

## VI Housing Authority Aims to Reduce Reliance on Federal Funds Amid Ongoing Cuts

**With \$71 million in annual federal support, VIHA says it is preparing to sustain itself short-term without aid. Officials cite a solid reserve and ongoing efforts to secure local and alternative revenue.**

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**The Louis E. Brown Housing Community on St. Croix, a VIHA property. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM**

The V.I. Housing Authority is working to “wean” itself off the need for external financing, said VIHA Executive Director Dwayne Alexander. During Friday's meeting of the Senate Committee on Housing, Transportation, and Telecommunications, discussion among lawmakers and VIHA representatives included concerns about whether the authority would be on stable footing without the federal government's support. This as federal cuts begin to be felt in the territory, [affecting the](#)

[operations](#) of local government departments and agencies.

“We're always concerned because all of our funding comes from the federal government. We receive about \$71 million every single year,” said Mr. Alexander. While the agency would of course be open to the receipt of local funding, Mr. Alexander informed lawmakers that “we are trying to prepare the best we can based on the situation.”

VIHA’s preparation includes the ability to tap into a hefty reserve if necessary. “We have enough money to survive about four or five months...without any funding from the government,” he told lawmakers. “In terms of our Section Eight program, we can go about a month, maybe a month and a half,” he added. “We are still working behind the scenes to try to generate additional money for the Housing Authority,” Mr. Alexander told Senator Alma Francis Heyliger.

The reserve, Mr. Alexander later clarified, is larger than the four months of operational spending required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. “We have more than four months of reserve, that if the government shuts down today we can survive more than four months in public housing,” Mr. Alexander reassured Senator Ray Fonseca, who was pleased by the news. “You see that the government got four days of operating reserves. They got four months. That's awesome,” the lawmaker responded.

With short term stability secured, Mr. Alexander is also optimistic about the federal government maintaining current levels into the future. Having received reassurances during a recent meeting in Washington, D.C., “we pretty much believe that we'll receive our funding,” Mr. Alexander said in response to questions from Senator Angel Bolques Jr. about federal funding security.

Even with VIHA’s best efforts to prepare for the worst-case scenario, committee chair Senator Marvin Blyden observed that VIHA has failed to expend large amounts of federal funding, particularly those earmarked for special populations under the Housing Choice Voucher Program. “Federal funds are hard to come by. DOGE taking back everything from everyone, everywhere,” Mr. Blyden remarked, concerned that the authority would become a target for the rescission of federal dollars.

Akela Anthony, director of the Housing Choice Voucher Program, used the Foster Youth to Independence program as an example, indicating that VIHA has been “slow to receive referrals from the Department of Human Services,” its partner agency. On the bright side, Ms. Anthony noted that the funding for the program does not expire.

Like other federally funded departments, VIHA will be maintaining regular contact with focal points in Washington for updates on the status of critical federal funding for local programs and operations.