

**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

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I. STATE VISION

As the United States Virgin Islands continues its recovery from over a decade of economic stagnation characterized by false starts and slow growth, the stage is set for new opportunities. There has been notable improvement in some sectors, specifically in tourism and hospitality, business and financial services and construction over the past fiscal year. Future growth will rely to a great extent on the stability of these staple industries as well as the development of new and innovative ones.

The world economy has become a major factor in determining the sustainability of any population. To that end, the Territory will focus on the ever-expanding opportunities made available by the global market. Technology and the use of locally available resources allow for a natural development of the skills of the current workforce into that of a globally skilled and competitive workforce.

Several broad goals have been introduced to lead the Virgin Islands workforce on the path to high-skilled high-wage jobs that are rooted into the local economy but are transferable globally.

- ❖ Strengthening existing growth industries;
- ❖ Encouraging public and private partnerships in emerging and high-growth industries;
- ❖ Utilizing sectoral initiatives to target growth in most promising industries and occupations;
- ❖ Enhancing the physical infrastructure of the workforce center to attract more customers, employers and job seekers to use its services.

As with anything new, changes to the socio-economic dynamics and changes that affect customs and culture are often met with skepticism. Preparing a small economy for the new global realities is a vast undertaking but, one that when introduced with tangible expansion to local market opportunities present a welcome change.

The U.S. Virgin Islands has included the fields of Health Care, Information Technology, Hospitality and Financial Services in the workforce plan as local high-growth, job training occupational areas. These fields utilize skills that are transferable across continents as well as highly competitive within the local community.

Currently, tourism is the strongest performing sector of the Virgin Islands economy and has experienced steady growth over the last fiscal year. Air and cruise ship arrivals have increased notably over the last two years, spawning a surge in hospitality related services such as hotel stays and restaurant services, transportation needs, recreation facilities and retail services to construction. This growth is expected to continue throughout the decade.

The business and financial services market that spurred unprecedented new growth and heralded a financial recovery only three years ago is now in jeopardy due to recent Congressional reform. It is anticipated however, that this market will survive despite changes and will continue to attract and retain additional jobs in the knowledge-based economy to include finance, marketing and advertising.

The construction industry is a durable one that teaches multiple skills that are transferable worldwide and are always in demand. As the population grows and quality of life issues become more diverse, housing and recreational needs grow. The promising growth in the hospitality market anticipates a demand for additional hotel rooms, marinas, resorts, condominiums, timeshares and planned communities.

Addressing the needs of high producing markets will involve collaboration between workforce agencies, economic development agencies, the public education system, the local university, government agencies, faith-based and community organizations and business and industry partners. 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. There are also representatives from the economic development agency, community based organizations, labor unions and the business/industry sector. These individuals will utilize their knowledge and areas of expertise to determine the best mix of local and federal funds, leveraged in a manner to maximize resources and serve the larger public in the most efficient way possible.

The business and industrial sector have first hand knowledge of the changing needs of the workforce and have been instrumental in keeping the Board current with the new technology and skills that now shape our global economy. Their input has and will continue to be the pivotal component in shaping workforce policy.

Services to prepare youth to become viable members of the workforce will be a focal point of the workforce system. From the skill standards emphasized through the *No Child Left Behind Act* to training and preparation for locally available demand occupations, the resources now available to youth will prepare them to make better decisions when preparing for their future. The administration of youth services will be more proactive especially for youth that are out-of-school, homeless, aging out of foster care and youth offenders. 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. A stronger emphasis will be placed on counseling services not only for the young people being served but also for their immediate support network, which may include parents, siblings, family friends and other close relations. Most importantly, services for youth will allow the young person to embrace their youth – emphasizing the possibilities available through a planned course of lifelong learning.

II. WORKFORCE PRIORITIES

To ensure a system that is flexible and relevant, the following key priorities have been developed.

□ **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 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. Customers can expect to receive more services and/or training to lead to better skills and ultimately better jobs within the high growth industries.

□ **Expanding the role of business in workforce development issues.**

The business sector has always played an integral role in determining demand occupations within the Territory. However, with rapidly changing technology being introduced regularly and globalization of the workforce requiring businesses to streamline their operations in order to stay competitive, the skills required of the workforce must be constantly reassessed. Only with stronger input from the business and industrial sector can this be achieved.

□ **Building strategic partnerships between business, education, 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. As we move toward a demand-driven system, workforce goals must work in tandem with the continuing improvement goals. A shared vision of the attainment of these goals serves to build stronger, more lasting partnerships.

□ **Establishing strategic partnerships with faith-based and enhancing partnerships with community organizations.**

The recent inclusion of the faith-based community in providing workforce programs has enhanced and expanded the product offered by the One-Stop system. To solidify this relationship efforts will be made to fully integrate them into the planning process and not just as service providers.

□ **Establishing strategies for targeting sectoral partnerships.**

Sectoral partnerships offer a more direct response to addressing the needs of high-growth, high-demand areas. They can build the workforce capacity of the selected occupational area by focusing on specific skills that target the weak areas of a business’ workforce.

They can address staff shortages, recharge troubled industries by retraining their present workforce and/or focus on the overall growth pattern of an economic sector.

❑ **Implementing a seamless approach to accessing graduated levels of services and programs through a multi-functional One Stop Service Delivery system.**

As the workforce system grows, both employer and participant customers need to view the One-Stop as the place to access more than just entry-level job services and training programs. They can do so by utilizing the services and programs offered by a diverse set of One-Stop partners. Customers should be able to design for themselves a “step” service strategy that allows them to advance from job/career exploration to entry-level job attainment to advance training in the demand occupation of their choosing. Ideally, this would include active participation from the employers who see the value of encouraging their workers to continually improve their skills.

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

This system has been automated to accommodate new methods of information collection and management. Performance training for staff has led to a better understanding of the importance of keeping accurate customer records and developing a plan of action for each customer.

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. Attached is an organizational chart that explains the chain of command.

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 represented on the State Workforce Investment Board, includes:

- Five representatives from Business Organizations;
- Three representatives of organized labor;
- Two representatives from Community based organizations;
- One local legislator;
- Commissioner of Labor;
- Commissioner of Education;

- Commissioner of Human Services;
- Assistant Commissioner for Employment & Training;
- Director of Adult and Vocational/Technical Education;
- Principal of the Vocational School
- Senior Official of the University of the Virgin Islands;
- A representative from the Economic Development Agency;
- A representative of the Housing Authority.

The Administrator of the Virgin Islands Vocational Rehabilitation Unit, the Division for Disabilities and Rehabilitation Services, reports directly to the Commissioner of Human Services, who is the final decision maker on these issues. The Commissioner of Human Services as the decision-maker is the best representative to the Workforce Board. The Department of Human Services is a combined agency, that is, all disabilities are addressed. The Board however, is cognizant that the Commissioner cannot be a detailed authority on all issues. It is therefore, the practice of the State Board that when issues that need specific clarification or discussion arises that the individual(s) directly related to the project attend the Board meeting and present the subject area. Additionally, the Administrator for the Vocational Rehabilitation Unit is an active member of the One-Stop partners group. This body addresses both program specific and coordination issues. Information discussed at the partners group is routinely brought to the attention of the SWIB. One of the primary goals of the SWIB is to ensure that training and employment opportunities are available to all individuals, including individuals with disabilities. Services to the disabled are prioritized throughout the workforce system and methods of addressing the technology gaps that exist in the One-Stop Centers are of equal priority.

The Commissioner of Labor and the Assistant Commissioner of Employment and Training represent the 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 represents 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 Director of Adult and Vocational/Technical Education represent adult education and literacy activities authorized under title II of WIA, they also represent vocational and technical programs and literacy services for youth. The Housing Authority representative promotes employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. There are no post-secondary vocational education activities authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act in the Territory. All entities described have and will continue to be involved in the Workforce Investment System.

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 Vocational Education Board, the Vocational Rehabilitation advisory group and the Housing Authority’s Family Self-Sufficiency advisory group.

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 holds quarterly meetings that are announced at least two weeks in advance. 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. Recently, the Management Information System (MIS) unit has also come under the general management of the Board, allowing members a direct handle on performance statistics that influence policy direction for the system.

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 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.

In order 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 Vocational & Technical Education, the Re-employment Program, 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.

In addition to the structure identified above, the Governor established lines of communication for open and effective sharing of information among state agencies and

the Workforce Investment Board by appointing heads of the following agencies as members of the Board:

- VI Department of Education – Commissioner
- VI Department of Human Services – Commissioner
- University of the Virgin Islands – Vice President
- VI Department of Labor – Commissioner
- 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.

IV. ECONOMIC AND LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS

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 leisure and hospitality, construction and heavy industry and the financial services, are expected to continue to grow over the next few years.

The hospitality sector shows promise as new activity due to increased tourism and tourism-related construction continues to grow at a steady pace. 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, however fluctuations in that sector too is expected to level off and eventually offer some growth prospects.

Healthcare services may be the next growth area in the Territory over the next few years. 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 Islands’ set of facilities now becoming a Regional Health Care Facility. A new Cancer Institute is slated to open within the next two years, as is a Cardiac Center. Plans are also in the works for a medical school to be established in the Territory in the very near future.

Another area slated for growth, due mostly to the global economy and more directly to the areas of growth within the Virgin Islands is Information Technology. Tourism, construction, financial services and healthcare have all seen rapid growth in the past five years because of the advances in technology, each in its own discipline. This has resulted in new programs, software and systems. 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 is one area that has seen a steady decline over the past decade. Watch factories, which were once a vital part of the local economy and a source of job opportunities for low skilled workers, have been outsourced to other global regions where cost factors are lower than that of the US Virgin Islands. Other segments in this sector including durable goods and instruments & related products also show a notable decline. There are no indications that any marked improvements will be seen in this sector within the next few years.

As the community continues to grow however, and the demands of the society change to accommodate that growth, the jobs and occupations that show the highest projected increase are skilled workers for the healthcare industry.

Statistics from a recent study of the Virgin Islands Healthcare Industry by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) indicate that there is a significant need for trained and skilled personnel in this field.

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	Virgin Islands, 2004		Per 100,000, U.S., 2000
	Number	Per 100,000	
Registered nurses	498	457.7	780.2
Licensed practical nurses	145	133.3	241.5
Nursing, psychiatric and home health aides	250	230	686

Source: Virgin Islands Department of Health; 2000 U.S. Census

The Virgin Islands had substantially fewer registered nurses (RNs) and licensed practical nurses (LPNs) per 100,000 population than the U.S. overall (457 versus 780 and 133 versus 242, respectively). Nursing, psychiatric and home health aides were also much fewer per capita (230 per 100,000 versus 686 in the U.S. as a whole).

Given the growing demand of the Territory in this sector and the expansion of facilities and services, it is projected that job growth will continue over the next decade.

In the Hospitality and Leisure sector, trends indicate a continuing growth pattern. Job availability can be noted in a 2004 survey conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which shows two of the top three occupations listed related or directly connected to the Hospitality and Leisure sector. Two of the top five occupations indicate the consistent demand for workers in the Business and Financial Services sector.

Major Occupational Group	Percentage
Office and Administration	22%
Sales and Related	19%
Food Preparation and Serving Related	15%
Business and Financial Operations	11%
Production	9%
Education, Training and Library	7%
Personal Care and Services	5%
Transportation and Material Moving	5%
Management	4%
Healthcare Practitioners and technical	3%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004 Job Vacancy Survey

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

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

These sectors promise jobs in hotels, restaurants, retail establishments, recreational and sports facilities. They foster skills in carpentry, masonry, welding, pipefitting, electricity 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"> • Basic to advanced math and reading comprehension • Workplace health and safety • Product and service awareness • Customer service 	Office Managers Night Auditors Front desk clerks Food & beverage personnel Retail clerks & managers
Construction & Heavy Industry - (Industrial Maintenance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic to advanced math and reading comprehension • Basic to advanced occupational skill knowledge • Basic computer skills 	Electricians Carpenters Masons Millwrights Instrument fitters Process operators Welders/Pipefitters
Business & Financial Services and Information Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced literacy skills • Basic and advanced computer skills • Knowledge of systems operation and hardware • Bookkeeping and accounting certificates/degrees • Multi-tasking flexibility 	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 110,740 (Eastern Caribbean Center - University of the Virgin Islands 2003 U.S. Virgin Islands Community Survey).

As of January 2005, 48,430 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 9th grade education. 20.9% of the population 25 years of age and older have a 9th to 12th 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 State’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 develop occupational training programs that are directly related to actual work product expected by the employer.
- Developing “training sets” not just programs that include a comprehensive mix of basic skills, job preparatory skills and occupational skills training.
- 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 State plans to conduct an environmental scan for the targeted high-growth, high-demand sectors 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 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. Within the next two years the State will initiate steps to:

- 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

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, 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 2004-5, \$1.2 million dollars in local funds was provided.

Workforce Strategies

Throughout the early part of PY'05 the State Board will work with business and partner agencies to flesh out the possibilities of the new national strategic direction. 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, Information Technology, Healthcare and Financial Services
- ❑ Conduct study on new growth areas from a workforce preparatory perspective, specifically the healthcare sector.
- ❑ 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.

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 a "need as" 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 State'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

The Hospitality and Healthcare sectors are the focus of the most immediate study during Program Year 2005. Training opportunities currently exist in the Healthcare area with several eligible training providers offering Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) courses. As more specific information becomes available on the skill needs of this sector, additional training opportunities will be added to the list of eligible provider services. Various courses are sporadically offered in the Hospitality sector but so far not in a unified, targeted manner. Members of the hospitality community are in the process of developing plans for a full service hospitality training

school. Presently, a skills shortage needs assessment is being made and should be completed by early summer. December '05 is the targeted completion date. The State Board plans to work with the designers of this project to help identify the training needs – both current and projected of this high-growth industry.

Strategies being developed to promote and maintain these and other 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.
- 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. As the demand-driven system is built during the first year, initial priority will be 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. By year two, 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.

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 can partner with the One-Stop system and provide a step in the training sets being offered.

Most 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 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.

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.

The State Workforce Board has developed a new ad hoc committee to address issues concerning youth. This committee will begin this program year to design 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.

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

This year the State has requested several workforce system waivers to promote the Territory’s workforce agenda more effectively as noted in the following chart.

Statutory/Regulatory Provision	Citation	Statement of Justification
20% Funds Transfer Authority to increase limit to 40% funds transfer between Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs.	20 CFR 667.140	The territory’s unemployment rate, although still higher than the national rate, has been reduced from a 9.4% in 2003 to an 8.3% as of January 2005. We would like the flexibility to be able to serve more of the eligible long-term unemployed and displaced homemakers. The increase from 20% to 40% would allow more adults that are not dislocated to be served.
Prohibition on Individual Training Accounts for Youth	20 CFR 664.510	With the new strategic vision for delivering youth services and its emphasis on the neediest youth, youth offenders, youth aging out of foster care and children of incarcerated parents, out-of-school youth, etc. the territory intends to position itself so that youth will have available to them access to the career path of high growth industries; basic skills remediation and apprenticeships; etc. If we want to ensure youth buy-into the new strategies and goals then we must also give them leverage to select programs and training of their choosing.

<p>Waiver to allow use of up to 50% state rapid response funds for incumbent worker training.</p>	<p>129 (b) and 134 (a) (1) (b)</p>	<p>Part of the territory’s existing issue is in the construction industry where skilled journeymen are sought for jobs in a refinery setting or as employees of a subcontractor working in a refinery and other construction companies. The constant cry has been that qualified employees are not available for jobs therefore individuals from out of the territory with the skills necessary are brought in to complete jobs. Welders, Arc Welders, Plumbers, A Electricians, etc. are some of the jobs that are very difficult to fill in the territory. A waiver would allow us the flexibility to approach, negotiate with the private sector and fund training that would either provide credentials for the present employees or help employees develop soft skills for promotional possibilities, etc.</p>
<p>Youth: Competitive Selection of Service Providers</p>	<p>Section 123 of 105-220 and 20 CFR 663.530</p>	<p>The Virgin Islands does not have an unlimited market of service providers. We are selecting providers on a competitive basis however customer choice is limited. We would like the flexibility to recognize a youth provider that has the service needed for youth customers, particularly older or Out-of-School youth without having to go through the competitive process.</p>

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. 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.
- The Workforce Investment Board will not directly operate any programs.
- Performance information provided by on-the-job and customized training program providers should conform to state and federal requirements and will be evaluated based on compliance with such.
- Transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker funding streams (not to exceed 20%) will be 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.
- 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 twenty (20%) percent of the funds allocated for a fiscal year between adult employment and training activities and dislocated workers employment and training activities.

A complete listing of existing policy is attached to this document.

VII. INTEGRATION OF ONE-STOP SERVICE DELIVERY

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.

Services to job seekers shall:

- Be unified throughout all One-Stop locations;
- 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.

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

In the first five years of WIA, career development and enhancement programs and services to customers were integrated into a seamless delivery system. The goals that made it possible are system building and sustainable over time. They included:

- Automated Common Intake Form(s) transferable between divisions and agencies;
- An interactive LMI system that is universally accessible and taps into current data specific to the customer’s needs;
- Building employer confidence – use system as the one-stop for building business, expanding into new areas, staff recruitment and continuing staff development; and
- Improving and expanding the pool of training providers to provide training that will meet the customer’s needs, be competitive, market driven and marketable to the worldwide community.

The One-Stop System provides direct 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) will allow the customer to choose the preferred provider and the Individual Training Account (ITA), will afford them the resources they need to obtain the services.

Basic job seeker services are available at the One Stop. They 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

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. Wagner-Peyser, Unemployment Insurance and WIA services are connected through a common intake process. In the past few years, the automated America’s One Stop Operating System has been 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 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 Vocational 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 regularly scheduled information seminars to providing customer assessment tools. Statewide funds are not used in the operation of the One-Stop center.

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.

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 2005, are as follows:

ESTIMATED FORMULA ALLOTTMENTS	PERCENTAGE OF ALLOCATION*	ESTIMATED FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR SERVICES
\$ 793,979	75% Adults	\$607,394
\$ 749,311	75% Youth	\$573,223
\$1,307,094	60% Dislocated Workers	\$849,938

**after State and Local Administration*

Preliminary Allotment for the Employment Service (Wagner-Peyser) in Program Year 2005 is \$ 1,434,557.

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. They are not however, subject to the other requirements of the eligible provider system.

IX. SERVICE DELIVERY

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.

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. In an effort to serve youth better, plans are now underway by means of a waiver request to allow youth the use of vouchers through Individual Training Accounts (ITA’s). Basic youth services, such as assessment and counseling are available through Youth specific partners and providers. Partner agencies also offer access to the GED, GED preparation, and vocational and basic skills training. All youth customers have access to the resource room. Computer skills training, information search and other research materials that 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.

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).

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.

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 trades 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.

Adults and Dislocated Workers

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:

REQUIRED LOCAL EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES

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. Some core services are self-service – some are accessed with some assistance from workforce staff.

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.

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 will 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 CBO 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 are defined as:

- 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 the address specified skill shortages within the industry. Customers will be able to use their ITA's to access this targeted training.

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 signed between the VI Office of Veteran's Affairs, the Department of Labor and other parties delineates 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.

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.

Priority of Service

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. 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.

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.

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 are being sought to include youth in the ITA system, which will give 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 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 for this program year. 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 who are work ready or who have successfully completed training in an occupational skill area. Youth will 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.

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. However, in order to address practical challenges that occur on a daily basis, a business/employer committee comprised of managers, front-line staff and employers is being formed 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. 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.

Strategies for Faith-based and Community Organizations

The One-Stop system has opened all resource available to employers and service providers 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.

X. STATE ADMINISTRATION

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 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;
- Providing technical assistance to the One-Stop partners and eligible providers; and
- Staff development and training.

The State has elected to request four waivers to facilitate the delivery of service for the Workforce System. They include:

- 20% Funds transfer authority to increase limit to 40% funds transfer between Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs;
- Elimination of prohibition on Individual Training Accounts for Youth;
- Waiver to allow use of up to 50% state rapid response funds for incumbent worker training;
- Youth: Competitive Selection of Service Providers

Performance Management and Accountability

The State has negotiated performance measures for the next two program years (Program Years 2005 and 2006). There have been no additional performance measures developed for the Virgin Islands. The levels negotiated reflect a slow moving economy with limited job opportunities and limited occupations that are consistently in demand.

For the first few years of WIA implementation, the US Virgin Islands has been in an overall economic slump. While there have been pockets of progress in some sectors, a generally sluggish economy has limited the growth of existing businesses and industries, has deterred new businesses from developing and slowed to a crawl new hires and/or new job creation.

In January 2001, the VI Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that 46,410 of the VI workforce were employed. By January 2003, that number had fallen to 43,750. The corresponding unemployment rates for that time period indicates a rise in rate from 6.6% in January 2001 to 9.6% in January 2003. The economic crisis faced by the Virgin Islands affected almost every sector of the local economy – construction, trade, transportation, professional and business, information and other service sectors. The decline became notable in the late 1990's even when America was experiencing a nationwide boom; it pre-dates September 11, 2001 but its further economic decline was exacerbated by the events of that day.

Some stronger sectors such as leisure and hospitality, education and health and the financial services, endured the harsh economic realities but were forced to cut back on their labor pool simply to stay in business. Using already scarce resources to expand their product was not an option therefore training needs and adding new challenging groups to the payroll was not a high priority. The US Virgin Islands Bureau of Economic Research reports that wages fell during that time period by 3.6% in total nonagricultural wage and salary jobs affecting both the private and public sector.

During CY 2003, the economy started to rebound somewhat due to capital development projects, new construction, and repair and maintenance contracts for the cyclical industrial market. The hospitality sector once holding steady also has seen new activity due to increased tourism and tourism-related construction. However, according to reports by the US Virgin Islands Bureau of Economic Research, “job growth is nonexistent”.

By January 2004, the VI employed numbered 44,380 and by January 2005, 44,430, slightly increased (1.01%) from January 2003. The corresponding unemployment rates also decreased slightly from 8.6% in January 2004 to 8.3% in January 2005.

Economic conditions are expected to improve in the next few years albeit at a very slow rate and barring no drastic global crises. Future trends anticipate a slow steady stabilization of the economy with the mainstay tourism market expected to continually expand. The once strong financial services market took a hit due to congressional reform. Some stronger sectors such as leisure and hospitality, education and health and the financial services, endured the harsh economic realities but were forced to cut back on their labor pool simply to stay in business. Using already scarce resources to expand their product was not an option therefore training needs and adding new challenging groups to the payroll was not a high priority. The US Virgin Islands Bureau of Economic Research reports that wages fell during that time period by 3.6% in total nonagricultural wage and salary jobs affecting both the private and public sector.

**WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT STATE PROPOSED
LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE FOR
PROGRAM YEARS 2005 & 2006**

MEASURE	PY'04 Negotiated Levels	PY'03 * Performance Data	Proposed Level for PY'05	Proposed Level for PY'06	
Adults					
Unsubsidized Employment	52%	31.8	52%	54%	
6-month Retention	77%	59	73%	75%	
Earnings Change	\$1950	n/a	\$1950	\$1980	
Credentials	74%	50	60%	62%	
Dislocated Workers					
Unsubsidized Employment	68%	27.3	68%	70%	
6-month Retention	76%	75	77%	79%	
Earnings Replacement	\$1950	n/a	\$1950	\$1980	
Credentials	77%	10.4	60%	62%	
Youth 14-18					
Skills Attainment	75%	34	75%	77%	
Diploma/Equivalent Attainment	48%	n/a	48%	50%	
Placement and Retention	60%	41	63%	65%	
Youth 19-21					
Unsubsidized Employment	58%	19.4	60%	62%	
6-month Retention	78%	83.3	79%	80%	
Earnings Change	\$1900	n/a	\$1900	\$1950	
Credentials	32%	n/a	38%	40%	
Customer Satisfaction					
Participant	67%	63%	70%	73%	
Employer	67%	60%	70%	73%	

*Data reflects a composite of available information from PY'03 quarters.

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.

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: crbenjamin@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: crbenjamin@vidol.gov

Name of WIA Title I Signatory Official: Cecil R. Benjamin, 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: crbenjamin@vidol.gov

Name of WIA Title I Liaison: Cecil R. Benjamin, 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: crbenjamin@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: crbenjamin@vidol.gov

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

Cecil R. Benjamin, 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: crbenjamin@vidol.gov

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: Charles W. Turnbull

Signature of Governor: _____ **Date** _____