**US VIRGIN ISLANDS WAIVER REQUESTS**
**WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT**

**WAIVER TO INCREASE ON-THE-JOB TRAINING (OJT) REIMBURSEMENT FOR EMPLOYERS**

**Statutory and/or Regulatory Requirement to be Waived**
WIOA Section 134 (c)(3)(H)(i) and 20 CFR 680.720 (b)

**Actions Taken to Remove State and Local Barriers**
There is no State or Local statutory barriers for the implementation of the proposed waiver.

**State Strategic Goals(s) and Department of Labor Priorities Supported by the Waiver**
The Virgin Islands Workforce System seeks to enhance business engagement through a sector-based approach to workforce training. On-the-Job training is a tried and true method of work-based training especially in times of recovery from natural or other disasters. Employers need a strong workforce, but when one is not readily available, quick but effective turn around training is needed. The VI has seen a need for such activity especially in the construction industry. While general theoretical knowledge is necessary, learning through performance allows for a quick ramp up of the local workforce. Employers are able to meet their objectives and job seekers are introduced to and learn to perform (by doing) in an actual work environment. For smaller companies who do not regularly have a large workforce on standby, this waiver allows them the opportunity to employ individuals who may still be dislocated from other employment, while still being able to use their limited resources for other critical aspects of job performance.

COVID-19 has restructured the workplace and learning. Modernization of the workplace and the methods used for learning must be prioritized to meet today’s job demands. Employers are now faced with several new initiatives such as providing on the job medical screenings such as temperature checks, flexibility with the standard 9-5 office/business hours, fully automating their businesses to allow for virtual operational hours. Greater emphasis will be placed on closing the digital divide. Assisting current and new business owners with sharpen their focus will be provided with partnerships with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

USDOL also prioritizes the need for work-based learning situations. It connects education and training strategies and fulfills the gaps in sector-driven demand areas.

**Projected Programmatic Outcomes Resulting from Implementation of the Waiver**
This waiver allows for smaller businesses to be more flexible with the use of their resources and increase their labor force thus making them more competitive for jobs often afforded to larger companies who are able to absorb the cost of a larger workforce. It also builds capacity for
smaller companies by allowing for the use of local talent rather than having to undergo costly recruitment from off-island.

Individuals, Groups or Populations Benefitting from the Waiver
This waiver benefits both employers and job seekers.

How the State Plans to Monitor Waiver Implementation, Including Collection of Waiver Outcomes
The Planning, Research and Monitoring Unit at the VI Department of Labor will conduct regularly scheduled reviews of the effectiveness of this waiver. Also, performance data collection through the State’s MIS system will be analyzed to determine any patterns that result from usage.

Assurance of State Posting of the Request for Public Comment and Notification to Affected Local Workforce Development Boards
The waivers will be posted for review and comment on the VI Workforce Development Board and VI Department of Labor’s websites.