



THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

BUREAU OF CORRECTIONS

"Security, Custody, Control"

Rural Route 1, Box 9909, Kingshill, VI 00850-9715
8201 Subbase, 1st Floor St. Thomas, USVI 00802-5813
Plot #1 Negro Bay – Williams D. Roebuck Park, Frederiksted, St Croix VI 00840
Phone: STX (340) 773-6309 STT (340)-714-8300 - Fax: (340) 778-2929 – <https://boc.vi.gov>



April 9, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kyza A. Callwood
Chief Strategy Officer/Acting PIO
(340) 714-8300
Kyza.callwood@boc.vi.gov
<https://boc.vi.gov>
Facebook: [shorturl.at/fzLQ1](https://www.facebook.com/shorturl.at/fzLQ1)

Bureau of Corrections Reconfirms the Public's Trust

ST. THOMAS, USVI – The Virgin Islands Bureau of Corrections (BOC) has begun its transformation process to provide proper care consistently, supervise, and manage all offenders under our jurisdiction while assisting, as appropriate, their re-entry into society. Director Wynnie Testamark continues to work collaboratively with our staff, community partners, customers, Governor and the Legislature, and the community to make the tough decisions as together we transform lives for a safer Virgin Islands. "Our current and future team of correctional and non-correctional professionals will be highly skilled with a full range of expertise, education, and experience said Director Testamark."

When news media outlets publish or discuss subjective matters relative to hiring practices based on inaccurate statements extrapolated by members of our community, either intentional or unintentional, among others, it seeks to taint the hard work of our qualified and capable staff and the continuous great efforts and accomplishments made by the Bureau of Corrections. It will also cause individuals who may want to apply for a BOC career to avoid making such applications. No conspiracy or favoritism is happening in our organization. At the Bureau of Corrections, our most valuable asset is our outstanding staff. I have prioritized providing them with the tools, resources, and training they need to safely and effectively carry out their job responsibilities."

In the past year, we made steady progress toward achieving our long-term strategic goal of becoming a premier correctional agency in the region that offers an opportunity for growth and professional development. In an effort to strictly follow best correctional practices, techniques, consent decree mandates, among other essential factors, in the last month to a year alone, sworn and civilian staff have received training in several areas to include but not limited to the use of force and cell extraction, hospital security, suicide refresher, Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus, effective communication and report writing, and firearms training. During that same time, correctional supervisors and civilian managers received leadership training at a week-long conference on St. Thomas. To address staffing shortages, which leads to long hours and low morale, BOC has stepped up its recruitment and retention efforts, wherein we now have a total of 21 correctional recruits in various stages of the onboarding process: 15 on St. Thomas and 6 six (6) on St. Croix as part of its recently completed 5-year strategic plan. Our strategic plan is rooted

in the premise that the Bureau will be recognized as a model correctional facility, committed to excellence and respected by the community as an innovative, stable, and effective organization. It establishes key performance indices and benchmarks to gauge progress across the agency's various divisions. At the end of five years, the strategic plan envisions the Bureau of Corrections as an accredited, premier correctional agency that is finally out from under the federal consent decrees.

"BOC is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of everyone in our community, including individuals who are currently in jail, along with promoting public health and safety," Testamark said. "Rest assured that our employees, inmates, and facilities remain our number one priority."

In the last year, our current team of experts has helped the Bureau upgrade its inmates' medical and mental health care. First, the Bureau has begun converting X dorm at John Bell into a mental health unit for the exclusive use of chronically mental health patients. This has long been one of the Bureau's aspirational goals because it allows quicker intervention and comprehensive treatment for inmates with mental illness. The Bureau also made technology upgrades that have positively affected medical and mental health care. We now have telemedicine and telepsychiatry capability. We also implemented the use of electronic medical records, which streamlines the management of patient records while reducing administrative costs and the risk of data loss.

In essence, as Warren Bennis, a great author, said, "Leadership is the capacity which translates a vision and more into reality. BOC's Leadership and staff possess virtues like integrity, dedication, fairness, new idea creation with an openness of mind, and innovativeness. "The Virgin Islands Bureau of Corrections continues to employ organizational change supporting emphasis on care objectives equal to the emphasis on custody with strict adherence to correctional procedures to foster a positive, innovative, and creative work environment," Testamark said. "We are implementing all necessary strategies and solutions that will allow us to be an efficient and effective correctional agency."

#