

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Dept. Of Labor Announces Implementation Of Workforce Innovation And Opportunity Act

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ST. THOMAS -- Dept. of Labor Commissioner Designee Catherine Ann Hendry has announced the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which was signed by President Obama on July 22, 2014, a press release issued by Government House on Thursday has made known.

The new federal legislation is the first major reform to federal job-training programs in more than 15 years. The WIOA supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), and is designed to improve the coordination of employment and training services across federally-funded programs; and strengthen collaboration, coordination and partnerships between and among public agencies, community based organizations,

private sector businesses and employers.

The Act emphasizes “work first”, (temporary or transitional) to job seekers in conjunction with increased access to training, education and other support necessary to succeed in the job market and in their careers.

WIOA also highlights the engagement of businesses and employers to guide and lead the alignment of training with the skills needed to match qualified workers to the demands of our 21st century workforce; and provides opportunity for incumbent worker training and transitional jobs which promote on-the- job training and paid apprenticeships.

Additional highlights WIOA include:

- Reform to the Public Workforce System & America’s Job Centers (currently called One Stops and located at VI Department of Labor offices).
- Improved access to comprehensive services from partner programs and agencies
- Designation of mandatory partners comprised of Dept. of Labor’s employment service, adult, dislocated worker and youth; Dept. of Human Services; and Dept. of Education’s Adult Education and Literacy Act programs
- Establishment of a comprehensive American Job Center (One Stop) that provides access to physical co-located services across the core programs and from the required partners.

"The Virgin Islands Department of Labor is thrilled to launch the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act as it will improve the coordination of employment and training services across the territory," Hendry said.

The public is invited to join the Dept. of Labor and its partners for the WIOA kickoff event in both districts on Wednesday, July 1st, 2015 at 12:00 noon, at the American Job Centers located at the department’s offices on both St. Thomas and St. Croix.

Residents are also encouraged to visit Labor’s website [here](#) for more information. Additional information on WIOA can also be gleaned through [here](#).