

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bryan Provides EDA With \$1 Million To Fund 20-Year Territorial Economic Plan: USVI Vision 2040

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ST. CROIX – The Virgin Islands Economic Development Authority (E.D.A.) held a public hearing and governing board decision meeting last Thursday for to vote on several important measures. Brought to the floor was a measure for "VI 2040 Vision", an initiative introduced by Governor Albert Bryan during the State of the Territory Address.

Kamal Latham, E.D.A. chief executive officer, said that the VI 2040 Vision is an effort to develop a 20-year economic plan for the territory. "The governor designated E.D.A. to lead a multi-agency task force to develop the vision to be deployed on October 1st," said Mr. Latham. "We have been granted \$1 million from the Community Development and Block Grant – Disaster Recovery funds to fund Vision 2040." The deadline is firm,

mandated by the governor and will not be extended, the E.D.A. said.

Mr. Latham said that the E.D.A. issued a request for proposal (R.F.P.) to secure an economic development consultant to work with the authority to develop the 20-year plan and a target competitive industry analysis. The R.F.P. was issued with a May 24th deadline.

Wayne Biggs, E.D.A. assistant chief executive officer, explained that during executive session the board made the decision to, "Authorize Kamal Latham, chief executive officer, to enter into a contract with Portals, LLC, a consulting firm for \$598,772 to complete a 20-year economic plan by the October 1st deadline, subject to negotiating a satisfactory payment schedule." It remains unclear as to how the remainder of the \$1 million will be spent. Before going into executive session, Mr. Latham was about to explain the details but he was stopped by an official at the meeting, who said it would not be fair to Portals, LLC for the financial terms to be discussed in public. The board then voted to discuss the matter in executive session.

Portals LLC, is a Virginian global consulting group. [The firm describes itself as](#) an "Owner's Representatives' at heart with experience spanning the commercial nonprofit and government sectors. Our consulting services focus on providing strategic planning and execution support utilizing program management and strategic business operations expertise." The firm says it works with entrepreneurs, established companies and governments to convert ideas into bankable opportunities attractive to investors.

The request for proposal, issued May 10th, sought to secure a consulting firm that's "highly qualified" to assist the U.S. Virgin Islands in its efforts to "promote economic growth, job creation, and wealth generation."

A [request for clarification of VI 2040 Vision](#) dated May 21st that includes consultant questions and answers is posted on the E.D.A. website and gives more detailed information about the initiative. According to the document, Shanell Petersen, managing director of marketing and 2040 vision, is the internal lead at the E.D.A. for the 20-year economic plan and is dedicated to assisting the consultant. Her internal task force includes two staff members.

The clarification document further states, "Vision 2040 is a local government initiative. The governor announced the initiative during his State of the Territory address to be led by the E.D.A. and federal funds will be used to support the vision, including Housing and Urban Development Community Development and Block Grant – Disaster Recovery locally distributed by Housing Finance Authority and U.S.E.D.A. funding. Therefore, the vision must meet federal guidelines of procurement."

The request for clarification says the E.D.A. desires over 50 percent of the local population and approximately 10 percent of the diaspora to be engaged in providing feedback to the Vision 2040 process. The E.D.A. is seeking a diverse mix of in-person and digital engagement approaches.

A job [vacancy announcement](#) posted on the E.D.A.'s website states that the entity is seeking a full-time program manager for its managing director for Marketing and 2040 Vision position for the St. Thomas office. The position pays \$61,337.48 - \$65,091.83

The program manager reports to the managing director. According to E.D.A.'s website, members of the Vision 2040 steering committee include Mr. Bryan, Lt. Governor Tregenza Roach, Mr. Latham, Senator Allison Degazon, and attorney George H.T Dudley from St. Thomas.

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