

**A FIVE-YEAR TECHNOLOGY PLAN FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN
THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS**

2008-2012

**IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LIBRARY SERVICES
AND TECHNOLOGY ACT (LSTA)**

**INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES
NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES**

**DIVISION OF LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES AND MUSEUMS
UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS**

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

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Introduction

The United States Virgin Islands is located 1,100 miles from the North American continent between the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. The islands, a territory of the United States, are made up of four major landmasses surrounded by approximately one hundred smaller islands and tiny cays. The four major islands are St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. John and the fourth, Water Island, was turned over to the USVI from the Department of Interior in the year 2000. Located just a half mile off the south side of St. Thomas, Water Island is served by St. Thomas offices. The Capitol of the USVI is Charlotte Amalie, the city located on St. Thomas.

The islands' population is approximately 111,000 people of which almost 80% are of African heritage. Other groups represented include East Indian, Caucasian, Chinese, Arab and Hispanic. As such, the population is diverse.

Administration of the Library Services and Technology Act is the responsibility of the Territorial Library Agency. This agency, the Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums, is administered by the Executive Branch of the Government of the Virgin Islands' Department of Planning and Natural Resources.

Territory-wide, no distinction is made between the local and state (territorial) levels. The Division of Libraries participates in the direct provision of public library service as well as in the administrative, centralized technical, online services and systems functions.

The Division of Libraries is located in St. Thomas. In addition to the four major public libraries located throughout the three major Virgin Islands, the Division also operates a bookmobile (a second will be operational in St. Thomas in the near future), a small kiosk library and a Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, all located on St. Croix. The Division also maintains special collections of Virgin Islands materials and a photo duplication/digitization lab, where local newspapers and other Virgin Islands government documents are microfilmed, digitized and duplications of old photographs are made.

Mission Statement

The Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums believes:

- the history and cultural heritage of the Virgin Islands should be preserved and studied
- the public libraries should serve as the information resource for the Government of the United States Virgin Islands as well as its populace
- free and open access to information for all residents of the United States Virgin Islands is essential

It is the mission of the Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums to:

- provide service, information and other resources to the Government of the United States Virgin Islands
- support the development of an informed citizenry by providing access to a world of ideas and information
- identify, preserve and promote the historical and public records of the United States Virgin Islands
- provide support to all residents of the United States Virgin Islands in their pursuit of learning

The Division's projected priorities as outlined in its Projected Report aim:

- to improve the ability of libraries to provide public service
- to enhance its document storage capacities
- to further develop its public service capacity
- to expand its technological base

Information and resources are provided to the Government of the United States Virgin Islands and the residents of the U.S Virgin Islands through several means. Each year provides the Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums the opportunity to improve its facilities in order to effectively serve the needs of library patrons. With the advancement of technology and the ever present need to update library materials while steadily offering the new, there is always room for improvement in all areas pertaining to Virgin Islands public libraries. To meet the public's needs and enhance services, the following Topic Area GOALS are established.

Background and Needs Assessment

Of the approximately 111,000 persons living in the Virgin Islands,

According to the Virgin Islands Department of Health, The Virgin Islands, consisting of St. Thomas, St. John, St. Croix and Water Island, have close to one-third of their population below the poverty level.

While the U.S. economy grew at a record pace in the 1990s, contributing to the lowest child poverty rate in over 20 years, (2005 Poverty Rate = 35% US Census = 35 of every 1000 people are at poverty level) the economic conditions for children and families in the U.S. Virgin Islands continues to deteriorate. The percentage of children in families with incomes below the poverty line continues to increase. (Taken from KidsCount)

The Virgin Islands has not established its literacy rate.

Linkages can and have been made between the levels of education and the type of library service available to a community. Virgin Islands public libraries, under the current levels of funding and staffing continue to provide a minimal level of service only. The people of the territory, however, particularly the young adults and children are targeted populations by default because they make up approximately 1/3 of the population. They require a highly proactive public library system, one focused on the planning, organizing and implementation of services to meet their needs in the immediate and long term.

All persons in the territory, no matter the social or economic status, are served by the same public library system.

LSTA funds will be used to supplement the local government's appropriations and allocations to libraries. It will allow for the initiatives necessary to provide the people of the territory with a level of library service that meets their needs.

Goal I. Expand on the scope of the Virgin Islands Automated Library System (VIALS), to include collaboration with the (VILINET) Virgin Islands Library Network.

Timeline: Years 1-5

VIALS is the divisional library technological network. All libraries utilize the Dynix catalog and a Windows 2003 network maintained centrally at the Territorial Library main offices. The VIALS network therefore provides Internet service, email, printing, desktop services and technical support to staff and public. It is the backbone of the Division and is heavily supported by LSTA. This includes the purchase and upgrade of all divisional hardware and software

titles. With the re-institution of VILINET (see IMLS Grant #LS-00-06-0063-06) VIALS will collaborate with the University of The Virgin Islands to attempt to establish a single hardware/software platform.

Evaluation: Continued growth and strength of VIALS/VILINET

Goal II. To increase participation in library shared online resources and cataloging services in collaboration with VILINET (territorial academic, school, special libraries). To participate in shared bibliographic databases, including OCLC.

Timeline: Years 1-5

Currently, Divisional libraries do not participate in any shared bibliographic utilities. Divisional libraries holdings are not shared with libraries outside the territory. This limits the use of interlibrary loan services. While, the libraries are an associate member of OCLC, that service is not utilized. These utilities serve as cost and time saving tools for libraries. The location of the territory warrants use of such services as the libraries are not geographically close to any other similar facilities.

Evaluation: Increased holdings in the OCLC Union Catalog

Goal III. To improve the connectivity and technology related to VIALS by taking advantage of the subsidized funding offered by the E-Rate program. To provide improved telecommunications services, Internet access, internal connections, and basic maintenance of internet connections.

Timeline: Years 1-5

Since 1997 greatest percentage of connectivity for VIALS has been provided through donation by the private telephone utility thus making it feasible to continue the expansion of related services. In addition, purchase of bandwidth from private companies is also necessary. With the planned collaboration associated with VILINET, connectivity needs will increase. The DLAM has considered the E-Rate option and is working with ALA/COSLA to determine feasibility.

Evaluation: Successful implementation of the E-Rate program.

Goal IV. To increase the volume and quality of online library/information resources including those from commercial, government (federal, state, local) by establishing an improved means for identification, evaluation, acquisition of electronic resources.

Timeline: Years 1-5

The DLAM has made major progress with its acquisition of quality online resources including subscriptions and ownerships. It offers Homework Help online and Ask a Librarian from Tutor.com. Through VILINET collaborative purchases or resources will be made and licensed so that patrons will have greater access. There are numerous examples of resources available in the Territory, in the region, the states and other countries and institutions that are valuable to the V.I. reader and can now be made accessible via the digitized format and electronically.

Evaluation: Increased number of online resources provided to library patrons via the library website and through other electronic means thus decreasing resource deficiencies in the territory.

Goal V. The reinstatement of the library advisory council/s as stipulated in the Virgin Islands Code for the purpose of improving the standards for library service in the territory.

Timeline: Years 1-5

Prior to the institution of IMLS/LSTA, required was an advisory council for the purpose of making recommendations and guidance from the public on matters associated with LSCA. The DLAM has not had an active advisory council since IMLS/LSTA was instituted.

Evaluation: Active and functioning advisory council for libraries in the territory.

As in the case with the previous plan, the structure and size of the territory impacts discussion on the planning, organizing and implementing of services and

programs. It is relatively easy for persons on different levels to cooperate and share resources. Federal, territorial and local government persons work close to accomplish goals. The involvement of outside groups such as a Friends of Libraries g and the various professional organizations related to libraries are easily utilized. For example, past professional development workshops, seminars, conferences, etc. for university, school and public librarians and their staff were jointly organized by the St. Croix Library Association, the St. Thomas/St. John Library Association and the Virgin Islands Library Association. With the evolution of the University of the Virgin Islands/University of Pittsburg Masters program for librarians, new professional energy enters the Virgin Islands library and information science arena. The Division of Libraries outsource a number of technical tasks to SOLINET (OCLC services) among others.

The public library online public access catalog system is shared with the public school libraries. School librarians and the Division of Libraries systems and cataloging staff in particular work closely towards school usage of the system. This is one of the vital components of the indented goals of VILINET (the Virgin Islands Library Network) which is being reinstated with the benefit of and IMLS Pacific Islands grant As such, all these groups work together in formulating goals and methods of evaluation for the Division.

Library patrons of all types and levels need to be more involved in the service offered to them. They are not involved in the process, but instead take whatever is offered to them. In order to properly evaluate the various programs and services supplemented by the LSTA grant, Librarians at the school level will be surveyed on the availability of the Dynix catalog system. Patrons will be asked to complete surveys related to specific programs. These will query impressions and effect of past programs while also soliciting suggestions or needs for future ones. Level of user sophistication is also an indication of service and program success. The availability of local library consultants will also be utilized in this process.

Importantly, the GOALS identified in this plan specifically reflect the topic areas, issues, policy recommendations, program recommendations of previous territorial/White House Conferences on Library and Information Services produced by shareholders identified by the above.

Stakeholder Involvement and Communication

Though the organizational chart and makeup of the Division of Libraries calls for a Library Advisory Board, persons have not been appointed to this role since the 1980's. The advisory role is therefore informally accomplished with the various organizations comprised of librarians. These include the St. Croix Library Association, the St. Thomas/St. John Library Association and the Virgin Islands Library Association. These organizations bring together all persons working in the library field, whether it be in school, academic or public libraries, professionals or para-professionals. The service and programs offered at the public libraries impact all of these groups. The shortage of

librarians in the territory actually leads to sharing of professionals as school librarians work part time for the public or university libraries. With the establishment of the University of the Virgin Islands/University of Pittsburg masters degree program for Virgin Islands residents, an additional and professional component is now available to function as shareholders as they will complete internships and be employed by territorial libraries, including the Division of Libraries.

While their input was garnered in selecting and prioritizing the LSTA goals, they will regularly be updated on the progress or problems involved with seeing the plan to fruition. The Division of Libraries' website is also key in alerting the public and the various professional organizations about the programs offered at local public libraries. In addition, association meetings will be used to provide information and garner feedback on the same.

Monitoring Procedures and Assurances

The Virgin Islands Division of Libraries Five Year-Plan and procedures for using the LSTA funds is different to that of other states and areas. There are no sub-grantees in the VI model. The Division of Libraries receives and utilizes the granted funds throughout the four public libraries held in the territory. Financial reports are undertaken by the business arm of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources, the parent agency of the Division of Libraries. The Division of Libraries, particularly the Systems Office will keep the Director of Libraries and the Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources informed on the goals outlined in the plan.

Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Funds play an ever-increasing role in the ability of the Virgin Islands Division of Libraries ability to serve its community. Past LSTA funds enabled the Division to upgrade the libraries' network; provide for the reinstatement of the Virgin Islands Library Network (VILINET); upgrade the capability of the library to digitize and provide easy access to the library's valuable collection of microfilm. Continued funding is essential to the accomplishment of Divisional technology goals for the territory