The Virgin Islands Consortium

VIEDA Refutes Board of Education Claim That It Is Responsible for Scholarship Payment Enforcement

The V.I. Economic Development Authority says the Board of Education—not EDA—is legally responsible for tracking scholarship fund contributions, and notes that required reporting for 2024 has not yet been submitted, limiting its ability to act on concerns.

Community Center / **Published On July 30, 2025 07:49 AM /**

Staff Consortium July 30, 2025

ST. THOMAS — The V.I. Economic Development Authority (VIEDA) has issued a formal response to testimony delivered by V.I. Board of Education (VIBE) Chair Dr. Kyza Callwood during the Board's Fiscal Year 2026 budget hearing on July 24. In that testimony, Callwood criticized the lack of contributions from Economic Development Commission (EDC) beneficiaries to the Territorial Scholarship Fund, and asserted that

VIEDA was responsible for ensuring those payments were made.

In its statement released July 29, VIEDA pushed back on that claim, clarifying that while the agency supports the goals of the Territorial Scholarship Fund and welcomes continued collaboration with VIBE, statutory responsibility for collecting and tracking these contributions rests entirely with the Board of Education.

“Depending on the type of business, some VIEDC beneficiaries are required to contribute a minimum of $3,000 annually and some are required to contribute a minimum of $10,000 annually to the Virgin Islands Board of Education,” the statement explained. These funds are to be deposited into the Territorial Scholarship Fund.

VIEDA stressed that VIBE is required by law to submit an annual report within 60 days after the close of each calendar year, listing each beneficiary’s name, the amount contributed, and the use of funds. This report, VIEDA said, is critical for the agency to carry out its oversight responsibilities and follow up with beneficiaries as needed.

Callwood had testified that 41 out of 99 EDC beneficiaries had not contributed to the fund in either FY2024 or FY2025, and expressed frustration with what he described as a lack of accountability. “At the end of the day,” he told lawmakers, “the responsibility is EDA to ensure that they make the payments.”

In response, VIEDA pointed out that the most recent reports received from VIBE covered Calendar Year 2022 (submitted on August 1, 2024) and Calendar Year 2023 (submitted on March 13, 2024). However, no report has yet been submitted for Calendar Year 2024, which, according to VIEDA, is necessary to investigate any alleged instances of noncompliance.

Further, VIEDA clarified that reporting for Calendar Year 2025 is not yet due, as the year is still in progress.

Despite the disagreement over responsibilities, VIEDA expressed a willingness to work with the Board of Education. “We view our collaboration with VIBE as a mutually beneficial relationship that supports the education and workforce development of young Virgin Islanders,” the agency stated.

“VIEDA remains fully committed to helping ensure that all beneficiaries meet their obligations under the law,” the statement continued, reaffirming a shared commitment to accountability, partnership, and the success of the Virgin Islands Economic Development Commission program.

VIEDA concluded by expressing its openness to continued dialogue with Dr. Callwood and his team, and underscored that timely reporting from VIBE is essential for meaningful enforcement.