



# TESTIMONY

Legislature of the Virgin Islands | 35<sup>th</sup> Legislature

Committee on Education and Workforce Development

*The Honorable Marise James, Chairperson*

*The Division of Personnel*

*Presented by:*

**Cindy L. Richardson, MBA**

Director of Personnel

**Millicent Aubain, SHRM-SCP, IPMA-SCP, LSSYB**

Territorial Administrator  
of Recruitment and Classification

**Thursday, May 16, 2024**

Good morning, Honorable Senator Marise James, Chairwoman of the Committee on Education & Workforce Development, committee members, non-committee members, colleagues, and our viewing and listening audience.

I am Cindy L. Richardson, Director for the Division of Personnel. Accompanying me here today is Ms. Millicent Aubain, Territorial Administrator of Recruitment and Classification. In response to your invitation, we are here today to provide a status update as it pertains to recruitment and retention of employees, government employment opportunities, workforce development programs and services provided to help people find, prepare for and maintain employment.

**Recruitment Activities:**

For FY 2024, DOP has engaged in the following recruitment activities:

- 10/10/2023 Department of Labor / Governor's Workforce Summit 2023 (STX)
- 10/12/2023 Department of Labor / Governor's Workforce Summit 2023(STT/STJ)
- 10/26/2023 National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) Employer Roundtable (Virtual)
- 11/27/2023 Edith Williams Alternative School Recruitment Outreach (STT)
- 01/18/2024 Rapid Response - St. Croix AVIS (STX)
- 01/23/2024 Department of Labor's *Fete Done Time Fi Work* Career Fair (STX)
- 01/25/2024 Department of Labor's *Fete Done Time Fi Work* Career Fair (STT)
- 02/14/2024 UVI Offices of Student Life /Activities & Career Services Student Engagement Fair (STX)
- 02/15/2024 University of Florida's 2nd Annual Global Virtual Career Fair with VIPD, BOC, DOJ, DOE
- 02/17-19/2024 52nd Annual Agriculture & Food Fair 2024
- 02/22/2024 State Office of Career, Technical & Adult Education 2nd Annual Territorial CTE Fair (STX)
- 02/29/2024 ADA Employer Recruitment Roundtable (Virtual)
- 03/21/2024 Neogov Training for Business Partners & Central Government (Virtual)
- 04/10/2024 UVI Office of Career Services' Annual Career & Recruitment Fair (STX)

04/17/2024 Division of Personnel's Spring into Action Career Fair (STX)  
05/15/2024 DOL Carnival Over Work Takeover Career Fair (STX)  
5/22/2024 Division of Personnel's Spring into Action Career Fair (STX)

## **Recruitment Programs**

To address critical workforce shortages, we introduced two (2) innovative recruitment programs: namely, the U.S. Army Partnership for Success Program and the Reentering Retirees Program (RRP).

**U.S. Army PAYS (Partnership for Your Success) Program:** An agreement was between the US Army and the Government of the Virgin Islands and the Division of Personnel on April 12, 2024: Notably, our groundbreaking collaboration under the PAYS program sets a precedent for facilitating seamless transitions for American soldiers into public service roles. This program has hundreds of partners throughout the US representing the public and private sector. The GVI is the first territory to participate in this program. We have provided a link that funnels veterans to our website to view and apply for government vacancies then receive an interview once qualified.

**Reentering Retirees Program:** The RRP enabled by ACT 8560 and amended by ACT 8690, allows retirees to return to government service, thereby bolstering our recruitment efforts with seasoned professionals. Under this program, retirees may return to government service for up to 36- months, after an initial waiting period of 9 months or may return for up to 24 -months with no waiting period if he/she is a nurse, police officer, or teacher. However, retirees must apply and qualify for hard to fill continuous recruitment positions. There are currently 11 participants.

## **Examinations**

As part of our recruitment efforts, we have facilitated examinations for various positions across different agencies. Notable vacancies included Emergency Call Center Operator (12 referred) Correction Officer (15 referred), and both entrance Correction Officer and Firefighter-EMT that should be completed the week of June 24-28, 2024. Furthermore, a customized promotional exam process has been administered for all ranks within VIFEMS (Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency

Medical Services), Bureau of Corrections and VI Police Department. It is worth highlighting that our collaborative efforts with these agencies have resulted in the successful filling and promotion of 52 mandatory leadership positions as of December 2023.

### **Classification**

In tandem with our recruitment endeavors, we have undertaken comprehensive classification studies aimed at optimizing organizational structures. Specifically, our initiatives at DLCA have focused on restructuring unit/divisions to enhance efficiency and fiscal viability. By collapsing redundant position classifications and realigning roles, we have not only streamlined operations but also facilitated career progression for six (6) impacted employees with salary adjustment totaling **\$29,886.63**. A similar initiative is underway at the Lieutenant Governor's Office Appraisal Unit that has eight (8) employees, albeit temporarily on hold pending funding identification. This initiative promises to not only optimize efficiency but also serves as a powerful recruitment tool for attracting seasoned professionals and ensures alignment with evolving organizational needs.

### **Job Descriptions**

Between FY 23 & 24 DOP has completed a total of 215 job descriptions, accompanied by comprehensive tools, resources and training sessions for HR professionals within the semi and autonomous agencies. Embracing innovation, we have initiated the incorporation of AI into our daily operations for writing and editing job descriptions.

DOP currently has 163 vacancies posted on the DOP website: 73 on St. Croix, 60 on St. Thomas, 1 on St. John; and 29 with a territorial status. The division has started to promote vacancies based on industry, demand, salary, and educational requirements. DOP will be rolling out a territorial recruitment campaign later in the fiscal year when more details will be made available.

### **Training Programs**

We have continued our collaboration with the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) to launch the 2023-2024 cohort of the nationally accredited Virgin Islands Certified Public Manager (VICPM) Program. The 14-month training program is designed to improve the performance of public sector managers and the organizational performance of state, local and federal governments. Forty (40)

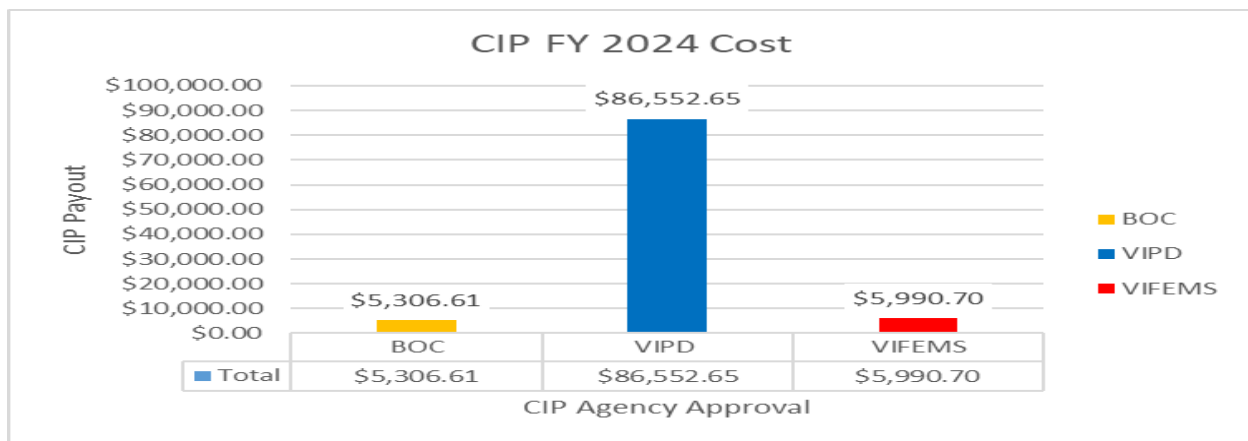
GVI employees and one (1) applicant from the private sector were selected to participate in this cohort.

We continue to offer regular ongoing facilitator-led training such as Brilliant Customer Service and the New Employee Welcome (N.E.W.) orientation. DOP’s Sexual Harassment Prevention Training is completely automated and was rolled out in November 2023 and requires a passing score of 80% or above for receipt of certificate of completion. DOP created the monthly virtual *GVI HR Success Series... Staying in Gear*. The 2-hour sessions started in August 2023 and are held on the last Tuesday of each month. Some of the topics covered in past sessions include NOPA Processing, Recruitment Processes, Donated Leave, Progressive Discipline and Collective Bargaining Agreements, Employee Background checks, and Cyber Security Awareness. Each session is recorded and stored in the HR Partners section of the Division of Personnel's website. The chart below shows the training of 1,779 employees to date for the fiscal year.

<b>FY 2024 Training Update (October 2023-April 2024)</b>	
<b>REGULAR TRAINING TOPICS</b>	<b>TOTALS (as of April 30, 2024)</b>
<b>New Employee Welcome (N.E.W.)</b>	<b>259</b>
<b>Harassment Prevention:</b>	<b>1,036</b>
• N.E.W. Harassment Prevention Training: 257	
• Sexual Harassment Prevention Training ( <u>Online Module</u> ): 678	
• Harassment Prevention - <u>General</u> Training (Instructor Led): 84	
• Harassment Prevention - <u>Supervisor</u> Training (Instructor Led): 17	
<b>Customer Service Training</b>	<b>24</b>
<b><i>GVI HR Success Series... Staying in Gear</i></b>	<b>460</b>
<b>TOTAL (for REGULAR TRAINING TOPICS):</b>	<b>1,779</b>

## The Career Incentives Program

For fiscal year 2024, 10 employees of the Virgin Islands Police Department (VIPD), VI Bureau of Corrections (BOC), and the VI Fire & Emergency Medical Services (VIFEMS) have received Career Incentive Program pay totaling \$97,849.96.



DOP has also researched a Learning Management System in which a favorable vendor has been selected to provide over 30,000 courses to all GVI employees. While this was not supported in our FY 24 budget, we will continue to identify other sources of funding to support this opportunity as we begin to roll out our employee performance software.

In conclusion, it is essential to underline that the Division of Personnel is deeply committed to promoting diversity, inclusivity, and equal opportunities within the workforce. Our small but mighty staff remains committed to the consistent evaluation and improvement of GVI recruitment efforts and retention of current employees, employment opportunities offered, workforce development programs and services that we provide to help the people of Virgin Islands find, prepare for and maintain employment.

My team and I stand ready to answer any questions you may have.