

logo not found or type unknown

Under Fire, VITEMA Announces Employment Opportunity for Spanish-Speaking 911 Operators

Community Center / **Published On February 19, 2021 06:08 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **February 19, 2021**

Image not found or type unknown



The Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency said Thursday it's seeking Spanish-speaking employees to work at VITEMA's 911 Emergency Call Centers, in a move aimed at providing quality emergency response service to the territory's rather large Hispanic community — especially on the island of St. Croix.

The agency [came under fire](#) during a Wednesday Senate hearing where it was revealed that there were no Spanish-speaking employees at the 911 Emergency Call Centers — a revelation that infuriated senators who called on VITEMA to rectify the matter.

In its Thursday release, VITEMA sought to clarify the situation. The agency said while it has no Spanish-speaking 911 dispatch operators, it works with the V.I. Police Department and the V.I.

Fire Service — local agencies presumably with Spanish-speaking employees — "to provide translation support within minutes of a call," VITEMA said.

VITEMA said it expects that Language Line Solutions Inc., a system which provides real-time translation and transmission services of over 50 languages and dialects, will be up and running on March 18. The agency said it staffs thirty-seven 911 call operators with language capabilities in English and Patois (known as Creole or broken French).

Said Daryl Jaschen, VITEMA director, "911 operators are the community's first connection to critical resources during all emergency situations. Our goal is to inclusively serve our community by facilitating the seamless deployment of vital emergency services. The agency has had challenges recruiting qualified bilingual operators. It is my hope that the attention brought to our need for Spanish speakers will ignite an interest in members of our community to take up this role. We look forward to expanding our team in service of our Latin community."

Persons fluent in Spanish interested in working as 911 call operators should submit their resumes to contact@vitema.vi.gov.