

VI DOJ Staff Complete Specialized National Training in Trial and Investigative Skills

Attorneys, investigators, and litigation staff from the V.I. DOJ completed intensive NAGTRI training sessions on St. Croix and St. Thomas, aimed at strengthening trial techniques and investigative skills through hands-on, expert-led instruction.

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The V.I. Department of Justice has completed a rigorous, two-island training program led by the National Attorneys General Training and Research Institute (NAGTRI), focused on enhancing trial techniques and investigative strategies for DOJ personnel.

The sessions took place on St. Croix from March 17–18 and continued on St. Thomas from March 20–21. Each island hosted its own two-day session, drawing together attorneys, investigators, and

litigation support staff to refine their legal acumen and strengthen practical expertise in critical areas of case management and prosecution.

The training, hosted in partnership with the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG)—a professional organization based in Washington, D.C., representing attorneys general from across the U.S. and its territories—provided a hands-on, nonpartisan learning environment. The program is part of NAAG’s broader mission to promote legal excellence and support the work of attorneys general nationwide.

Sessions were held at the University of the Virgin Islands Great Hall on St. Croix and at the Windward Passage Hotel on St. Thomas. Programming included a mix of expert-led instruction and practical, scenario-based workshops. Attorneys engaged in mock trial exercises that emphasized skills such as using exhibits effectively, conducting cross-examinations, and impeaching witness testimonies. Investigators and paralegals focused on developing case theory, practicing interview techniques, and applying investigative strategies.

“At NAAG, we focus on learning by doing,” said Christina Rodriguez, a representative from the training institute. “Participants get to immerse themselves in the experience—examining and interviewing witnesses depending on their group. It’s an opportunity to have fun while learning and practicing essential skills. This feedback-driven environment helps everyone in the room improve, and they can learn from one another’s experiences.”

Attorney General Gordon C. Rhea expressed his appreciation for the initiative, describing it as “invaluable” for DOJ personnel. “This training has been invaluable for our staff, equipping them with innovative tools to improve their work,” said Rhea. “Learning directly from experts in trial techniques and investigative skills is a vital part of our ongoing commitment to justice and fairness in the Virgin Islands.”

He also noted that he personally participated in several of the sessions and was pleased with the skill level demonstrated by DOJ staff. “I am confident that our attorneys and support staff are on par with national standards for prosecution and justice,” he said, adding that this experience “has been immensely beneficial.”

Looking ahead, Attorney General Rhea expressed plans to continue the department’s partnership with NAAG by hosting training sessions twice annually. “We’ll continue to explore new areas of learning and refine our techniques,” he said.