



For Immediate Release

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Press Contact

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**The Department of Human Services Announces Town Hall Invitations for
Input into Draft USVI Preschool Development
Strategic Plan for Birth – Five-Year-Old Children**

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS— The Department of Human Services (DHS) and the University of the Virgin Islands’ Caribbean Exploratory Research Center (UVI CERC) announced that they are winding down the federally funded, one-year project (Road to Success: Developing an early child care and education mixed delivery system for the B-5 population in the USVI) with a series of virtual town hall meetings, open to the public.

Members of the Core Strategic Planning Group (CSPG) are interested in hearing from parents, guardians, teachers, caregivers, policy makers and other community members about their perspective on the draft Strategic Plan for children birth through five (B-5).

The communities of St. Croix, St. John, St. Thomas, and Water Island are invited to participate in one of the four (4) scheduled Virtual Town Hall Meetings to be convened via Zoom.

The meetings are part of the USVI’s PDG B-5 Strategic Plan development process and will provide a forum for all voices to be heard and for community members to share their perspective on the draft strategic plan. All are encouraged to share feedback to help ensure the plan is creating an effective pathway to achieving the Territory’s vision of thriving USVI children, birth through five, instilled with a love for learning.

- Tuesday, November 10 – 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- Thursday, November 12 – 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- Tuesday, November 17 – 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Information to Join Zoom Meetings

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86038779521>

Meeting ID: 860 3877 9521

Dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

Meeting ID: 860 3877 9521

The Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5), was awarded to DHS. The project was implemented under the direction of the University of the Virgin Islands' Caribbean Exploratory Research Center (UVI CERC), which served as the designated State Entity.

As a preliminary step to inform the development of the strategic plan, UVI CERC conducted the qualitative and quantitative research necessary to complete and spearhead the completion of a comprehensive Needs Assessment of the current B-5 ECE mixed delivery system in the USVI.

The project is winding down with the development of the USVI's PDG B-5 Strategic Plan which will delineate the Territory's roadmap for developing and sustaining a high quality, mixed delivery B-5 ECE system in the Territory. DHS did an MOA with UVI to do the research, Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan. The Town Hall meetings are part of the protocol to gather feedback from the community.

PDG B-5 Principal Investigator and Project Director Noreen Michael expressed the need and sincere desire for community participation and stated, "We're inviting parents, educators, care providers and all other community members to join and participate in these important conversations about the Territory's strategic approach to providing high quality early childhood care and education for children birth through five in our community. Your voice is not only important, but also essential." DHS Commissioner Causey-Gomez re-iterated the importance of community involvement saying, "It is our collaboration and collective input that will ensure a truly wholistic and effective strategic plan that addresses access to and quality of an early care and education program for our youngest that we can all be proud of."

For more information on how the U.S. Virgin Islands is building a foundation on which our children can grow and thrive go to <https://bit.ly/2krH2GL> or contact **Noreen Michael, USVI PDG B-5 Project Director** at nmichae@uvi.edu.

The Department of Human Services (VIDHS) exists to provide social services to members in our community with diverse needs. In times of national uncertainty and hardship we act as a safety-net and exist to inspire hope and empower change through non-judgmental, quality delivery of needed services and resources. Please visit the Department of Human Services website, www.dhs.gov.vi for more information.

For more information on COVID-19, please visit our website, covid19usvi.com, or text COVID19USVI to 888777. To report a suspected COVID-19 case, call (340) 712-6299 or (340) 776-1519.

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