant economic impact, the following actions will be taken. The Dislocated Worker Unit (DWU) will be prepared to:

- organize a broad based response to a dislocation event;
- assess the need for additional resource requirements not already available;
- seek to establish labor-management committee when appropriate; and
- facilitate the provision of adjustment and retraining services through the Division of Training.

On-site DWU activities are provided so that initial assessments can be done. The Division of Training as part of the on-site team provides eligibility determination services by using the following procedures:

- Initial interview – pre-application process;
- Client is informed of the full array of services available to them;
- Eligibility determination and verification takes place.
- Documentation of client’s skills, aptitude or ability interests, barrier, level of educational attainment, supportive services need is performed through testing and counseling;
- An individual service plan is developed.

The U.S. Virgin Islands does not have a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program.

The One-Stop centers provide dedicated services to persons with disabilities through the Local Office Counselors in each district. Efforts to place those customers who are job ready and who demonstrate ability or interest in particular employment opportunities are able to participate in job development efforts. The customers who require additional services or training to be job ready are referred to one of several partners who can assist the customer in obtaining the necessary skill level to be employable. Work-Able, the Vocational Rehabilitation office and the VI Resource Center for the Disabled are among some of the partners that customers may be referred to for assistance in obtaining the skills needed for placement or independent living.

The agreement between the VI Office of Veteran’s Affairs and the VI Department of Labor delineate services that are to be part of One-Stop activities. Applying the one-stop elements of universality, customer choice, integration and performance accountability avoids duplication at service delivery points. The Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) will continue to ensure priority treatment of veterans at the One-Stop locations. Representatives are the case managers for the veteran customer and may maneuver through the system to ensure that veterans receive priority status at each station of interest. Programs for the disabled veterans (DVOP) are not available in the Virgin Islands because the population was deemed insufficient for the grant application.

The Virgin Islands has a growing population of individuals with limited English proficiency. To meet the employment needs of these individuals the One-Stop system, in conjunction with one of its partners - UVI-CELL, is in the process of acquiring software and training materials to be used in the One-Stop’s resource room with a goal of ultimately having a dedicated area of the resource room for LEP services. Plans are also being made to make classroom training available for individuals based on the occupation in which they are interested; for example, an individual who may be skilled in the construction trades but speaks little or no English would learn to do so by learning the language of his/her skill and expand from there. There are also several One-Stop service providers that offer ESL classes, as does the Department of Education’s Adult Education program.

Currently there are no specific services designated for agricultural employers. They will however, through universal access receive the same benefits as all customers of the

system. There is also no Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker program available in the Virgin Islands.

#### *IX.C.5*

##### *Priority of Service*

Core services are available to and accessible by any member of the community. Priority for employment and training activities shall be given to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals for intensive services and training services. Since most One-Stop partners to include the programs under the VI Department of Labor are funded almost completely with federal funds, funds are generally limited, therefore those on public assistance low income individuals and those with barriers to success such as those with limited English Proficiency, disabilities, long-term unemployed, displaced homemakers and basic skills deficient constitute the priority groups and are universally served throughout all partner programs available in the One-Stop Centers. If funding becomes even more limited, the priority of service will focus on those individuals receiving public assistance.

Also, in accordance with the Jobs for Veterans Act (P.L. 107-288)(38USC 4215) priority of service is provided to veterans (and certain spouses) who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for all employment and training programs. Customer choice will be maximized for these services through the use of Eligible Provider Lists, which will be made available at all one-stop locations.

#### *IX.D.*

##### *Rapid Response*

Each program year fifteen percent of the Dislocated Worker funding stream allotment is reserved for Rapid Response activities. Rapid Response activities are administered by the State Rapid Response team which is led by the Department of Labor and includes representatives from Unemployment Insurance, the Employment Service and WIA. Funds set-aside for these activities are initially used for task force meetings, educational activities directed at general public information and response to plant closures and/or mass layoffs. At the onset of any major plant closing or layoff, the chief elected officials of the Territory are notified as is the Department of Labor who then coordinate resources and activate the Rapid Response task force to conduct their prescribed activities. These activities include but are not limited to the development of an individual service plan, assessment of skills and education, determination of available jobs in the areas of interest and retraining. Rapid Response team members provide on-site availability of services to affected workers and offer follow up services at the One-Stop centers to afford workers access to all the additional support resources available there.

The MIS unit is an integrated unit that includes Rapid Response, National Emergency Grants (when activated) and other One-Stop activities in its operations. The MIS unit oversees the America's One Stop Operating System (AOSOS), which is a data collection, and reporting tool that manages customer and service provider information and activities. Currently, providers linked to this system include WIA and Wagner-Peyser programs.

The VI has not administered a National Emergency Grant since the inception of WIA; however such service can be accommodated by the MIS system if necessary.

### *IX.E*

#### *Youth*

The goal of serving youth most at-risk is the foundation of the Virgin Islands' revised strategy for the Youth system. The ten WIA program elements still form the basis of all youth program design. In addition, the Bush Administration's new vision for serving youth emphasizes program interaction and linkages with education and economic development systems. To achieve the vision, goals have been introduced across four major areas. They include alternative education, demand of business, neediest youth, and improved performance.

The workforce system offers a variety of services to all youth ages 14 to 21. Youth are referred to the workforce system by school counselors, health and human services professionals, juvenile at-risk agencies and concerned parents. Walk-ins are also encouraged and welcomed.

Although services will be available for all youth special focus will be given to youth who are out-of-school, homeless, aging out of foster care, disabled, pregnant or parenting and youth offenders. Education and training services will be offered for longer periods of time allowing youth the time and resources to explore all their options and prepare for careers rather than jobs.

Services to prepare youth to become viable members of the workforce will be a focal point of the workforce system. Youth services will be made available in a comprehensive package of educational, workplace and developmental resources that youth can access as they journey from learner to practitioner. These services will be the product of a joint effort between educators, workforce professionals and employers in order to keep activities focused and connected to today's work environment.

In-house programs, conducted either by workforce staff or designated youth service providers, are offered to 14-16 year old in-school youth. They provide a comprehensive arrangement of academic and life skills and are designed to keep youth in school and help them achieve at or above grade level competency in math, language and writing skills. Youth are also offered computer literacy training, life skills workshops that address adolescent issues and career planning. Job shadowing and mentoring services precede work experience which can be either paid or unpaid. In-school youth services are provided year-round as after-school programs during the school year and in a more concentrated all day format during the summer. For those youth most at-risk or those experiencing emotional problems referrals are made to certified counselors in the Education or Health and Human Services agencies.

Out of school youth have access to similar services and programs. Programs designed for them include High School diploma or GED preparation, basic skills courses and occupational skills training. Career preparation and planning include portfolio building,

resume writing, workplace etiquette and workplace survival workshops. Education and training services will be offered for longer periods of time allowing youth the time and resources to explore all their options and prepare for careers rather than jobs. Lifelong learning is integrated into all youth preparation activity as they are encouraged to continue on to advanced education and training after initial exposure to the workforce.

This year, the WIA Youth services and the VI Department of Labor's local Youth program have been integrated to a) streamline services; b) reduce duplication of resources and c) leverage shrinking federal youth funds. The Eligible Service Provider list for Youth providers has been revised to include successful providers who have offered innovative and alternative learning experiences to the local youth program. Additionally, after-school programming for in-school students and comprehensive alternative learning programs for out-of-school youth will now be available to WIA customers on a year-round basis. New service providers have also been added to the roster that offers life skills and pre-employment training for disabled youth. Through this training experience disabled youth will gain important skills for accessing the workforce and will also have an opportunity to engage in paid and unpaid work experience during their program participation. Providers are required to seek permanent work experience for those customers who are able to do so.

The Apprenticeship program in the Virgin Islands once renewed will offer another alternative for out-of-school youth to receive the training and education they need to obtain a relevant career. Plans are underway for the Apprenticeship program to be fully renewed by program year '08. Also, an agreement with the Job Corps is currently being negotiated by the Department of Labor. Once functional, this will offer yet another pathway for out of school youth and youth at-risk of dropping out of school. Coordination with the Job Corp programs is slated to be complete during this program year.

Several standards have been developed to guide the Youth system, including:

- Redesigning programs to attract and accommodate more out-of-school older youth (our most disadvantaged youth population).
- Waivers have been obtained that include older youth in the ITA system, which gives them greater choice for training and education opportunities.
- Youth program designs that are more comprehensive and of a longer duration to ensure proper developments of skills and competencies will be encouraged.

This includes basic skills, attainment of diploma/GED work preparatory workshops, occupational skills training in areas of local demand and an increased emphasis on internships (paying and non-paying work experience) in their fields of interest. A stronger emphasis will also be placed on the counseling component – an integral function that help youth develop a sense of purpose and belonging – the ability to function in the larger world of work. To that end, programs and services will be developed to support the following youth development competencies.

- Self-Worth – “I can succeed” attitude
- Responsibility – “I can make good choices; I can share with community”
- Education – Post-secondary goal setting
- Employability – “I can learn and succeed with skills learned”

Youth service providers are encouraged to infuse these competencies into their training programs whenever possible.

The Youth strategy is built on the application of multi-layered services available through an integrated network of partners and providers. Goals for youth are set based on an agreed upon outcome i.e. employment, attainment of occupational credentials, entry into advanced education. However, the journey to achieving these outcomes is the focus of this strategy. Program diversity is encouraged, as is relevance to the local economy. Youth program service providers will be required to submit program designs that consider the following factors.

- Programs should, whenever possible, be presented in an alternate setting or manner than the regular classroom atmosphere;
- Programs should provide “real world” opportunities for youth to practice the competency or skill being learned;
- Occupational skills programs should be developed for locally high-demand, high-growth areas;
- Youth customers should be able to logically critique elements of the course of study, training etc, received through the Workforce Network.

The requirements for youth programs have been enhanced. As many of the goals set may require additional study, a percentage of Statewide funds will be made available to providers to redevelop their programs. Statewide funds will be used in two ways.

1. They will be made available in the form of mini grants to providers based on proposals received.
2. Funds will be used by the State to:
  - conduct program design workshops for youth practitioners;
  - explore alternative and innovative methods of youth program development;
  - establish partnerships with employers interested in working with and employing youth in high-demand, high-growth industries.

Employability outcomes will improve for youth, as they will now have access to more One-Stop services. Core services, specifically job search and job matching will now be accessible to youth are work ready or who have successfully completed training in an

occupational skill area. Older and Out-of-School Youth now have the opportunity to access providers on the eligible provider list and training can now be obtained through the use of Individual Training Account vouchers.

Finally, the introduction of the new Youth Net will combine the resources of several agencies to include the Departments of Labor, Education, Human Services, the Housing Authority, and Justice.

#### *IX.F. Business Services*

With the move towards a demand driven system, the role of business becomes more important to all aspects of service delivery. The Workforce Board is already comprised of a majority of business members, who balances strategic planning efforts among both public and private enterprise issues. One strategy used to address practical challenges that occur on a daily basis, is the organization of a business/employer committee comprised of managers, front-line staff and employers to specifically address demand-driven workforce direction. Specifically, what does business need to make workforce more productive, work more efficiently and the business venture successful. The goals of this committee will be to:

- Address general workforce development needs that all businesses need to grow;
- Identify factors that are a barrier to employing skilled workers;
- Identify factors that benefit a high-growth, high-demand workplace;
- Develop a continuous improvement plan that employers can use to ensure the maximum growth of their workforce through the One-Stop system.

The One-Stop Centers will provide a vast array of services for employers – from basic labor market information to assisting investors in preparing new businesses plans to job listing and employee referral services to employee retraining and skill upgrading workshops. Waivers being sought for the next two programs years will also assist businesses that need employees trained and/or retrained for tasks specific to their business.

Services offered through Wagner-Peyser Act funds specifically focus on employer needs such as recruitment, screening and testing services, resource referrals and employer education and support services. An Employer Relations and Partnership Building Plan have been developed. The plan uses the State Workforce Board as the conduit for all workforce development marketing and promotion. The Work Opportunity Tax Credit program will be offered to employers, service providers and other agencies.

#### *IX.G. Service Delivery Strategies*

The Workforce Investment Board will undertake a strategy designed to both educate the job seeking community and gain employer confidence in the system. This program year, the SWIB will launch a website dedicated to informing the workforce community of the services and resources available through the workforce system. The website will describe programs and services offered through the partnerships that make up the One-

Stop system, make the linkages between training programs and job availability in demand occupations, explore the ladders and lattices of opportunity available through basic core training in high growth areas such as healthcare, construction, manufacturing and information technology, and highlight the pathways to career development.

The Workforce Board is also promoting the use of a Client Profile. The Client Profile will be a tool used by both the job seeker and the employer. It will reveal the types of education and training obtained the levels of academic proficiency, levels of occupational training accomplishments, delineate the weak areas and highlight the strengths, and it will chart progress made in attaining goals set for career development. For the job seeker, it will be a living document detailing his/her educational and training activities and helping to set benchmarks for achieving career goals. For the employer, it will be an accompaniment to the resume – a tool that allows a potential or current employer to assess the true level of experience attained by an employee, which will allow for better placement in the workplace.

#### *IX.H. Strategies for Faith-based and Community Organizations*

The One-Stop system has opened all resources available to current employers and service providers within the workforce system to faith-based and community organizations. Additionally, we will offer regularly scheduled workshops on WIA regulations, services and performance goals to service providers and prospective providers, assist with the coordination of job fairs to recruit skilled, qualified workers from WIA and other service pools, and provide access to labor market information through workshops, literature, print and electronic media.

A complete strategy for integrating faith-based and community organizations into the demand-driven workforce system will be part of the overall demand-driven plan currently being developed by the workforce board. It will include a marketing campaign, a recruitment and collaboration period and will set goals for implementation of activities. The Board has in its membership representation from both community and faith-based organizations. They have been designated to lead a community scan of available community and faith-based employment and training activities and gauge the interest of their participation with workforce development in the Territory. A complete plan should be available by the beginning of program year '08.

## **X. STATE ADMINISTRATION**

X.A. The Virgin Islands uses the America's One-Stop Operating System (AOSOS) to support its Workforce Investment System. This system is used to manage the State's job matching, case management and performance reporting activities. The Department of Labor's MIS unit is responsible for tracking and generating reports on exits, placements, and other outcomes of customers traversing the workforce system. The reports generated will form the basis for intermittent review of operations and reassessment of strategies when necessary.

X.B. The State will use the Statewide allotment to fund activities in accordance with WIA 128(a)(1).

- Administration of the adult, dislocated worker and youth WIA activities;
- Conduct research and studies that assist in the continued development a demand-driven workforce system;
- Fund pilot projects developed to enhance opportunities for older youth and incumbent workers;
- Provide technical assistance to the One-Stop partners and eligible providers; and
- Staff development and training.

X.C. The Virgin Islands Workforce System is requesting the extension of its two current waivers namely, 40% transfer authority between Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and authority to utilize Individual Training Accounts for Youth. Additionally, the following waivers were requested and approved to help build the employer services component of the workforce system.

- *Use of Rapid Response Funds for Incumbent Worker Training*
- *Data Collection Relief for Incumbent Workers*
- *Sliding Scale Match for Customized Training*
- *Sliding Scale Match for OJT's*
- *Use of Common Measures Only*

*X.D. Performance Management and Accountability*

The State has completed negotiations of performance measures for the next two program years (Program Years 2007 and 2008). Approved measures are listed below. There have been no additional performance measures developed for the Virgin Islands. The levels reflect a slow but consistently growing economy with limited job opportunities and limited opportunities for growth within the region however; measures reflect *expected* occupational growth within the next two years.

In January 2005, the VI Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that 47,598 of the VI workforce were employed. By January 2007, that number had risen to 48,526. The corresponding unemployment rates for that time period indicates a decrease in rate from 7.1% in January 2005 to 6.0% in January 2007. The economic status of the Territory is clearly getting better. Much of this growth can be attributed to the steady tourism product and the business opportunities that feed into its sustenance. These opportunities range from the construction trades born of new hotel and resort construction or modifications to retail expansion and real estate acquisitions.

Continued growth and improvement are expected in the economy over the next few years. The VI Bureau of Economic Research anticipates a real growth of 3.6% through 2007. Future trends anticipate a slow steady stabilization of the economy with business activity and the mainstay tourism market expected to continue on its current course.

All performance measures have been developed with the anticipation of additional work opportunities and diversity in the opportunities available. Traditionally, it has been easier for entry-level workers to attain jobs therefore a slight increase in the entered employment rate will be noted. The retention level though usually a strong aspect did not fare well for the last two years and is not expected to rapidly increase over the next two years. As more employment opportunities become available individuals are likely to risk job change and/or transition to a better situation rather than holding on to a job just because it is a source of steady income. The credential rate will likely increase as employers demand more from their employees and more training in demand areas become available. Also, as the workforce system expands to work with business' retraining and advanced training needs, more employees will be required to get industry-recognized credentials as they continue on their chosen career path. Average earnings may gradually show an increase, but it is not anticipated that any significant change will be realized in the next two years. Employers investing in the education of the workforce will likely spend more resources in training needs initially. After the fruits of their investment become apparent it is likely that an increase in wages will then occur. There will however be a slight increase in earnings as the Virgin Islands has an incremental multi-year increase in the minimum wage planned through 2009.

Youth measures have shown some improvement in the past two years and it is anticipated that this will continue. New programs for younger in-school youth have been planned that will help increase their basic skills abilities and the likelihood of remaining in school until they receive their diploma. Both the skills attainment and diploma/equivalent attainment measures should realize noted improvement. The success of these two measures will positively impact the retention measure. A slightly higher level for all younger youth measures is being proposed.

A major focus of the next two years is on increased services for older out-of-school youth. Several new programs which target both the attainment of a high-school diploma or GED and an occupational skill coupled with work experience have come on line. These programs are scheduled to be of longer duration and offer more intensive counseling and career development that should encourage youth to both complete their basic educational needs and seek higher education in order to be prepared to follow their chosen career path. Although a positive attainment of the measures for older youth proved a challenge for the last two years it is anticipated that a positive change will be effected but will not be evidenced until the latter part of PY '08 therefore; proposed rates for older youth have not been increased for PY'07 and slightly increased for PY'08.

Initial Wagner-Peyser measures have been encouraging therefore; a slight increase is anticipated for both measures over the next two years.

***WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT and WAGNER-PEYSER  
STATE PROPOSED LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE***

<b>FOR PROGRAM YEARS 2007 &amp; 2008</b>					
<b>WIA MEASURE</b>	<b>PY'06 Negotiated Levels</b>	<b>Past Performance Data</b>	<b>Approved Level for PY'07</b>	<b>Approved Level for PY'08</b>	
<b>Adults</b>					
Entered Employment	54%	32.1%	54%	56%	
6-month Retention	80%	38.8%	78%	79%	
Average Earnings	\$8500	\$8239	\$8500	\$9000	
Credentials	78%	30%	78%	79%	
<b>Dislocated Workers</b>					
Entered Employment	70%	42.9%	70%	72%	
6-month Retention	79%	37.5%	75%	77%	
Average Earnings	\$10,000	\$8657	\$10,000	\$10,500	
Credentials	80%	22.9%	78%	80%	
<b>Youth 14-18</b>					
Skills Attainment	77%	61.7%	79%	82%	
Diploma/Equivalent Attainment	50%	77.9%	75%	77%	
Placement and Retention	65%	60.5%	68%	70%	
<b>Youth 19-21</b>					
Entered Employment	62%	57.8%	62%	64%	
6-month Retention	80%	34.4%	80%	82%	
Earnings Change	\$1950	\$ 122	\$1950	\$1960	
Credentials	40%	70.3%	70%	72%	
<b>Customer Satisfaction</b>					
Participant	73%	63%	75%	77%	
Employer	73%	60%	75%	77%	
<b>Wagner-Peyser</b>					
Entered Employment Rate	44%	45.6%	50%	53%	
Employment Retention	60%	71.6%	72%	75%	
Average Earnings	\$8500	\$11,881	\$12,100	\$12,200	

It is anticipated that these levels of performance will challenge the Territory to improve its workforce product, specifically the way services are offered through the One-Stop system, the manner in which service providers offer services to customers and the outcomes of those customers after using the system.

To ensure accountability and adherence to the goals stated in the Plan and the Governor's vision the State Board has created a Compliance and Standards sub-committee. The role of the committee will be two-fold.

1. *Standards* – The Board will be tasked with ensuring that the workforce system is continually moving closer to the Governor's vision. The programs and certifications offered should not only reflect the demand sectors identified but also lead to regional advancement through gainful employment in the designated areas of study. The sub-committee will be charged with creating acceptable levels of performance by providers and employers.
2. *Compliance* – Once standards are created the sub-committee will meet quarterly or as needed to review the performance of the workforce system as well as the Eligible Service Providers. The committee will recommend suspensions as well as revocations of providers to the Board. They shall also have the power to demand corrective action plans from any entity found not to be in compliance.

The Compliance and Standards sub-committee shall consist of five (5) members of the WIB and shall not include any employee of the Department of Labor in order to ensure non-biased evaluations.

The Workforce System is working on establishing a Universal Tracking System that allows for tracking of all customers that access the One-Stop system. Partners to the system will be able to extract the data needed for their specific needs and the WIA system will be able to keep track of what services are most in demand. The UTS will help measure the amount of traffic passing through the One-Stop centers, determine what areas of service are accessed most often, help managers plan staffing and self-service options that enable customer flow to be more efficient and identify areas of weakness within the daily operation. The system should be operable during PY '07.

#### *X.E. Administrative Provisions*

The State Board will evaluate performance based on negotiated performance levels; customer satisfaction surveys for both employers and job seekers; and compliance with the approved plan. If performance does not meet expected levels, the Governor, under advisement from the State Board shall provide technical assistance, which may include:

- the development of a performance improvement plan;
- a reevaluation of the delivery of one-stop *team* performance; and/or
- the retraining of the Board, one-stop partners and/or eligible service providers.

If failure to achieve levels of performance continues into the following year, the Governor, under advisement of the State Board shall take corrective action, which may include the development of a reorganization plan that may:

- require the appointment and certification of a new board;

- prohibit the use of eligible providers and one-stop partners identified as achieving a poor level of performance; or
- take other such actions as the Governor determines appropriate.

The economic and business climate of the Virgin Islands will figure largely into the performance measures set for the Territory. Continued technical assistance to meet standards will be ongoing at the request of the One-Stop partners or the eligible providers. The Governor will accept appeals to corrective action from sanctioned parties up to thirty (30) days after notice has been received. The Governor shall make a final decision not later than thirty (30) days after the receipt of the appeal. Sanctioned parties wishing to further appeal decision may do so to the Secretary within thirty (30) days of receipt of decision from the Governor. The Secretary will issue a final decision not later than thirty (30) days after receipt of the appeal.

Each individual or entity that wishes to receive funds for the provision of training services shall give an assurance that such individual or entity is able to provide programmatic and architectural accessibility to individuals with disabilities.

The following notice appears on all eligible provider applications, all background material and/or all publications that promote WIA/Wagner-Peyser programs.

*All recipients of WIA Title I financial assistance must maintain compliance with Section 188 – Nondiscrimination of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and 29 CFR Part 37, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and for beneficiaries only citizenship and participation in WIA.*

## **XI. ASSURANCES**

1. The State assures that it will establish, in accordance with section 184 of the Workforce Investment Act, fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through the allotments made under sections 127 and 132. (§112(b)(11).)
2. The State assures that it will comply with section 184(a)(6), which requires the Governor to, every two years, certify to the Secretary, that -
  - a. the State has implemented the uniform administrative requirements referred to in section 184(a)(3);
  - b. the State has annually monitored local areas to ensure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements as required under section 184(a)(4); and
  - c. the State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with section 184(a)(3) pursuant to section 184(a)(5). (§184(a)(6).)
3. The State assures that the adult and youth funds received under the Workforce Investment Act will be distributed equitably throughout the State, and that no local areas will suffer significant shifts in funding from year to year during the period covered by this Plan. (§112(b)(12)(B).)
4. The State assures that veterans will be afforded employment and training activities authorized in section 134 of the Workforce Investment Act, and the activities authorized in chapters 41 and 42 of Title 38 US code. The State assures that it will comply with the veterans priority established in the Jobs for Veterans Act. (38 USC 4215.)
5. The State assures that the Governor shall, once every two years, certify one local board for each local area in the State. (§117(c)(2).)
6. The State assures that it will comply with the confidentiality requirements of section 136(f)(3).
7. The State assures that no funds received under the Workforce Investment Act will be used to assist, promote, or deter union organizing. (§181(b)(7).)
8. The State assures that it will comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of section 188, including an assurance that a Methods of Administration has been developed and implemented (§188.)
9. The State assures that it will collect and maintain data necessary to show compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions of section 188. (§185.)
10. The State assures that it will comply with the grant procedures prescribed by the Secretary (pursuant to the authority at section 189(c) of the Act), which

are necessary to enter into grant agreements for the allocation and payment of funds under the Act. The procedures and agreements will be provided to the State by the ETA Office of Grants and Contract Management and will specify the required terms and conditions and assurances and certifications, including, but not limited to, the following:

•General Administrative Requirements:

- 29 CFR part 97 --Uniform Administrative Requirements for State and Local Governments (as amended by the Act)
- 29 CFR part 96 (as amended by OMB Circular A-133) --Single Audit Act
- OMB Circular A-87 --Cost Principles (as amended by the Act)

•Assurances and Certifications:

- SF 424 B --Assurances for Non-construction Programs
- 29 CFR part 37 --Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Assurance (and regulation) 29 CFR § 37.20
- CFR part 93 --Certification Regarding Lobbying (and regulation)
- 29 CFR part 98 --Drug Free Workplace and Debarment and Suspension Certifications (and regulation)

•Special Clauses/Provisions:

Other special assurances or provisions as may be required under Federal law or policy, including specific appropriations legislation, the Workforce Investment Act, or subsequent Executive or Congressional mandates.

11. The State certifies that the Wagner-Peyser Act Plan, which is part of this document, has been certified by the State Employment Security Administrator.
12. The State certifies that veterans' services provided with Wagner-Peyser Act funds will be in compliance with 38 U.S.C. Chapter 41 and 20 CFR part 1001.
13. The State certifies that Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities will be provided by merit-based public employees in accordance with DOL regulations.
14. The State assures that it will comply with the MSFW significant office requirements in accordance with 20 CFR part 653.
15. The State certifies it has developed this Plan in consultation with local elected officials, local workforce boards, the business community, labor organizations and other partners.
16. As a condition to the award of financial assistance from the Department of Labor under Title I of WIA, the grant applicant assures that it will comply

fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following laws: -- Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), which prohibits discrimination against all individuals in the United States on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and against beneficiaries on the basis of either citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States or participation in any WIA Title I--financially assisted program or activity; -- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the bases of race, color and national origin; -- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities; -- The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; and -- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs. The grant applicant also assures that it will comply with 29 CFR part 37 and all other regulations implementing the laws listed above. This assurance applies to the grant applicant's operation of the WIA Title I--financially assisted program or activity, and to all agreements the grant applicant makes to carry out the WIA Title I--financially assisted program or activity. The grant applicant understands that the United States has the right to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance.

17. The State assures that funds will be spent in accordance with the Workforce Investment Act and the Wagner-Peyser Act and their regulations, written Department of Labor Guidance implementing these laws, and all other applicable Federal and State laws and regulations.

**PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION DESIGNEES AND  
PLAN SIGNATURES**

**Name of WIA Title I Grant Recipient Agency:**

VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
Address: 2203 Church Street, Christiansted, VI 00820  
Telephone Number: (340) 773-1994  
Facsimile Number: (340) 773-0094  
E-mail Address: abryan@vidol.gov

**Name of State WIA Title I Administrative Agency:**

VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
Address: 2203 Church Street, Christiansted, VI 00820  
Telephone Number: (340) 773-1994  
Facsimile Number: (340) 773-0094  
E-mail Address: abryan@vidol.gov

**Name of WIA Title I Signatory Official:** Albert Bryan, Jr., Commissioner

VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
Address: 2203 Church Street, Christiansted, VI 00820  
Telephone Number: (340) 773-1994  
Facsimile Number: (340) 773-0094  
E-mail Address: abryan@vidol.gov

**Name of WIA Title I Liaison:** Albert Bryan, Jr., Commissioner

VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
Address: 2203 Church Street, Christiansted, VI 00820  
Telephone Number: (340) 773-1994  
Facsimile Number: (340) 773-0094  
E-mail Address: abryan@vidol.gov

**Name of Wagner-Peyser Act Grant Recipient/State Employment Security Agency:**

VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
Address: 2203 Church Street, Christiansted, VI 00820  
Telephone Number: (340) 773-1994  
Facsimile Number: (340) 773-0094  
E-mail Address: abryan@vidol.gov

**Name and title of State Employment Security Administrator (Signatory Official):**

Albert Bryan, Jr., Commissioner

**VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**

Address: 2203 Church Street, Christiansted, VI 00820

Telephone Number: (340) 773-1994

Facsimile Number: (340) 773-0094

E-mail Address: abryan@vidol.gov

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As the Governor, I certify that for the *Territory* of the *United States Virgin Islands*, the agencies and officials designated above have been duly designated to represent the Territory in the capacities indicated for the Workforce Investment Act, Title I, and Wagner-Peyser Act grant programs. Subsequent changes in the designation of officials will be provided to the U.S. Department of Labor as such changes occur.

I further certify that we will operate our Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser Act programs in accordance with this Plan and the assurances herein.

**Typed Name of Governor:** John P. deJongh, Jr.

**Signature of Governor:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_