

Introduction to Major Departments of Your Government

The role of the government is important to understand. It is equally important to have a clear understanding of the importance of leadership and legislative oversight as both can influence the impact of the organizational performance of agencies and departments on our day-to-day lives.

To assist you in better understanding our government, below you will find a summary of the missions of our departments and agencies as described in the 2020 Proposed USVI Executive Budget.

Department of Justice

Mission Statement To prosecute all violations of the Virgin Islands Code and the representation of the Government in all civil actions brought against it or on behalf of the Government; and provide efficient and effective financial and access support services to children and custodial parents.

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Information consolidated by Lawrence “Larry” Boschulte. Asking for your vote on November 8, 2022.

Scope and Overview

The Department of Justice serves as the chief law enforcement office in the territory. The three-fold mission handles litigation activities, prosecutes crimes, provides general advice, reviews contracts and legal documents and collects and distributes child support payments and facilitates access and visitation for children who do not reside with both parents.

Office of the Governor

Scope and Overview

The office of the Governor functions pursuant to the mandated as authorized by Title 2 and 3 of the Virgin Islands Code, the Revised Organic Act of 1954, the Elective Governor's Act (US Public Law 90-490) approved August 23, 1968 and Acts No. 5250 and 4440 of March 9, 1977 and August 31, 1980 respectively. The Office of the governor exercises authority over the departments, agencies and instrumentalities of the U.S. Virgin Islands Government. The Units within the Office of the Governor are; Administration, Policy (namely, Economic and Fiscal Issues; Legal Counsel; Health and Human Services), Protocol, Public Relations and the Executive Secretariat. The Office of the Governor is committed to a mission of a sound, stable, financial and economic environment that will enhance the welfare of all the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Office of Management and Budget

Mission Statement

To improve public services.

Scope and Overview

The Office of Management and Budget, through the budget preparation and execution process, instills planning, review and evaluation techniques in the government agencies and departments. The office also places emphasis on policy development and performance management.

Division of Personnel

Mission Statement

Through strategic partnerships and collaboration, the Division of Personnel (DOP) assists Departments/Agencies in the recruitment, development and retention of a high performing workforce. DOP fosters a healthy and productive work environment that lends itself to employee empowerment, engagement and the organizational growth. We will provide leadership and guidance in the development, application, and equitable administration of policies and procedures.

Scope and Overview

Title 3 Chapter 25, Virgin Islands Code, Sections 451 through 667, as well as the Personnel Rules & Regulations, Subchapter 472, Sections 91 through 103 sets forth the Division of Personnel's mandate.

Office of Collective Bargaining

Mission Statement

To fulfill our legal mandate to fairly engage in the collective bargaining process and enhance the relationship between labor and management. This mission is pursued while being cognizant of the adverse economic condition of the government and its projected deficit.

Scope and Overview

Pursuant to Title 24 V.I.C. Section 377(b), the Office of Collective Bargaining (OCB) has the power and duty to represent the executive branch of government and its departments, agencies and divisions in all collective bargaining proceedings and labor disputes. This includes mediation, arbitration, civil court proceedings, appeal proceedings and administrative proceedings before the PERB. Consequently, OCB also functions as would a small law office, coordinating and defending the government's legal position and defense in a variety of matters. This requires the close supervision and direction of a legal staff, including Attorneys, a Paralegal and Labor Relations Specialists by the Chief Negotiator.

Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency

Mission Statement

The Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency prepares for, coordinates the response to and recovery from all hazards and threats that impact the Virgin Islands.

Scope and Overview

The Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Agency (VITEMA) establishes procedures to address threats to homeland security and to coordinate with other agencies for the protection of life, public health, property and infrastructure in the event of terrorist attacks, natural disasters and man-made incidents. It provides clear direction for response readiness regarding the distribution of federal assets and training personnel in all aspects of emergency management.

Bureau of Information Technology

Mission Statement

The Bureau of Information Technology provides reliable, contemporary, and integrated technology to support and facilitate government actions and activities utilizing industry best practices and state of the art products through an IT service and delivery framework consistent with evolving industry standards. In addition, the Bureau coordinates communications, interoperability actions, activities, and programs to facilitate and support emergency management operations. BIT also facilitates and manages other essential communication services, equipment and devices to support 911 and other emergency service-oriented operations throughout the territory.

Scope and Overview

Act No. 6634 requires the development of a comprehensive technology strategy that includes data management services, training of information management personnel, enhanced office automation, improved data communication systems and facilitation of cybersecurity initiatives that prevent compromise throughout the enterprise.

Virgin Islands Energy Office

Mission Statement

The mission of the Virgin Islands Energy Office is to promote sustainable energy policies throughout the Virgin Islands which encompasses energy production, distribution, efficiency and consumption through training, outreach, financial incentives, and technical assistance.

Scope and Overview

The Virgin Islands Energy Office (VIEO) was established by Executive Order 182-1974 to devise and execute energy policy. The VIEO establishes, monitors, and coordinates the integration of policies relating to energy conservation, use, control, distribution, and allocation with respect to all energy matters. The VIEO is also the state-designated agency for the planning, implementation, oversight, and administration of federal funds to include the State Energy Program (SEP), the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), and the energy programs of the 2016 Energizing Insular Communities (EIC) Program.

Virgin Islands Energy Office

Mission Statement

The Office of the Adjutant General plans, coordinates and implements support of territorial responders to natural and man-made disasters, civil disturbances, foreign and domestic threats and Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Scope and Overview

The Office of the Adjutant General (OTAG) develops and implements policies and procedures that support the key strategic objectives of the Virgin Islands National Guard (VING). The three collective performance goals follow: (1) to promote operational effectiveness; (2) to have a safe and secure territory through effective and efficient preparedness; and (3) to build a comprehensive territorial support capability for responding to all threats.

Office of Veterans Affairs

Mission Statement

The Office of Veterans Affairs provides information and services to all Veterans, regarding benefits and entitlements, in collaboration with the United States and the Virgin Islands Government.

Scope and Overview

The First Legislature of the Virgin Islands, with the enactment of Act No. 8, created the Division of Veterans Affairs within the Department of Labor. Act No. 5265 renamed the division the Office of Veterans Affairs and transferred it to the Office of the Governor.

Office of the Lieutenant Governor

Mission Statement

The Office of the Lieutenant Governor regulates financial institutions, assesses and collects taxes, and processes documents.

Scope and Overview

The Office of the Lieutenant Governor fulfills its regulatory responsibility of monitoring banks, insurance companies, and other financial institutions; processing requests for articles of incorporation, insurance licenses; and recording of deeds and assessing all real property taxes in a professional manner that increases the collection of taxes and fees for the Government of the Virgin Islands. The Lieutenant Governor is the Secretary of State, the Chairman of the Banking Board and the Commissioner of Insurance. The Chairman of the Banking Board regulates domestic and foreign banking institutions and small loan companies operating in the territory and ensures compliance with banking practices. The Commissioner of Insurance enforces the statutory provisions, promulgates rules and regulations, and conducts investigations where violations may exist, holds hearings, and brings actions against violators in a court of law. Additionally, the Commissioner licenses insurance companies, agents, and brokers; examines records of companies and agents; and revokes licenses for cause. Finally, the Commissioner reviews products offered by companies and administers qualifying exams to agents and brokers.

Bureau of Internal Review

Mission Statement

To administer and enforce the internal revenue tax laws of the Virgin Islands.

Scope and Overview

Title 33 Section 680 of the Virgin Islands Code creates the BIR as a separate independent agency of the Government of the United States Virgin Islands. The BIR promulgates and enforces the tax laws and regulations of the territory that includes corporate and individual income taxes, gross receipts, trade and excise, production taxes, gift taxes, highway users' taxes, hotel occupancy taxes, inheritance taxes, fuel taxes, environmental impact infrastructure fee, and miscellaneous excise taxes. In addition, it provides revenue reports and reports to the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs any instance in which a person, corporation, or association licensed to do business in the Virgin Islands willfully claims an exemption from any excise tax, gross receipts tax, or customs.

Bureau of Motor Vehicle

Mission Statement

To provide the public with drivers licensing, vehicle titling, vehicle registration services and other business transactions as required by law.

Scope and Overview

The Bureau of Motor Vehicle administers laws and collects fees from the public that request drivers licensing, vehicle titling, vehicle registration services and other business transactions as required by law.

Department of Labor

Mission Statement

To administer a system of effective programs and services designed to develop, protect and maintain a viable workforce.

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Information consolidated by Lawrence "Larry" Boschulte. Asking for your vote on November 8, 2022.

Scope and Overview

The Virgin Islands Department of Labor (VIDOL) receives its authority pursuant to Titles 3, 24, 27 and 29 of the Virgin Islands Code, the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Act of 1970, and other federal laws which require development of administrative structures that govern and enforce fair labor standards and protect the territory from any threat to health, morals, and general welfare. Executive Order No. 309-1989 defines the organizational structure of VIDOL and requires the following units: Occupational Safety and Health, Workers' Compensation, Labor Relations, Hearing and Appeals, Job Service, Training, Unemployment Insurance, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Planning, Research and Monitoring, and Administration.

Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs

Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (DLCA) is to review applications and issue business licenses in a timely manner, assist and protect consumers, and ensure that all persons comply with the licensing and consumer protection laws of the Virgin Islands.

Scope and Overview

The Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (DLCA) provides and administers consumer services and programs pursuant to Title 3, Chapter 13 and the Consumer Protection Law of 1973, as set forth in Title 12A of the Virgin Islands Code. DLCA is charged with establishing, administering, coordinating and supervising the regulation and licensing of private business and professions. The Department also ensures that no person shall engage in any deceptive or unconscionable trade practice involving any consumer goods or services, or in the collection of consumer debts. The department also coordinates with other agencies and boards and commissions in the licensing of professions and occupations as provided for the Consumer Protection Law and Title 27 of the V.I. Code

Department of Finance

Mission Statement

To provide efficient government financial services to all stakeholders

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Information consolidated by Lawrence "Larry" Boschulte. Asking for your vote on November 8, 2022.

Scope and Overview

Title 3, Section 177 of the Virgin Islands Code established the Department of Finance. The Office of the Commissioner supervises seven (7) divisions located on St. Thomas and St. Croix as follows: (1) Financial Reporting and Audit Assurance; (2) Accounting Operations; (3) Treasury Division; (4) Government Insurance; (5) Payroll; (6) Management Information System; and (7) Board of Tax Review.

Department of Property and Procurement

Mission Statement

To Administer a procurement system that is conducted efficiently, accurately, and fairly. This manner and quality of conduct extend to the Department's responsibilities in the areas of property management, transportation services, warehousing and supply distribution, and printing production.

Scope and Overview

The department exercises general control and enforcement of the laws and regulations governing the procurement and acquisition of government property, disposition of real and personal property, review of construction and professional services contracts, purchase and maintenance of the vehicle fleet, sale of supplies and gasoline coupons to departments, inventory and warehousing activities, and operation of the Printing Office. In addition to its procurement functions, under the Virgin Islands Federal Emergency Response Plan, it manages two primary emergency services: transportation and resource management.

Department of Agriculture

Mission Statement

The Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture develops, supports, and promotes an economically lucrative agriculture industry in the U.S. Virgin Islands while protecting consumers and the environment.

Scope and Overview

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The Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture (VIDA) created by Act No. 5265, then amended by Act No. 6070 abolished the Department of Economic Development and Agriculture by creating two separate entities; the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Tourism. The VIDA is structured to provide basic agricultural services and technical support to the Territory's farming community. The Department's primary responsibilities are expanding agricultural activities for the production and marketing of agricultural commodities, processing agricultural products throughout the U.S. Virgin Islands, enforcing environmental protection laws as they pertain to land, water, and soil as well as enforcing regulatory practices as they relate to veterinary services.

Public Safety & Bureau of Corrections

Mission Statement

The Bureau of Corrections (Bureau) provides proper care and supervision of all offenders under its jurisdiction while assisting as appropriate their re-entry into society, protects the public and ensures the safety of the Bureau's personnel.

Scope and Overview

Under the supervision of the Director, the Bureau provides security, custody and rehabilitation to correctional inmates.

Virgin Islands Fire Service

Mission Statement

The Virgin Islands Fire Service provided the highest level of service and protection to the people of the Virgin Islands, through public education, rapid response, inspection and the elimination of fire hazards.

Scope and Overview

Established under the Office of the Governor by Act 4206, the Virgin Islands Fire Service (VIFS) safeguard life and Property of the residents through the operational efficiency of three key areas: Emergency Operation (Suppression), Arson Investigation and Prevention (Prevention), And Administration.

Virgin Islands Police Department

Mission Statement

To protect the life and property of all citizens of the Virgin Islands and to ensure a safe and secure environment.

Scope and Overview

As the VIPD was established in accordance with Title 3, Chapter 15, of the Virgin Islands Code. The Department is primarily charged with the enforcement of laws. Pursuant to Executive Order No. 312-1989, the Department is now organized into seven (7) divisions which are: Office of the Commissioner, Division of Police Operations – St. Thomas/Water Island, Division of Administration Support and Logistics, Division of Police Operations – St. Croix, Division of Highway Safety, Division of Training and Division of Police Operations – St. John.

The Department's primary emphasis is the provision of basic police services, specifically to maintain and increase police control, rapid response to incidents, calls for service, effective investigation, and solution of criminal acts and timely apprehension of criminal perpetrators.

The Law Enforcement Planning Commission (LEPC) is attached to the Office of the Commissioner; and per Act No. 6036, the Narcotics Strike Force was placed under the Virgin Islands Police Department for budgetary purposes only.

Law Enforcement Planning Commission

Scope and Overview

The Virgin Islands Law Enforcement Planning Commission (LEPC) was established as an agency of the Government of the United States Virgin Islands, within the Virgin Islands Police Department for budgetary purposes only and subject to the jurisdiction of the Governor. LEPC adheres to the provisions of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 and all acts amendatory and supplementary.

LEPC confronts criminal and delinquent activities before they escalate. The head of the agency advises and assists the Governor in developing policies and programs for improving the coordination,

administration, and effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System in the Virgin Islands. LEPC accomplishes its objectives by working in conjunction with Government agencies, non-profit organizations, and faith-based entities.

Department of Planning and Natural Resources

Mission Statement

To protect, maintain, and manage the natural and cultural resources of the Virgin Islands through proper coordination of economic and structural development with local, federal, and non-governmental organizations, for the benefit of present and future generations that they live safer, fuller lives in harmony with their environment and cultural heritage.

Scope and Overview

The Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR), established by Act No. 5265, enforces all laws pertaining to the preservation of fish and wildlife, trees and vegetation, and water resources, including the protection of safe drinking water, air, water pollution, oil pollution, flood control, sewers and sewage disposal. The department monitors compliance for mineral and other natural resources and preserves archaeological, architectural, cultural and historical resources. It requires adherence to laws pertaining to growth and development in the coastal zone, coastal lands, and offshore islands and cays. It oversees the compliance of boat registration; mooring and anchoring of vessels within the territorial waters; land survey and land sub-division; development and building permits and code enforcement; earth change permits in the first and second tiers; and zoning administration.

The department formulates long-range comprehensive and functional development plans for the human, economic and physical resources of the Territory. It promotes and coordinates library information services and museums on a territory-wide basis and preserves the archives in conjunction with the Archive Council.

Department of Education

Mission Statement

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The Virgin Islands Department of Education commits to the superior preparation and performance of every student for continuing education, rewarding employment, and responsible citizenship.

Scope and Overview

The Department of Education (DOE) exercise general control over the enforcement of laws relating to free public education by implementing and monitoring instructional programs for all k-12 students and adult learners, as well as, providing support services such as child nutrition, pupil transportation, library services, and the maintenance of educational facilities and offices. The department functions as both Local Education Agency (LEA) and State-level Education Agency (SEA). The Commissioner heads the SEA level and the District Superintendent the two LEAs.

Department of Health

Mission Statement

The Department of Health reduces health risks, ensures access to quality health care and enforces health standards.

Scope and Overview

The Virgin Islands Department of Health conducts programs of preventative medicine to protect the health of residents and enforces public health statutes to prevent and suppress disease and injury.

Department of Human Services

Mission Statement

The Department of Human Services provides social services that enhances the quality of life for individuals and families with diverse needs.

Scope and Overview

The Department of Human Services (DHS) serves as the State Agency for all publicly financed, social service programs, except those of public health and housing programs, and provides services to the poor, the disabled, the juvenile delinquent, the elderly, and the low-income family. Moreover, it serves as the authorized agency for protection and care of abused and neglected children and coordinates activities of the Inter-Agency Council on Homelessness.

Public Works Department

Mission Statement

To provide timely, efficient and responsive facility maintenance, infrastructure management and transportation services to the Virgin Islands community.

Scope and Overview

As authorized by title 31 of the Virgin Islands Code, as amended by Acts No. 5265 and 6638 is to: design, construct, and maintain government buildings, public roads and highways, to provide for the management and maintenance of public burial sites, including veterans' cemeteries; to provide convenient and well-organized transportation services; assist in the protection and preservation of private and government property in natural disasters or mass transportation systems and in the planning, construction, operation, maintenance and administration of parking areas, parking lots and garages.

Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation

Mission Statement

To promote diverse sports and recreation, maintain facilities and promote physical fitness.

Scope and Overview

The Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation (DHPR), pursuant to Title 3, Chapter 18, Title 21 of the Virgin Islands Code Chapter 1 and Title 32 Virgin Islands Code Chapters 1, 2, 9 and 11 administers, coordinates and serves as the "State Agency" for the purpose of participating in federal programs. The

DHPR has direct responsibility for all programs of sports, parks, and recreation with oversight of parks and open spaces.

Department of Tourism

Mission Statement

The Department of Tourism increases visitor expenditures, to aid in the economic development of the territory.

Scope and Overview

The Department of Tourism (DOT) supports economic development through the formulation and coordination of program and policies pertaining to all aspects of tourism. Activities include devising strategies that make the territory competitive and desirable as a destination, communicating with tourist related business to determine how best to improve the industry and promoting an understanding that Virgin Islands culture as a part of the experience and identifying unique advertising features of St. Croix, St. John, St. Thomas and Water Island.

Source: 2020 USVI Executive Budget

(<http://legvi.org/committeemeetings/Finance/Budget%20FY2020/FY%202020%20Executive%20Budget%2006-04-19.pdf>)