GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FY 2027 BUDGET PRESENTATION

Bridging the Gap, Sustaining the Mission: "Resilient Service and Strategic Stewardship for the Virgin Islands"

Testimony By:
COMMISSIONER AVERIL E. GEORGE

Presented To:
36TH LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON BUDGET, APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCE

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

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I. INTRODUCTION & OPENING PROTOCOL

Good Morning Honorable Chairman **Senator Novelle E. Francis,** Jr., Vice Chair, members of the Committee on Budget, Appropriations, and Finance, other distinguished Senators present, my Department of Human Services leadership team, dedicated staff, support volunteers, and the listening and viewing public across our territory.

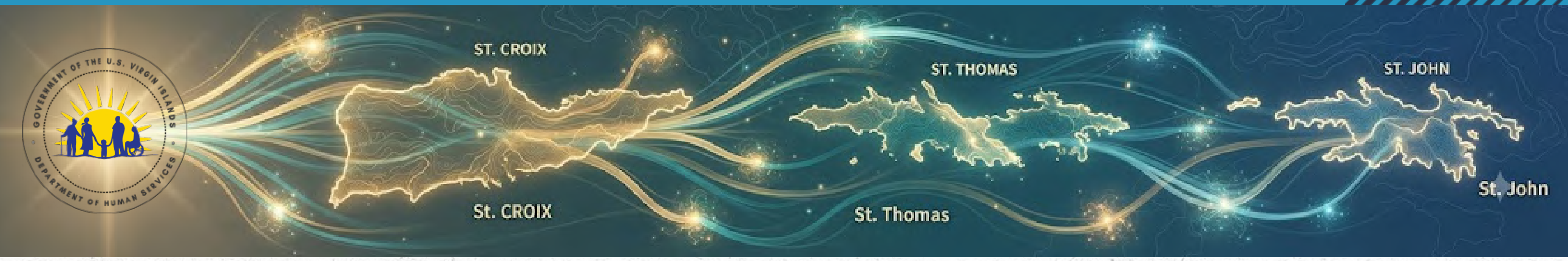
I am **Averil E. George,** Commissioner of the Virgin Islands Department of Human Services (VIDHS). In the well with me today are Assistant Commissioner **Carla Benjamin** and Assistant Commissioner **Taetia Phillips-Dorsett;** Chief Financial Officer **Lydia Magras Purcell**; Chief Legal Counsel **Frederick Norford;** Deputy Commissioner of Human Resources and Labor Relations **Rolda Mason;** Deputy Commissioner of Operations for St. Thomas and St. John **Sean Georges**; and Deputy Commissioner of Operations for St. Croix **Hugh Nicholas.** Also accompanying us are our Chief Procurement Officer **Laura Dennin;** Special Project Manager **Akilah O'Brien**, and key division administrators and directors who drive our daily operations.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to present the proposed **Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget** for the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Human Services.

II. OUR MISSION, MANDATE & COMMUNITY REACH

Under Title 3 of the V.I. Code, DHS is mandated to protect our most vulnerable citizens. While old estimates claimed we served one-third of the Territory, today's data reveals a stark reality, DHS directly supports **46% of all Virgin Islanders.** That is nearly ***half*** of our 87,000 resident community. Behind every **line item** presented to you today Senators, stands a **Virgin Islander in need:** a senior holding onto their dignity through a simple hot meal, a mother or father striving to build a better life because they now have reliable child care, or a young teenager on our streets, desperately seeking safety from harm.

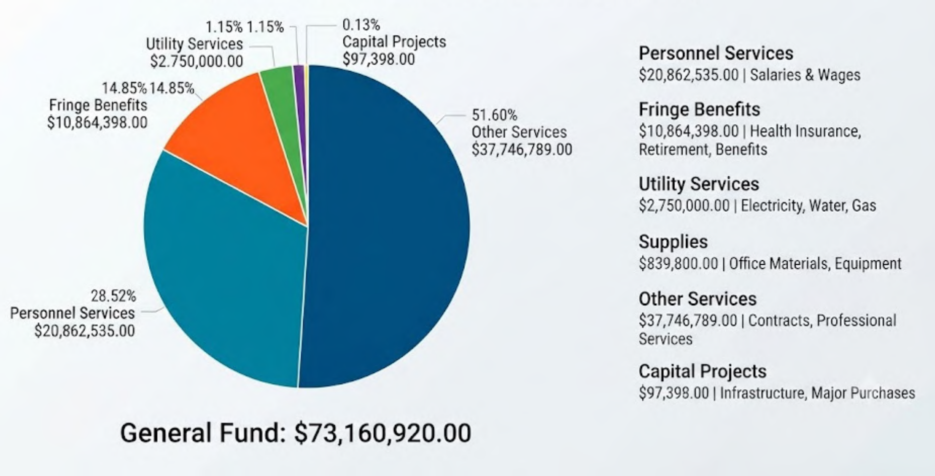
This budget is ***not*** a spreadsheet—it is our solemn commitment to the people we serve. The fiscal headwinds before us are real, but our resolve is absolute. With your legislative partnership, DHS will stand strong, bridge the gap, and protect the people who need us most.



III. FY2027 BUDGET OVERVIEW:

For Fiscal Year 2027, the Department of Human Services is requesting a total combined operating budget of $**200,976,727.00** across local and federal funding streams. This total reflects a normalized realignment of our federal grant portfolio **to $128,389,652.00** as disaster and pandemic funds have been fully drawn down and utilized, leaving general availability tied to our statutory federal ceilings. To align with this transition, our local General Fund request is **$72,587,075.00**—representing a local investment adjustment of +**$7,445,489.00** (or +**11.43%**) over FY2026.

This local footprint is built on **$72,587,075.00** for everyday departmental operations, alongside **$545,000.00** in miscellaneous General Fund appropriations dedicated to community and special projects—which includes **$500,000.00** for the Energy Crisis Elder/Other program, **$45,000.00** for the DHS Centennial Living Treasures initiative.



The General Fund allocation directly anchors our personnel, daily facilities maintenance, professional service contracts, and mandatory local matching requirements. Specifically, the FY2027 General Fund for DHS is broken down into the following categories: Personnel Services at **$20,862,535.00**, Fringe Benefits at **$10,864,398.00**, Utility Services at **$2,750,000.00**, Supplies at **$839,800.00**, Other Services at **$37,746,789.00**, and Capital Projects at **$97,398.00**, for a total General Fund allocation of **$73,160,920.00**.

(FY2026 Revised vs. FY2027 Recommended)

Expenditure Category	FY2026 Revised	FY2027	Net Change ($)	% Change
Personnel Services	$19,556,499.00	$20,288,690.00	+$732,191.00	+3.74%
Fringe Benefits	$9,587,578.00	$10,864,398.00	+$1,276,820.00	+13.32%
Supplies	$952,111.00	$839,800.00	-$112,311.00	-11.80%
Other Services	$36,432,527.00	$37,746,786.00	+$1,314,259.00	+3.61%
Capital Projects	$192,812.00	$97,398.00	-$95,414.00	-49.49%
Utility Services	$2,625,000.00	$2,750,000.00	+$125,000.00	+4.76%
GENERAL FUND	$65,715,431.00	$72,587,075.00	+$6,871,644.00	+10.46%




V.FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCES

DHS manages a multi-funded, highly integrated, social services infrastructure supported by a total federal grant portfolio of **$128,389,652.00** for Fiscal Year 2027. These federal funds are awarded across 34 active grant streams administered through federal partner agencies. Major federal grant categories supporting our core agency operations include:

- **Medicaid & Healthcare:** Medicaid Assistance Program (MAP) claims, FMAP matching, Medicare Part D, and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).
- **Early Childhood & Child Care:** Head Start, CCDF Block Grants, and child care mandatory/matching funds.
- **Food Security & Public Assistance:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP Admin/E&T), Social Services Block Grant (SSBG), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) TANF, and Adult Assistance grants.
- **Child Welfare & Protection:** Promoting Safe & Stable Families, Chafee Foster Care, and Child Abuse/Neglect state grants.
- **Senior, Disability & Rehabilitation:** Vocational Rehabilitation, Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), Elder Justice, and Administration for Community Living awards. (ACL)
- **Territorial Development & Victim Support:** OIA Economic/Social Development USDOJ OVW Sexual Assault Services Program Formula Grant and USDOJ OVC Crime Victim Compensation grants.

A comprehensive listing of active **federal grants** is provided in the attached FY2027 appendix, designated as **Active Federal Grants Ledger (FY2027).**

2. Local Miscellaneous & Subgrantee Appropriations (FY2027)

DHS administers a diverse portfolio of local sub-grantee and miscellaneous appropriations totaling **$2,845,000.00** funded through the Miscellaneous section of the General Fund for Fiscal Year 2027. These local dollars directly empower non-profit community partner organizations delivering vital safety-net services across St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John.

A comprehensive listing of active **Subgrantee Appropriations** is provided in the attached FY2027 appendix, designated as **Subgrantee Appropriations (FY2027)**

VI. FEDERAL LEGISLATION OUTLOOK: H.R. 1 COMPLIANCE

Our FY2027 budget stays within local funding limits, but DHS is actively managing major operational changes required by new federal rules under **H.R. 1** (**The One Big Beautiful Bill Act**)**:**

- **Medicaid Retroactive Coverage Restrictions:** Limits backdated Medicaid coverage to one month for expansion populations and two months for non-expansion populations.

- **Asset & Citizenship Verification Mandates: I**mplements strict verification rules restricting Federal Matching Funds (FMAP) for enrollees with unverified citizenship status.

- **SNAP ABAWD Work Requirements:** Enforces new federal work requirement tracking for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) and updates utility allowance formulas.

- **SNAP Administrative Cost-Share Cut** (Section 10106): Beginning in FY2027, the federal share of SNAP administrative operational costs drops from 50% down to 25%. This non-waivable reduction doubles the Territory's required local matching burden from 50% to 75% to maintain core SNAP operations, outreach, and system planning. This reduction applies only to administrative and operational expenses. It does not reduce the monthly SNAP food benefit amounts received by eligible households.

- **Territorial Protections Maintained: I**mportantly, in FY27 the Virgin Islands remains exempt from federal work requirement caps under Medicaid expansion and provider tax phase-downs, maintaining local administrative flexibility.

VII. WORKFORCE & LABOR RELATIONS

As of June 30, 2026, the Department's active workforce stands at **573** employees territory-wide, reflecting a slight reduction compared to 582 employees during the same period last year. Our personnel remains strategically distributed across both districts:

- **St. Croix District: 305** employees
- **St. Thomas / St. John District: 268** employees

Classifications & Funding Allocations:

- **By Classification: 468** Classified union personnel, **10** Classified non-union personnel, and **95** Exempt staff.
- By Funding Source: **293** Federally funded positions and **280** General Fund positions.

Separations:

- **Deceased:** 3 (2 STX; 1 STT)
- **Resignations:** 20 (9 STX; 11 STT)
- **Retirements:** 12 (9 STX; 3 STT)
- **Dismissals:** 1 (STT)

Our workforce is further supported by 74 Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) participants (39 on St. Croix and 35 on St. Thomas/St. John) and approximately 20 program volunteers providing critical operational support.

VIDHS actively works alongside six **(6) collective bargaining units** to maintain workplace equity and stability.

- **Virgin Islands Workers Union** (VIWU)
- **Seafarers International Union** (SIU) Masters
- **United Steelworkers** (USW) Supervisors
- **United Steelworkers** (USW) Masters
- **Seafarers International Union** (SIU - Corr Officers)
- **Law Enforcement Supervisors Union** (LESU)

In coordination with the Office of Collective Bargaining (OCB), the Department is actively awaiting scheduled dates to advance contract negotiations for four (4) units: VIWU, SIUM, USWM, and USW Supervisors. Additionally, all negotiated salary increases and pending retroactive payments for USW Masters were completed earlier in FY2026.

Implementation of Statutory Minimum Baseline Adjustments

The Department has successfully brought all personnel into full compliance with the statutory baseline mandate established under Bill No. **36-0053** - Act No. **8831**.

All **$35,000** baseline salary adjustments have been fully processed for approximately **105** employees to ensure full compliance with the statutory baseline mandate established under Bill No. 36-0053 - Act No. 8831, and all associated retroactive payments have been accounted for. However, federal grant allocations—which subsidize significant portions of our Head Start and Senior Care payrolls—**did not** automatically increase to absorb these wage increases. Consequently, DHS must now rely on an expanded local General Fund allocation to **bridge this salary differential, cover the resulting fringe** benefit increases, **and prevent severe operational deficits** across our grant-funded operations.

While we are on the subject of our incredible DHS workforce, we are privileged to celebrate two exceptional public servants on our team who truly embody this standard of excellence and selfless service. It is my distinct honor to formally recognize our **2026 DHS Employees of the Year:**

For the St. Thomas-St. John District: We proudly recognize **Yvette Henry, Community Affairs Coordinator in the Office of the Commissioner.** In her role, Yvette works tirelessly to strengthen the connection between DHS staff and the community, helping to keep residents informed about DHS programs and services. She also serves as the Department's **ESF #6 Emergency Disaster Lead**, helping coordinate critical support for individuals and families during times of emergency and disaster. Her leadership and passion for service make her an invaluable part of DHS.

For the St. Croix District: We proudly recognize **Maria Colon-Clarke, Office Manager at the Herbert Grigg Home for the Aged.** Maria is a pivotal force behind the daily operations of the Home, ensuring that both staff and residents are supported. Ms. Colon-Clarke was also a critical staffer involved in the Queen Louise Home for the Aged resident transition to the Palms Court Harborview temporary location. **Her dedication** helps create a safe, organized, and compassionate environment where our elderly residents receive the dignity, care, and respect they deserve.

Congratulations to **Yvette and Maria**, and to **our entire DHS team across St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John—thank you.** Long before sunrise and well after dark, you do the quiet, heart-centered work that holds our community together. You hold the fragile hands of our seniors, wipe the tears of our youngest children, and ensure no family faces their darkest hour alone. This isn't just a job to you—it is a deep calling. You **give your whole hearts t**o this territory every single day, and you are the **true heartbeat of this agency.**

1. Office of Child Care & Regulatory Services (OCCRS)

Divisional Financial Summary

Total Divisional Allocation: $8,600,855.00

- **Personnel Services:** $1,337,781.00
- **Fringe Benefits:** $769,917.00
- **Supplies:** $673,881.00
- **Other Services** (Subsidies & Operations): $5,759,276.00 ($5,334,276.00 Federal + $425,000.00 General Fund)
- **Capital Projects:** $60,000.00

OCCRS licenses and monitors all **early childhood facilities, summer camps, and home-based providers** for children **up to age 12** territory-wide. Backed by **$6.82 Million i**n federal CCDF grants, OCCRS administers direct child care subsidies set at the 100th percentile of market rates (ranging from $**429 to $725/month** depending on a child's age and type of care) to ensure equitable access to quality early learning environments.

Currently our territory-wide child care network includes **106 providers**: **97 Formal Providers - licensed facilities** and **9 Informal Providers** - **Family, Friend, and Neighbor** (FFN) caregivers. Of these, **46 providers, (43.4%)** participate in our CCDF subsidy program, complemented by **54 approved summer camps** offering seasonal care across St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John.

Island	Formal Providers (Licensed Facilities)	Informal Providers (Family, Friend & Neighbor - FFN)	Total Provider Network	CCDF Participating Providers	Approved Summer Camps
St. Croix	29	9	**38**	23	34
St. Thomas	59	0	**59**	21	19
St. John	9	0	**9**	2	1
TOTAL	**97**	**9**	**106**	**46** *(43.4% of Network)*	**54**

CCDF Subsidy Reach & Essential Worker Expansion

By amending the state plan to permanently adopt COVID allowances for members of our community who provide essential services, **OCCRS i**s now helping more working parents, frontline staff, and essential workers in the USVI obtain child care assistance:

- **Direct Child Care Assistance:** At the end of June 2026, the OCCRS has provided childcare subsidies for 859 of whom, 261 were summer students children across eligible families (STX: **483** (**205 summer**) children/ families; STT: **376** children (**56 summer**) / families; STJ: **5 children 3 families**).
- Support for Essential Workers: 198 essential worker families (**109 STX, 86 STT,35 STJ**) who previously exceeded income thresholds are now enrolled in child care assistance.
- Summer Camp Oversight: We vetted, approved, and monitored **54** summer camps (34 STX**, 19 STT, 1 STJ**) to give children safe, structured places to learn while school was out.

2. Office of Head Start

Divisional Financial Summary

FY2027 Recommendation: $15,357,903.00

- **Local General Fund (0100):** $5,927,271.00
- **Federal Grants (3100):** $8,304,673 (Funded primarily through F72X4 - Head Start)
- **Personnel Services:** $8,866,614.00 ($3,853,200.00 General Fund + $7,823,263Federal)
- **Fringe Benefits:** $5,136,223.00 ($2,074,071.00 General Fund + $ 3,229,288 .00 Federal)
- **Supplies & Other Services:** $ 401,117.00

The Office of Head Start administers comprehensive early childhood education, health, nutrition, and disability services across the Territory under the ***Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007***. Head Start promotes school readiness for low-income children ages **three (3) to five (5)** while involving parents as primary decision-makers through the Head Start Policy Council.

Enrollment & Demographic Profile

Total Funded Enrollment: 637 preschoolers (340 on St. Croix and 297 on St. Thomas/St. John). During the preceding school year, the program served 647 children across 603 families.

Family Structure & Household Profile:

- **Single-Parent Households:** 473 families (78%)
- **Two-Parent Households:** 130 families (21%)
- **Employed Parents** (Full, Part-Time, or Seasonal): 532 families (84%)
- **Unemployed Parents:** 172 families (27%)
- **Parents with High School Diploma** / GED: 285 parents (47%)
- **Healthcare Coverage:** 339 children (53%) enrolled in (MAP).

Operational & Workforce Context

Heading into FY2027, the Preschool Services Unit is anchored by a specialized workforce of 164 **Allocated FTEs**—including 38 Preschool Teachers, 34 Preschool Teacher Assistants, 27 Food Service Workers, and comprehensive administrative, health, and transportation personnel—operating instructional classrooms, food service facilities, and transportation networks across the districts to maintain full service delivery and classroom capacity. However, the program faces significant operational headwinds:

- **Staffing & Capacity (STT/STJ):** Teacher shortages and an approximate $2,046,835 million grant reduction threaten the opening of five (5) classrooms for the upcoming program year.
- **Enrollment (STX):** Low enrollment and minimal waitlist activity impact overall program targets and service delivery expectations.

Head Start Disaster Recovery Capital Rebuild Portfolio ($42.45M Total)

Backed by our **$42M disaster recovery allocation,** infrastructure progress remains strong.

Building on the opening of Cruz Bay Head Start on St. John, momentum continues across our flagship sites The Office of Head Start has **five (5)** new facilities scheduled to open across the territory for the 2026-2027 program year, expanding access to services and significantly improving the learning environment for children and staff.

Anna's Hope Head Start (STX): 99% Complete ($7.0M)

Concordia Head Start
(STX): 99% Complete ($7.0M)

Minetta Mitchell Nutrition Center
(STT): 98% Complete ($4.2M)

Dilsa Capdeville Head Start Facility
STT): 90% Complete ($11.0M)

Lindbergh Head Start
(STT): 97% Complete ($3.0M)

The program is also in ongoing communication with the **Virgin Islands Energy Office** (**VIEO**) regarding its approved applications to install solar power systems and battery storage across both new and existing Head Start facilities. This initiative will strengthen energy resilience, reduce operational disruptions, and support long‑term sustainability.

3. Office of Intake & Emergency Services (OIES)

Divisional Financial Summary

- **Total OIES Allocation: $1,648,276.00** (General Fund + Federal Child Abuse & Neglect / SSBG Grants)
  - **Personnel Services:** $910,568.00 ($270,198.00 General Fund + $640,370.00 Federal)
  - **Fringe Benefits:** $448,694.00 ($117,024.00 General Fund + $331,670.00 Federal)
  - **Utilities & Operational Expenses:** $289,014.00 ($214,014.00 General Fund + $75,000.00 Federal)

The **Office of Intake and Emergency Services** (**OIES**) is sustained by a combined FY2027 operating budget of **$1,648,276.00,** comprising **$601,236.00** in local General Fund support and $**1,047,040.00** in specialized federal funding through the Social Services Block Grant.

Serving as the **central 24/7 gateway** for receiving, screening, and investigating all reports of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation across the Territory, OIES also manages emergency welfare assistance inquiries, family preservation intake assessments, adult indigent burial assistance applications, and mandatory background checks overseen directly by the Administrator. The division provides immediate crisis aid and targeted in-home support to stabilize high-risk families:

- **Emergency Welfare Services:** Assists able-bodied households with no children. Contracts with local merchants to provide essential furniture and appliances such as beds, refrigerators and stoves to facilitate daily living, provides emergency travel assistance to return errant destitute nonresidents to their home jurisdiction, provides emergency rental and utility assistance to relieve and prevent homelessness and assist the unhoused.
- **Family Preservation Services:** Assists families with children. Delivers in-home wraparound services, parenting education, counseling, and direct resource linkages to preserve and stabilize families. Services also include concrete services available via the Emergency Welfare Services program.

For FY26, **OIES** has deployed **modernized call-routing and intake tracking tools** to accelerate crisis dispatch and case management across all three islands. The Division has also expanded inter-agency mandated reporter training for educators, medical personnel, and law enforcement to ensure timely, legally compliant reporting of suspected child maltreatment

4. Division of Children & Family Services (DCFS)

Divisional Financial Summary

- **Total DCFS Allocation: $6,200,000.00** (General Fund + Title IV-B Foster Care & Child Welfare Grants)
  - **Personnel Services:** $2,570,000.00 (Funds ongoing case managers, adoption specialists, and licensing officers)
  - **Fringe Benefits:** $1,315,000.00
  - **Utilities & Operational Expenses: $**2,315,000.00 (Covers monthly foster care board payments, court-ordered placements, medical/psychological evaluations and kinship stipends.

DCFS manages **ongoing child protection, foster care placement, adoption services, family reunification, and court-mandated supervision** for children who have been removed from unsafe home environments. DCFS works directly with family courts, foster parents, relative caregivers, and community residential partners to ensure long-term safety, permanency, and well-being for vulnerable youth in the territory. There are **31 children** supported in foster care across the territory (**14 i**n STT/STJ and **13** in STX). There are **24 children** in residential care (**13** in STT and **11** in STX). Three children are in care outside of the territory, including one in a family home setting.

Core Operations & Community Partner Support

- **Foster Care & Permanency:** DCFS oversees youth in traditional foster care, kinship placements, and specialized group homes territory-wide.
- **Kinship & Adoption Services:** DCFS Recruits, trains, and licenses foster families while managing adoption subsidies and independent living transitions for older youth.

5. Division of Intervention & Prevention Services (DIPS) & YRC

Divisional Financial Summary

- **Total Divisional Allocation: $1,648,276.00**
- **Personnel Services:** $895,420.00
- **Fringe Benefits:** $462,180.00
- **Utilities & Operational Expenses:** $290,676.00 (Covers YRC 24/7 security, youth counseling contracts, food/supplies, and facility utilities)

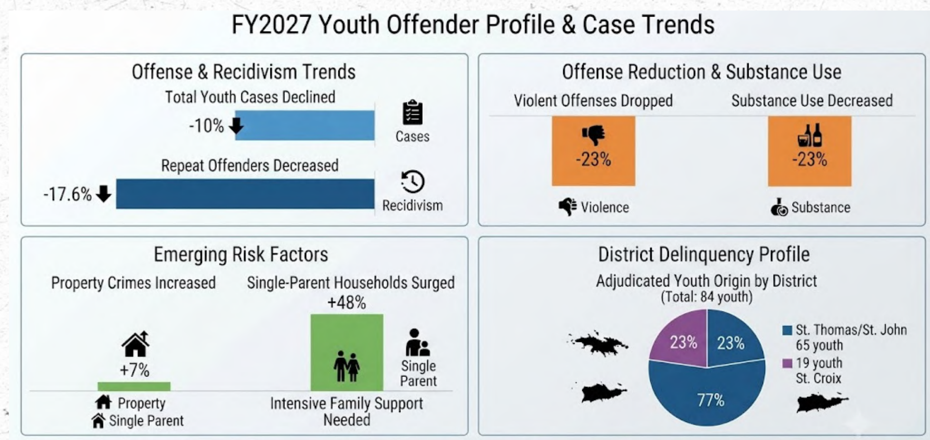
DIPS addresses at-risk, **Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS),** and adjudicated youth, managing community-based interventions and operations at **the Youth Rehabilitation Center (YRC).** Supported by a local budget baseline, DIPS serves over 120 local youth annually through alternative sentencing, counseling, and rehabilitation.

Youth Rehabilitation Center (YRC)
Sustained by an FY2027 local General Fund budget of **$3,269,992.00**, the Youth Rehabilitation Center provides a **24-hour** secure detention facility for **pre-trial** and **adult-transferred** youth offenders. The facility is operated by **22** staff members, anchored by a frontline security team of **14** Correction Officers and **1** Acting Chief Correction Officer whose round-the-clock operations frequently drive high overtime demands, alongside 7 specialized support and administrative staff.

In FY2026 YTD, DIPS served **108** total youths across the Territory (**73** in St. Thomas/St. John and **35** in St. Croix), representing a **10.7% decrease** (-13 cases) compared to FY2025 (121 youths):

Metric / Youth Classification	FY2026 YTD (STT-STJ / STX)	% of FY26 Total	Primary Operational Focus
Adjudicated Youth	**84** (65 STT-STJ / 19 STX)	**77.8%**	Core delinquency & court-mandated supervision
At-Risk Youth	**21** (7 STT-STJ / 14 STX)	**19.4%**	Community diversion & early intervention counseling
Persons In Need of Supervision (PINS)	**3** (1 STT-STJ / 2 STX)	**2.8%**	Status offense monitoring & family support
TOTAL YOUTH SERVED	**108** (73 STT-STJ / 35 STX)	**100.0%**	Overall 10.7% Caseload Decrease (-13 cases)

Juvenile Justice Trends Analysis (FY2025 vs. FY2026)
Between FY25 and FY26, severe delinquency dropped significantly territory-wide, despite emerging household risk factors:



- **Decrease in Overall & Repeat Offenses:** Total youth cases declined by **10%**, accompanied by a **17.6%** decrease in repeat offenders.
- **Reduction in Violent Offenses & Substance Use:** Admissions of youth with violent offenses dropped by **23%**, alongside a **23%** decrease in alcohol and drug users.
- **Increase in Property Crimes & Single-Parent Household Acuity**: Conversely, property-related offenses saw a **7%** increase, while the proportion of youth originating from single-parent households surged by **48%**, highlighting the need for intensive family support during detention transition and release.
- **District Delinquency Profile:** Of the 84 adjudicated youth requiring secure YRC detention or court supervision, **77%** originated in the St. Thomas/St. John district (65 youth) and **23%** in St. Croix (19 youth).

6. Office of Residential & Interstate Compact Affairs (ORICA)

Divisional Financial Summary

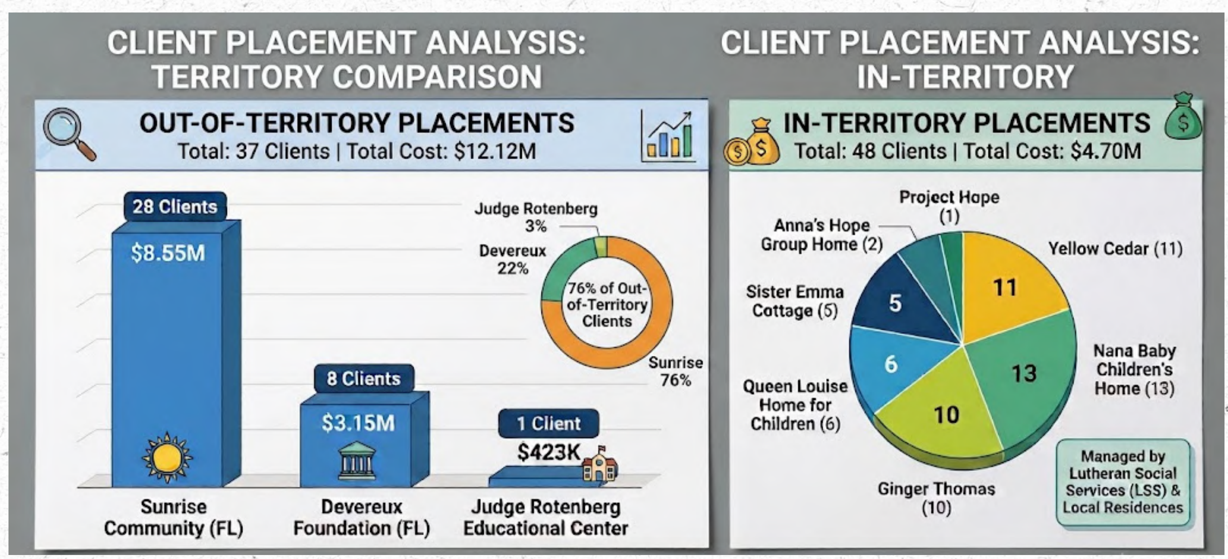
Total FY2027
Recommendation: $16,801,409.00

- Local General Fund (0100): $16,626,541.00
- Federal Grants (3100): $174,868.00
- **Personnel Services:** $181,368.00
- **Fringe Benefits**: $112,392.00
- **Supplies:** $3,000.00
- **Other Services** (Residential Treatment Contracts): $16,504,649.00 (General Fund)

ORICA manages specialized **24-hour residential placements** for vulnerable children and adults with severe developmental disabilities. Local General Funds (**$23.01M** total professional services line) support **72** total clients in care (**37** placed out-of-territory and **35** locally)

Beyond daily case management, **ORICA** achieves transformative outcomes for the Territory's most medically fragile residents. This past year, **ORICA** successfully facilitated and secured l**ife-saving brain surgery** for a **young man** who has lived with significant developmental disabilities since birth. This critical medical intervention completely altered the trajectory of his life—dramatically extending his life expectancy, **elevating his overall quality of life,** and enabling him to begin learning **sign language** and other enhanced methods of communication.

ORICA maintains continuous oversight across local and off-island facilities for **72** active residential clients:



- **Out-of-Territory Placements** (37 Clients | $12.12M):
  - **Sunrise Community (FL):** 28 clients ($8.55M)
  - **Devereux Foundation (FL):** 8 clients ($3.15M)
  - **Judge Rotenberg Educational Center:** 1 client ($423K)
- **In-Territory Placements** (48 Clients | $4.70M):
  - **Lutheran Social Services (LSS) & Local Residences:** Yellow Cedar (11), Ginger Thomas (10), Queen Louise Home for Children (6), Sister Emma Cottage (5), Nana Baby Children's Home (13), Anna's Hope Group Home (2) and Project Hope (1).

7. Division of Family Assistance (DFA)

Divisional Financial Summary

DFA Total Divisional Allocation: $16,801,409.00

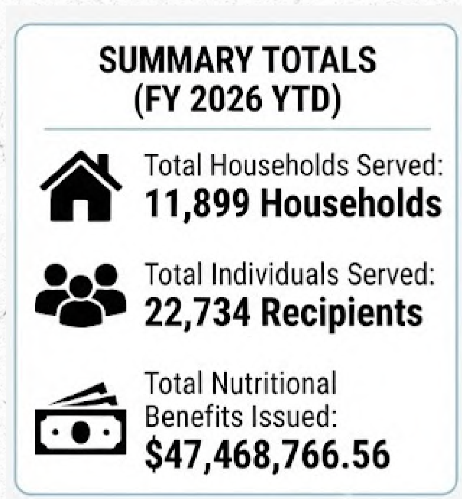
- **Personnel Services**: $4,820,000.00
- **Fringe Benefits:** $2,510,000.00
- **Utilities & Operational Expenses:** **$9,471,409.00** *(EBT transaction engine platform fees, direct welfare cash assistance, and ECAP utility assistance; regional office utilities covered via central accounts)*

The **Division of Family Assistance** (DFA) provides food, cash, medical, energy, and family support assistance to Virgin Islands residents. DFA delivers these needs-based eligibility benefits through **Electronic Benefit Transfer** (**EBT**) systems. During FY 2026 YTD, **23,718** total recipients received **$48,733,183.56** in combined food and cash assistance across the Territory.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is one of the Territory's primary prevention safety nets for low-income families. SNAP injects **$55 Million** to **$62 Million** annually directly into the USVI economy, preventing malnutrition while supporting local grocery retailers and job creation.

- **Total Households Served** (FY 2026 YTD): **11,899** Households
- **Total Individuals Served** (FY 2026 YTD): **22,734** Recipients
- **Total Nutritional Benefits Issued** (FY 2026 YTD): **$47,468,766.56**



SNAP Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Cash Assistance & AABD Programs

In FY 2026, **DFA** disbursed **$1,264,417** in direct aid across six cash assistance categories to **984** low-income, elderly, and disabled recipients.

- **TANF**: Disbursed **$76,115** to **102** individuals (**39** households; **26** adults, **76** children).
- **Aid to the Aged** (**AA**)**:** Provided **$417,953** to **299** low-income seniors.
- **Aid to the Blind** (**AB**): Issued **$24,528** to **20** blind residents.
- **Aid to the Disabled** (**AD**)**:** Delivered **$659,745** to **484** disabled residents.
- **General Tutor** (**GT**)**:** Provided **$9,912** to **9** recipients lacking standard TANF relationship documentation.
- **General Assistance** (**GD**): Disbursed **$76,164** in short-term disability aid to **70** recipients.

TANF Jobs Opportunity & Basic Skills (JOBS) Program

The **JOBS Program** assists TANF recipients in transitioning from cash dependency to self-sufficiency through education, vocational training, and work placements. Currently, **112 individuals** receive services through JOBS (**94** dependents and **18** heads of household).

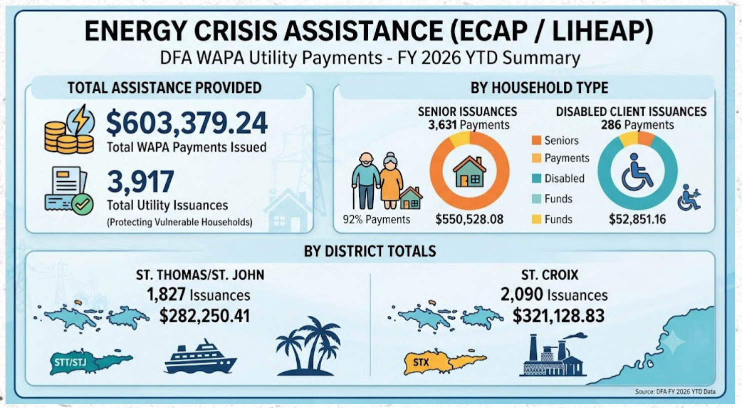
To meet federal outcome standards for employment, earnings, and credentialing, TANF JOBS enacted key reforms:

- **Digital & Financial Literacy:** Implemented digital skills instruction and specialized financial literacy classes.
- **Mental Health Integration:** Added state plan screenings, identifying **29% of clients** needing mental health support.
- **Work Mandates & Distance Learning:** Enforced **20–30** weekly participation hours (based on child age) and expanded online training via Metrix Learning.

Energy Crisis Assistance (ECAP / LIHEAP)

DFA has issued **$603,379.24** in direct **WAPA electrical utility** payments during FY **2026** YTD across **3,917 utility issuances** to protect vulnerable households:

- **Senior Issuances:** 3,631 payments ($550,528.08)
- **Disabled Client Issuances:** 286 payments ($52,851.16)
- **District Totals:** St. Thomas/St. John (**$282,250.41** across **1,827** issuances) | St. Croix (**$321,128.83** across **2,090** issuances).



Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP)

Funded by the federal **Administration for Children and Families** (ACF), VI PREP delivers the evidence-based ***Reducing the Risk*** curriculum in public schools through an **MOU with VIDE.**

The program trained **21 VIDE** educators and reached 255 students across **13 activities.** In Summer 2026, VI PREP expanded further, delivering career, financial, and digital literacy workshops across six summer camps to approximately **100 additional youth.**

8. Medical Assistance Program (Medicaid / MAP)

Divisional Financial Summary

Total Divisional Allocation: $**102,619,300.00**

- **Personnel Services:** $3,488,400.00
- **Fringe Benefits:** $1,934,702.00 (
- **Supplies:** $50,000.00
- **Other Services** (Claims & Operations): $96,308,777.00
- Capital Projects: $837,421.00

The Medical Assistance Program (**MAP**) administers territory-wide healthcare coverage for qualifying low-income individuals, families, seniors, and children. The division oversees medical management information systems (MMIS), claims processing, provider relations, eligibility determination, and program integrity initiatives to ensure compliance with federal Medicaid and CHIP guidelines. MAP manages a massive territorial healthcare delivery footprint, financing clinical care for **17,417 active members**

Program Metric	FY2026 / FY2027 Baseline	Primary Operational Impact
Total Covered Beneficiaries	17,417 Beneficiaries	Territory-wide indigent healthcare coverage
Allocated Operating Budget (Activity 72901)	$102,619,300.00	Combined local appropriation & federal matching drawdowns
Captured Federal CHIP Allotment	$12,041,667.00	Dedicated healthcare coverage for low-income children

Federal Enterprise Systems & FFP Funding Updates

FY2026 CMS Award: During FY 2026, the MAP program was awarded **$30,215,684.00** in enhanced Federal Financial Participation (**FFP**) funds for Medicaid Enterprise Systems Operations from CMS:

- **$3,950,067.00** awarded from Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA) funds at 100% funding (requiring no local match).
- **$15,455,988.00** funded at **90%** FFP.
- **$12,347,073.00** funded at **75%** FFP.

FY2027 Available Balance: The USVI has a total remaining balance of **$2,989,892.00** available to request for **Medicaid Enterprise System** enhancements in FY 2027 from the CAA funds expiring at the end of the fiscal year.

- **Multi-Year FFP Securing:**
  - FY2027: **Secured $20,856,279.00 in** FFP (**$9,055,233.00** at 90% FFP and $1**0,217,520.00** at 75% FFP).
  - FY2028: Secured **$15,455,988.00** ($8,893,152.00 at 90% FFP and **$6,562,836.00** at 75% FFP).

Federal Matching Percentages (FMAP) DHS leverages favorable Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP) to maximize federal reimbursements and minimize local fund exposure:

Program	Federal Share	Local Share
Adult Group	90%	10%
Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)	85%	15%
Medicaid (Fee-for-Service)	83%	17%

- **Standard Medicaid: 83% Federal / 17% Local** (Covers low-income families, elderly, and disabled residents)
- **Adult Expansion Group: 90% Federal / 10% Local** (Covers childless adults up to 138% of the Federal Poverty Level)
- **CHIP: 85% Federal / 15% Local** (Financed through $12.04M in federal CHIP grant funding)

Healthcare Provider Network & Clearinghouse Disbursements

Territorial Public Hospitals & Health Facilities:

- **Roy L. Schneider Hospital (SRMC - St. Thomas):** Supporting inpatient care, emergency room services, surgical procedures, and outpatient diagnostics | Claims Total Paid YTD: **$6,860,060.40** Number Claims Processed YTD: **6,131 |**
- **Governor Juan F. Luis Hospital & Medical Center (JFL - St. Croix):** Supporting acute inpatient care, emergency room stabilization, hemodialysis services, and specialized clinical care | Claims Total Paid YTD: **$3,453,115.01** | | Number Claims Processed YTD: **4,854 |**
- **Governor Juan F. Luis Hospital / ESRD:** Claims Total Paid YTD: **$234,971.46 |** Number Claims Processed YTD: **148 |**
- **DOH, Government of the VI (Charles Harwood Complex):** Claims Total Paid YTD: **$82,367.32** | | Number Claims Processed YTD: **806 |**

Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs):

- **Frederiksted Health Care, Inc. (St. Croix):** Prospective payment system (PPS) reimbursements supporting primary care, dental services, and preventative screenings | Claims Total Paid YTD: **$5,161,570.89 |** | Number Claims Processed YTD: **15,686 |**
- **St. Thomas East End Medical Center Corp. (St. Thomas):** Prospective payment system (PPS) reimbursements supporting primary care, dental services, and preventative screenings | Claims Total Paid YTD: **$1,015,258.29 |** Number Claims Processed YTD: **8,490** |**Myrah Keating Smith Community Hospital**: Claims Total Paid YTD: **$164,353.22** | | Number Claims Processed YTD: **403** |
- **Pharmacies & Off-Island Tertiary Care:** Sustains network reimbursements for local private physicians, independent pharmacies, medical equipment vendors, and off-island transfer facilities for acute specialized treatments unavailable in the Territory.

9. Division of Disabilities & Rehabilitation Services (DDRS)

Divisional Financial Summary

Total Divisional Allocation: $3,269,120.00

- **Personnel Services:** $1,240,000.00
- **Fringe Benefits**: $645,000.00
- **Utilities & Operational Expenses**: $1,384,120.00 (Client tuition, job placement contracts, and assistive technology; office utilities.)

During FY2026 YTD, the **DDRS Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program** invested **$146,251.69** directly into consumer-centered services to drive higher education, accessibility, and competitive workforce placement. Expenditures were strategically allocated across seven service categories, with the majority of funding directed toward higher education, assistive technology, and maintenance supports.

- **Primary Investment Pillars (85.6% of Total Funds):**
  - **4-Year University Support:** $59,642.32 (40.8%) – Postsecondary credentials and degree attainment.
  - Rehabilitation Technology: $35,369.02 (24.2%) – Adaptive equipment and assistive tech accommodations.
  - **Room & Board Maintenance:** $30,210.35 (20.7%) – Subsistence support enabling consistent participation.
- **Targeted Skill & Mobility Supports** (14.4% of Total Funds):
  - **Occupational/Vocational Training:** $15,375.00 (10.5%) – Industry certifications and job skills.
  - **Student Travel & Direct Access**: $5,300.00 (3.6%) – Transportation to training and educational sites.
  - **Assessment & Interpreter Services:** $355.00 (0.2%) – Target eligibility and communication support.

Unlike prior years dominated by initial assessment costs, FY26 spending strategically shifted toward direct postsecondary degree completion and rehabilitation technology.

2. Youth-Centric Demographic Footprint & Pre-ETS Outreach

DHS intake data shows that DDRS remains heavily focused on helping young people with disabilities prepare to enter the workforce. Through strong partnerships with the Department of Education (VIDE) and local Special Education units, youth under **25 account for 75.8% of all program referrals—including 36.4% under age 16, 33.3% between ages 16 and 18, and 6.1% between ages 19 and 24.**

Mirroring last year's trends, this steady demand highlights the territory's ongoing need for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), youth job training, career exploration, and customized planning for individuals with disabilities.

10. Senior Citizens Affairs (SCA)

Divisional Financial Summary

Total Divisional Allocation: $13,931,899.00

- **Personnel Services:** $5,650,000.00 (Covers 24/7 nurses, homemaker aides, and senior center staff)
- **Fringe Benefits**: $3,120,000.00
- **Utilities & Operational Expenses:** $5,161,899.00 (Meals on Wheels food procurement, 24/7 residential facility utilities at Herbert Grigg and Queen Louise, and off-island care at Casa de Salud)

Backed by an overall allocation of over **$13M** the **Division of Senior Citizens Affairs**(**SCA**) champions our territory's elders by delivering comprehensive direct care and safety-net services to safeguard the well-being and quality of life for thousands of seniors across the territory.

DHS Residential & Nursing Homes provide 24/7 institutional care, skilled clinical nursing, and residential housing for our most fragile elderly residents. To support this critical mission, the homes operate with a robust, dedicated staff of 91 full-time employees. This includes a specialized clinical team of **4** Registered Nurses, **12** Licensed Practical Nurses, and **29** Certified Nursing Assistants, ensuring 24/7 skilled care and supervision for our residents. The operational stability of these facilities is further secured by a recommended FY2027 General Fund budget o**f $6.13** Million, reflecting a **$1 Million** increase over the previous fiscal year to meet rising care demands.

- **Queen Louise Home for the Aged (St. Thomas):** Currently provides 24/7 care for **12 long-term residents.** To ensure absolute safety and continuous care during ongoing facility rebuilds, operations were safely transitioned to temporary quarters at Palm's Court / Harbour View.

- **Herbert Grigg Home for the Aged (St. Croix):** Delivers round-the-clock residential care, memory support, and clinical nursing for **26 long-term residents** on St. Croix.

Capital Portfolio: Beyond daily operations, the Division is actively managing a **$204 Million** combined **FEMA Public Assistance disaster recovery** rebuild portfolio. This includes **$131 Million** for the complete replacement of the Herbert Grigg Home **and $73 Million** for the new Queen Louise Home complex. Furthermore, the facility is leveraging **$2.9 Million** in Federal Grant funding (primarily through the Social Services Block Grant) to significantly upgrade supplies and enhance the quality of life for our aging population during this transition.

B. Senior Social Services, Nutrition & Community Care (**$1,830,000.00**)

This allocation delivers essential **home-based care, daily nutrition, and community center programming** across all three islands:

- **Meals on Wheels** (**Territory-Wide**)**:** Delivers daily nutritious meals directly to the homes of **601 homebound seniors** (**351 in STT/STJ and 250 in STX**)**.**
- **Information & Referral** (**I&R**)**:** Reached **4,504** seniors year-to-date through direct office intakes and community health expos; successfully processed **1,871** Senior IDs and **118** SPAP applications.
- **Homemaker Services:** The Elderly Social Services Unit (Homemaker Services) In FY26 DHS Homemaker services delivered in-home personal care and daily living support for **153** seniors, representing a **27.5%** growth in active monthly client maintenance.
- **Family Caregiver Support** (**VIFCSP**)**:** Supports **121** family caregivers and maintains 113 active cases with respite care, dementia groups, and financial stipends.
- **Community Senior Centers**: Provides daily congregate meals, social activities, and mobility supports **for 136** seniors across the Richmond Senior Center (**72** participants on STX), the STRIVE Center (**46** participants on STT), and the Adrian Center (**18** participants on STJ).

C. Adult Protective Services (**$1,230,000.00**)

Adult Protective Services is sustained by a combined FY2027 operating budget of **$1,233,620.00**, comprising **$828,314.00** in local General Fund support and **$405,306.00** in specialized federal grants—including the Social Services Block Grant (**$391,650.00**) and the Elder Justice Act – Adult Protective Services grant ($13,656.00).

- **Client Reach:** Provided direct crisis intervention, investigation, and protective services for 124 vulnerable adults year-to-date.
- **Operational Performance:** Successfully reduced the open active case backlog by **65.9%** (cutting open cases from **261** down to **89**) while maintaining a rapid **16-hour** average emergency response time across the territory.

D. Senior Employment Program - SCSEP994,593.00)

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (**SCSEP**) is sustained by a combined FY2027 operating budget of **$994,593.00**, comprising **$85,945.00** in local General Fund support and $908,648.00 from the Senior Community Service Employment grant.

- **Client Reach:** In FY26 SCSEP Expanded program enrollment to **89** active senior participants,

11. Office of Legal Counsel & MIS

Divisional Financial Summary

- **Total Divisional Allocation**: **$5,154,927.00** (Activity 72010 **Executive $2.99M**, Activity 72020 **Planning/Ops $662K,** Activity 72030 **HR $1.19M**, Legal Counsel **$313K)**
- **Personnel Services**: $2,850,000.00
- **Fringe Benefits**: $1,480,000.00
- **Utilities & Operational Expenses:** $824,927.00 (Legal research software, labor arbitration expenses, and central executive operations)

Office of Legal Counsel (Budgeted Allocation: $313,692.00)

The Office of Legal Counsel protects the Department's legal integrity, manages high-stakes administrative hearings, enforces vendor compliance, and oversees Criminal Victims Compensation and critical federal grant programs.

- **CVCC Oversight & Grants:** For FY2026 to date, the Office processed and paid out **$134,350 across 39 approved Crime Victims Compensation Commission (CVCC) applicants** and secured a $100,000/year, 2-year **LEPC grant** to fund a dedicated staff position.
- **Program Integrity & Hearings:** Legal Counsel has Interviewed candidates for a Hearing Officer position to establish a dedicated SNAP Administrative Hearing Office and issued formal complaints for Medicaid fraud hearings on St. Croix.
- **Labor, Contracts & Leases:** Legal has coordinated PERB defense strategies with VIDOJ; executed a CNA workforce training MOU with VIDOH; and finalized commercial leases (including Havensight and Tutu Park Mall) alongside annual DPP renewals.
- **Civil Rights & Compliance:** The Office has also **finalized** written public grievance procedures in collaboration with the VI Civil Rights Commission and maintained strict compliance regarding subpoenaed record disclosures.

Management Information Systems (MIS)

The MIS Division serves as the technological backbone of VIDHS, maintaining cyber resilience, network connectivity, and EBT transaction stability across all islands.

- **Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Migration:** Oversees network security protocols and manages IT infrastructure migrations for relocated regional hubs (including Palm's Court/Harbour View and DHS facilities).
- **EBT & Program System Operations:** Ensures 24/7 technical uptime for the territory's Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system, supporting SNAP and TANF benefit issuance without disruption to local retailers or client access.
- **Cross-Division Software Support:** Partners with program divisions to modernize legacy data tracking, including supporting system updates for the Senior Employment Program (SCSEP) and integrating procurement workflows into the GVI System.

12. Operations, Facility Management & Capital Rebuilds

Divisional Financial Summary

- **Total Operations & Facilities Allocation: $3,516,818.00**
  - **Personnel Services:** $410,000.00
  - **Fringe Benefits:** $212,000.00
  - **Capital Projects Line** $144,818.00
  - **Utilities:** $2,750,000.00

DHS manages one of the largest and most complex physical plant footprints in the Government of the Virgin Islands. Our operations encompass **24-hour residential long-term care facilities, secure juvenile detention centers, senior community centers, early childhood head start centers, and administrative service centers.**

Lease Management & Strategic Facility Consolidation

DHS balances state-owned real estate with strategically managed commercial leases to maintain administrative capacity and program delivery across all three islan

1. State-Owned Real Estate Holdings

- **St. Croix:** Estate Diamond Complex, Anna's Hope Complex, Youth Rehabilitation Center (YRC), and Herbert Grigg Home for the Aged.
- **St. Thomas:** Knud Hansen Complex (slated for $128M rebuild) and Queen Louise Home for the Aged.
- **St. John:** St. John Multi-Purpose Center in Cruz Bay.

2. Commercial Leasing Portfolio Summary

- **St. Croix District:** 8 active leased properties | **$948,603.80 annual rent**
- **St. Thomas & St. John District:** 6 active long-term properties (plus 1 temporary 9-month sheltering agreement at Palms Court) | **$1,512,539.39 annual rent**
- **Territory-Wide Total**: **14** active long-term leases | $**2,461,143.19 annual leasing commitment**

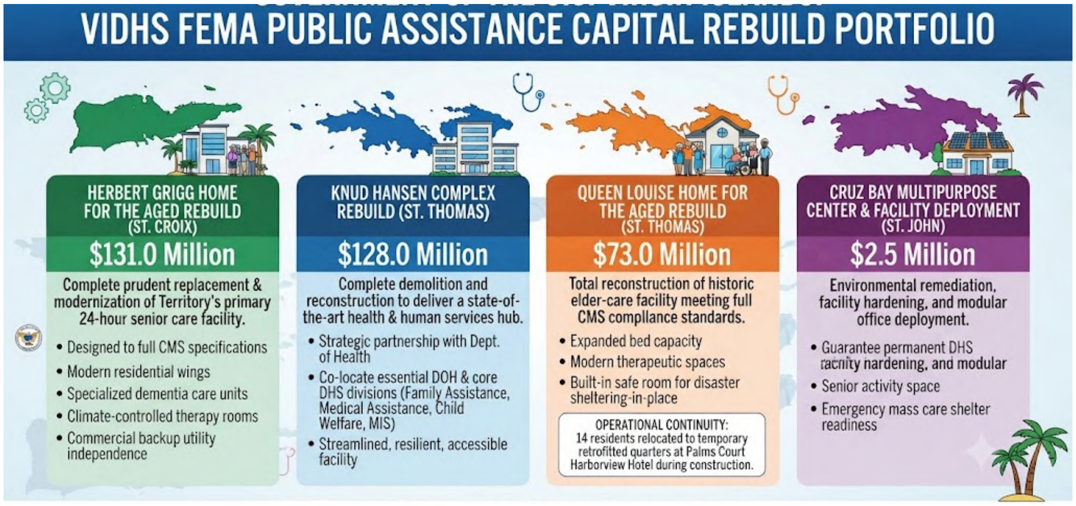
Maintenance, Fleet Operations & Emergency Power Infrastructure

The Maintenance and Transportation Unit serves as the operational backbone for day-to-day facilities upkeep, emergency power systems, and mobile service delivery across all three islands, operating within a broader **$3.99 Million budget** while actively managing approximately **$818,000.00** in targeted capital and equipment commitments:

- **Departmental Fleet Operations ($519,300):** Manages and services over 80 specialized agency vehicles to maintain territory-wide mobility. Active procurements include a 7-vehicle service fleet replacement (**$347,737.60**)**,** multi-passenger program vans (**$135,790.00**)**,** and individual program transport vehicles (**$35,800.00**) **t**o support temperature-controlled Meals on Wheels delivery vans, wheelchair-accessible Senior Center transport buses, specialized juvenile transport vehicles for YRC, and disaster emergency response trucks.
- Facilities Upkeep & Emergency Power Systems (**$298,700**)**:** The Department directs routine building upkeep, mold remediation, site safety, and emergency power support across agency facilities. Active allocations cover industrial backup generator installations (**$213,554.54**)**,** data center battery backups ($50,896.60), office equipment maintenance (**$38,302.00**)**,** and consolidated facility elevator repairs.

FEMA Public Assistance Capital Rebuild Portfolio ($333M+ Total)

Partnering with **ODR, FEMA, and DPP**, DHS is replacing facilities damaged by Hurricanes Irma and Maria with modern, resilient infrastructure. The Department is executing a dual operational strategy: aggressively driving a historic **$333 Million+ FEMA Public Assistance (PA)** capital rebuild portfolio to replace storm-damaged infrastructure. These permanent reconstruction projects have been engineered to current building codes, wind-shear standards, and hurricane resilience requirements. Our long-term residential care rebuilds for **HGH and QLH** are designed to full **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** structural and operational specifications to ensure future federal reimbursement eligibility:



- **Herbert Grigg Home for the Aged Rebuild (St. Croix) — $131.0 Million:** This project represents a complete prudent replacement and modernization of the Territory's primary **24-hour senior care facility** on St. Croix. Designed to full **CMS specifications**, the new complex will feature modern residential wings, specialized dementia care units, climate-controlled therapy rooms, and full commercial backup utility independence.
- **Knud Hansen Complex Rebuild (St. Thomas) — $128.0 Million:** This project is a **complete demolition and reconstruction effort** at Knud Hansen that will deliver a state-of-the-art health and human services hub. In strategic **partnership** with the **Department of Health**, this modern complex will co-locate essential DOH operations directly alongside our core DHS divisions—including Family Assistance, Medical Assistance, Child Welfare, and MIS. This allows us to streamline territorial service delivery into a single, resilient, and fully accessible facility for the residents of St. Thomas and St. John.
- **Queen Louise Home for the Aged Rebuild (St. Thomas) — $73.0 Million:** This **$73 million project i**s a total reconstruction of our historic elder-care facility on St. Thomas. Designed to meet full **CMS compliance standards**, the new home will offer expanded bed capacity, modern therapeutic spaces, and a built-in safe room—a crucial feature being embedded into **both** of our territorial homes for the aged so residents can safely shelter in place during a disaster. *(Operational Continuity: To allow construction to proceed safely without disrupting care, all 14 senior residents were successfully relocated to temporary, fully retrofitted quarters at the Palms Court Harborview Hotel.*
- **Cruz Bay Multipurpose Center & Facility Deployment (St. John) — $2.5 Million:** Environmental remediation, facility hardening, and modular office deployment in Cruz Bay to guarantee permanent, uninterrupted DHS administrative presence, senior activity space, and emergency mass care shelter readiness for the island of St. John.

13. Office of Non-Profit and Support Services

The **Office of Non-Profit and Support Services** remains focused on strengthening service delivery systems through intentional collaboration, regulatory compliance, and responsible fiscal stewardship. With the onboarding of the Director in late 2025, the office successfully revamped operations after being unstaffed since 2024.

Fiscal Management & Subgrant Optimization

DHS continues to optimize non-profit grant administration across two core funding streams: **GVI General Fund Allotments** and **Crisis Intervention Subgrants**.

- **FY2025 Impact ($3.22M Total):** Disbursed **$3,222,500** across **25 GVI and 12 Crisis Intervention non-profits**, reaching **9,919 residents** (3,635 youth under 18) with **100% NOGA payment compliance**.
- **FY2026 Impact YTD ($3.20M Total):** Allocating **$3.205M** to **25 GVI non-profits** and **$1.0M** to 10 Crisis Intervention non-profits, reaching **8,047 residents** (2,776 youth under 18) to date.
- **Processing Status:** Active disbursements are underway. While new OMB mandates and the roll-out of the **GVIBUY** procurement platform introduced **temporary delays**, full NOGA payout processing is actively moving forward under strict fiscal controls.

Federal Compliance & System Capacity Building

- **FVPSA Federal Compliance:** Partnered with local crisis centers to complete all 6 required FVPSA reports, resolving past reporting deficiencies and achieving **100% federal compliance**.
- **Expanded Victim Services (OVW / SASP):** Expanded Sexual Assault Services Formula Program grants to strengthen local rape crisis centers and direct victim intervention services.
- **Homelessness & CoC Engagement:** Maintained monthly Continuum of Care coordination and executed 3 multi-island outreach initiatives across St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John to support unhoused residents.

14. Mass Care & Human Services (ESF-6)

Under the **Territorial Emergency Operations Plan (TEOP),** VIDHS leads **Emergency Support Function #6 (ESF-6),** managing Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Points of Distribution **(PODs)**, Disaster SNAP **(D-SNAP)**, Lifelines (Food, Shelter, Hydration), and the statutory **Senior & Disabled Disaster Registry** across St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. John, and Water Island.

Core Operational Pillars & Strategic Priorities

- **Shelter Network & Modernization:** DHS ESF-6 manages **11 operational sites** (8 primary shelters with **2,209** pre-landfall capacity, emergency sites, and central kitchens) using the digital **PULSE** intake system and pre-staged hydration pods.
- **Elder & Disabled Disaster Registry (Act 8085):** DHS Tracks **954 active high-risk enrollees (*543* STT / 313 STX / 100 STJ)** to coordinate emergency wellness outreach before and after a natural disaster.
- **Mass Feeding & Emergency Response:** In a disaster scenario, DHS coordinates 72-hour emergency food operations with the **Red Cross, VITEMA and FEMA**, transitioning to **VIDE central kitchens** on Day 4, while deploying medical shelter staffing under emergency waivers.

CONCLUSION

Honorable Chairman Francis, Vice Chair, and distinguished members of this committee, the budget before you reflects a responsible, disciplined, and proactive approach to meeting the critical needs of our community while navigating shifting fiscal landscapes.

Every local dollar appropriated to the Department of Human Services is a **direct investmen**t in the health, safety, and human dignity of nearly half our population. Through our core divisions—spanning **early childhood education, emergency family assistance, healthcare administration, and specialized residential care—we remain steadfast in our mission to protect and uplift children, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and vulnerable families across St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John.**

On behalf of our entire **executive leadership team,** and ou**r devoted employees across the Territory,** thank you for your continued partnership, shared vision, and legislative stewardship.

We now welcome your questions.