



2026 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET PRESENTATION

**Frits E. Lawaetz Legislative Conference Room on the Island
of St. Croix August 15, 2025.**



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Statement by Yirah Tutein
On behalf of the VI Labor Management Committee
Friday August 15, 2025

Good afternoon, Chairman, Honorable Novelle E. Francis, Jr, and other distinguished members of the Finance Committee of the 36th Legislature.

My name is **Yirah Tutein**, Executive Director of the Virgin Islands Labor Management Committee (VILMC). It is my privilege to appear before you today to present an overview of our committee and to respectfully request your consideration of our proposed budget.

I would also like to recognize **Mr. Joseph Gumbs**, who will be providing an additional presentation to the Finance Committee.

My presentation will highlight the history and purpose of the VILMC as an Agency Labor Management Committee, followed by a brief review of our Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Recommendation.

Executive Summary

The Virgin Islands Labor Management Committee (VILMC) is composed of **ten (10) members**: five representing Labor and five representing Management.

Management representatives include:

- **Joseph Wrensford**, Co-Chair (Supervisor, WAPA Water Division)
- **Ronald Tutein**, Security Supervisor, GERS
- **Violet Wilkins**, Supervisor, Fire Emergency Medical Service
- **Alscess Lewis-Brown**, Professor, University of the Virgin Islands

Labor representatives include:

- **Joseph Gumbs**, Co-Chair
- **Carol Armstrong**, Co-Chair (WAPA Employees Association Union)
- **Hillary Jean-Baptiste**, Professional & Technical Union, WAPA
- **Clacier Industrious**, Bureau of Motor Vehicles
- **Geraldine Walters-Buncome**, VI Nurses Association Union

The Committee operates under the **Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws**.

Role of the Executive Director

As Executive Director, my responsibilities include implementing committee recommendations, coordinating workshops and seminars, developing policies, and preparing proposals in support of our goals. These efforts are guided by a strategic operational plan developed in consultation with experts from:

- The Government of the Virgin Islands and its instrumentalities
- Labor organizations
- The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS)
- The American Arbitration Association
- Private sector professionals

Mission and Activities

The VILMC plays an active role in **public sector collective bargaining** and was established to strengthen Labor-Management relations, improve working conditions, and enhance the quality of work life for employees across the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Some of the Committee's key objectives include:

- Developing educational programs that enhance Labor-Management communication
- Identifying and resolving issues that affect labor relations
- Encouraging collaboration and trust between employees and management

Historical Background

The Virgin Islands Labor Management Committee (VILMC) is a territory-wide initiative dedicated to strengthening employee involvement in management decision-making, with a focus on improving the overall work environment.

The concept of the VILMC was introduced to the Virgin Islands in 1982 by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS), which sought to promote collaboration between labor and management in a non-adversarial setting. At the national level, FMCS actively organized similar committees to strengthen labor-management relations. In 1986, the Virgin Islands formally established the VILMC as a non-profit organization. The term "Labor" encompasses both unionized and non-unionized employees within government agencies.

In 2023, the FMCS recognized the VILMC as the longest continuously functioning Labor Management Committee internationally—a significant milestone underscoring the territory's commitment to cooperative workplace solutions.

VILMC programs are designed to equip employees with the skills and tools needed to engage effectively in agency group dynamics. These initiatives are especially vital in organizations where adversarial relationships previously existed, helping to build trust and cooperation between labor and management.

At its core, the VILMC values the expertise and experience of employees as essential to solving workplace challenges and enhancing service delivery. Moreover, it champions employee consultation in decision-making processes, ensuring their voices are heard before final decisions are made.

VILMC FOCUS

The Virgin Islands Labor-Management Committee (VILMC) focuses on fostering engagement between labor and management by developing agency-specific Labor Management Committees. These committees address and recommend solutions to workplace challenges that, while not directly covered under the Collective Bargaining Agreement, have a significant impact on the work environment.

Workplace dynamics evolve with changes in government administration, retirements, reassignments, and appointments of new agency heads, managers, and supervisors. These transitions affect labor-management relationships and underscore the need for proactive collaboration.

To support these efforts, the VILMC offers dispute resolution services—including grievance mediation and facilitation—to help agencies navigate internal issues. Additionally, the committee conducts customized training sessions designed to promote team building and strengthen agency performance.

Consistent cooperation between labor and management can significantly enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of government operations. With the requested budget, the VILMC will continue to implement in-house Supervisor-Steward workshops that encourage open dialogue, mutual understanding, and the exchange of constructive solutions.

BUDGET REQUEST FOR FY2026

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Virgin Islands Labor Management Committee's (VILMC) budget request for Fiscal Year 2026.

We respectfully submit a total request of **\$265,000.00**, allocated as follows:

- **\$127,000.00 — Personnel**
Covers compensation for two full-time employees and one part-time employee.
- **\$5,000.00 — Capital Outlays**
Includes procurement of equipment and assets essential to program operations.
- **\$11,000.00 — Fringe Benefits**
Supports required benefits associated with personnel.
- **\$10,000.00 — Office Supplies**
Covers the cost of general administrative and operational materials.
- **\$112,000.00 — Other Services and Charges**

This allocation supports:

- Professional services for workshops and training sessions
- Network and communication
- Office space rental and utility costs
- Inter-island travel and continued education for employees and committee members

Honorable Senators, on behalf of the VILMC, I express our sincere appreciation for the opportunity to present this budget before the Finance Committee.

At this time, I would like to invite Mr. Joseph Gumbs to share our accomplishments for Fiscal Year 2025 and outline our strategic goals for Fiscal Year 2026.



**2026 FISCAL YEAR
BUDGET PRESENTATION
BY MR. JOSEPH GUMBS**

**Earle B. Ottley Legislative Hall on the island of St. Croix
August 15, 2025.**

**Statement by Joseph Gumbs
On behalf of the VI Labor Management Committee
Friday August 15, 2025.**

Good afternoon, Senate Chair, Honorable Novelle Francis, Jr and esteemed Senators of the 36th Legislature, distinguished testifiers, colleagues, and members of the listening and viewing audience. My name is Joseph Gumbs, and I serve as the Labor Co-Chair of the Virgin Islands Labor Management Committee (VILMC). It is with deep respect and a shared commitment to strengthening Labor-Management relations that I gratefully accept the invitation to testify before your committee today.

VILMC Operational Goals and Objectives

Goal I:

Foster and maintain healthy, fulfilling work environments across government agencies by promoting opportunities for employees to contribute meaningfully to decision-making processes.

Goal II:

Design and implement programs aimed at improving communication and productivity, while providing continuous education on Labor-Management relations for both labor and management representatives.

Goal III:

Assist agencies in identifying and resolving issues that impact the effectiveness and health of Labor-Management relationships within the workplace.

Goal IV:

Produce and distribute *The Motivator*—a monthly newsletter dedicated to highlighting Labor-Management relations within the public sector and promoting continued dialogue and engagement.

Objectives and Strategies

The Agency Labor Management Committee (ALMC) meetings and workshops are designed to foster collaboration in a non-adversarial environment, ultimately enhancing labor relations across the agency. These forums provide a structured space for problem-solving through the open exchange of information and ideas, helping to define key issues and work toward effective resolutions.

Additionally, these forums serve as valuable platforms for:

- Developing leadership skills,
- Discouraging unproductive behaviors in contract administration,
- Promoting constructive conflict management,
- Reducing workplace tension among all parties.

A. Increasing Utilization of the Agency Labor Management Committees

To encourage broader engagement and strengthen the ALMC framework, the following initiatives will be implemented:

1. Support the organization and sustainability of ALMCs across agencies.
2. Offer orientation sessions and targeted training.
3. Provide issue-specific assistance to address workplace challenges.
4. Circulate *The Motivator* newsletter to reinforce engagement and communication.
5. Sponsor training programs for both management and non-management employees.
6. Host an annual general meeting for all Agency Labor Management Committees.

Expected Outcomes:

- A measurable increase in the number of active ALMCs.
- Greater participation by managers, supervisors, employees, and unions in cooperative decision-making processes.
- Enhanced interest in training opportunities focused on contract administration and grievance resolution.

B. Improving the Nature of Labor-Management Relationships

A high volume of unresolved issues between labor and management often indicates underlying problems that remain unidentified or inadequately addressed. Such issues are frequently raised as signals of growing dissatisfaction with leadership's actions—or lack thereof.

Labor-management relationships typically fall into one of three categories:

1. **Conflict:** Management does not recognize or cooperate with union representation.
2. **Restraint:** Interaction is limited and strained.
3. **Accommodation:** Both parties engage in productive, solution-focused dialogue.

This strategic effort aims to transition relationships toward accommodation, fostering mutual respect, open communication, and long-term collaboration.

For FY 2026, the VILMC anticipates the Following Goals:

We continue to provide effective training programs to build a base of knowledge for management, union, and other interested parties, and to provide with the skills to deal more effectively and efficiently in resolving grievances with their Agency Labor Management Committees. As such, in collaboration with the Public Employee Relations Board the following programs may be available during FY 2025:

- **Re-organizing Agency Labor-Management Committees, in each Agency; (The Master Collective Bargaining Agreement in the V.I. Government requires that the Agencies organize Agency LMC's.)**
- **The Administrative Hearing Process**
- **Customer Services**
- **Diversity in the Workplace**
- **Contract Administration**
- **Grievance Handling**
- **Shop Steward Grievance Investigating**
- **Grievance Committee**
- **Interpersonal Communication**
- **Unacceptable Behaviour in the Workplace**
- **Other specialized training, as deemed appropriate and by request. We will continue to offer the use of the LMC Conference room to the GVI Department & Agencies for Meeting, Trainings, Mediations and Arbitrations.**

ACCOMPLISHMENT FOR FY 2025

WORKSHOPS

In an ongoing effort to conduct training at the VILMC, the following are presented for consideration of additional FY 2025 funding:

Updating the VILMC Information Brochure: To provide additional information including frequently asked questions (“FAQs”), training programs, and other pertinent information.

Overall, in an ongoing effort to work within its budgetary constraints, during FY 2025, LMC will continue to effectively schedule several training courses.

- VILMC members and FMCS Commissioners will continue to present while providing cost savings to the Government agencies and Unions.
- VILMC will simultaneously schedule more training on both islands.
- Continue to provide essential training programs.

DATES OF PROGRAMS	AGENCY	WORKSHOPS
03/27/2025	Grievance Committee	WORKSHOP
04/07/2025	Customer Services Training	WORKSHOP
04/8/2025	Customer Service Training	WORKSHOP
04/10/2025	Customer Service Training	WORKSHOP
04/11/2025	Customer Service Training	WORKSHOP
06/11/2025	Managers Rights and Responsibilities	WORKSHOP
06/11/2025	Managers Rights and Responsibilities	WORKSHOP
PENDING	Interpersonal Communication	WORKSHOP
PENDING	A Guide to Shop Steward Grievance Investigation	WORKSHOP

Various Agencies and Unions The VILMC Worked With Include:

- Public Works
- Human Services
- Department of Labor
- V.I. Fire Services and Emergency
- Bureau of Corrections
- VI Economic Development Authority
- Department of Health
- VI Port Authority
- VI Waste Management Authority
- VI License Practical Nurses
- Department of Education
- VI Police Department
- Department of Planning and Natural Resources
- Division of Personnel
- Bureau of Motor Vehicles
- Department of Licensing & Consumer
- American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
- UNITED STEEL WORKERS (USW)
- Seafears International Union (SIU)
- Wapa Employees Association (WEA)
- Professional & Technical Employees Union (P&TEU)
- Education Administrators Association (EAA)
- VI Nurses Association (VISNA)
- Registered Nurses Leadership Union (RNLU)
- Untied Industrial Workers of N.A. (UIW/SIU)
- Law Enforcement Supervisory Union (LESU)
- Police Benevolent Association (PBA)
- VI License Practical Nurse (VILPN)
- VI Pilots Bargaining Unit (VIPBU)
- International Association of Firefighters (IAFF)

**AGENCIES TO WITH FORMED ALMC'S AND AGENICES IN THE
ORGANIAZATIONAL PROCESS**

AGENCY	ORGANIZED ALMC	LOCATION
VI Water and Power Authority	ORGANIZED- Agency Labor Management Committee	STT
VI Economic Development Authority	ORGANIZED- Agency Labor Management Committee	STT
Department of Labor	ORGANIZED- Agency Labor Management Committee	STT/STJ& STX
Department of Public Works	To be organized	STT
Department of Health	To be organized	STT
Department of Agriculture	To be organized	STT
Department of Education	To be organized	STT
Bureau of Corrections	To be organized	STT
Department of Licensing & Consumer Affairs	In process	
Fire Emergency Service	ORGANIZED- Agency Labor Management Committee	STT
Department of Sports Park and Recreation	To be organized	STT
Department of Human Services	ORGANIZED- Agency Labor Management Committee	STT
V.I.P.D.	ORGANIZED- Agency Labor Management Committee	STT
G.E.R.S.	ORGANIZED- Agency Labor Management Committee	STT
D.P.N.R.	ORGANIZED- Agency Labor Management Committee	STX
Bureau of Motor Vehicle	ORGANIZED- Agency Labor Management Committee	STT/STJ &STX

Honorable Senators, on behalf of the Virgin Islands Labor Management Committee, I extend our sincere gratitude for the opportunity to present our accomplishments for Fiscal Year 2025 and share our strategic goals for Fiscal Year 2026. At this time, Mrs. Tutein and I welcome any questions and stand ready to provide further insight. Thank you.

VILMC TRAINING PROGRAM

The LMC has various training initiatives to bring enlightenment and awareness of Labor relations to all interested person. Below is a breakdown as to the training and meetings held during FY 2025 to date:

Workshops

On March 27, 2025, Grievance Committee Meeting with VISNA Nurses

On April 7, 2025, Customer Service training with Bureau of Motor Vehicle - STT/STJ

On April 8, 2025, Customer Service training with Bureau of Motor Vehicle- STT/STJ

On April 10, 2025, Customer Service training with Bureau of Motor Vehicle- STX

On April 11, 2025, Customer Service training with Bureau of Motor Vehicle-STX

Labor Management Activities

Union Meeting

On October 28, 2024, Labor Management Committee (ALMC) with Department of Licensing and Consumer.

On February 12, 2025, WEA union meeting

On February 19&20, 2025, Arbitration with Breau of Correction SIU vs. Office of Collective Bargaining

On February 25, 2025, meeting with Commissioner Molly at Department of Labor.

On March 12, 2025, WEA union meeting.

On March 20, 2025, WEA union meeting

On May 9, 2025, EAA and OCB Negotiations

Other Meeting

On January 24, 2025, attended OMB Budget Training

On March 21, 2025, attended OMB Seminar

The Committee focused attention on addressing issues, and conflict management, with Unions at the union meetings. The unions are allowed to use the VILMC conference room. Most meetings are conducted after 5:00p.m.

ORGANIZATION OF AGENCY LABOR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

Under the Master Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Virgin Islands Government, each Agency is required to establish an **Agency Labor Management Committee (ALMC)**. The **Virgin Islands Labor Management Committee (VILMC)** provides guidance and support to assist Agencies in forming and maintaining their respective ALMCs.

Each ALMC must consist of an agreed-upon, equal number of representatives from both management and rank-and-file employees.

These committees meet periodically to identify and address workplace issues not typically covered by the Collective Bargaining Agreement. When utilized effectively, ALMCs serve as a powerful tool for fostering collaboration and improving workplace conditions.

Topics an ALMC May Address Include:

- Safety and health issues;
- Elimination of excessive waste;
- Morale of the workers
- Working conditions;
- Productivity;
- Causes of grievance;
- Training;
- Absenteeism and tardiness
- Improving and utilizing skills;
- Policies; Rules and Regulations;
- Supervisors/Worker Relationship
- Job Satisfaction.
- Employee's suggestions

Purpose of Agency Labor Management Committees (ALMCs)

Agency Labor Management Committees (ALMCs) provide a structured forum for addressing workplace issues that fall outside the scope of the Labor Agreement. These issues may include:

- Safety and health
- Working conditions
- Absenteeism and tardiness
- Rules and regulations
- Employee morale

The dynamics of workplace relationships—between employees and supervisors, and among peers—can often give rise to conflict. In many cases, **communication** serves as both the root cause and the potential solution. Ineffective conflict resolution approaches must be replaced with healthy dialogue and interpersonal skills. Communication and conflict resolution are teachable and essential tools—sometimes, all that's needed is to show employees how to engage respectfully and constructively.

Workshops Offered by VILMC

To support positive workplace transformation, the **Virgin Islands Labor Management Committee (VILMC)** offers targeted workshops on:

- Management and Employee Rights & Responsibilities
- Conflict Management
- Contract Administration
- Grievance Handling

- **Mediation**
- **Supervisor-Steward Relationships**
- **Workplace Violence**
- **Dealing with Difficult Employees**

Labor Law Consultants & Training Specialists

Attorney Archie Jennings- He was past Legal Counsel to District 2A, AMO, Supervisors Union International of Firefighters, VI Nursing Association on St. Thomas and St. John, American Federation of Teachers, WAPA, Professional Technical Employee Union, and United Steel Workers. Attorney Jennings is a certified mediator for the District Court of the Virgin Islands. He is the Managing Attorney for the Disability Rights Center of the Virgin Islands which includes litigation of Class Action Cases. The emphasis of his law practice is Labor, Employment and Civil Rights Law.

Alscess Lewis-Brown- is a seasoned human resource professional, who has extensive experience in labor relations. Ms. Lewis-Brown years of experience in this area span more than twenty-five years working in both the public sector and the private sector. Her early work life in this area began as an administrator with Los Angeles Community Colleges Overseas while in Okinawa, Japan; however, as a young professional, she worked as a personnel service's coordinator at Martin Marietta Alumina. Later, she worked as the personnel manager for Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority. After five years, she worked at, Hess Oil Virgin Islands Corp as the personnel coordinator, with responsibilities for labor relations and recruitment. She has work as the Human Resources Director at the Virgin Islands Department of Education, and Virgin Islands Police Department. In the academic circles, she is a teacher and author. Ms. Brown has been an adjunct instructor at the University of the Virgin Islands for mor than twenty years.

Commissioner Guy Serota- Commissioner Serota has served with the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) for more than 25 years, mediating disputes and leading trainings across a wide range of sectors—including construction, manufacturing, utilities, oil and gas, maritime, retail, and service industries. His background includes roles as a labor paralegal, business agent with the Operating Engineers, and staff representative for the Communication Workers of America. His deep expertise in mediation and arbitration has supported labor-management cooperation nationwide.

EMPLOYEE INQUIRIES

Through its work and training across various departments, the **Virgin Islands Labor Management Committee (VILMC)** receives daily inquiries from employees and supervisors seeking guidance on workplace challenges. While responding to individual concerns is not the Committee's primary focus, VILMC consistently assists callers by clarifying grievance procedures and promoting respectful, solution-focused communication between subordinates and supervisors.

VILMC is highly regarded in this role because it maintains a neutral stance while advocating a collaborative posture toward management: **the goal is not to “win”—it's to resolve.** When issues are settled constructively, everyone benefits—and management truly succeeds.

BUDGET REQUEST FOR FY2026

The Governor has recommended a budget allocation of **\$200,000** for the Virgin Islands Labor Management Committee (VILMC) for the fiscal year **October 1, 2025, to September 30, 2026**. This funding will support the continuation and expansion of **free workplace training workshops** across government agencies.

To meet increasing demand and broaden our reach, we respectfully request an **additional \$65,000**. This supplemental funding will enable VILMC to deliver more comprehensive training programs focused on conflict resolution, supervisor-steward relations, employee rights and responsibilities, and other key areas critical to workplace effectiveness and morale.

Would you like me to format this as part of a presentation or budget proposal summary? I can style it to suit your audience.

ACCOUNT TITLE	PROJECTED AMOUNT	JUSTIFICATION
Executive Director,	\$75,000.00	Two Full-Time Employees
Executive Assistant,	\$45,000.00	One Full-Time Employees
Custodial Services	\$ 7,000.00	
Capital Outlays	\$ 5,000.00	Copier
Fringe Benefits	\$11,000.00	Social Security & Medicaid
Supplies	\$10,000.00	Office Supplies, Equipment Maintenance and Repairs, Postage
Professional Services	\$18,000.00	Consultants, Presenters Training, Fees, Per Diem, etc.
Communication	\$10,000.00	Telephone, Internet, Fax
Travel	\$30,000.00	Inter-Island, and Off-Island
Training	\$ 30,000.00	
Rent	\$24,000.00	Office Space, Conference Room & Common Area
Requested Budget Total	\$265,000.00	

PERSONNEL LISTING

The VI Labor Management Committee has two full-time employees, and one part-time custodian worker, to cover the daily operations of the organization.

TITLE	SALARY	HOURLY PAID
Executive Director	\$75,000.00	
Executive Assistant	\$45,000.00	
Custodian (Part-Time)	\$ 7,000.00 (\$18.00)	

RENTAL LISTING

The VILMC leases an office. This office occupies commercial rental space leased by St. Thomas Properties Ltd., at #8000 Nisky Center, Suite 740B St. Thomas, VI. 00802. The monthly rental amount of one thousand and seven hundred seventy-five dollars and sixty-eight cents (\$1,775.68), two hundred and eighteen dollars and twenty-four cents (\$218.24) for common area charges that include electricity and air conditioning. The rental space is approximately 496 square feet. This includes a 96 sq. ft. conference room, where some workshops and union meetings are conducted.

CONTRACTS MONTHLY CHARGES

CONTRACTS & MONTHLY CHARGES	
ADT	\$32.00
VIYA Telephone Services	\$409.00
VIYA WIRELESS INTERNET	\$100.00