



**For Immediate Release**

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Press Contact

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**Department of Human Services Recognizes National Disability Employment Awareness Month During October**

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS— The Department of Human Services, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program, is seeking to raise awareness about disability employment issues and celebrate the many contributions of Virgin Island employers, community partners and trailblazers that support and honor courageous workers with disabilities. *This year marks a major milestone in the nation's history; it is not only the 75th observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), but the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American Disability Act, ADA and 100 years since the establishment of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program.*

**National Disability Employment Awareness Month is celebrated across the United States to help eliminate the barriers that limit opportunities for educational and economic advancement for workers challenged by disabilities.** Over the past century, with the help of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, persons with disabilities across the United States have found meaningful work opportunities. These opportunities not only positively impact an individual's income but serves to boost their confidence and ability to live independent lives.

**The Virgin Islands Vocational Rehabilitation Program launched its first ever online work readiness training program this summer, and services will continue for qualifying students throughout the school year.** Additionally, the program is working to reactivate the Randolph Sheppard Program in the U. S. Virgin Islands. The Randolph Sheppard Program is a Business Entrepreneurial Program for persons that are legally blind that authorizes operation of vending and concession facilities on federal property. In conjunction with a private provider, the program also provides job coaching and ongoing support for the significantly disabled. This is just one example of the many initiatives and services available through the VR Program.

The Department of Human Services encourages all to help celebrate the milestones of the national Vocational Rehabilitation Program by reaching out to someone who has a disability and expressing a little extra support and encouragement for their journey. *For those with a disability seeking employment, and for those who may know someone seeking employment, please contact the*

**DHS - Vocational Rehabilitation Program today.** The Program offers employment related services that include:

- Transition planning for high school students with disabilities to assist with adequately preparing for post-secondary education and competitive employment.
- Vocational counseling
- Evaluation & training
- Job placement
- Assistance with resume writing and many other services

**DHS - Vocational Rehabilitation Program**

- St. Croix: (340)643-8145 or (340)626-6268
- St. Thomas / St. John (340)774-0930 or (340)244-7861

Please also **visit the DHS website at [www.dhs.gov.vi](http://www.dhs.gov.vi) for additional resources.**

*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](http://www.dhs.gov.vi) for more information.*

For more information on COVID-19, please visit our website, [covid19usvi.com](http://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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