

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Law Enforcement Planning Commission Anticipating Less Grant Money Due To Population Decline

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Due to an 18 percent population decrease between the 2010 and 2020 census, the Law Enforcement Planning Commission projects a decline in future award funds.

Director Angela Lloyd Campbell, representing LEPC, presented these concerns during her testimony at the 35th Legislature's Committee on Budget, Finance, and Appropriations last week. In defense of her agency's fiscal year 2024 budget request, she sought just over \$788,000 from the general fund, with nearly 85 percent earmarked for salaries and fringe benefits.

LEPC, which oversees the administration and monitoring of several U.S. Department of Justice federal grant programs, bridges both federal and local resources to address issues like criminal violence and youth delinquency within the territory. However, Ms. Campbell emphasized the challenge of the meager \$8,768 allocated for supplies, indicating it was insufficient for yearly operational costs.

Beyond funding, the director took pride in the programs sponsored by federal grants, spotlighting three new grants and several ongoing projects. These projects span various initiatives, such as juvenile delinquency prevention, medical examiner enhancement, and the nationwide Project Safe Neighborhoods program.

The anticipated reduction in funds didn't deter LEPC's enthusiasm. As part of their community outreach, the organization facilitated the return of the National Night Out campaign across three islands. This campaign seeks to foster stronger community-police partnerships with a shared vision of safer neighborhoods.

Lawmakers, keen to understand the nuances of grant management, raised concerns about the LEPC's handling of grant expiration dates and the complexities of expending obligated money within set timelines. In her response, Ms. Campbell attributed these delays to the inherent challenges nonprofits face in program implementation, especially when operating on a reimbursement basis.

In March, LEPC hosted financial management training, which saw participation from over 50 individual and organization representatives, where attendees gained insights into grant management. Ms. Campbell also discussed an updated application review process, emphasizing a formal review component for objectivity and transparency in funding decisions.

Concluding her testimony, Ms. Campbell expressed gratitude to her LEPC team. While acknowledging that LEPC does not offer direct services, she emphasized their guiding role in supporting community-focused programs and initiatives. "The Law Enforcement Planning Commission is a small agency that plays a significant role in our community through funded projects and programs," Campbell affirmed, promising that the LEPC would persist in its mission to bolster public safety by endorsing impactful community projects and programs.