

Testimony
Michael Carty, Chairman, VI Workforce Development Board
Committee on Education and Workforce Development
November 16, 2023

Good day, Honorable Chairwoman, Marise James, Honorable Donna Frett-Gregory, Vice-Chair, members of the Committee on Education and Workforce Development, other members of the 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands of the United States, and the listening and viewing audience. I am Michael Carty, Chairman of the VI Workforce Development Board. Here with me today is the Executive Director, Sonia Boyce. Thank you for the opportunity to provide information on the VI Workforce Development Board's role in the workforce development system in the Virgin Islands, specifically addressing workforce development programs and the services that are provided to help people find, prepare for, and maintain employment.

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

The VISWDB leads efforts of employer engagement, conducts program oversight of local adult, dislocated worker, and youth workforce activities. In addition, the Board identifies eligible training providers for adult and dislocated workers, negotiates and works to establish local performance accountability measures. We seek to empower our community through education and training, ensuring that every individual can develop skills that lead to meaningful employment.

Our Eligible Training Provider (ETP) program is a critical component of our service delivery system. The Virgin Islands Workforce Development Board's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) identifies training providers who qualify to receive Workforce Innovative and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds to train adults, dislocated workers, and out-of-school youth in high demand career sectors. The Virgin Islands' ETPL and related eligibility procedures ensure the accountability, quality, and labor-market relevance of programs of training services that receive funds through WIOA. WIOA outlines the responsibilities of the Governor and state agency in creating and maintaining a list of eligible training providers. We currently have eighteen board approved eligible training providers. **(See Attachment #1)**

The ETP program provides access to training services that are directly linked to occupations in demand within the Virgin Islands. **(See Attachment #2)** It includes a wide array of providers who offer comprehensive programs that meet the needs of our diverse workforce. Earlier this year, the Board approved WIOA Eligible Training Providers List Policy

(WIOA 410-23) to establish general guidance on the provision of training services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). **(See Attachments #3)**

The Board has partnered with Metrix Learning to provide Career Pathways exploration tools, skill assessment, skill gap analysis, and remediation courses free to all Virgin Islanders. Seventeen states and the Virgin Islands are currently using Metrix Learning to help their workforce populations update their skills and improve employment prospects. Job seekers can successfully use Metrix Learning to update their job skills to gain employment. Populations that can be served include the unemployed, youth, those on public assistance, reentry, underemployed, local businesses, etc. **(See attachments #5, #6, #7, #8, #9, #10, #11, #12, #13, and #14)**

The Virgin Islands Workforce Development Board offers a broad spectrum of training programs. They range from healthcare to information technology, from skilled trades to customer service, we have designed these programs to respond directly to the needs of our community and the gaps in our local labor market. Our goal is to achieve a substantial increase in program completion rates over the next few months, with a significant percentage of graduates gaining employment within three months of completion. By aligning training programs with the needs of local businesses, we will address critical employment gaps. This will bolster local businesses by providing them with skilled workers and stimulate our economy by increasing the earning potential of our residents.

The American Job Center (One-Stop Operator) funded by the Virgin Islands Workforce Development Board and housed at the Department of Labor locations, plays a critical role in bringing together a multitude of workforce services in a single location, serving both job seekers and employers. It provides a broad range of services, such as job search and placement assistance, skills assessment, and career counseling. Partnerships with our WIOA core partners are aimed at aligning our training programs with postsecondary education opportunities and employer needs. This collaborative effort ensures that our trainees have a clear pathway to high-demand occupations and that our local employers have access to a well-trained and educated workforce.

Let me take this moment to share with you a summary of the latest Measurable Skills Gains for our Adult and Dislocated Workers programs. These are performance outcomes for employment and earnings-related measures for adults and dislocated workers Dislocated Worker (DW), comparing these against set goals of the **National Preparedness Goal (NPG)**. Improvements: **Adult Measurable Skill Gains:** There's a substantial improvement from the NPG of 63.0% to 80.1% in the first run, although it slightly decreased in the second run to 79.7%. **DW Measurable Skill Gains:** An even more significant improvement is seen here, with a first-run performance of 87.5%, well above the NPG of 61.5%, and slightly lower in the second run at 82.4%. **DW Median Earnings:** The earnings have substantially exceeded the NPG of \$6,300.00, reaching \$8,641.00 which suggests successful outcomes in improving

earnings for dislocated workers. In summary, the program is successfully exceeding targets in skill gains and improving earnings for dislocated workers, which are positive indicators of program impact.

The programs offered by the Virgin Islands Workforce are more than just training; they are pathways to prosperity for individuals and the community at large. The Board is committed to working collaboratively with the members of the 35th Legislature. We seek your support and assistance to expand these vital programs to not only maintain but accelerate their growth and success. The Virgin Islands Workforce Development Board thank you for the support you give workforce development in our community. I welcome the opportunity to respond to any questions you may have.

Attachments

Attachment #1:	List of Board Approved Eligible Training Providers
Attachment #2:	Demand Sector Occupation List
Attachment #3:	WIOA Eligible Training Providers List Policy (WIOA 410-23)
Attachment #4:	ETPL Summary
Attachment #5:	Metrix Learning Flyer Overall Programs
Attachment #6:	Metrix Learning Flyer Food Service Flyer
Attachment #7:	Metrix Learning Information Technology Flyer
Attachment #8:	Metrix Learning Artificial Intelligence Flyer
Attachment #9:	Metrix Learning Quarterly Activity Report
Attachment #10:	Metrix Learning Communications Skills Flyer
Attachment #11:	Metrix Learning Customer Service Flyer
Attachment #12:	Metrix Learning Finance Skills Flyer
Attachment #13:	Metrix Learning Leadership Skills Flyer
Attachment #14:	Metrix Learning Professional Development Flyer