

The Virgin Islands Consortium

VI Council on the Arts Awarded AARP's 2020 Community Challenge Grant

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VI Council on the Arts has been named a recipient of the 2020 AARP Community Challenge Grant, one of 184 grantees selected in the United States, a release issued Thursday has made known.

The grant will be used to expand the Yacht Haven Public Arts Initiative, which gave five local artists the opportunity to create and display their work throughout Yacht Haven in the form of murals and sculptures. VI Council on the Arts said it will expand the location of the project beyond the Yacht Haven property and give seniors and elder artists the opportunity to pilot this project.

“On behalf of the Board, Director and Staff, we are honored that AARP has selected the Virgin Islands Council on the Arts to receive an AARP Community Challenge Grant,” stated Jaria Lynch, Special Projects Coordinator. “AARP is a nationwide leader on making neighborhoods, towns, and cities more livable for all residents and we are honored that they see the tangible value this project will bring to our community.”

According to the release, the project is part of the largest number of Community Challenge Grants to date with more than \$2.4 million awarded among 184 organizations nationwide. Grantees will implement “quick-action” projects to create more livable communities across all 50 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. All projects are expected to be completed by December 18, 2020, and are designed to achieve one or more of the following outcomes:

- Create vibrant public places by improving open spaces and parks and activating main streets.
- Deliver a range of transportation and mobility options by increasing connectivity, walkability, bikeability, wayfinding, and access a wider range of transportation choices.
- Encourage the availability of a range of housing by increasing accessible and affordable housing solutions.
- Increase civic engagement and demonstrate the tangible value of “Smart Cities” by bringing together local leaders and residents from all backgrounds to address challenges.
- Support coronavirus response and recovery efforts by ensuring older adults’ access to information, essential services, and civic life.

“We are incredibly excited to support the Virgin Islands Council on the Arts as they work to make immediate improvements in St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands, encourage promising ideas and jumpstart long-term change,” shared Troy de Chabert-Schuster, AARP state director. “Our goal at AARP in The Virgin Islands is to support the efforts of our communities to be great places for people of all backgrounds, ages and abilities and the coronavirus pandemic has only underscored the importance of this work.”

Other AARP in The Virgin Islands grantees include the VI Trail Alliance and Partners in St. Croix. The full list of grantees can be found at www.aarp.org/communitychallenge.