

Dionne Wells-Hedrington, Ed.D.
Commissioner

GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
**DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION**



St. Thomas: 1834 Kongens Gade, Charlotte Amalie
St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands 00802-6746

St. Croix: 2133 Hospital Street, Christiansted
St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands 00820-4665

Tel: (340) 774-0100
dionne.wells@vide.vi
www.vide.vi

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Honorable Marise C. James
Chairwoman, Committee on Education and Workforce Development
#20 Estate Golden Rock
Christiansted, St. Croix, Virgin Islands 00820

Sent electronically via dpayne@legvi.org.

Dear Senator James:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the VI Department of Education's State Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education's role in the workforce development system in the Virgin Islands, specifically addressing workforce development programs and the services provided to help people find, prepare for, and maintain employment.

My name is Dr. Monique M. Faulkner, the State Director of Career, Technical and Adult Education (SOCTAE) for the Virgin Islands Department of Education. The State Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education is responsible for the oversight of Career and Technical Education in the Virgin Islands, as well as for oversight of all Adult Literacy programs in the territory funded under the Adult Education Family Literacy Act.

Programs under SOCTAE all play integral roles in workforce development. The more pertinent of those programs are the Carl D. Perkins grant program, the Adult Education, Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) grant program, the Congressional Grant Award, GED services for the territory and the State Director also serves as the NCCER Sponsor for the VI Department of Education.

Career and Technical Education is the core of workforce development. It drives the skilling and upskilling of the workforce, reduces recidivism, enables economic self-sufficiency for disenfranchised adults, which ultimately reduces crime, attracts business and industry, and creates strong economies. Career and Technical Education (CTE) in the territory makes the USVI's workforce competitive among Caribbean islands and aide in strengthening the Nation's workforce globally competitive edge.

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Under the SOCTAE, we have CTE programs at the secondary and the post-secondary/adult levels. Currently, we are working diligently on the CTE restructuring which introduces CTE from kindergarten through middle school as exploratory and at the Secondary and post-secondary levels as programs that are stackable. The secondary/post-secondary restructuring will allow students to transfer seamlessly from secondary to post-secondary technical training programs, and from the post-secondary training programs into the University system. At the post-secondary level, this will allow adults to stop out with a technical certificate and enter the workforce and return for higher level credentialing without penalty because we realize life happens, and we support the whole student (personal, professional, and academic growth).

A requirement for program completion and certification at the State and National levels are internships, of which roughly 70% culminate in placement. Our programs are a part of the VI Workforce Board’s eligible provider listing, and we share mutual relationships for reskilling, or upskilling of current employees and for placement of future employees, or development of in demand training programs with the public and private sector businesses and other Government partners.

Currently offerings for adults at the Raphael O. Wheatley Skill Center as follows:

a. # based on attendance in each program as of September 2023

Plumbing	Hair Braiding/Barbering	NCCER Electrical I	Emergency Medical Technical (EMT)	Medical Admin Assistant	Auto Mechanic /Body	Carpentry	Esthetics	HVAC	Massage Therapist
7	8	17	27	2	18	8	9	19	11

Cosmetology	Phlebotomy	CMA	Nail Technology	Certified Nursing Assistant	License Practical Nurse (LPN)	Culinary Arts	Computer Applications	Patient Care Tech.
26	13	12	7	8	15	3	6	8

Programs slated for Raphael O. Wheatley Skill Center in January are:

Electric Vehicle Certification
HVAC II and II

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Current Offerings at CTEC Post-Secondary/Adult are:

PROGRAM	# Students Enrolled
Child Development Associate	5
NCCER Core	19
NCCER Electrical 1	7
NCCER Electrical II	9
Phlebotomy	15
TOTAL	55

Programs slated for CTEC in January 2024 are:

HVAC

LPN

Electric Vehicle Certification

Emergency Medical Technician

Electrical III and IV

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide this testimony and I am available to address any questions or concerns you may have.