

# USVI Narrative Report 2019-2020

## 1. State Leadership Funds (AEFLA Section 223)

- (a) Describe how the State has used funds made available under section 223 (State Leadership activities) for each the following required activities:
- Alignment of adult education and literacy activities with other one-stop required partners to implement the strategies in the Unified or Combined State Plan as described in section 223(1)(a).
  - Establishment or operation of a high-quality professional development programs as described in section 223(1)(b).
  - Provision of technical assistance to funded eligible providers as described in section 223(1)(c).
  - Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and improvement of adult education activities as described in section 223(1)(d).
- (b) As applicable, describe how the State has used funds for additional permissible activities described in section 223(a)(2).

Though the pandemic has taken us by surprise, the US Virgin Islands has devoured in continuing development of adult education and literacy activities via distance learning. During COVID-19 program closures took effect. As a result, our local providers offered distance education services to students previously enrolled in the classroom. The State Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (SOCTAE) has continued to virtually have monthly meetings, technical assistance and have also included virtual professional developments on remote instruction and strategies on administering remote assessments (TABE 11/12).

In light of this crisis, many changes have been made to accommodate the pandemic, communication have been the key in networking electronically. The publicly funded workforce system is a national network of Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services. It helps all jobseekers secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. Because of the pandemic, all services are remotely done online, user friendly, by accessing the portal.

COVID-19 has publicly made the US Virgin Islands technology savvy. As stated above all services are remotely done online. Due to the nature of meeting the needs of adult learners, the portals is user friendly. Virtual delivery was made to accommodate all stakeholders. The WIOA requires States and local areas to enhance coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery. This system is comprised of workforce and related programs form both WIOA core program partners and required one-stop delivery system partners. These core program partners include: The VI Department of Labor (VIDOL), who administers the Youth, Adult, Dislocated Worker (Title I) and Wagner-Peyser programs (Title III); the VI Department of Education (VIDE), which administers Adult Education and Family Literacy programs (Title II) and the VI Department of Human Services (VIDHS) which administers the

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Vocational Rehabilitation program (Title IV).

The Virgin Islands Workforce Board (VIWB) is charged with system coordination, integrity and compliance, and continuous improvement. Each of the four core programs is represented and is a voting member of the Board.

In the previous years, the US Virgin Islands One-Stop Job Center was housed on each island at the VI Department of Labor office. It served as a hub for all employment and training activities for employers and job seekers. The system is designed to assist those with multiple barriers to attaining and maintaining employment by streamlining administrative functions, offer career readiness and training services virtually through the Virgin Islands Electronic Workforce System (VIEWS) at [www.vidolvIEWS.org](http://www.vidolvIEWS.org) or in person at the Job Center location. It operates on the basis that everyone who accesses the system is seeking employment (first time job or an advanced work opportunity). Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, clients are not able to walk-in to the job center. However, the database is still active and referrals are done electronically.

In the VIEWS portal, clients/job seekers has access to career services (that prepares them for the workforce); training services (that helps them attain the credentials in different skills) and follow up services (ensure that career goals are met). Title I job seekers have access to services to include job readiness workshops and seminars, individualized career counseling, job search matching and referrals. Additionally, job seekers who have been or are about to be laid off from their current employment have access to all workforce preparedness and training services. Youth customers have access to fourteen (14) program elements designed to develop the whole person with wrap around services that are connected to career development goals. Title II customers who seek to obtain their high school diploma or equivalent are referred to Adult Education services offered by VIDE. Title III Wagner-Peyser programs are also administered by VIDOL. Their primary customers are job seekers who are skilled and ready for work or who have been in the workforce and are seeking employment change or advancement. They will be able to prepare/update their resumes; attend in-house workshops and seminars designed to enhance work etiquette; attend short term pre-vocational activities to enhance specific skill sets such as computer literacy, communication skills and interviewing techniques. Title IV job seekers who because of a disability may need additional assistance attaining employment. Eligibility will be determine through a complete assessment and will then be emailed by a vocational counselor (VR) to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IEP). Services will include: vocational counseling, guidance and referral; vocational training; transition services from school to work; rehabilitation technology services; supported employment; and job search and placement. Due to COVID-19, services are aligned to CDC approval.

The Employer Engagement Team assists businesses, small to large with solutions to the workforce needs. However, due to COVID-19 and the shutdowns small businesses were mandated to close. Nevertheless, the team provided the businesses access to the Job Center facilities for virtual training and workshops for their current employees. They may request assistance with the administration of testing or career assessments which are done remotely online. Employers can also take advantage of training solutions that can help their employees ascend the career ladder

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within their organization.

Required Partners Programs offered by the required partners of the One-Stop delivery system include: VIDOL- Unemployment Insurance Program, VIDE- Career and Technical Education programs, VIDHS- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and the Senior Community Service Employment program; and VIHA- Youthbuild, Resident Opportunity Self Sufficiency (ROSS) and Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program.

The State Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education is responsible for administering funds to suitable providers and provide program performance oversight to sub-grantees. Funds were provided to eligible local entities for the provision of adult education services which include: Adult Education; Literacy; Workplace adult education and literacy activities; English language acquisition activities; Integrated English literacy and civics education; Workforce preparation activities; or integrated education and training.

The purpose of the AEFLA grant is to provide AE and Literacy programs in the USVI that will assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency; assist adults who are parents to obtain the skills necessary to be partners in the education of their children; assist adults in the completion of a secondary school education. Title II, AEFLA provides funding for ABE and Literacy services programs that will help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving educational opportunities of low income families. The eligible provider receiving a sub grant of the VIDE will use the funding to operate one or more programs in the St. Thomas/St. John District, St. Croix District or both.

Currently, the Virgin Islands Department of Education have accepted eligible applicants to fund Adult Education and Family Literacy services in St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix Districts in accordance with applicable Public Law Title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) for an established period designated by the VIDE State Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education. Non-profit entities will be required to have proof of tax-exempt organization status under 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

### Categories of Service or Instruction (AEFLA, Section 231 (b))

- Workplace Literacy
- Family Literacy
- English Literacy

Awards will be subject to availability of funding from the US Department of Education with a period of (2) two years.

Eligible sub-grantees are established organizations which included, local education agencies; community-based organizations; volunteer literacy organizations, institutions of higher learning, public or private non-profit agencies; libraries; public housing authorities; non-profit institutions, or faith based organizations could have applied. The successful provider receiving sub grants

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under AEFLA were required to obtain the corresponding MIS System being used by VI Department of Education State Office of Career, Technical, Adult Education. Trainings and professional developments were provided virtually. The VIDE maintains a record of eligible past providers in the state who might offer AE and Literacy Services. A Request for Proposal (RFP) including an application packet, will be prepared, and given to the general public and interested parties. Public notices will also be advertised. The RFP will be posted for 8 months with continuous reminders of deadlines for applications leading up to the final month of RFP acceptance. The process of reading and rating the proposal will be followed by the notification and successful selection process. The evaluation tool with certain criteria will be able to determine whether the proposed applications will meet the specific requirements set by US Department of Education as set in Section 231 of Title II of the Workforce Investment Act and the VI Department of Education. Proposals must include a reasonable budget with at least 15% local match. Proposals will be read and rated at a minimum of three times by trained grant readers and must meet a minimum score of 70 points.

### **2. Performance Data Analysis**

Describe how the adult education program performed in the overall assessment of core programs based on the core indicators of performance. Discuss how the assessment was used to improve quality and effectiveness of the funded eligible providers and any plans to further increase performance in future reporting years.

FY2019-2020 was once again a challenging year for the US Virgin Islands Adult Education program in the territory regarding program performance due to the pandemic. Though all learning took place via online, it was difficult for VIDE AE program to meet all mandates. SOCTAE's performance on the core indicators is not yet what it ought to be. While individual negotiated targets were met, continued efforts need to be made to accelerate performance improvements. To help ensure meaningful student progress, core performance measures guided program planning and curricula SOCTAE used NRS approved assessments to track MSGs (TABE 11/12), obtained high school equivalency credential and obtained employment (surveys), and transition to post-secondary within one year after program exited (post-surveys).

Program monitoring and support by SOCTAE is committed to continuously improving program performance. Accurate and timely data collection and entry, ongoing program monitoring, and professional development are key components to meeting SOCTAE's mandates. SOCTAE monitors program data quality by performing regularly scheduled bi-annual site visits. In addition, SOCTAE analyzes performance measures in the territory, twice a year and monitors data quality and integrity using diagnostic tools on a monthly basis. SOCTAE coordinates and provided training virtually to VIDOAE AE programs regarding data entry and use.

The SOCTAE's program monitor visited sites before the pandemic and focused on targeted technical assistance for program improvement, ensured the presence of necessary procedures and compliance with grant requirements. Prior to the pandemic, SOCTAE had provided all AE programs an in-depth 3-day professional development training to all AEFLA employees

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throughout the territory that emphasize on improving the skills of program administrators, school counselors, and teacher improvement, especially in math and reading. Ongoing professional development activities has now taken place periodically via webinars and online monthly meetings.

To further improve performance, especially during this pandemic, SOCTAE continued to conduct regular case reviews, quarterly desk reviews, an annual performance review of local program performance, and targeted virtual monitoring focusing on compliance issues.

### **3. Integration with One-stop Partners**

Describe how the State eligible agency, as the entity responsible for meeting one-stop requirements under 34 CFR part 463, subpart J, carries out or delegates its required one-stop roles to eligible providers. Describe the applicable career services that are provided in the one-stop system. Describe how infrastructure costs are supported through State and local options.

Though the One-Stop Center has been inactive for the past 6 months due to COVID-19 with continuous shutdowns in the community, VIDOL has resources virtually in place to assist workers and employers. VIDOL is currently offering a full suite of online and telephone employment services through its One-Stop Center. However, because of the pandemic, the infrastructure cost and agreement are still being negotiated and drafted by the leading agency for One-Stop Job Centers.

### **4. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) Program (AEFLA Section 243)**

Describe how the state is using funds under Section 243 to support the following activities under the IELCE program:

- Describe when your State held a competition [the latest competition] for IELCE program funds and the number of grants awarded by your State to support IELCE programs.
- Describe your State efforts in meeting the requirement to provide IELCE services in combination with integrated education and training activities;
- Describe how the State is progressing towards program goals of preparing and placing IELCE program participants in unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency as described in section 243(c)(1) and discuss any performance results, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing those program goals; and
- Describe how the State is progressing towards program goals of ensuring that IELCE program activities are integrated with the local workforce development system and its

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functions as described in section 243(c)(2) and discuss any performance results, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing those program goals.

This is NOT offered in the USVI.

### 5. Adult Education Standards

If your State has adopted new challenging K-12 standards under title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, describe how your Adult Education content standards are aligned with those K-12 standards.

- Optional – Describe implementation efforts, challenges, and any lessons learned.

Adult education and literacy activities, including adult education, literacy, and family literacy utilize the K-12 standards established by the VIDOE. Standards have been developed by the VIDOE that includes English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Financial Literacy. The VIDOE Academic Standards serve as expectations for what students should know and be able to do by the time they obtain their high school equivalency. These standards may assist the territories ABE providers in providing the guidance and expectations necessary for a student to obtain their GED or high school equivalency.

The VIDOE State adopted standards focus on deep thinking, conceptual understanding, and real-world problem solving skills, set expectations for students to be College, Career, and Citizenship ready, incorporate literacy in science, social studies and technology subjects, emphasize the use of citations and examples from texts when creating opinions and arguments, increase rigor and grade-level expectations, and determine the full range of support for English language learners.

SOCTAE's approved assessments are standardized, valid, reliable, and approved for use. Standardized is defined as having directions, time limits, materials, and scoring procedures that are designed to remain constant each time the test is given. Valid is defined as the degree to which the assessment measures what it is intended to measure. Reliable is defined as the consistency with which an assessment produces results. Pre-assessment is defined as the initial assessment administered to a student when they first enroll in the program for the current fiscal year. Post-assessment is defined as an assessment administered to a student to measure learning gains since the pre-assessment or their last assessment in the current fiscal year. The pre and post assessments is provided by TABE 11/12 before and after each semester to see their growth.

Educational functioning level of a student is determined by the National Reporting System (NRS) approved standardized assessment scale scores. All students are placed into an appropriate Educational Functioning Level (EFL) as determined by the student's scale score of the standardized assessments. In addition to using required standardized assessments for NRS reporting and accountability, programs use assessments for instructional purposes. Accountability

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and reporting purposes of assessment include but are not limited to: 1. Uniform measurement of learner gains that are aligned with the NRS educational functioning levels. 2. Consistent comparison of the success of programs in meeting state performance targets. 3. Consistent comparison of program data for performance-based funding.

Instructional purposes of assessment include but are not limited to: 1. Determining the instructional needs of individual learners. 2. Determining the effectiveness of instruction through learner gains. 3. Providing information regarding local program and/or statewide professional development needs.

### **6. Programs for Corrections Education and the Education of Other Institutionalized Individuals (AEFLA Section 225)**

What was the relative rate of recidivism for criminal offenders served? Please describe the methods and factors used in calculating the rate for this reporting period.

US Virgin Islands Bureau of Corrections (VIBOC) stated, *"At this time, we do not have current 2020 data on the recidivism rate for BOC. There has not been an established territory wide tracking for the current time period. Due to Hurricanes Irma & Maria much of the data was lost. In order to come up with the recidivism rate, we have to gather, collect, and analyze data over a period of no less than three (3) years."*

VIBOC is in the final phase of completing a reentry program operational manual. VIBOC is expected to implement the new reentry program in January 2021. Moving forward, their plan is to utilize the LSCMI model. VIBOC is presently a NCCER accredited training facility that delivers CTE services. VIBOC has certified 5 NCCER Trainers and 3 Test Proctors. The NCCER Core Curriculum class is in preparation to begin in January 2021 as well. *The VIBOC does not discriminate, therefore, CTE VIBOC services all inmates which includes inmates with disabilities with CTE activities and carried out through instructional teaching on Educational (English, Math & GED Prep) Art therapy, Substance Abuse, Self-Exploration, Preparing for Leaving Institution classes, Resume Writing, Anger Management, Library Science, Conflict Resolution, and How to use the Law Books.* BOC continues to enhance, through certification, vocational and educational programs. Unfortunately, much activity has been stymied by the COVID-19 pandemic.