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# AARP in The Virgin Islands: Who They Are, What They Do

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Do you know what AARP does for the communities and the people in the Virgin Islands? Frequently, AARP is confused with an insurance company that only serves older adults. AARP is, in fact, a non-profit organization that advocates on behalf of Americans of all ages, and it does so locally for Virgin Islanders. It was established in 1958 by Ethel Percy Andrus, a retired school teacher and since then has offices across the entire nation, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands.

AARP in The Virgin Islands works, even during the pandemic, to advocate for the passage of many bills that will improve the lives of all in the territory. AARP-VI works to make VI communities livable for all ages and follows the principle that what is good for an eighty (80) year old is also good for an eight (8) year old.

As a Fierce Defender, AARP-VI fights to pass legislation for livable communities, help caregivers and their families, [prevent Elder Abuse](#), and access to justice. Some of the bills AARP in The Virgin Islands advocated to pass that became law this year are:

- Bill No. 33-0220 for Beach Access for the Disabled
- Bill No. 33-0367 to re-establish the Commission on Aging
- Bill No. 34-0034 to amend the Uniform Electronic Legal Material Act
- Bill No. 34-0076 to amend the existing law to grant seniors and the terminally ill preference in civil actions.

AARP-VI continues to work to improve:

- Access to services and support for Caregivers. This includes passing legislation addressing all forms of elder abuse, and creating an Advance Directive Registry.
- Healthcare quality and access by passing Behavioral Health and Telehealth legislation.
- Transportation connectivity and support systems by passing Complete Streets Policy.
- Financial resilience by revising the USVI Probate Code, creating a provision for electronic wills and electronic notaries.
- Age-friendly housing through the development of assisted living communities and Medicare-certified nursing homes.

Once signed into law and enacted, the Complete Streets Bill will aid in the development and implementation of strategies to increase the usability of all streets for all modes of travel for citizens of all ages and abilities in the Virgin Islands. To receive advocacy-related news and alerts to join AARP-VI in supporting legislation, visit [aarp.org/getinvolved](http://aarp.org/getinvolved). To learn more about bills passed and those the organization is working on in the VI, visit the [advocacy page](#) on their local site or [aarp.org/vi](http://aarp.org/vi).

AARP in The Virgin Islands also ensures Virgin Islanders have the most up-to-date information on the COVID-19 virus and the vaccines and booster shots. Visit [aarp.org/vivaccine](http://aarp.org/vivaccine) for more information and [aarp.org/vacunvi](http://aarp.org/vacunvi) for information in Spanish.

In 2020, AARP in The Virgin Islands asked Albert Bryan, Jr., the Governor of the VI, to ensure all residents of voting age in the VI could vote safely from their homes. As the new year begins and the new election season arrives, AARP-VI will continue those efforts to ensure residents can vote from home in the upcoming elections and provide information on where the candidates stand on the issues more important to them.

As a Wise Friend, AARP-VI offers many workshops to help caregivers learn how to care for themselves while they care for a loved one, for residents to learn how to save money and manage their finances, and for entrepreneurs to start or grow their businesses. Many of these offerings are possible because of the advocating arm of the organization and the passion of volunteers. AARP-VI collaborates with many local agencies and organizations to offer “fun with purpose” events where residents can learn about AARP and how it fights for them.

On December 3, 2021, AARP-VI participated in the “Ah Glow in Deh Park” Festival of Lights Virtual Program. The AARP-VI tree displayed Livable Communities ornaments depicting the Eight Domains of Livability. Visitors will learn more about this initiative and what Livable

Communities and the eight domains mean at the park. Watch the [event](#) on the AARP Virgin Islands Facebook page at [Facebook.com/aarpvi](https://www.facebook.com/aarpvi) or the Crucian Cultural Group Facebook page. Visit Limpricht Park at King Street in Christiansted Town on St. Croix to see the tree.

On December 25, 2021, AARP-VI will collaborate with Stanley and The Ten Sleepless Knights to bring the annual Christmas Serenade. The band will play the Quelbe Christmas tunes heard in the many neighborhoods they visit annually during Christmas time on St. Croix.

In December, AARP-VI continues to thank Caregivers for their hard work and dedication and provide resources to care for themselves while caring for others. Visit the AARP-VI Facebook page for a [Caregiving Virtual Conversation](#) with the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Sigma Theta Omega Chapter. Obtain caregiving resources at the local website by clicking the [Caregiving tab](#). Visit [aarp.org/vi](https://aarp.org/vi) and click on the “[Events](#)” link or [aarp.org/nearme](https://aarp.org/nearme) to learn more about events hosted locally, including the Conversations with AARP-VI talk show series. Find a Spanish translation of the talk show at the AARP Virgin Islands Spanish Facebook page at [Facebook.com/aarpviespanol](https://www.facebook.com/aarpviespanol).

AARP-VI is proud to work on behalf of the 22,000 plus members in the Virgin Islands and all VI residents of all ages. The volunteers and staff of AARP in The Virgin Islands look forward to continuing the work for our beautiful islands and communities in 2022 and wish all a Happy Holiday Season and a Happy New Year!

Submitted by AARP VI.

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