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Time Running Out: UVI Encourages Last Push for St. Thomas & St. John Residents to Complete Community Survey

Ahead of the November 12 deadline, UVI's Eastern Caribbean Center is collecting essential data to support social services, economic strategies, and community infrastructure

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St. Thomas, USVI By. GETTY IMAGES

The University of the Virgin Islands' Eastern Caribbean Center (ECC) is urging residents of St. Thomas and St. John to participate in the ongoing Virgin Islands Community Survey (VICS) before the November 12 deadline. The survey has already been completed on St. Croix, and now efforts are focused on gathering data in the St. Thomas-St. John District.

According to Dr. Marissa Johnson Rogers, director of the ECC, the 2024 VICS is a critical tool that helps to address key data gaps in the U.S. Virgin Islands. “The VICS 2024 is essential to close critical gaps in USVI data used by local agencies whose jobs are to organize and plan for the social, educational, wellness, and economic needs for the Territory,” Rogers stated.

Unlike the U.S. Census, which collects data from every household, VICS employs a scientific random sample. As a result, only selected households will be interviewed. When UVI representatives visit homes in the district, they will carry UVI photo IDs and data collection devices for identification purposes.

According to the release, the information gathered during the survey mirrors some of the data collected in the 2020 Population and Housing Census, but with additional enhancements. The ECC will be using Geographical Information System (GIS) devices to provide layered data on population and housing, which will offer more nuanced insights. Population questions include factors such as age, gender, education, ethnic origin, employment status, health insurance coverage, veteran status, and disability. Housing-related questions focus on matters such as water source, internet access, the number of rooms, utilities, ownership status, and rent.

The ECC assures the public that all collected information is treated with the utmost confidentiality. Data will only be published in summarized form, ensuring that individual households cannot be identified.

Dr. Johnson Rogers emphasized the importance of community participation, stating, "Please lend your voice to our efforts to tell the authentic story of the strength of the USVI community. This research and data are critical to quantify our needs to local and federal agencies as we continue recovery from the 2017 Hurricanes and the COVID-19 pandemic."