

The Virgin Islands Consortium

11 Small Manufacturing USVI Entrepreneurs To Promote Locally-Made Products In New York City

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Representatives from the U.S. Virgin Islands Economic Development Authority (EDA), along with the USVI State Trade Expansion Program (STEP), will sponsor and lead a delegation of 11 U.S. Virgin Islands small-manufacturing entrepreneurs to "NY NOW Summer 2018", the leading market for home and lifestyle products, a release the EDA issued Monday has made known. NY NOW Summer 2018 will be held from August 12-15 at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in New York City.

The trade show event will allow the small manufacturers to showcase and promote their design-driven products that were made in the USVI to buyers from around the world as they network among more than 20,000 buyers from 66 countries, according to the

release. Nearly 40 percent of NY NOW buyers only source NY NOW for products. This will be the first time the EDA and the small-manufacturing entrepreneurs will attend the event.

The following USVI small-manufacturing entrepreneurs will attend NY NOW Summer 2018:

Jason Budsan	Caribbean Herbals	Candles
Christa-Ann Molloy	Christa's Art Gallery	Prints on bath and home accessories
Ramone Reid	Cultured Naturals Body Care	Organic hair and body products
Deborah Sun	Debbie Sun Art Studio	Art printed on fabrics and other gifts
Clemenceau Perry	DTC Recycling d/b/a Perry's Glass	Glassware items (Dinnerware)
Linda Bailey	Home Grown Farm	Tea
Aquannette Chinnery	JDNatlady's Creations, LLC	Soaps and hair products
Peter Gonzalez	Pita Art Studio	Metal embossed wall hangings
Toni Downs	Queen CariBEE	Soaps and honey
Linda Bailey	Harmony Bath & Body	Soaps and scrubs
Diego Kean	Studio VI Photography	Photographs of tropical images printed on postcards, wall stickers, decorative wall/window paper wrap, etc.

The STEP program is authorized by the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010 through the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

"These local, small-manufacturing entrepreneurs will also be featured in targeted magazine publications within their respective industries," said Wayne Biggs, assistant executive director of the EDA. "This delegation is a tremendous opportunity for these entrepreneurs to gain exposure and for the USVI to showcase its local talent and the unique products that exist within our territory."

Held twice a year – in August and February - NY NOW billed as the leading market for home and lifestyle products. It features three collections: home, lifestyle and handmade products, and is produced by Emerald Expositions, a leading operator of business-to-business trade shows in the United States.

"We're excited to assist another group of small businesses to grow through export marketing. These quality products unique and authentic to the Caribbean will be on display to the world," said Nadine Marchena Kean, USVI STEP Project coordinator, and director of the Enterprise Zone Commission.

Funded by a grant from the Small Business Administration (SBA), STEP is a one-year program trade initiative that is designed to help small businesses grow, increase their

exporting activities, and raise the value of the products and services, according to the EDA. Through SBA's competitive State Trade Expansion Program (STEP), \$18 million in funding has been awarded to 44 state international trade agencies to support export growth among U.S. small businesses.

In 2017, through the EDA, the U.S. Virgin Islands applied for a grant to administer this program in the territory and was awarded a grant in the amount \$125,000. Governor Kenneth Mapp designated the EDA as the agency to administer the STEP program in the territory, according to the release.

In 2013, EDA representatives led trade missions with local, small manufacturers to the New York City's 59th Annual Summer Fancy Food Show, and to SIAL Brazil: The Latin American Food Marketplace - a food trade event held in Sao Paulo.

Feature Image: JDNatlady's Creations' items.