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V.I. Agriculture Business Center St. Thomas to Open on January 18

The center, among other objectives, seeks to contribute to the territory's food sovereignty and economic growth

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The University of the Virgin Islands, in collaboration with the V.I. Small Business Development Center (VI SBDC), is set to open the St. Thomas location of the Virgin Islands Agriculture Business Center (VI AgBC) on Thursday, January 18.

The event, scheduled from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., will take place at the University of the Virgin Islands Orville E. Kean Campus, specifically at the UVI 13D Research and Strategy Innovation Center on St. Thomas.

According to the release, this new center aims to boost agricultural productivity in the Virgin Islands. It is an initiative stemming from the "2021 Agricultural Plan directed by Act 8404," which focuses on enhancing local agriculture to achieve food security and sovereignty for residents of the Virgin Islands.

The VI AgBC is designed to support local farmers and fishers by offering a range of services, including individual consulting, business education, and technical assistance, all at no cost to the clients, UVI stated. The center's programs are dedicated to fostering business growth in the territory's farming and fishing industries.

Among the services provided, farmers and fishers can receive help with obtaining business licenses, creating business plans, and training for securing financing through various means such as funding, grants, and loans. Additionally, the center will offer training in accounting, bookkeeping, cash flow analysis, and other critical business practices essential for effective business operations and expansion.

The VI AgBC will serve clients across St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John, with service centers on each island equipped with consultants and support staff. These efforts are part of a broader initiative to advance the territory towards greater food security and sovereignty.