

BVI Begins 2020 Population And Housing Census

Community Center / **Published On January 20, 2020 08:46 AM /**

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Roadtown Tortola **By. ANGELA BURNS/VI CONSORTIUM**

ROAD TOWN, TORTOLA – Residents of the British Virgin Islands are being encouraged to cooperate with the Central Statistics Office (CSO) of the government, as the process begins to collect data for the 2020 Population and Housing Census.

CSO Director Raymond Phillips said that the census represents the most extensive and comprehensive database at the territory’s disposal, as it reveals issues relating to the characteristics of the population and housing stock that merit further investigation by government.

“It is used to compare the country’s socio-economic situation with those of other countries, especially countries in the Caribbean,” he said. “It is only through this data that we can see where we need to concentrate our efforts and hence improve our conditions.”

The process has begun with a call for enumerators. The deadline for submission of applications is March 31st, following which they will be trained and employed for a period of up to seven months from June. The field work is expected to be completed by December 2020.

Addressing confidentiality concerns, Mr. Phillips said the Central Statistics Office is bound by confidentiality clauses as outlined in the Statistical Act, 2005.

He said persons should not be reluctant to cooperate with census officers as the strictest confidence is applied to the data collected. “This data is not shared with any other Government agency as the Statistical Act prohibits this type of data sharing,” he explained.

During the last census, field work started in August 2010. Over 100 enumerators were mobilized.

According to the Virgin Islands 2010 Population and Housing Census Report, this exercise was practically completed within 8 months, but problems associated with threats, refusals, call backs and capturing persons living on the outer islands and yachts, resulted in the process being extended.

After capturing about 83% of the population, the field exercise was terminated in July 2012.

In 2010, it was determined that there were 10,830 households and 28,054 persons residing in the Virgin Islands. When disaggregated by island, the data showed that 83% of the population or 23,419 persons resided on the largest island of Tortola; 14% or 3,930 persons resided on Virgin Gorda; 1% or 285 persons resided on Anegada and 1% or 298 persons on the island of Jost Van Dyke. The remaining islands and cays along with persons living on yachts accounted for 122 persons or less than 1% of the total population.

As it relates to the origins of the population, the data showed that 61% of the population was born outside of the BVI. Within this sub-group, the majority of expatriates hailed from Guyana, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Jamaica.

With respect to employment, the data showed that almost 62% of the population of the Virgin Islands was in the labour force. The unemployment rate was at 2.8%.

Overall, of those persons who were employed, 18.0% were employed by government, while 63.0% were working in the private sector. Just over 10% were entrepreneurs.

As it relates to income, the 2010 Census results showed that the median income for the Virgin Islands was US\$1,733.60 per month. The overall average monthly income earned by all workers in the Virgin Islands was US\$2,452.73.

The 2020 Population and Housing Census, slated to officially begin in June, will be conducted in close collaboration with the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).