



VI WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

For the Period of
July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019

Table of Contents

About the VI State Workforce Development Board.....	3
Progress made in achieving State's vision and goals as described in State Plan.....	4
• Work Based Learning	
• Work Experience	
• Incumbent/Customized Training	
Waivers.....	5
Summary of Performance Measures.....	6
Customer Satisfaction	7
Strategic Development Workforce Initiatives.....	10
Rapid Response.....	11
Program Highlights.....	11
Promising Practices.....	17
The Future of WIOA in the Virgin Islands.....	20

About the VI State Workforce Development Board

The VI State Workforce Development Board (VISWDB) is a policy making entity charged with strengthening the workforce development system by collaboratively building strong partnerships with secondary and post-secondary education, economic development and the business and private sector to align and improve economic growth in the Virgin Islands.

The VISWDB assists the Governor in developing, implementing, and modifying the State Plan. Reviews territory wide policies and programs, and any recommended actions that should be taken by the Territory to align workforce development programs in the Territory in a manner that supports a comprehensive and streamlined workforce development system. This also includes the review of provisions or comments on the State Plans, if any, or programs and activities of one-stop partners that are not core programs, the development and continuous improvement of the workforce development system, the development and updating of comprehensive performance accountability measures, including adjusted levels of performance, to assess the effectiveness of the core programs as required in the Territory. The identification and dissemination of information on best practices, the development and review of Territorial policies affecting the coordinated provisions of services through the Virgin Islands One Stop delivery system, the development of strategies for technological improvements to facilitate access to, and improve the quality of, services and activities provided through the One Stop delivery system. The development of strategies for aligning technology and data systems across One Stop partner programs. Preparations of annual reports, development of statewide workforce and labor market information. The development of such other policies as may promote statewide objectives for, and enhance the performance of, the workforce development system in the Territory.

The VISWDB shall lead efforts of employer engagement, conduct program oversight of local youth workforce activities. Perform competitive selection of youth providers, identify eligible training providers for adult and dislocated workers, negotiate and reach an agreement on local performance accountability measures, oversee competitive selection of One Stop Operators and Providers, designate or certify one-stop operators through a competitive process and to terminate for cause the eligibility of such operators, and coordinate activities with education and training providers including providers of workforce investment activities, providers of adult education, career and technical education and local agencies administering plans under Title 1.

Progress made in achieving State's vision and goals as described in State Plan

The VISWDB's vision and goals were enhanced to fit the needs of the Territory after the catastrophic impact of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017. The board sought to establish a collaborative working relationship with agencies and businesses that played a major role in the recovery and rebuilding of the Territory and its workforce. Strong partnerships were made with businesses to provide career development services that allow for the strengthening of personal development skills, basic academic skills, and occupational skill proficiency with the focus on post-secondary certificate or degree. This would assist the participants in their search for gainful, sustainable and meaningful employment.

Modifications were made to the WIOA State Strategic Unified Plan in 2018. Six goals were identified as priority items:

- Enhance Business Engagement through a Sector-Based approach to Workforce Training.
 - Develop program design in conjunction with the business sector needs.
 - Establish on-going work-based learning opportunities based on real time skills gaps expressed by employers.
- Align Work-Readiness and Workforce Training programs with Economic Development Strategies.
 - Proactively prepare for new employers and emerging occupational opportunities.
 - Develop a signature work readiness product that stamps customers as “ready to work” through the workforce system.
- Promote diversification of post-secondary education and training opportunities.
 - Explore alternative and innovative methods of attaining credentials.
 - Foster new opportunities for online and blended learning options.
- Develop focus-driven sector strategies.
 - Reengineer the workforce system from the “street level”.
 - Engage with hiring agents who assess job applicants for competency.
 - Encourage sector expos where employers present their business process and core occupations.

- Develop a network for temp or “gig” workers.
 - Append current system and use AJC as central repository for bridging employer seeking day labor, short term projects, or intermediary jobs that will sunset in less than one year.
 - Encourage jobseekers to unify as talent groups in related occupations.
- Develop an Integrated Data System.
 - Integrate agency operations through technology.
 - Design electronic common intake tools.
 - Manage customers through shared profiles.
 - Partner with private sector entities.
 - Promote employer services and consultants.

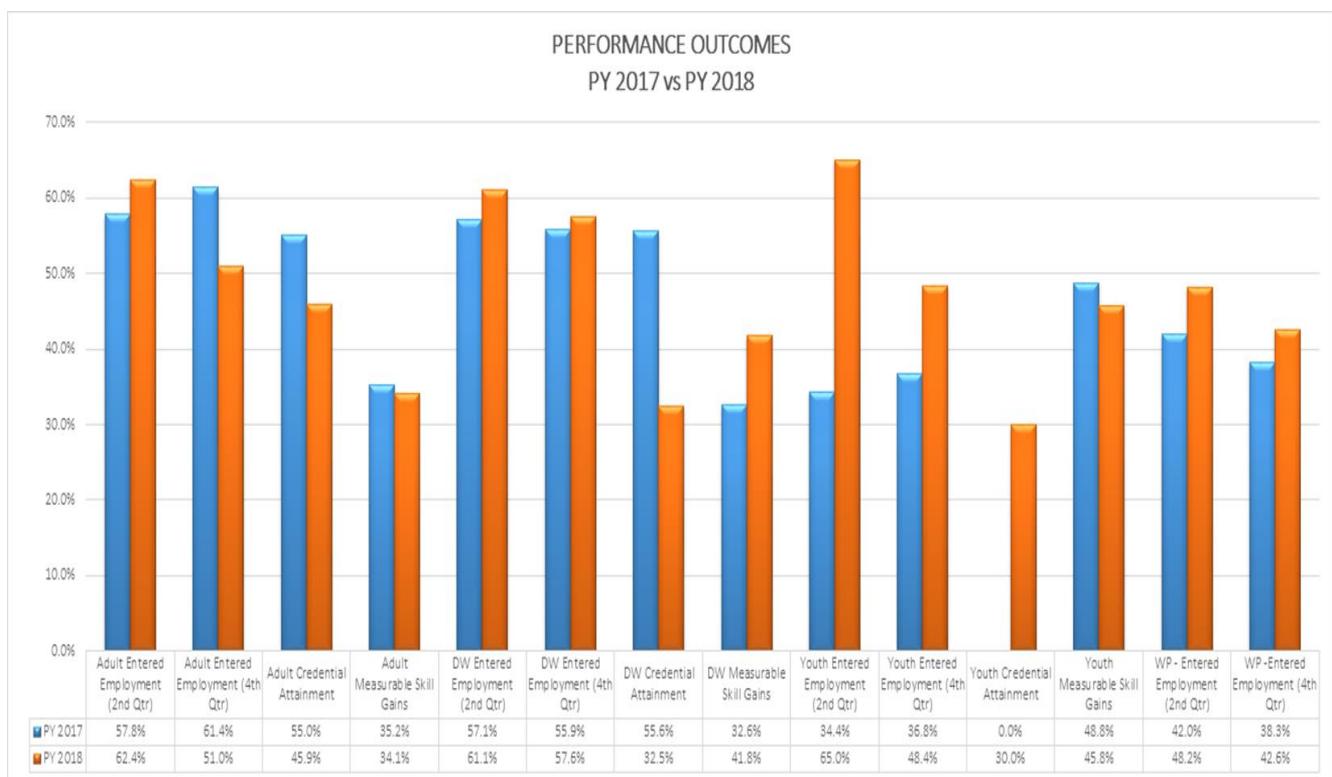
Waivers

- Waiver of the requirement that eligible training providers collect performance data for all students in a training program. ETA approved this request through June 30, 2020.
- Waiver to allow the US Virgin Islands to exclude individuals affected by the disaster from the calculation of State and Local performance measures. ETA approved this request through June 30, 2020.
- Waiver of the requirement that local programs provide each of the fourteen (14) youth program elements in order to prioritize needed services to youth participants in hurricane affected local areas. ETA approved this request through June 30, 2020.
- Waiver of the requirements to conduct evaluations of workforce investment activities for adults, dislocated, and youth. ETA approved this request through June 30, 2020.
- Waiver of the fifty percent (50%) wage reimbursement OJT cap to up to ninety (90%) for businesses with fifty (50) or fewer employees. ETA approved this request through June 30, 2020.

Summary of Performance Measures

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS PY 2018		
Measure	NPG	Final Run
WIOA		
Adult Entered Employment (2nd Qtr)	50.0%	62.4%
Adult Entered Employment (4th Qtr)	50.0%	51.0%
Adult Median Earnings	\$5,100.00	\$5,066.00
Adult Credential Attainment	63.0%	45.9%
Adult Measurable Skill Gains	Baseline	34.1%
DW Entered Employment (2nd Qtr)	54.0%	61.1%
DW Entered Employment (4th Qtr)	55.0%	57.6%
DW Median Earnings	\$5,500.00	\$4,903.00
DW Credential Attainment	50.0%	32.5%
DW Measurable Skill Gains	Baseline	41.8%
Youth Entered Employment/Placement (2nd Qtr)	37.0%	65.0%
Youth Entered Employment/Placement (4th Qtr)	40.0%	48.4%
Youth Median Earnings	Baseline	\$5,086.00
Youth Credential Attainment	43.0%	30.0%
Youth Measurable Skill Gains	Baseline	45.8%
Wagner Peyser		
Entered Employment (2nd Qtr)	54.0%	48.2%
Entered Employment (4th Qtr)	47.0%	42.6%
Median Earnings	\$5,500.00	\$5,177

Performance Indicator	PY 2018 Results' Date Range
Entered Employment 4th Qtr	July 2017 - June 2018
Entered Employment 2nd Qtr	January 2017 - December 2017
Median Earnings	July 2017 - June 2018
Credential Attainment	January 2017 - December 2017
Measurable Skill Gains	July 2018 - June 2019



Customer Satisfaction

Surveys were used to assess customer satisfaction for businesses and job seekers. Emails were sent

with a link to complete the customer satisfaction survey.

The survey was emailed to 1337 participants. Responses were provided by checking a range of one

through 5, with the higher numbers representing higher satisfaction.

A similar survey was sent to employers. The survey included questions about their overall satisfaction

with the services received at the VI Department of Labor's Workforce Development Center, the level

of information sought that was readily available through booklets, handouts, videos, electronic access

or customer satisfaction, their experience with customer service, and how likely were they to return

to the VI Department of Labor's Workforce Development Center for future needs.

Customer Satisfaction Surveys		Customers			Employers		
Number of Surveys Sent		1337			465		
Number of Surveys Completed		211			104		
Response Rate		15.8%			22.4%		

2018 Customer Satisfaction Survey:

What is your overall satisfaction with the services received at the VI Department of Labor's Workforce Development Center?

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	N/A	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	27.01% 57	32.70% 69	21.33% 45	8.53% 18	9.00% 19	1.42% 3	211	3.61

How satisfied are you with the level of information sought that was readily available through booklets, handouts, videos, electronic access or customer service?

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	N/A	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	25.59% 54	36.97% 78	18.01% 38	10.90% 23	6.64% 14	1.90% 4	211	3.65

If you interacted with customer service, how would you rate that experience?

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	N/A	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	26.54% 56	36.02% 76	18.01% 38	9.95% 21	7.58% 16	1.90% 4	211	3.65

Based on this visit, how likely are you to return to the VI Department of Labor's Workforce Development Center for career services?

Very Likely	Likely	Neutral	Unlikely	Very Unlikely	N/A	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	31.28% 66	33.18% 70	14.69% 31	9.95% 21	9.00% 19	1.90% 4	211 3.69

PY 2018 Employer Satisfaction Survey

What is your overall satisfaction with the services received at the VI Department of Labor's Workforce Development Center?

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	N/A	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	12.50% 13	50.00% 52	23.08% 24	1.92% 2	0.00% 0	12.50% 13	104	3.84

How satisfied are you with the level of information sought that was readily available through booklets, handouts, videos, electronic access or customer service.

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	N/A	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	10.58% 11	41.35% 43	26.92% 28	4.81% 5	0.96% 1	15.38% 16	104	3.66

If you interacted with customer service, how would you rate that experience?

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	N/A	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	14.42% 15	31.73% 33	21.15% 22	3.85% 4	2.88% 3	25.96% 27	104	3.69

Based on this visit, how likely are you to return to the VI Department of Labor's Workforce Development Center for future needs?

	Very Likely	Likely	Neutral	Unlikely	Very Unlikely	N/A	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	20.19% 21	40.38% 42	22.12% 23	0.00% 0	2.88% 3	14.42% 15	104	3.88

Strategic Development Workforce Initiatives

Our strategic workforce development initiatives were driven by our goals. We sought to align education, employment training and workforce development services in the territory to achieve our main objectives.

WIOA Statewide Implementation: Worked with the VI Department of Labor Employment and Training Division, Department of Human Services – Vocational and Rehabilitation and TANF and SNAP Divisions, VI Department of Education – Adult Education and Career and Technical Education Division. Governor Albert Bryan, Jr. by Executive Order established the VI State Workforce Development Board in July 2019 and placed it under the Office of the Governor.

Memorandum of Understanding and Resource Sharing Agreement: An MOU was entered into between the VI Workforce Development Board and the Department of Labor, Department of Human Services and the Department of Education. The purpose of the MOU was to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of workforce development services in the Virgin Islands Workforce Delivery Area. It serves to establish joint processes procedures and resource sharing that will enable partners to provide a seamless and comprehensive array of workforce development services through the local One-Stop System to residents of the US Virgin Islands.

The Local One-Stop Delivery System: The Virgin Islands Department of Labor (DOL) is the One Stop Operator for the Territory. The DOL is responsible for the management and operation of the One Stop Center in all districts. Its primary area of focus is:

- Providing job seekers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with family-sustaining wages;
- Providing access and opportunity to all job seekers, including individuals with barriers to employment, such as individuals with disabilities, to prepare for, obtain, retain and advance in high-quality jobs and high-demand careers;
- Enabling business and employers to easily identify and hire skilled workers and access other supports, including education and training for their current and evolving workforce;

- Participating in rigorous evaluations that support continuous improvements of one-stop centers by identifying which strategies work better for different populations;
- Ensuring that high-quality integrated data is available to make informed decisions by policy makers, employers and job seekers.

Rapid Response

Rapid Response and Dislocated Workers: The Territory received a \$3,000,000 National Dislocated Worker Grant in September 2017 immediately following the dual category 5 Hurricanes Irma and Maria, to assist individuals laid off from their permanent employment due to the damages wrought by the storms.

During the Program Year, there were 9 Rapid Response Sessions held within the Territory.

Program Highlights

UVI Cell:

- **Certified Clinical Medical Assistant** - This course consists of 300 hours of training that will provide participants with theoretical, hands-on knowledge and an externship that will prepare them for the National Healthcare Association (NHA) Certified Clinical Medical Assistant exam. It also trains individuals to assist physicians in the examination and treatment of patients as well as perform routine office tasks in the health care industry.

Theoretical and practical skills acquired will allow participants to acquire jobs, enhance or prepare for national or local certification job performance. Upon completion of the program, students will attain an industry recognized certificate and certification.

St. Croix Foundation:

- **Solar-Supported Community Center Demonstration Project** – Individuals will be able to enroll into a national center for construction education and research course in the areas of Fiber

Optics, CORE Construction, and Solar Installation. Upon completion, students will receive an NCCER Certification.

MedCerts:

SNHU is a private, nonprofit, accredited institution, founded in 1932 that is dedicated to helping students transform their lives. The College for America programs offered by SNHU use an online, competency-based model that was designed for working adults. Competency-based education focuses on mastery of critical competencies instead of the number of classes taken or credits earned. Regionally accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. NEASC). Accredited Southern New Hampshire -University Associates Degree or Bachelor's Degree.

- ***Hospitality and Retail Specialist*** – Students will gain the perquisite skills recommended for entry into or advancement into a career in hospitality and retail while also gaining the critical soft skills and workforce readiness traits.

Program training services: Food safety and handling, business writing, effective communication, managing email, customer interaction, rapport building in customer service, Microsoft Office Series 1, basic business math, time management, leadership essentials and management essentials. Students will receive a Certified Customer Service Professional designation from ICSA upon completion of the program.

- ***Behavior Technician and the Medical Office “Work UP”*** – Skills learned through this program – Essential customer service skills, functional behavior assessment tools and ethical guidelines for therapists treating children and adults with autism and intellectual disabilities, along with daily operation of the medical office and the ten steps to job readiness.

Students will receive certification:

RBT – Registered Behavior Technician provided by BACB – Behavior Analyst Certification Board.

CMAA – Certified Medical Administrative Assistant provided by NHA – National Healthcareer Association.

CCSP – Certified Customer Service Professional provided by ICSA – International Customer Service Association.

- ***Medical Front Office Assistant, Administrative and “Work-UP”*** – Students will learn Medical Office Procedures, Microsoft Office, Human Anatomy, Physiology, and Medical Terminology as

well as insurance and billing and coding. This program includes the “Work-UP” ten steps to job readiness course.

Upon completion of the training, students will receive the following credentials:

CMAA – Certified Medical Administrative Assistant provided by NHA – National Healthcare Association.

CBCS – Certified Billing and Coding Specialist provided by NHA – National Healthcare Association.

- **Professional Coder** – Students will gain skills to become a Certified Professional Coder Apprentice. Students will also take courses to receive the Customer Service Professional certification.
Students will receive certification: CPC – A certified Professional Coder provided by AAPC – American Association of Professional Coders.
CCSP – Certified Customer Service Professional provided by ICSA – The International Customer Service.
- **Administrative Office Specialist – Customer Service** – Students will gain the skills to become a Customer Service Professional, a wide range of administrative tasks, and IT fundamentals.
Students will also learn the 10 Steps to Job Readiness.
Students will receive certification – CCSP – Certified Customer Service Professional Level 1 and CCSP Certified Customer Service Professional Level 1 provided by CSA.
- **Dental Assistant and Office Manager** – Skills learned through this program will be Essential Customer Service Professional skills, medical office procedures, dental terminology, fluoride application, topical anesthetic, coronal polishing and much more. Steps to job search readiness will also be included.
Students will receive certification:
ICE – Infection Control Exam (Credential)
CMAA – Certified Medical Administrative Assistant provided by NHA – National Healthcare Association.
RHS – Radiation Health and Safety Exam (credential)
CCSP – Certified Customer Service Professional

- Medical Care Coordinator – Skills learned through this program will be essential Customer Service Professional skills, Medical Office Procedures, Understanding of Medical Plans, Insurance, Pharmacy Policies and Principles and steps to job search readiness.

Students will receive certification:

CPhT - Certified Pharmacy Technician Assistant

CMAA - Certified Medical Administrative Assistant provided by NHA – National Healthcare Association.

CCSP – Certified Customer Service Professional provided by ICSA – International Customer Service Association.

Pinnacle Services LLC:

- NCCER Occupational Skills Development Program, it exposes students to Plumbing Level One which includes safety blueprints, plumbing tools, trade math, types of fittings and pipes. Students will receive a nationally recognized NCCER Plumbing Level One Certificate.
- NCCER Electrical Level One – the program exposes participants to Electrical Level One, which includes safety orientation to the trade, circuits, national electric code, electrical and construction drawings, theory and conduit bending. Students will receive a nationally recognized NCCER Electrical Level One completion certificate.
- NCCER Masonry – Program exposes students to Industrial Masonry Level One, which include orientation to the trade, safety, masonry tools, mortar types and mixtures, masonry units and installation techniques. Students will receive a nationally recognized NCCER Masonry Level One Completion Certificate.
- NCCER CORE Introductory Craft Skills – Program exposes participants to the necessary introductory, industrial level occupational skills including safety, use of industrial hand and power tools, basic blueprint reading, basic construction related math, communication material handling and employability skills. Students will receive a nationally recognized CORE Certificate and Wallet Card.

Wheatley Skills Center:

- The Raphael O. Wheatley Skill Center is a post-secondary program that offers programs of studies ranging from two to four semesters in duration. It is a tuition-based program which offers nationally affiliated exams and certificates upon completion of eight of their nine programs.

Construction Trades - NCCER Certification (The National Center for Construction Education

Allied Health – National Health Career Association, HVAC – NCCER and EPA,

Culinary Arts – Registered as an authorized testing site for Certified Culinarians with American Culinary Federation (ACF).

Tang How:

- Construction Trade Program

NCCER Core Trainee will attain the necessary skills to continue education in their chosen craft.

NCCER Pipefitting Level 1 and 2 – Individuals will acquire the necessary skills for entry level jobs.

NCCER Welding Level 1 and 2. Individuals will acquire necessary skills for Trainee entry level jobs.

Individuals who successfully complete any of the Trade Programs are referred to companies for testing and placement into Trainee positions.

NetWave:

- Fiber Optics Technician/installer - Train students to install, maintain and repair fiber optics cables, connectors, and testing of fiber optic lines by training them to do fusion and mechanical splicing, cable termination, identification and inspection of connectors, testing, microscope inspection, power measurements, insertion loss testing and Optical Time

Domain Reflectometer (OTDR) testing. Students will receive a Fiber Optic International Fiber Optic Technician/Installer Certification (Global Certificate) upon completion of the program.

CTEC:

- This is an NCCER CORE Curriculum is a prerequisite to all level I craft curriculum. Its modules cover Basic Safety, Communication Skills, proper use of equipment, basic federal guidelines and regulations, and introduction to Construction Drawings.

NCCER module exams and NOCTI (National Occupational Testing Institute - exam) - Successful completion of the course students will receive a National Certificate from NCCER. Students will receive a CTEC certificate with a grade average of 80 or more.

Community Action:

- Participants in the Certified Administrative Professional (CAP) program will acquire information and build competency related to sitting for the Certified Administrative Professional exam. They will learn theory and real-world methods to effectively supporting all administrative functions within an organization. Students will obtain advanced level administrative skills to include certifications in Microsoft Office applications as a certified Microsoft Specialist. Additionally, those students with at least 3 years experience and/or Degrees will obtain the Certified Administrative Professional Certification.

Participants in the Certified Bookkeeper program will be able to validate bookkeeping skills, confirm professional ethics obtain bookkeeping, accounting principles, payroll, QuickBooks and work readiness skills that will prepare them for a successful rewarding career in the bookkeeping, accounting and finance field. Students will obtain their QuickBooks Certification and CB certification from the American Institute of Professional Bookkeepers. After successful completion of this program, students will obtain the Entrepreneurship & Small Business (ESB) certification administered through Certiport. Community Action NOW! is an authorized proctor and trainer for Certiport.

The ESB program is a micro-enterprise Initiative pathway to economic independence through self- employment. Participants in the ESB program are low-income, high-potential entrepreneurs who want to start up or strengthen their small business. C.A.N. ESB micro-entrepreneurs are women and men, veterans, farmers, disabled individuals and even those with felony convictions who seek a second chance at life. Participants will gain core concepts in entrepreneurship, recognizing and evaluating business opportunities, marketing sales and business financial management. Participants will earn the ESB certification through Certiport

Southern New Hampshire University (College for America):

- SNHU is a private, nonprofit, accredited institution, founded in 1932 that is dedicated to helping students transform their lives. The College for America programs offered by SNHU use an online, competency-based model that was designed for working adults. Competency-based education focuses on mastery of critical competencies instead of the number of classes taken or credits earned.

Regionally accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. NEASC). Accredited Southern New Hampshire -University Associates Degree or Bachelor's Degree.

Promising Practices

The United States Virgin Islands is well on its way to making Registered Apprenticeship a resourceful, innovative employee development for the territory's businesses. The VI Workforce Development Board will partner with VIDOL to engage workforce providers and industry organizations as sponsors of the program. VIDOL is a Registered State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA) since March 21, 2019. One of the goals is to reduce paperwork for the employer. Currently, one service provider has come on board and will be incorporated in our marketing and advertising program.

Presently, VIDOL's Youth and Apprenticeship (YA) unit is working on the requirements necessary to move forward. The YA unit has set the KPI for 2020 to have 5 registered apprenticeship programs to include Cyber security, JAG, Administrative Services, Marine and Hospitality/Culinary. Plans are already on the way for the Cyber Security in partnership with ICF and JAG - in partnership with Jobs for America's Graduates National program.

Additionally, discussions are being held to draft local legislation that will reflect language received from the USDOL Office of Apprenticeship.

VISWDB will continue providing occupational training that will lead to national certification and meet the needs of the employer.

During Program Year 2018 a contractor was sought to provide services to the VI Department of Labor to maintain compliance with all areas of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Workforce 108 was awarded the contract. The deliverables include:

- WIOA Consulting
- System Branding, Marketing and Promotion
- Employer Engagement and Business Relations
- Staff Development Training

There were several success stories during the Program Year as well as job fairs that were held to provide employment opportunities for residents.

CAREER JOB FAIR ATTENDANCE

Employers	22
Job Seekers	260



Job Fair held at the St. Thomas Tutu Park Mall



Job Fair held at the University of the Virgin Islands
St. Croix Campus



Apprenticeship Program with Pinnacle Services LLC. A ceremony was held to give recognition to the 22 residents certified by the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER).



Netwave LLC 2019 Graduates - 23 St. Croix residents completed the training program and received Fiber Optic Technician & Installation Certification.

Employer Appreciation Day



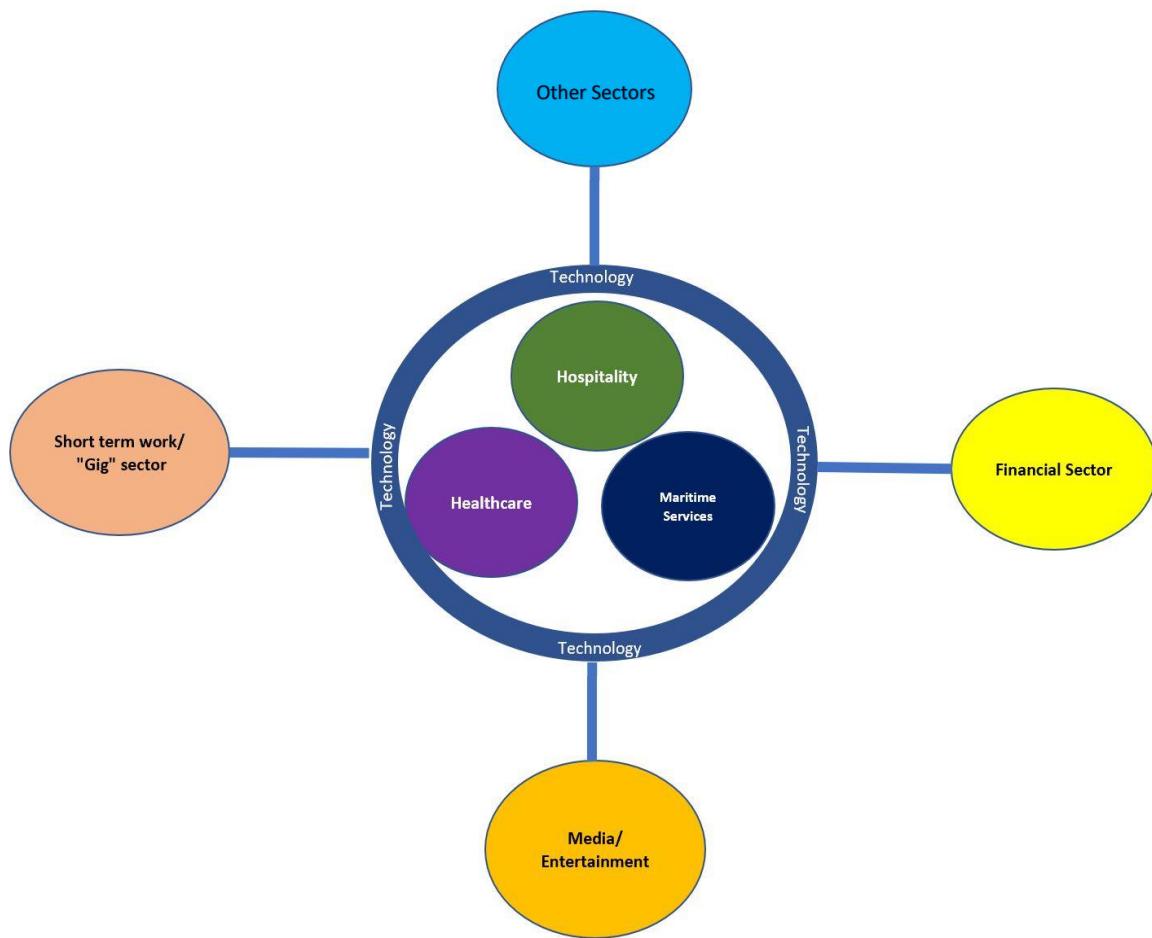
St. Thomas Recognition Award was presented to Auto Zone.



St. Croix Recognition Award was presented to Pinnacle Services LLC.

The Future of WIOA in the Virgin Islands

The VI Workforce Development Board remains committed to fulfilling its mission, administering and completing programs and projects so the Virgin Islands will be in full compliance with all state and federal regulations while serving the people of the Virgin Islands, recruit and re-train key employees, identify industry specific skills needed, determine barrier to employment and create a vast talent pool of highly skilled workers.



The future of WIOA

As we evolve and move our workforce into the future it is necessary to focus on a core group of industries that will propel other surrounding industries and sectors. For the next 4-5 years the Virgin Islands economy will ride the economic wave provided by the recovery and reconstruction following the devastating storms of 2017. While this will benefit all Virgin Islanders, we must prepare for the day

after tomorrow. We must ask ourselves who we will be after the recovery, and whether the recovery momentum transferred into other industries and growth sectors?

Four core/ center industries have been identified for the day after tomorrow:

1. Healthcare
2. Hospitality
3. Maritime
4. Other Sectors

These industries are then enhanced and encompassed by a 4th core industry - Technology. This design creates a flywheel approach where the movement of one core industry propels the other, then it generates momentum in the technology sector which moves the outer sectors on the flywheel:

1. Financial Services
2. Media/ Entertainment
3. Short Term/ "Gig" sector

While all sectors of the economy will receive focus these industries will turn the wheels.

The Virgin Islands is uniquely positioned in each of the core sectors for massive AI (Artificial Intelligence) learning to be developed. As the Virgin Islands seeks to diversify beyond hospitality we still need to further enhance and maximize hospitality while we spring-board onto others. One enhancement through technology is the development of a hospitality-based AI. The Virgin Islands has a unique position as one of the top tourist destinations in the world. This provides a great opportunity for training an AI on our industry best practices, and possibly matching previous and potential visitors to activities that satisfy their current and potential future interests. On the visitor level, knowing what a guest wants before they ask and providing island excursions personalized to their liking will create one-of-a kind experiences. While initially this may cater to the more affluent guest, as the AI is trained and developed it will aggregate data from a vast number of sources to then cater to the average everyday visitor, and eventually Virgin Island residents. Much of the data already exists – It just needs to be aggregated.

The same AI learning can be applied to the Healthcare and Maritime Industries. It is often stated that the Virgin Islands has a rapidly aging population, but what is frequently omitted from the statement is

that our population is also prone to ailments such as hypertension, diabetes, and stroke. Collecting data trends and treatment effects on our local population while receiving real-time data will help create strategies for prevention and treatment of these diseases. This will potentially identify certain environmental factors of the Virgin Islands that will aid in treatment and prevention. This will propel the healthcare industry, Hospitality/Tourism industry, and Technology sector – thus, The Flywheel Effect. The healthcare industry can also benefit by focusing on developing options in Blockchain. With a private ledger and unique identifier for each USVI patient there is massive potential to reduce error and insurance fraud. Though this concept is still new nationwide, now is the best time to test in a small environment.

Occupation	Location Quotient (%)	Hourly Wage (USD)	Mean Annual Salary (USD)
Computer User Support Specialists	0.49	22.34	46,470
Postal Service Mail Carriers	0.48	27.56	57,330
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	0.48	13.94	28,990
Management Analysts	0.46	34.45	71,660
Medical Assistants	0.43	15.25	31,730
Healthcare Support Occupations	0.42	15.06	31,330
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	0.42	23.85	49,610
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	0.41	20.26	42,130
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	0.36	29.02	60,360
Production Occupations	0.36	21.05	43,790
Human Resources Specialists	0.35	28.88	60,070
Computer Systems Analysts	0.34	25.74	53,550
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	0.33	16.01	33,310
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	0.32	28.30	58,860
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing,	0.21	20.71	43,080
Average		22.83	47484.67

Jobs that are most underrepresented in the territory but are the highest paying.

The jobs highlighted in the figure above are directly enhanced by the current design. Other jobs and sectors will be indirectly enhanced by the movement of these.

Learning enhancement

Establish Learning Management System (LMS) - There is a skills gap between job seekers and existing positions. The longer this gap remains, technology will catch-up and fill this gap. We must be proactive and enhance the learning of Virgin Islanders by developing content with the assistance of the local

industry on what skills are needed before hiring. Employers should not be asked what they are looking for, but we should partner with them to develop the learning content.

This LMS would be a virtual pipeline managing learning and progress.

Content can be developed by local industry experts in each sector and combined with industry standards to develop a custom localized approach to each industry. Candidates can begin their path through the pipeline through this system. Their results can be tracked by the Virgin Islands Department of Labor (VIDOL) and the data for the highest achieving members in the pipeline is passed on to potential employers and apprenticeship hosts.

Gig/ Short-term work

One focus on the outside of the flywheel with notable mention is part of the Gig/ short term work industry. The Gig economy is expected to become the means by which 60% of working professionals earn a living in the coming years. This area in the mainland US and abroad is dominated by platforms like Uber and Fiverr etc. These platforms are also known for the large fees they charge workers on each transaction. The development of a platform by an entity like VIDOL or in partnership with a local entrepreneur can facilitate matching workers with short-term opportunities (Gigs) in specific sectors. The Government (as facilitator) can generate revenue at the beginning of each transaction at a lower fee structure than the dominant platforms on the market.

In Summary the Virgin Islands needs to begin planning for the day after tomorrow. We need to decide for what we will be known. Combining traditional industries with various up-and-coming horizontal technology platforms will propel us into the future. Some enhancements may be distant and still conceptually new (moonshots), but this is where we need to take aim. We only need to be right once to create a positive tipping point.