



BUILDING FORWARD for **OUR CHILDREN NOW!**

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS
KIDS COUNT
DATA BOOK 2019

The cover photo for this Data Book was selected for its representation of CFVI's commitments to early childhood and post-hurricane community engagement. The photo was taken during an event unveiling one of several "Little Free Library" units being installed throughout the Territory as part of a CFVI-led initiative to promote literacy across the lifespan. Additionally, the photo on page 4 was taken at another one of our LFL installation events.

Pictured on the opposite page with the introductory letter is "iggi the iguana," the life-sized representation of the character on which the IGGI Project is based. The IGGI Project was created by Joan Bennett following Hurricane Marilyn in 1995 and expanded upon in 2017 following Hurricanes Irma and Maria, with support from CFVI. The primary objective of the materials - which include a coloring book, storybook, parent guide, teacher guide, and puppet show - is to help provide a vehicle for parents, educators, clergy, and other caregivers/volunteers to address the post-trauma psychological and emotional responses and needs of children.

The photo on the inside back cover was taken at Griffith Park playground, which was badly damaged during the storms. CFVI led the effort to replace playground equipment and revitalize the surrounding area, including installing a new pavilion and restoring the basketball court surface. It is now a favorite play space for children and families across the island!



WELCOME TO KIDS COUNT!

We are pleased to present “Building Forward for Our Children Now!” the 2019 USVI KIDS COUNT Data Book.

This release of USVI KIDS COUNT 2019 marks the two-year anniversary of the Territory’s devastation from Hurricanes Irma and Maria - two category 5 hurricanes. In September 2018, CFVI provided a one-year update letter to our community which expressed gratitude for the efforts that had shown us the very best of humanity: family, friends, neighbors and even strangers coming together in remarkable ways. And we promised to continue the work of rebuilding a stronger, more resilient USVI for all our people.

CFVI is committed to using reliable data to inform our work, improving policies and services for children and families, and making data available as a tool for the entire community, especially for our political leaders and government officials. Recognizing the need for current data about the state of vulnerable children and families in the U.S. Virgin Islands following the September 2017 storms, CFVI approached colleagues at the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) and, in collaboration with the UVI Caribbean Exploratory Research Center, produced the “Community Needs Assessment: Understanding the Needs of Vulnerable Children and Families in the U.S. Virgin Islands Post Hurricanes Irma and Maria (CNA).” The CNA report was released in February 2019 and provides the findings of a months-long community needs assessment to determine the status of health, education, human services, and housing needs. Part Two of this expanded KIDS COUNT report includes information from the CNA report and other more recent data, to inform our community’s decision-making as we continue to manage the Territory’s recovery from the hurricanes and develop plans to strengthen our economy and infrastructure in ways that will benefit the children of our community and serve the needs of their families.

Since 1997, the Community Foundation has honored our formal commitment to hold vulnerable children and families in the U.S. Virgin Islands as a primary lens in our grant-making and programming. In the months following the storms, with increased funding made available from generous donor support for recovery and resilience, CFVI has issued more than 100 grants totaling approximately \$16 million – a majority of which have specifically addressed the needs of children, youth and families. Grants included stipends to low-wage hospital workers, rapid response emergency grants to families throughout the Territory, the renewal of a playground in an underserved neighborhood, and a literacy project in partnership with programs providing job training to “disengaged” young people.

CFVI’s commitment to children and families in the USVI is non-negotiable, and we will embrace and expand our responsibilities as we build forward from the hurricanes to a stronger and more resilient community ... one which is kinder and gentler for our most vulnerable citizens. CFVI will continue to establish new relationships and bring additional resources to our Territory, as we have for nearly 30 years! We are proud of the road traveled to date and look forward to the journey ahead.

Building Forward together for our beloved Virgin Islands,

Dee Baecher-Brown
President, CFVI

George H.T. Dudley
Chairman of the Board, CFVI

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USING THIS BOOK

- This Data Book reports information for the year 2015 (or 2015-2016 in some cases). In addition to the standard time-lag for data providers to collect, analyze, and report data to us, there is an additional time-lag associated with the Virgin Islands Community Survey, from which population data are required to calculate rates and percentages. It is important to note that most of the data reported in Part 2 are raw data. Due to population data not being available for years 2016 – 2019, the calculation of percentages and rates was not possible. Comparability between years will also be limited and these data should be interpreted with caution.
- At times, data are reported by island (for St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas); other times, data are only available by district (St. Croix and St. Thomas/St. John).
- Definitions and sources are available – in alphabetical order – at the end of the Data Book.
- Much more data (including additional indicators, levels of detail, and previous years) can be found through the online KIDS COUNT Data Center, which houses data provided by KIDS COUNT member organizations and by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, which hosts the site. The Data Center can be accessed at www.datacenter.kidscount.org.

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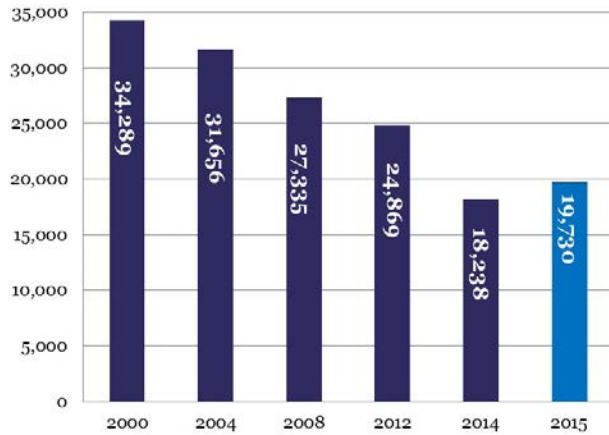
Trends in Indicators of VI Children's Well-being, 2012-2015

		2012	2013	2014	2015
Child & Family Demographics 	VI Child Population	27,026	21,741	18,238	19,730
	Children in Single-Parent Families	50%	59%	59%	68%
	Children in Married-Parent Families	24%	36%	36%	23%
Economic Well-Being 	Median Family Income	\$43,606	\$41,839	\$44,521	\$43,731
	Children in Poverty	31%	35%	37%	30%
	Unemployment Rate	12%	13%	13%	12%
Education 	5 Year Olds Behind Developmental Age Expectations Language and Comprehension	53%	55%	51%	49%
	5 Year Olds Behind Developmental Age Expectations Cognition Skills	34%	40%	39%	34%
	Public High School Dropouts	5.2%	7%	5.8%	5.6%
Health & Safety 	Low-Birthweight Babies	9.6%	8.7%	5.3%	7.20%
	Teen Birth Rate	48/1,000	36.3/1,000	33.6/1,000	52.7/1,000
	Children Without Health Insurance	28%	27%	26%	19%
	Teen Death Rate	207/100,000	58/100,000	149/100,000	60/100,000

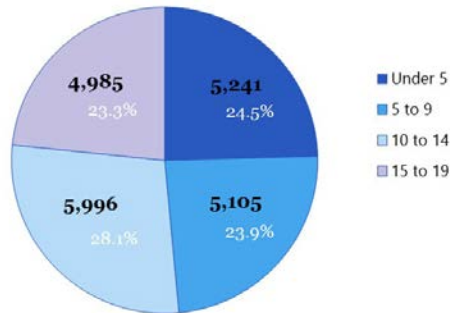
Note: VI rates must be interpreted with caution; small absolute numbers can lead to large variations in rates that are population-based.

CHILD & FAMILY DEMOGRAPHICS

VI Child Population, 2000-2015



Child Population by Age Group, 2015



VI Child Population by Age Group, 1990-2015

Year	0-17	5-17	0-17 as % of total population	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19
1990	35,427	26,197	26%	9,230	10,072	10,142	9,623
2000	34,289	25,736	25%	8,553	10,176	9,676	8,688
2010	27,026	19,526	28%	7,500	7,150	7,484	7,563
2014	18,238	14,128	17%	4,110	5,109	5,377	5,415
2015	19,730	14,490	19%	5,241	5,105	5,996	4,985

VI Child Population

The number of children (under 18) living in the USVI in 2015 (19,730) increased slightly as compared to 2014 (18,238). Looking more broadly at trends over time, the child population has diminished significantly since the year 2000, decreasing by 42% or over 14,500 children.

In 2015, children represented 20% of the total population, compared to 18% in 2014, and similar to 2013 (20.5%).

...by island*:

The proportion of children in the total population of each island was similar for both St. Croix (20.7%) and St. Thomas (19%). On St. John, children made up only 11.7% of all residents.

- **St. Croix:** 10,078 children represented 51% of all VI children, 403 (4%) more children than in 2014.
- **St. John:** 429 children represented 2.2% of VI children, 47 (9.8%) fewer children than in 2014.
- **St. Thomas:** 9,223 children represented 46.7% of all VI children, an increase of 1,136 (12%) from 2014.

...by age group*:

In 2015, the child population under 19 continued to be evenly split among groups: under age 5; from ages 5-9; 10-14; and ages 15-19.

Children ages 15 to 19 represented one of the smaller portions of children (23.4%), while children ages 10 to 14 represented the largest portion (28.1%). Reflecting the general trend in population decrease, the number of children in each age group has decreased by almost half since 1990.

...by citizenship*:

Similar to the rates of previous years, over 9 out of every 10 VI children were American citizens in 2015.

- 94% of VI children were U.S. citizens.
- Of all children who were U.S. citizens, 83% (16,719) were born in the U.S. Virgin Islands; the rest (3,405 children) were born in the U.S. mainland or other island areas (including Puerto Rico) - whether to Virgin Islands-born, U.S.-born, or foreign-born parents.

...by race*:

Since 1990, the distribution of children (under age 19) categorized as Black, White, and “Other races” as well as the proportion of children of Hispanic origin (any race), has been relatively stable.

The proportion of White children and children of “Other races” saw a small decrease from the previous year, while the proportion of Black children increased by 1,713 children. Meanwhile, children reported as being of Hispanic origin increased by 630 children.

- Black children: 18,374 or 86% of all VI children (83% in 2014)
- White children: 887 or 4% of all VI children (5% in 2014)
- Other race children: 2,066 or 9.6% of all VI children (12% in 2014)
- Hispanic children (of any race): 3,919 or 18% of all VI children (16% in 2014)

VI Children by Race/Ethnicity, 1990-2015

Year	Black	Hispanic (any race)	Other Races	White
1990	83%	15%	10.2%	6.8%
2000	82%	15%	11%	7%
2014	83%	16%	12%	5%
2015	86%	18%	9.6%	4%

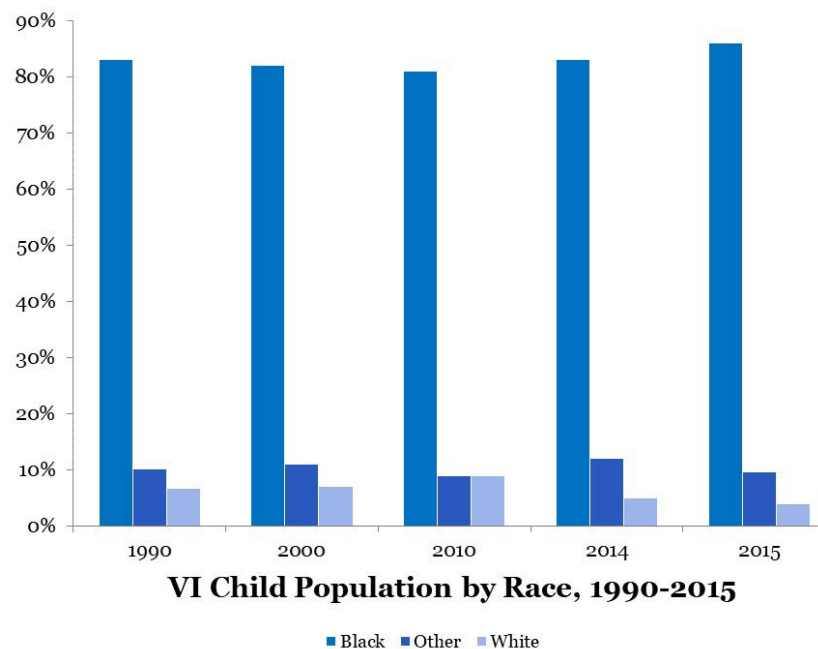
...by language*:

All children ages 5-19 were reported as speaking English (albeit at varying proficiency levels), regardless of whether English was the primary or only language spoken in the home.

- 75% of children spoke only English in their home.
- Of those children who spoke another language in their home, Spanish made up the majority (65% of children for whom another language was spoken), while French/Patois/Creole followed (28%), and “other languages” combined to make up a small percentage (7%).

*Note: Population measures VI children age birth through 19 years old.

“Other races” may include the following: Hispanic, Asian, Middle Eastern, East Indian, or a mix of any races.



FAMILY & COMMUNITY

Children Living with Female Parent Only

In 2015
58%
of VI children lived in households with only their female parent.



Children Living with Male Parent Only



In 2015
10%
of VI children lived in households with only their male parent.

In 2015, VI children under the age of 18 lived in a total of 11,062 family households.

Children in single-parent families¹

- 13,497 children (68%) lived in households with an unmarried single mother or father (possibly also with parent's cohabitating partner, or other adult relatives).

... with their mother:

- 11,479 children (58%) lived with their female parent only (no father present), which is the highest reported percentage within the last decade. *U.S. rate: about 26% of U.S. children lived in single-mother families.*²

... with their father:

- 2,018 children (10%) lived with their male parent only (no mother present), down from 11% in 2014. *U.S. rate: about 8% of children lived in a household with a single father.*³

Families headed by single women

Although the total number of children living in single-female-headed households within the VI has been generally declining since 2000, the share of children in these families has risen.

- Single female head of households were the majority (60%) of all families with children, an increase from the 2014 (52%) and 2013 (53%) proportions. *U.S. rate: 24.8% of all families with children were headed by single female householder.*⁴

¹National KIDS COUNT now identifies "single-parent families" as families headed either by a single mother or a single father. In USVI reporting (data from the VICS), children are categorized as living "with male parent only" or with "female parent only." Additionally, single-parent families may include a single mother or father with own children living in a household where that parent is not, in fact, the household head (e.g., a 3-generation household headed by the child/children's grandparent).

²KIDS COUNT Data Center, *Child Population by Household Type*

³KIDS COUNT Data Center, *Child Population by Household Type*

⁴American Fact Finder, *Households and Families*

... by location:

- St. Thomas and St. Croix had identical rates of families with children headed by a single mother: 60% (STX) and 60% (STT).
- The percent of families with children headed by a single mother in St. John was 49%.

... by race:

- Among Black families with children under 18, 63% (6,029 of 9,537) were headed by an unmarried female householder.
- Among White families with children under 18, 40% (240 of 607) were headed by an unmarried female householder.
- Among “Other Races” families with children under 18, 42% (387 of 918) were headed by an unmarried female householder.

Children in married-couple families

- 23.4% of VI children (4,607) lived in married-couple families, down from 36% in 2014 and similar to the 24% of children living in married-couple families in 2012.

U.S. rate: 66% of children lived in married-couple families⁵

Children in non-parent families

- In 2015, 8.2% of children lived in a household headed by an adult other than their parent - most often a grandparent.

...with grandparents:

- Approximately 4% of all children (860 children) lived in households headed by their grandparent(s).

...with other relatives (with or without a parent present):

- 300 children (1.5%) lived in households headed by a relative other than a grandparent or parent.

...with non-relatives (with or without a parent present):

- 256 children (1%) lived in households headed by non-relatives.

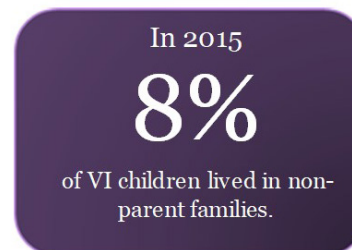
Children in other settings

- In 2015, there were no children under the age of 18 who were reported as the householder/spouse in their own household.

Children in Households Headed by Married Parents



Children in Households Headed by a Non-Parent

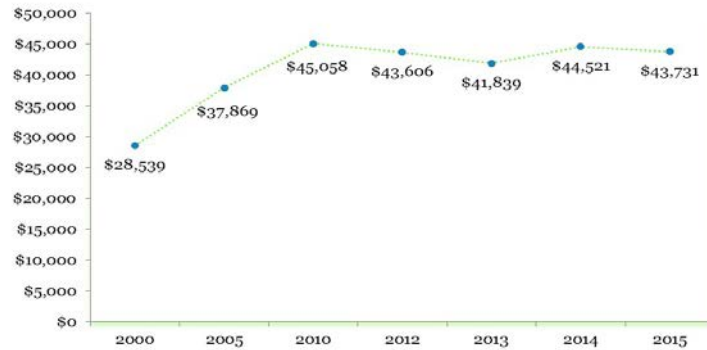


⁵ KIDS COUNT Data Center, *Child Population by Household Type*

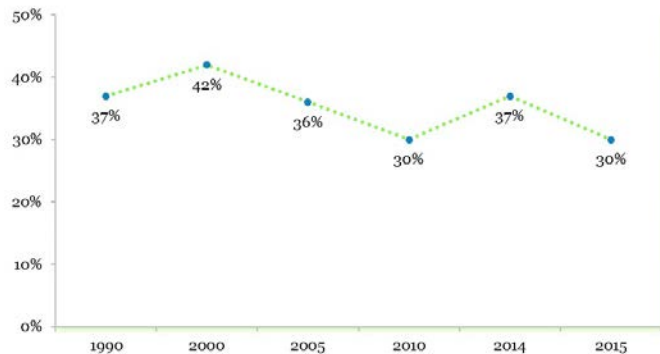
Find year-by-year data for VI Children in Families topics at the KIDS COUNT Data Center:
www.datacenter.kidscount.org

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

VI Median Family Income, 2000-2015



Children in Poverty, 1990-2015



Children Living in Poverty, by Age



Median Family Income*

In general, VI median family income has been steadily rising since the 2000s, with trending stagnation in recent years (e.g., after dips in 2012 and 2013, median family income in 2014 returned to levels reported in 2010).

- In 2015, the median income for VI families was \$43,731, a lesser amount than reported in 2014 (\$44,521), but comparable to that of 2012 (\$43,606).

U.S. Median Family Income: \$56,516.⁶

*Note: Economic data are reported based on income received in the previous year; thus, 2015 reporting cites income earned in 2014, and so on.

... by island:

Although exhibiting a slight decrease in 2015, median incomes for families in St. Croix had risen in the previous couple years, while those in St. Thomas have been steadily decreasing, thus bringing median family income for the two islands closer together. Median family income in St. John consistently remains higher than that of St. Croix or St. Thomas.

- **St. Croix:** \$41,485
Slight decrease from \$42,534 in 2014
- **St. John:** \$53,062
Large decrease from \$63,287 in 2014 and \$54,068 in 2013
- **St. Thomas:** \$45,131
Minimal decrease from \$45,300 in 2014 and \$45,861 in 2013

...by race:

Median family incomes reported in 2015:

- **Black:** \$43,296
- **White:** \$59,877 (decreased by 20% from 2014)
- **Other Races:** \$32,857

Children in Poverty

After several years of decreasing rates of child poverty leading up to 2010, rates over the past decade were showing an upward trend. However, the 2015 rate decreased to 30%, matching the lowest reported poverty rate for children recorded in the VI from 2010.

- In 2015, almost one-third of VI children (30%) lived in families with incomes below 100% of the federal poverty level (down from 37% in 2014, 35% in 2013).
- 5,836 children under age 18 were living in poverty.

U.S. child poverty rate: 13.5%.⁷

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, *Income and Earnings Summary Measures by Selected Characteristics: 2014 and 2015*

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, *People in Poverty by Selected Characteristics: 2014 and 2015*

...by age:

- In 2015, roughly a third (32%) of all children under age 6 (1,988 children) lived in families in poverty, compared to 28% of children ages 6 to 17 (3,848 children).

...by race*:

- Almost one of every three Black children (31%) and a quarter of children of Other Races (25.4%) lived in families in poverty, while only 11% of White children lived in poverty.

...by location*:

- Children in St. Croix had the highest poverty rate of the islands: 30.9% (about a 10 percentage point decrease from the rate in 2014: 40.6%).
- In St. Thomas, 27.7% of children lived in families in poverty (down from 34% in 2014 and 29% in 2013).
- In St. John, 36.5% of children lived in families in poverty (more than double the 14% of children in 2014).

*Note: Fluctuations in this indicator must be interpreted with caution; changes in small absolute numbers can have large effects on calculated rates.

Families (with Children) in Poverty

As median family incomes have been generally static across the past decade, the impact of poverty on families with children has remained persistent. For over two decades more than a quarter of families with children have consistently reported incomes below the federal poverty level.⁸

- In 2015, a quarter of families with children under 18 (2,811) lived in poverty, representing a 25.4% poverty rate for families with children.
- With just a small increase in the reported number of families with children under 18 (432 more families than in 2014 [10,630], compared to 12,183 in 2013, and 13,792 in 2012), the percentage of these families living in poverty has been relatively static (32% in 2014, compared to 30.9% in 2013 and 27% in 2012).

Female-Headed Families (with Children) in Poverty

Families headed by single mothers are especially vulnerable to factors associated with living in poverty.

- Children’s families headed by unmarried females continued to make up the majority of all poor families, representing over ¾ (80%) of all families (with children) in poverty in 2015, increasing from 76% in 2014 (74.5% in 2013, 76% in 2012).

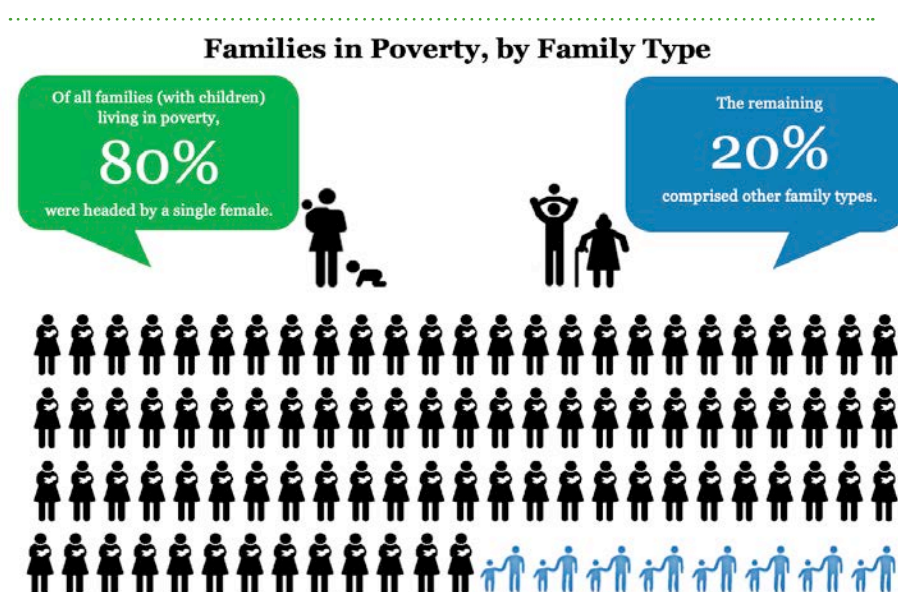
- A little over a third of single-female families with children (34%) lived below the federal poverty level (decrease from 47.1% in 2014 and 43.7% in 2013)
- Poverty rates are higher for female-headed families with children under age 6 (38% of these families were categorized as poor, compared to 33% of those with children ages 6-17). Reasons may include childcare responsibilities or costs, and/or younger age of the mother, limited access to the job market and educational matriculation, as well as limited work experience.

...by race:

- Among Black families with children, 26.8% were living below the poverty level (six percentage points lower than reported in 2014 of 31.2%).
- Among White families with children, 6.4% were living below the poverty level (a decrease from the rate of 8.5% in 2014 and substantial decrease from the 2013 rate of 16%).
- Among Other Race families with children, 22.6% were living below the poverty level (down from 45% in 2014).

⁸ The 2015 poverty threshold, adjusted for family size, was \$24,036 in annual income for a family of four with two related children under age 18. Because the cost of living (for food, housing, energy etc.) in the USVI is documented as among the nation’s highest, actual VI poverty levels are likely higher than indicated by the rates as calculated herein.

[U.S. Census Bureau, Poverty Thresholds](#)





1,154 children (5.5% of all children) received TANF in 2015, 162 children fewer than in the previous year.

Children in Families Receiving Income Assistance

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

The federal TANF program provides temporary cash assistance to qualifying families with dependent children. Adults receiving TANF benefits are required to participate in work that can lead to self-sufficiency through employment and can qualify for TANF benefits for 5 years maximum within their lifetime.

- 522 households with children received TANF benefits in 2015, totaling \$1,366,329 in benefits.
- 1,154 children (5.5% of all children) received TANF in 2015, 162 children less than in the previous year.
- Children in St. Croix continued to represent well over half (71%) of the Territory's children receiving TANF: 815 children; children in the St. Thomas/St. John district represented 29% of all children: 339 children receiving TANF.

...by family structure:

- Of children receiving TANF, 93.6% (1,074 children) lived with a single parent, 2.3% (27 children) lived with two parents, and 3.7% (43 children) lived without either parent.

Children In Families Receiving Nutrition Assistance

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for: Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

WIC is a federal health intervention program serving pregnant women, mothers, infants, and children under age 5 who are low- to mid-income and at nutritional risk.

In fiscal year 2015:

- 3,360 young children from birth through age 4 (or 64% of an estimated 5,240 VI children this age) received WIC benefits.
- 967 recipients were infants in their first year of life.
- 2,393 recipients were children ages 1 through 4 years old.

School Nutrition Programs

The federal School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program aim to enhance needy children's educational performance by improving their overall nutrition.

- Based on the level of overall low family income in the Territory, the USDA has designated all VI children age 2-18 as eligible to receive federally supported School Breakfast and School Lunch Program meals for free in public schools, no matter what their family's income.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The federal SNAP program provides food subsidies to reduce hunger for individuals and families experiencing unemployment, disability, reduced work hours, or other causes of income insecurity.

- 16,345 VI children ages 0-18 received SNAP benefits in 2015, similar to the numbers in previous years 2014 (16,497) and 2013 (16,530).
- 7,664 child-based households received SNAP benefits in 2015 (a small decrease from 7,956 child-based households in 2014 and 7,818 child-based households in 2013).
- In total, \$56,639,143 in SNAP benefits were provided for needy households (comprising households with and without children) across the Territory, over one million more dollars in benefits than in 2014 (\$55,338,091).

...by family structure:

- 76% of children receiving SNAP assistance lived with a single parent (12,485 children), 13.6% (2,229 children) lived with two parents, and 7% (1,142 children) lived without either parent.

Unemployment*

- In 2015, the VI unemployment rate continued to decline from the previous year (11.9% in 2014; down from 13.0% in 2013). However, unemployment rates remain high - the 2015 rate is double that of 2007 (5.9%).
 - The VI civilian labor force numbered 48,547 (an increase of 1,770 from in 2014), of which, 43,024 were employed.⁹
 - Over the course of the year, the unemployment rate ranged from a low of 10.4% (St. Thomas) in March to a high of 14.0% (St. Croix) in May.
- U.S. unemployment rate in 2015: 5.0% (down from 6.2% in 2014).¹⁰*

...by location:

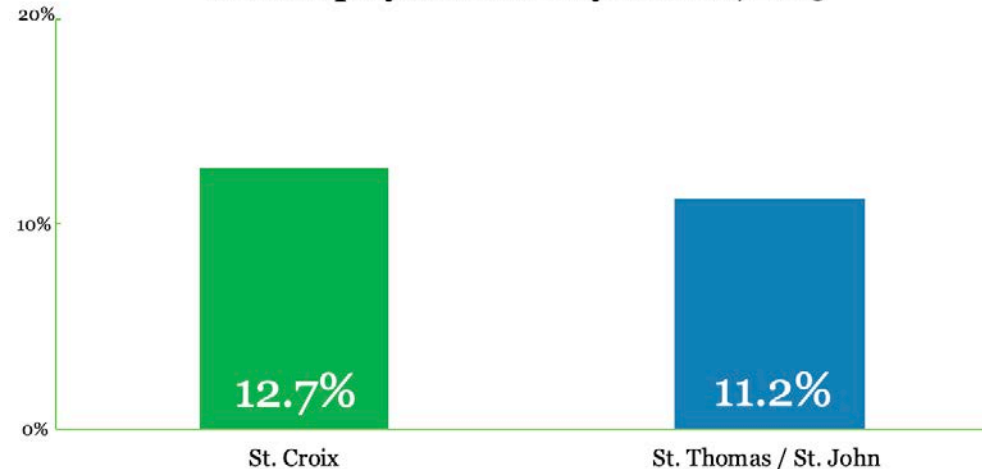
- St. Croix recorded an average unemployment rate of 12.7% in 2015 (down from 13.9% in 2014 and almost matching the rate in 2003 of 12.5%).
Over the course of the year, the monthly unemployment rate ranged from a low of 11.1% in October to a high of 14.0% in May.
- St. Thomas/St. John recorded an average unemployment rate of 11.2% in 2015 (down from 12.1% in 2014 and 11.8% in 2013).
Over the course of the year, the monthly unemployment rate ranged from a low of 10.4% in March to a high of 12.6% in October.

Federal/State Unemployment Insurance (UI)

Federal/State Unemployment Insurance programs give temporary payments to eligible unemployed workers. Since 2010, however, many workers' unemployment periods have outlasted the 60-week duration of their UI payments.

- In 2015, UI payouts on claims totaled \$12,230,014.00 (up from 11,504,916.96 in 2014 and down from \$16,794,588.47 in 2013, \$22,186,593 in 2012).

VI Unemployment Rate by District, 2015



*Note: A community's unemployment rate is likely to be higher than officially measured, as the rate reflects workers age 16+ actively seeking work, and excludes 'discouraged' unemployed workers who have given up searching for a job.

⁹ [USVI Bureau of Economic Research, "U.S. Virgin Islands Annual Economic Indicators," 1990-2017.](#)

¹⁰ [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey](#)

Youth Employment, Ages 16-19

- 20.7% of all youths ages 16-19 reported being members of the labor force (i.e., working or looking for work), with 19% of this subgroup (or 147 youth) working full-time (40+ hours per week) in 2015.
- Among youths ages 16-19 who were in the labor force in 2015 (765 youth), 46.7% were unemployed.
- 47.5% of male youths in the labor force (228 of 480 males) were unemployed, compared with 45.6% of female youths in the labor force (130 of 285 females).

Older Youth Employment, Ages 20-24

- 79.3% of youths ages 20-24 in the labor force were employed (2,122 of 2,673)
- Among older youths who were looking for work, 23% were unemployed.
- 13.4% of older male youths in the labor force (169 of 1,256 males) were unemployed, compared with 18% of older female youths in the labor force (262 of 1,417 females).
- 39.8 % of employed older youths worked full-time, at least 40 hours a week.

Detached Youth

'Detached' or 'disconnected' youth are youths ages 16-19 who are not enrolled in school and not working. Included are teens who have dropped out of high school and are jobless, as well as the smaller portion of teens who are recent high school graduates and who are unemployed.

*At the time of publication, data for this indicator had not been received.
The KIDS COUNT Data Center and PDF version of the Data Book posted online
will be updated if/when data become available.*

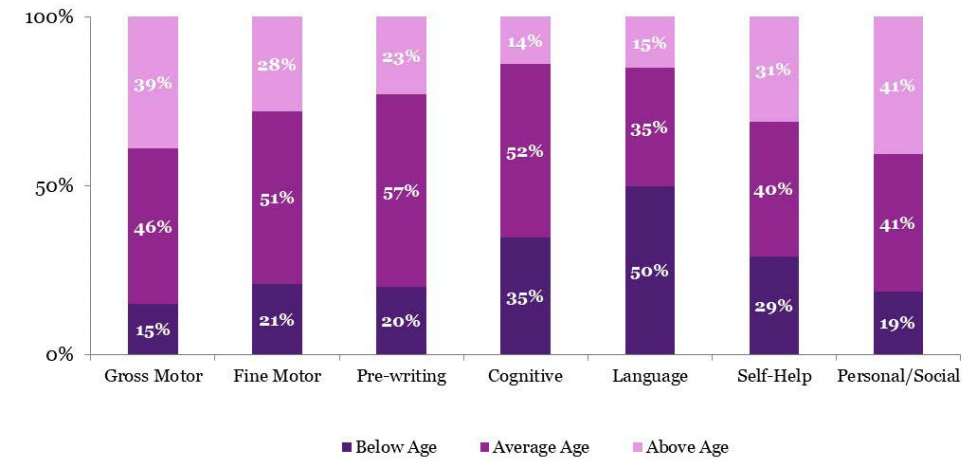
Find year-by-year data for Economic Well-being topics at
the KIDS COUNT Data Center:
www.datacenter.kidscount.org





EDUCATION

VI Children's Learning Skills at Entry to Public Kindergarten, Fall 2015



Note: Due to rounding error, percentages may not always sum to 100%.

The Learning Accomplishment Profile Third Edition (LAP-3) provides a method for observing skill development of children in the 36-72 month age-range. The LAP-3 assessment assists teachers, clinicians, and parents in assessing:

- Gross motor (physical)** - Abilities and coordination in movement
- Fine motor (physical)** - Abilities through dexterity, using tools, hand-eye coordination
- Pre-writing** - Pre-writing skills
- Cognitive** - Awareness of numbers, problem solving skills
- Language** - Ability to express thoughts, appreciate books
- Self-help** - Independence in hygiene, personal care
- Personal/Social** - Ability to communicate/follow rules

Early Head Start / Head Start

Head Start and Early Head Start provide free learning and development services to low-income children (ages birth to five) and pregnant women. Nationally, federal grants are awarded to public agencies, private nonprofit and for-profit organizations, tribal governments, and school systems to operate these programs.

Early Head Start Enrollment

There are only two Early Head Start Centers in the Territory, both operated in St. Croix.

During the 2015-2016 school year:

- 158 children ages birth to 3 were enrolled in Early Head Start programs throughout the Territory.
- 17% of children were characterized as having a disability.
- 111 unserved children were on the waiting list for Early Head Start programs (13 more children than the previous year).

Head Start Enrollment

In 2015, there were 45 Head Start Centers in the Territory: 26 in St. Croix, 1 in St. John, and 18 in St. Thomas.

- In 2015, 894 children ages 3 to 5 were enrolled in Head Start programs throughout the Territory; there were 965 total children served during the 2015-2016 school year.*
- 12.4% of enrolled children were identified as having a disability.¹¹
- 78.5% of enrolled children were covered by the Medical Assistance Program (MAP), which is funded by Medicaid.
- The waiting list for enrollment decreased by 17 students in 2015 (from 430 students waitlisted in 2014).

Children's Readiness for School

Upon entrance to kindergarten, VI public school children are assessed using the Learning Accomplishment Profile Third Edition (LAP-3).

In school year 2015-2016...

- Almost half (49%) of children entering public kindergarten were 6 months to over a year behind developmental age-expectations in language and comprehension skills (compared to 51% of children behind in 2014 and 55% in 2013).
- One-third or more of VI children entering public kindergarten also lacked adequate cognitive skills (34%), (compared to 39% in 2014 and 40% in 2013).

*Funded enrollment refers to the number of children that are supported by federal Head Start funds in a program at any one time during the program year; these are sometimes referred to as enrollment slots. Number of children served is the number of children that received Head Start services in the program year. Children on this list may have not completed an entire program year; however, once a child has received Head Start services, they are identified as a child served.

Children with Special Needs

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires states to identify and provide appropriate services to all children who are developmentally delayed (or who have a physical or mental condition likely to result in a developmental delay). Enrolled children from birth up to age 3 must receive appropriate Early Intervention (EI) services, under IDEA, Part C. Enrolled children ages 3 through 17 must receive appropriate Special Education services, under IDEA, PART B.

- In 2015, 6.2 % of VI children ages birth through 17 (1,230 children) were identified as developmentally delayed or at risk of delay.

Children Enrolled in Early Intervention: Birth-Age 3

Unless addressed effectively, delays or disabilities experienced by a child during these early years can impact his or her foundation for positive learning and social development. As of December 2015:

- 121 children birth through age 3 were receiving Early Intervention (EI) services (down from 142 in 2014 and 139 in 2013).
- ... Birth to age 1: 16 children
- ... Ages 1 to 2: 40 children
- ... Ages 2 to 3: 65 children
- Males represented 60% of children identified as receiving EI services.
- 70% of all children served were located in St. Croix.

Children Enrolled in Special Education: Ages 3 - 17

Part B of the federal IDEA Act requires all states' school systems to evaluate students ages 3-21 who are at-risk for special needs, and to provide all students who qualify for Special Education with an 'Individualized Education Program' (IEP) - individualized academic goals, with related support and accountability services. As of December 2015:

- 1,109 children ages 3-17 were enrolled in Special Education IEP programs (a decrease of 31 students from the previous year).
- In St. Croix, 594 children received special education services.
- In St. Thomas/St. John, 515 children received these services.

"Positive early experiences are essential prerequisites for later success in school, the workplace, and the community. Services to young children who have or are at risk for developmental delays have been shown to positively impact outcomes across developmental domains, including health, language and communication, cognitive development, and social/emotional development."¹²

¹¹According to Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) Standard 1302.14 (b), "a program must ensure at least 10 percent of its total funded enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under IDEA, unless the responsible HHS official grants a waiver."

¹²[The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, *The Importance of Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and their Families*](#)

2015-2016 Territorial Report Card

Third Grade Reading

"Research shows that proficiency in reading by the end of third grade enables students to shift from learning to read to reading to learn, and to master the more complex subject matter they encounter in the fourth grade curriculum. Most students who fail to reach this critical milestone falter in the later grades and often drop out before earning a high school diploma.

Although schools must be accountable for helping all children achieve, providing effective teaching for all children in every classroom every day, the Campaign for Grade Level Reading is based on the belief that schools cannot succeed alone. Engaged communities mobilized to remove barriers, expand opportunities, and assist parents in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities to serve as full partners in the success of their children are needed to assure student success."¹³

In the 2015-2016 school year...

- 59.1% of the 978 public school third-grade students tested by the Smarter Balance and the National Center and State Collaborative Assessment scored below standard performance levels for reading (2015-2016 Assessment Proficiency Rate Report Card).



¹³[Campaign for Grade Level Reading Overview](#)

Student Academic Performance by Grade

Grade 3 Reading Proficiency:

Below Basic	59.1%
Basic	25.7%
Proficient	10.3%
Advanced	4.8%

Grade 3 Math Proficiency:

Below Basic	0.0%
Basic	20.0%
Proficient	20.0%
Advanced	60.0%

Grade 5 Reading Proficiency:

Below Basic	57.2%
Basic	18.9%
Proficient	19.7%
Advanced	4.0%

Grade 5 Math Proficiency:

Below Basic	41.7%
Basic	0.0%
Proficient	33.3%
Advanced	25.0%

Grade 7 Reading Proficiency:

Below Basic	61.8%
Basic	23.1%
Proficient	12.7%
Advanced	2.3%

Grade 7 Math Proficiency:

Below Basic	33.3%
Basic	26.7%
Proficient	40.0%
Advanced	0.0%

Grade 11 Reading Proficiency:

Below Basic	32.9%
Basic	32.4%
Proficient	27.1%
Advanced	7.4%

Grade 11 Math Proficiency:

Below Basic	37.5%
Basic	25.0%
Proficient	37.5%
Advanced	0.0%

Find year-by-year data for VI Education topics at the
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2015-2016 Assessment Proficiency, Public Schools

Smarter Balance and the National Center and State Collaborative Assessment

All Districts: All Schools

		English Language Arts / Literacy				Mathematics			
		Students Tested	Percent of Students tested who scored in each performance level			Students Tested	Percent of Students tested who scored in each performance level		
Student Groups	Below Standard (%)		Near Standard (%)	Met or Exceeded Standard (%)	Below Standard (%)		Near Standard (%)	Met or Exceeded Standard (%)	
ALL Students		6,902	56.0	24.5	19.5	6,892	72.3	20.9	6.7
Ethnicity	Black or African American	5,449	55.5	24.8	19.7	5,429	72.1	21.2	6.7
	Hispanic	1,316	59.1	23.9	16.9	1,326	75.6	18.8	5.6
	Other	137	47.4	18.2	34.3	137	49.6	29.9	20.4
Gender	Female	3,356	47.5	27.3	25.2	3,360	69.7	22.4	7.9
	Male	3,546	64.1	21.8	14.1	3,532	74.8	19.6	5.6
LEP	Limited English Proficiency	493	83.6	12.6	3.9	516	91.1	7.4	1.6
SWD	Students with Disabilities	543	79.9	13.3	6.8	529	82.4	9.6	7.9
	Alternate Assessment	67	35.8	28.4	35.8	66	25.8	24.2	50
SWND	Students with No Disabilities	6,359	54	25.5	20.6	6,363	71.5	21.9	6.6

- For SY 2015-2016 English Language Arts/Literacy assessment, 59.1% of Hispanic students (1,316) performed 'Below Standard' and 79.9% of Students with Disabilities (543) also performed 'Below Standard'. The highest percentage of students performing 'Below Standard' were students with Limited English Proficiency (493 students; 83.6%).
- 55.5% of Black students (5,449) and 47.4% of "Other" race students (137) performed 'Below Standard' [the lowest percentage scoring 'Below Standard' among student groups not taking an alternate assessment].

- For SY 2015-2016 Mathematics assessment, 72.1% of Black students (5,429) and 75.6% of Hispanic students (1,326) performed 'Below Standard'. 91.1% of students with Limited English Proficiency (516) performed 'Below Standard'.
- 49% of students identified as "Other" races (137) scored at 'Below Standard'.

Truancy and Chronic Absence

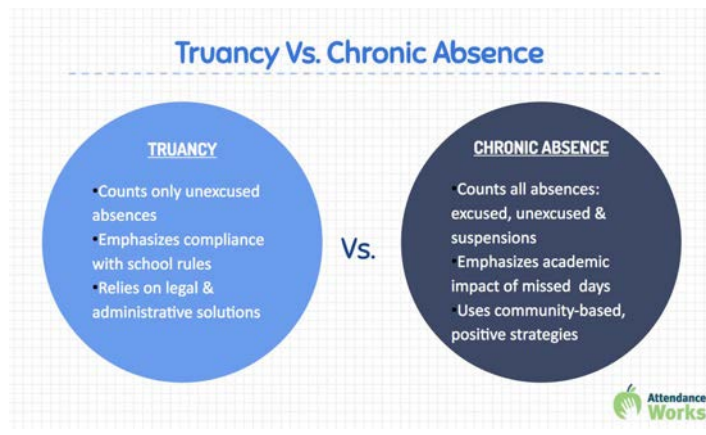
The term truancy generally refers to unexcused absences from school. Chronic absenteeism, on the other hand, reflects all absences: excused, unexcused, and suspensions. This indicator emphasizes the academic consequences of missed instructional time (e.g., chronically absent students are less likely to graduate from high school) and concentrates on preventing absences before students miss so much school that they fall behind.

"Across the country, more than 8 million students are missing so many days of school that they are academically at risk. Chronic absence — missing 10 percent or more of school days due to absence for any reason—excused, unexcused absences and suspensions, can translate into third-graders unable to master reading, sixth-graders failing subjects and ninth-graders dropping out of high school."¹⁴

The Virgin Islands Department of Education reports the number of students missing zero, 1 to 9, and 10 or more days of school per year (for any reason).

For the 2015-2016 school year:

- 0.3% (47 students) of the 13,880 enrolled students across the VI had missed zero days of school.
- 10.5% (1,451 students) missed between one and nine days of school.
- 89.2% (12,382 students) missed 10 or more days of school.
- The St. Thomas/St. John district had a higher rate of students who missed 10 more days of school (90.8% of 7,515 enrolled students), compared to the St. Croix district (87.4% of 6,365 enrolled students).



¹⁴Attendance Works, *Chronic Absence The Problem*

Educational Attainment

High School Completion, Ages 18-19

- 58.6% of the 1,597 youth ages 18-19 had earned a high school diploma in 2015 (a substantial decrease from 78% in 2014 and returning to similar rate of 59% in 2013).

High School/College Completion, Ages 18-24

- 77.2% of 6,002 youth ages 18-24 had completed high school in 2015 (down from 86% in 2014, and up from 72% in 2013).
- 9.0% of high school graduates ages 18-24 had earned a bachelor's degree or above in 2015 (down from 11.3% in 2014 and up from the 5% in 2013).

Graduation Rate

- In the 2015-2016 school year, 791 of 1,115 students graduated, increasing the 4 year cohort graduation rate by 1 percentage point, from the previous year (69.0% in SY 2014-2015).

Vocational Training, Ages 16 to 24

- In the 2015-2016 school year, less than a quarter of young people (20.8%) between the ages of 16 - 24 engaged in some vocational training.
 - ... 587 participated in a certificate program
 - ... 156 were in a technical preparation course
 - ... 379 received on-the-job training
 - ... 562 participated in a technical college program

Public School Dropouts and Withdrawals

Over their lifetimes, high school dropouts face higher likelihood of unemployment (or completely dropping out of the workforce), poorer health, lower rates of marriage, increased incidence of divorce and births outside marriage, and increased involvement with the welfare and justice systems.

Public Secondary School Dropouts, Grades 7-12

- 4.7% of public school students in grades 7 through 12 (304) were reported as dropouts in school year 2015-2016 (similar to 4.3% in the previous year, and close to the rate in 2013 when 5% or 349 students were reported as dropouts).
- In St. Croix, 134 students represented a 4.4% district dropout rate (and 44% of the 304 public secondary school dropouts reported Territory-wide).
- In St. Thomas, 170 students represented a 5% district dropout rate (and 60% of the 304 public secondary school dropouts reported Territory-wide).

Public Junior High School Dropouts, Grades 7-8

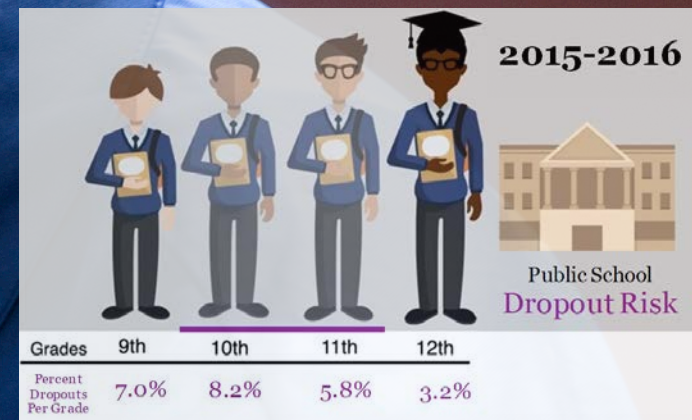
- In SY 2015-2016, 1.6% of 2,122 enrolled junior high school students were reported as dropouts.
- ... 1.2% of enrolled 7th graders (or 14 students)
- ... 1.9% of enrolled 8th graders (or 22 students)

Public High School Dropouts, Grades 9-12

- 5.6% of 4,295 enrolled high school students were reported as dropouts (similar to the rate of the previous year (5.8% in 2014-2015 and down from 7% in the 2013-2014 school year).
- ... 7.0% of enrolled 9th graders (or 104 students)
- ... 8.2% of enrolled 10th graders (or 82 students)
- ... 5.8% of enrolled 11th graders (or 54 students)
- ... 3.2% of enrolled 12th graders (or 30 students)

Public High School Withdrawals, Grades 9-12

- 2.2% (or 97 students) withdrew due to enrollment in Adult education, Skill center or Job Corps.
- 6.5% (or 280 students) transferred to a school outside of the U.S. Virgin Islands.





HEALTH & SAFETY

"Prevention of preterm births/low birthweight is one of the best ways to prevent babies born with low birthweight. Prenatal care is a key factor in preventing preterm births and low birthweight babies. At prenatal visits, the health of both mother and fetus can be checked. Because maternal nutrition and weight gain are linked with fetal weight gain and birth weight, eating a healthy diet and gaining the proper amount of weight in pregnancy are essential. Mothers should avoid alcohol, cigarettes and illicit drugs, which can contribute to poor fetal growth, among other complications."¹⁵

Babies Born at Low Weight

Birthweight is a key indicator of newborn health. Infants born with low weight at birth (weighing less than 5-1/2 pounds) face greater risks of physical and developmental setbacks and infant death than those born at normal weight. In addition, the importance of prenatal care establishes an ability for increased care and attention for new and expecting mothers. Low weight at birth is a risk factor for surviving the first year of life and for healthy development thereafter.

Since 2007, the number of VI babies born at low weight has shown a steady decline. In 2015, however, 7.2% of 1,357 live births (98) were born at low weight representing a movement toward rates observed in 2013 (8.7%) and 2012 (9.6%). The lowest reported rate in recent years occurred in 2014, when 5.3% of babies (69) were reported as born at low weight. *U.S. rate: 8.1% of babies born at low weight.*¹⁶

Babies Born at Very Low Weight

Babies born at very low weight (under 3 pounds, 4 ounces) are at greatest risk.

- Exhibiting similar rates from the previous year, 1.1% of babies (16 births not included in the 98 above) were born at very low weight in 2015.

*U.S. rate: 1.4%, unchanged since 2010.*¹⁷

Infant Mortality

- In 2015, 1 death occurred out of the 1,357 live births, for an infant mortality rate of 7.4 deaths per 1,000 live births (down from 8.5/1,000 and similar to the 7.5/1,000 in 2013)

... St. Croix: 1.7/1,000 (or 1 death out of 604 live births)

... St. Thomas / St. John: 0/1,000 (0 deaths out of 753 live births)

*U.S. rate: 5.9 infant deaths per 1,000 live births.*¹⁸

Births to Teens

The VI teen birth rate had continued its steady decline since 1990; however, the birth rate reported in 2015 signified a large increase from prior years - double that of the national teen birth rate.

- In 2015, 107 babies were born to a mother ages 15-19 (out of an estimated 2,029 girls this age), for a teen birth rate of 52.7 births per 1,000 girls ages 15-19.
 - Babies born to teens represented 7.9% of 1,357 live births in 2015.
 - St. Croix teen birth rate: 80/1,000 (69 births)
 - St. Thomas/St. John teen birth rate: 32.5/1,000 (38 births)
- U.S. rate: 22 births per 1,000 girls ages 15-19.¹⁹*

Child Health Insurance

Children with health insurance are more likely to receive regular check-ups to treat health risks before these lead to emergencies or chronic poor health. Children without health insurance have more severe and more frequent unmet health needs, miss more days of school, and experience more acute health issues in their later years.

Children with Medical Insurance

In 2015, 81.1% of all VI children and youth, ages birth through 19 (17,305 children) had some form of health insurance coverage.

Of children with health insurance:

- 39.1% of children (8,337) had insurance under 'Employer or Union'
- 1.6% of children (344) had insurance 'Directly from Company'
- 0.6% of children (128) received Medicare
- 1.6% of children (339) received Tricare Insurance (as a dependent of a military member/retiree)
- 0.5% of children (109) received 'Other Insurance'

Children with Medicaid Health Coverage

The number and portion of VI children covered by Medicaid have generally risen over time.

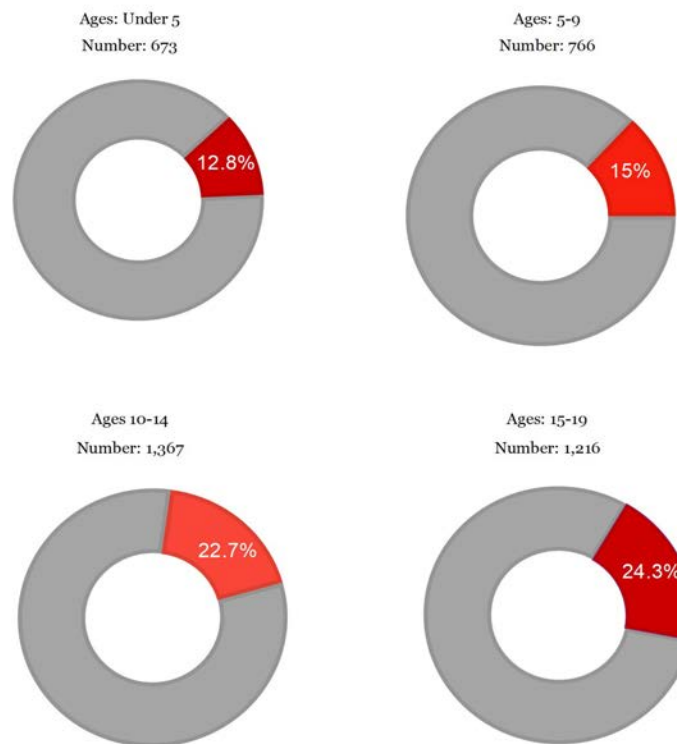
- In 2015, 8,412 children age birth through 19 were covered by Medicaid, representing over a third of VI children (39%).
- This rate of coverage is a large increase from those reported in 2014 and 2013, and over triple the rate from the 10% (2,758 children) in 2009.

Children without Health Insurance

In 2015, 18.9% of all VI children and youth, ages birth through 19 (4,022 children) lacked health insurance - a higher percentage than in any state, the District of Columbia, or Puerto Rico.²⁰

- 12.8% of VI children under age 5 were uninsured.
- U.S. rate of uninsured children ages birth through 19: 7.5%.²¹*

Uninsured Children, 2015



¹⁵ Boston Children's Hospital, *Low Birthweight in Newborns | Symptoms and Causes*

¹⁶ KIDS COUNT Data Center, *Low Birth Weight*

¹⁷ KIDS COUNT Data Center, *Very Low Birth Weight*

¹⁸ KIDS COUNT Data Center, *Infant Mortality Rate*

¹⁹ Child Trends, *Birth Rates (per 1,000 Population) for Females Ages 10 to 19: 1960-2016*

²⁰ KIDS COUNT Data Center, *Children 18 and Below without Health Insurance*

²¹ U.S. Census Bureau, *Children Under Age 19 and Adults Aged 19 to 64 Without Health Insurance Coverage by Selected Characteristics: 2015*

Find year-by-year data for VI Child Health topics at the

KIDS COUNT Data Center:

www.datacenter.kidscount.org

Child Maltreatment

In 2015, the overall child maltreatment rate (including physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect) was 11 per 1,000 children under age 18 (down from 13.5/1,000 children in 2013).

- St. Croix reported 121 maltreatment cases (more than double the cases reported in the previous year; 59 in 2014).
- St. Thomas/St. John reported 97 maltreatment cases (an increase of 21 cases from 2014).

U.S. rate: 9.2 per 1,000 children reported for child maltreatment.²²

Children referred for abuse (physical or sexual)

127 children were referred for abuse in 2015.

- Physical abuse rate: 5.2 per 1,000 children ... 59 cases in St. Croix; 43 cases in St. Thomas/St. John
- Sexual abuse rate: 1.2 per 1,000 children ... 13 cases in St. Croix; 12 cases in St. Thomas/St. John

Children referred for neglect

91 children were referred for neglect in 2015.

- Neglect rate: 4.6 per 1,000 children ... 49 cases in St. Croix; 42 cases in St. Thomas/St. John

Children placed in out of home care

57 children were removed under authority of DHS from custody of a parent or caregiver due to abuse or neglect, and placed in foster care.

... in regular foster care:

- children under age 18 were placed temporarily into foster care (31 in St. Croix; 26 in St. Thomas/St. John).
- 80% of children are from families headed by a single parent
- 29% of the children leaving the system were reunified with their birth parents or primary caregivers.

116 children were removed under authority from custody of a parent or caregiver and placed temporarily in residential care.

... in residential care:

- A total of 110 children and youth were served in residential facilities (similar to that of 112 in 2014 and a large decrease from 226 in 2010).
- Of these, 93 (80%) were in on-island facilities and 23 (19%) were in out-of-Territory facilities.

²² [KIDS COUNT Data Center, Children who are confirmed by child protective services as victims of maltreatment in the United States](#)

²³ [KIDS COUNT Data Center, Child Deaths](#)

²⁴ [KIDS COUNT Data Center, Teen Deaths from All Causes](#)

Child Deaths*

The child death rate reflects the physical health of children ages 1-14. The child death rate may also reflect mother's health, access to health care, exposure to auto, housing or neighborhood-based dangers, and level of adult supervision. Injuries and deaths are more likely for children who are under age five, or male, or who are poor.

- 2 children died among all children ages 1-14 in 2015 (compared to 1 death in 2014) for a rate of 13 deaths per 100,000 children.
- The two deaths were reported in St. Croix; there were no deaths reported in St. Thomas/ St. John.

U.S. rate: 16 deaths per 100,000 children ages 1-14.²³

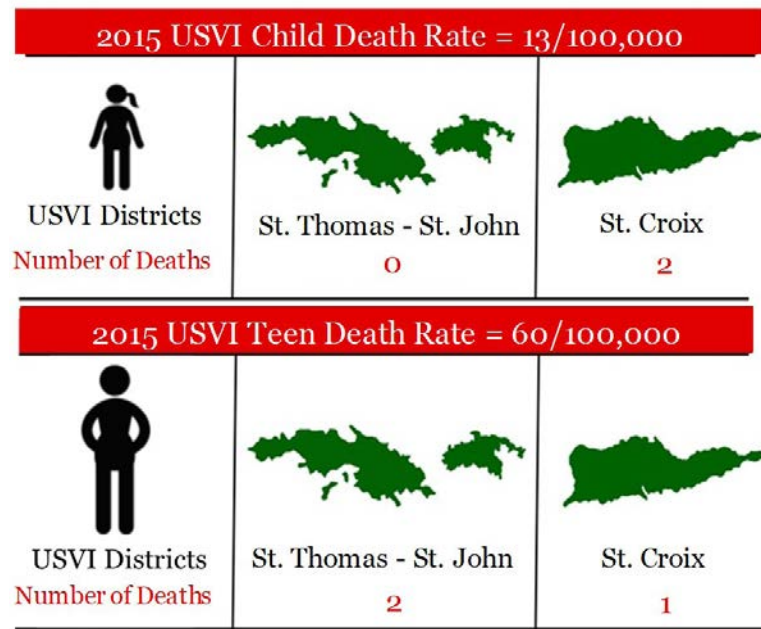
Teen Deaths*

In 2015, with 3 deaths to youth ages 15-19, the rate of teen death decreased to 60 per 100,000 teens.

- 1 death was reported in St. Croix (out of 2,187 teens) and 2 in St. Thomas/ St. John (out of 2,798 teens), for a total of 3 deaths out of 4,985 teens in the Territory.

U.S. rate: 48 deaths per 100,000 teens ages 15-19.²⁴

*Note: VI rates must be interpreted with caution: small absolute numbers (e.g., 3 deaths in 2013 compared to 11 in 2010 can lead to large variations in rates that are population-based.





In 2015, 57 children were removed under authority of DHS from custody of a parent or caregiver due to abuse or neglect, and placed in foster care.

JUVENILE CRIME

Juvenile Violent Crime Arrest Rate

- There were 38 juvenile violent crime arrests in 2015, out of an estimated 9,385 VI youth ages 10-17. The rate of juvenile crime arrests was 404 per 100,000 youth ages 10-17 (an increase from 388/100,000 in 2014, and decrease from 559/100,000 in 2013).
- ... Nature of arrests: 2/homicide, 1/rape, 4/robbery, 31/felony assault
- St. Croix: 15 arrests (down from 18 arrests in 2014)
- ... 310/100,000 violent crime arrest rate, out of an estimated 4,827 youth ages 10-17
- St. Thomas/St. John: 23 arrests (down from 37 in 2013)
- ... 504/100,000 arrest rate, out of an estimated 4,559 youth ages 10-17
- U.S. rate: 143 violent crime arrests per 100,000 youths ages 10-17.²⁵*

Juvenile Property Crime Arrest Rate

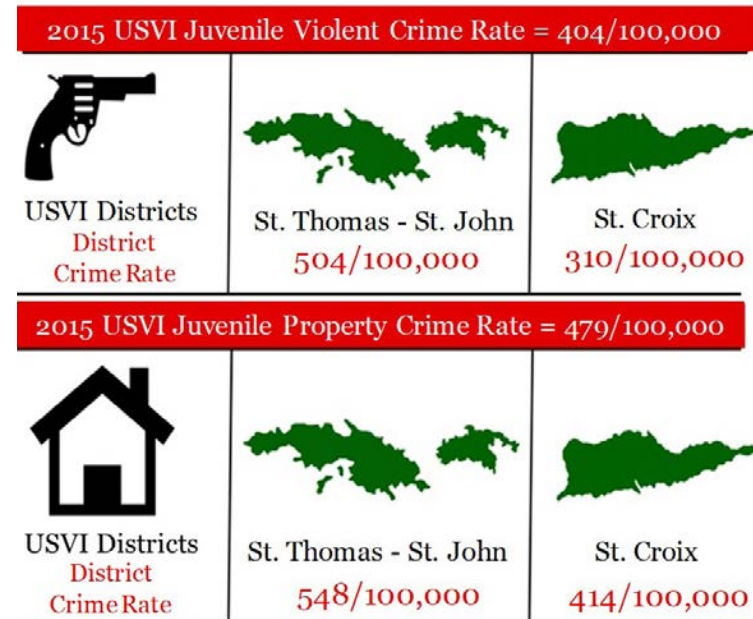
- There were 45 juvenile property crime arrests in 2015 out of an estimated 9,385 VI youth ages 10-17 (up from 21 arrests in 2014). The rate of juvenile property crime arrests was 479 per 100,000 youth ages 10-17 - more than double the rate in 2014 (233/100,000), although down from 2013 (569/100,000).
- ... Nature of arrests: 24/burglary, 15/grand larceny, 1/vehicle theft, and 5/arson
- St. Croix: 20 youth arrests (large increase from 4 in 2014, comparable to the rate of 26 in 2013)
- ... 414/100,000 property crime arrest rate out of an estimated 4,827 youth ages 10-17
- St. Thomas/St. John: 25 youth arrests (down from 31 in 2013)
- ... 548/100,000 arrest rate out of an estimated 4,559 youth ages 10-17
- U.S. rate: 624.8 property crime arrests per 100,000 youths ages 10-17.²⁶*

Juvenile Justice / Rehabilitation

There is one secure residential detention facility in the Territory, located on St. Croix. The Youth Rehabilitation Center (YRC) provides incarceration for pre-trial and adjudicated delinquents as well as adolescents legally transferred to adult status for committing serious felonies. The facility also provides intake, social services, education, recreation, nutrition, health and mental health services, as well as all court-related and mandated services.

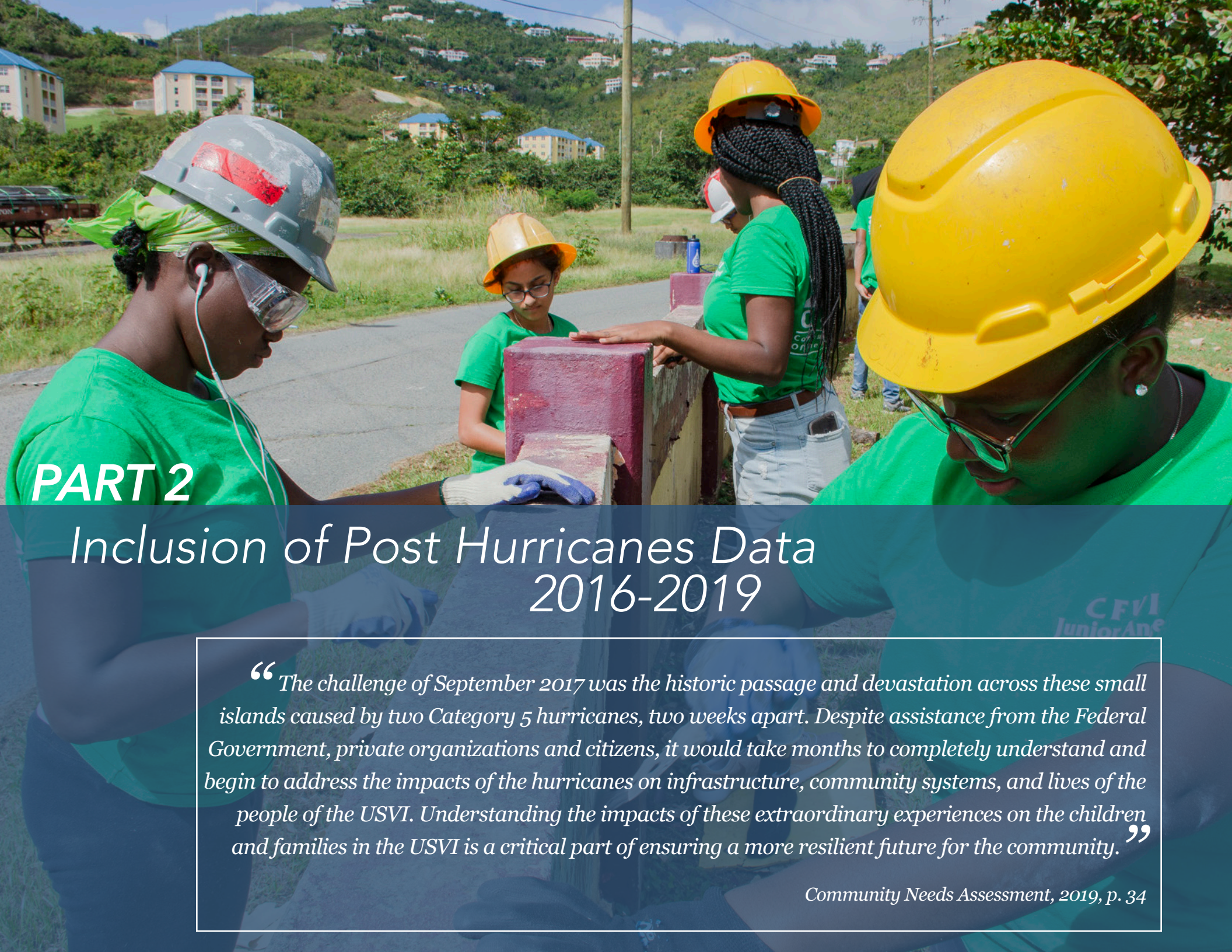
A total of 89 youth (20 from STT/J and 69 from STX) were retained in the YRC in 2015. Of these youth...

- over 85% were male
- 92% came from single-parent households
- 96% were living at home at the time of admission
- 6% were high school dropouts
- 46% had been arrested for violent crime
- 42% were repeat offenders
- 12% reported having experienced some form of abuse during their lifetime
- 18% had been diagnosed at some point as having special education needs
- 58% were entirely new (for their lifetime) to the juvenile system
- 24% had/have a sibling involved in the system.



²⁵ [Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *Violent Crime Arrests per 100,000 persons ages 10-17*](#)

²⁶ [Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *Property Crime Arrests per 100,000 persons ages 10-17*](#)



PART 2

Inclusion of Post Hurricanes Data 2016-2019

“The challenge of September 2017 was the historic passage and devastation across these small islands caused by two Category 5 hurricanes, two weeks apart. Despite assistance from the Federal Government, private organizations and citizens, it would take months to completely understand and begin to address the impacts of the hurricanes on infrastructure, community systems, and lives of the people of the USVI. Understanding the impacts of these extraordinary experiences on the children and families in the USVI is a critical part of ensuring a more resilient future for the community.”

Community Needs Assessment, 2019, p. 34

Historically, the USVI KIDS COUNT Data Book has based its data and analysis on the year for which the most recent USVI population data are available. These data are provided annually by the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) Eastern Caribbean Center (ECC) in the Virgin Islands Community Survey (VICS). In the aftermath of the 2017 storms, the most recent available VICS data were from the year 2015.

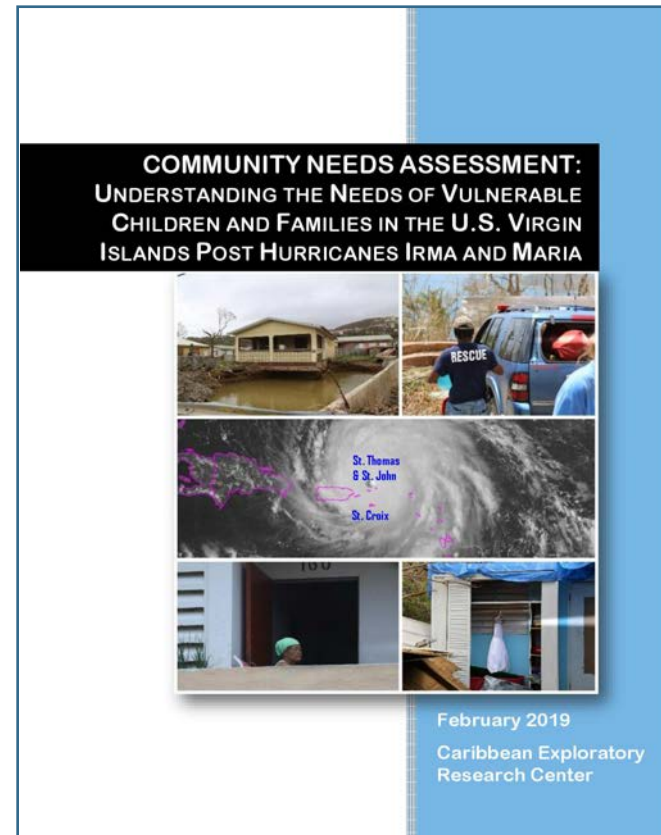
Recognizing the need for current data about the state of vulnerable children and families in the USVI following the September 2017 storms, CFVI approached colleagues at UVI and, in collaboration with the UVI Caribbean Exploratory Research Center (CERC), produced the Community Needs Assessment: Understanding the Needs of Vulnerable Children and Families in the US Virgin Islands Post Hurricanes Irma and Maria (CNA).

The CNA report was released in February 2019 and provides the findings of a months-long community assessment to determine the health, education, human services, and housing status and needs of children and families after the hurricanes.

Seven objectives guided the work of the research team and served as a framework for describing and documenting the status of health, education, human services, and housing among children and families. Through a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach; qualitative²⁷ and quantitative²⁸ primary data were collected. The findings of this community needs assessment point to a Territory with the most vulnerable residents experiencing continued challenges. This provides a much needed look into the complexities, gaps, and priorities critical to serving our Virgin Islands community.

Using data from the CNA and from local community and government agencies, CFVI has expanded the traditional KIDS COUNT Data Book format to include Part Two, with information on children and families in the USVI from 2016 through December 2018.

It is important to note that most of the data reported in this section will be raw data. Population data are not available for years 2016 – 2019, so the calculation of percentages and rates was not possible. Comparability between years will be limited and these data should be interpreted with caution.



The Executive Summary and E-Report of the CNA are available at CFVI's website (www.cfvi.net), under Publications.

²⁷ Key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and community forums.

²⁸ Surveys among the school-age population focused on behavioral health issues were used with youth and a compendium of instruments were used with adults.



CHILD & FAMILY DEMOGRAPHICS

A review of the demographic profile of the community provides important contextual background for understanding the impact of the storms. Such data are primarily drawn from the Virgin Islands Community Survey, for which the most recent data available are based on 2015 sampling.

VI Child Population

Within the last decade, there has been a continuous decrease in the child population (as well as in the general population). As reported in Part 1 of this data book, children continue to represent a smaller portion of each island's population²⁹.

Following two Category 5 hurricanes, understanding the dynamics of outmigration and demographic shifts within the population - as many families were temporarily or permanently displaced - will be critical³⁰. Therefore, the information and data collected from the 2020 census will be crucial to understanding population and economic complexities within the U.S. Virgin Islands.

2020 Census

- The Constitution requires that every person in the United States be counted—adults, children and babies, citizens, immigrants, or visitors.
- The next Census Day will be April 1, 2020.
- Federal count is important, as it determines funding for services/programs such as Head Start, Medicare, and Medicaid. The amount of funding allocated is lessened when certain subgroups (such as children) are not accurately counted, and can have a major impact on future planning³¹.
- Programs that benefit children and families, such as subsidized child care, early intervention services, and children's health insurance all depend on accurate census returns³².
- Ignoring the census, or inaccurate reporting, can have serious consequences, including misrepresentations, underfunding, and loss of programs.

²⁹ KIDS COUNT Data Center, *Total Child Population Under 18 in the Virgin Islands*

³⁰ The St. John Source, *Economic Toll of Hurricanes Mirrors Depth of Human Impact*

³¹ ECONOFACT, *Why Does the Census Matter for State and Local Governments?*

³² Right From the Start NJ, *Why You Should Participate in the 2020 Census*

FAMILY & COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

“The employment and economic activities in the USVI, which influence health and quality of life for families and children, have been challenged and were in a weakened state before the storms of 2017.”

Community Needs Assessment, 2019, p. 19

Children in Poverty

Poverty can have serious and long lasting impacts for children’s development and well-being. When the experience of poverty is further exacerbated by the impacts of a natural disaster, the risk factors for future outcomes are compounded³³. With the high rate of child poverty in the USVI, and the impact of physical/structural destruction, successful responses will be complex. It is well documented that hurricanes have the greatest impact on financially vulnerable families, and the mitigation of this reality calls for serious consideration of gaps, challenges, and opportunities for improvement in a multitude of services and programs within a community (see Community Needs Assessment, 2019, p. 133).

³³ Children who experience poverty when young, or who experience deep and persistent poverty, are at the greatest risk for poverty’s long-lasting, negative effects. In 2015, almost one-third of VI children (30%) lived in families with incomes below 100% of the federal poverty level (down from 37% in 2014, 35% in 2013).

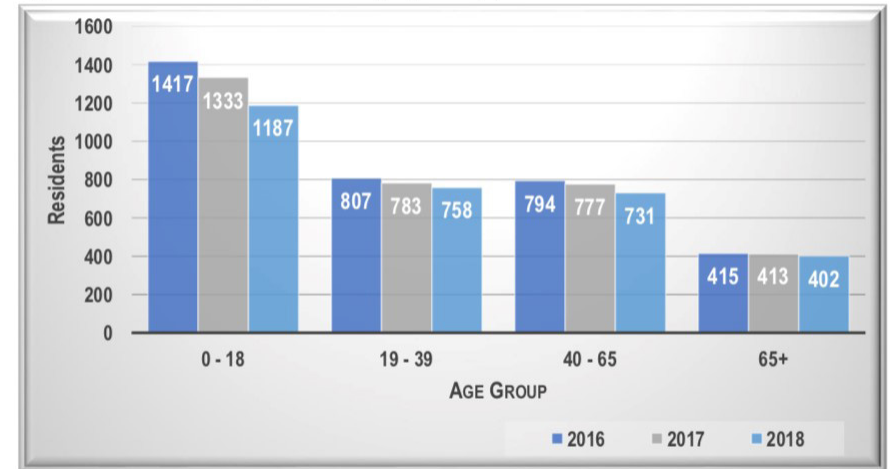
³⁴ According to national statistics provided in 2016, approximately 754,900 children (ages 0-17) lived in public housing in the US, representing 37% of residents living in public housing. Approximately 2 million children live in Section 8 housing, representing 43% of residents living in Section 8 housing. Additionally, 35% of public housing and 42% of Section 8 housing households are female headed with children. [National Center for Health in Public Housing, Demographics Facts Residents Living in Public Housing](#)

³⁵ “Damage was higher in neighborhoods with higher percentages of low- and middle-income households, partly because those households happened to be in the areas where the storms hit hardest and partly because some of those houses were less strongly constructed than the houses in wealthier areas.” [Hurricane and Resiliency Task Force Report, Housing and Buildings](#)

Children and Families in Public Housing

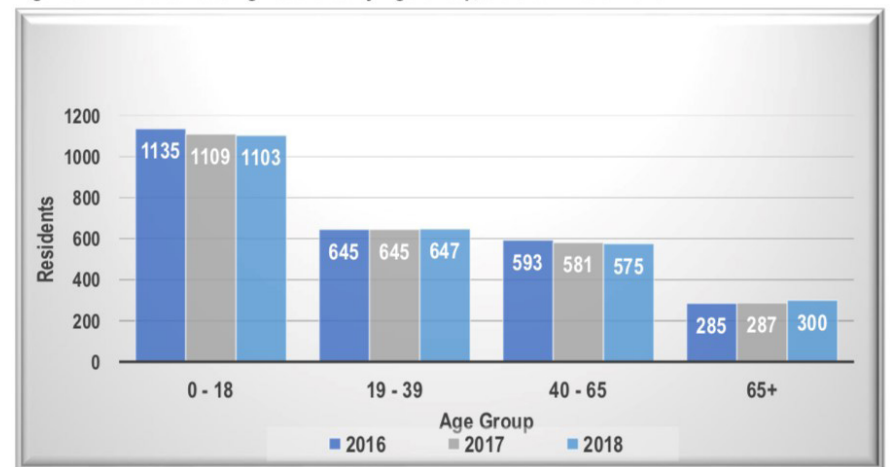
Figures 5.2A and 5.2B illustrate that, across the Territory, children make up 38% to 43% of all residents in public housing communities, similar to national rates³⁴. Children and youth are disproportionately more likely to be exposed to conditions associated with displacement and homelessness, in the aftermath of the hurricanes, due to sustained damage of housing units throughout the Territory³⁵. This further illuminates the vulnerability of children and families in low-income housing communities (see Community Needs Assessment, 2019, p. 131).

Figure 5.2A. Public Housing Residents by Age Group, St. Thomas: 2016–2018



Source: Virgin Islands Housing Authority (VIHA), unpublished data, 2018

Figure 5.2B. Public Housing Residents by Age Group, St. Croix: 2016–2018



Source: VIHA, 2018, unpublished data

Homelessness

Homelessness presents in different situations and circumstances. According to a 2019 Child Trends³⁶ report, children and youth experiencing homelessness include those who meet the definition set out in the HEARTH act of 2009 :

- Someone who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence
- Someone who has as a primary nighttime residence in a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground
- Someone living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements
- Someone who resided in a shelter or place not meant for human habitation and who is exiting an institution where he or she temporarily resided
- Someone who will imminently lose their housing, including housing they own, rent, or live in without paying rent; housing they are sharing with others; and rooms in hotels or motels; and who has no subsequent residence identified, and lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing
- A family that has experienced a long-term period without living independently in permanent housing, has experienced persistent instability as measured by frequent moves over such period, and can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities, chronic physical health or mental health conditions, substance addiction, histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse, the presence of a child or youth with a disability, or multiple barriers to employment

Catholic Charities of the Virgin Islands is responsible for conducting Point in Time (PIT) Counts as mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for all jurisdictions receiving HUD funding³⁷. The goal of the PIT Count is to get an accurate snapshot of homelessness in a given community.

Data trends for the U.S. Virgin Islands suggest that the number of adults and children living in sheltered housing situations has risen in recent years, and the living situations of children and families have been further exacerbated by delays in rebuilding for many residential locations and the strain on rental and public housing units.

³⁶ [Child Trends, *Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness*](#)

³⁷ [The St. Thomas Source, *The Homeless Are Counted. Now What?*](#)

Sheltered Emergency & Transitional Housing for Persons in Households with at Least One Adult & One Child

- In 2018, the number of persons in households requiring emergency sheltered housing was estimated at 71 people, the highest reported within the last decade. This number is 5 times higher than the number of persons reported needing emergency housing in 2017, prior to the storms in September.

Sheltered Emergency & Transitional Housing for Persons in Households Under the Age of 18

- In 2018, the number of children in households requiring emergency sheltered housing was 33 children, which is the highest reported since 2013. This number is over 3 times higher than the children reported needing emergency housing in 2017.
- Although data for persons under the age of 18 requiring emergency or transitional housing has only been captured since 2013, these data mirror the increases reported in the general population (adults and children).

Number of Adults & Children in Sheltered Emergency & Transitional Housing



Number of Children Under the Age of 18 in Sheltered Emergency & Transitional Housing



Children in Families Receiving Nutrition & Income Assistance

Although there has been a general decline in the number of children and families receiving public support, as indicated in Part 1 (and the graphs and charts included in this section), there was a reported increase in households receiving benefits after the storms in late 2017.

According to the Community Needs Assessment (2019), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) data showed increases one year after the hurricanes (September 2017 vs. September 2018) when considering overall amount of benefits disbursed, as well as the number of participating persons and households.

In response to the devastation of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, and the Presidential Disaster Declaration, a one-time disbursement of funds was made available to residents in the USVI who would not ordinarily be eligible for SNAP benefits (through the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or D-SNAP).

This support was provided to address residents' limited access to financial resources and new/increased need for assistance. The Department of Human Services' Division of Family Assistance processed approximately 30,316 applications for D-SNAP benefits and over \$30,000,000 was distributed to eligible residents in the USVI (Community Needs Assessment, 2019).

Table 4.2. SNAP Benefits in the US Virgin Islands – Percentage changes after Hurricanes Irma and Maria

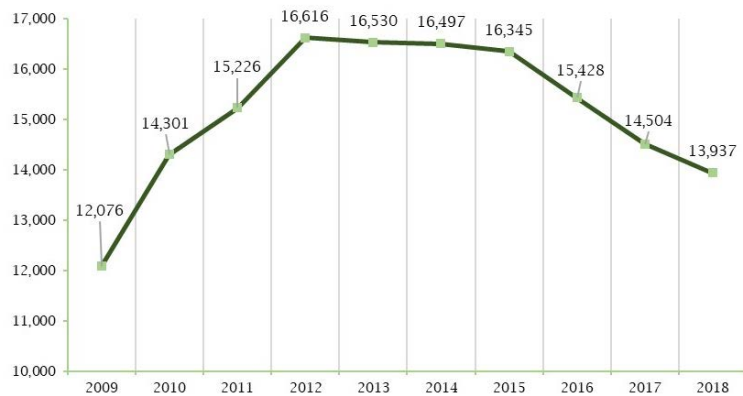
	September 2017	August 2017	September 2018	Percent Change – Sept. 2018 vs	
				August 2017	September 2017
Benefits	\$4,292,340	\$4,411,883	\$4,977,497	+12.8%	+16.0%
Participating Persons	25,406	25,867	28,933	+11.9%	+13.9%
Participating Households	12,028	12,363	14,260	+15.3%	+18.6%

Source: VIDHS; Note: Numbers do not include D-SNAP benefits.

(Community Needs Assessment, 2019, pg. 102)

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

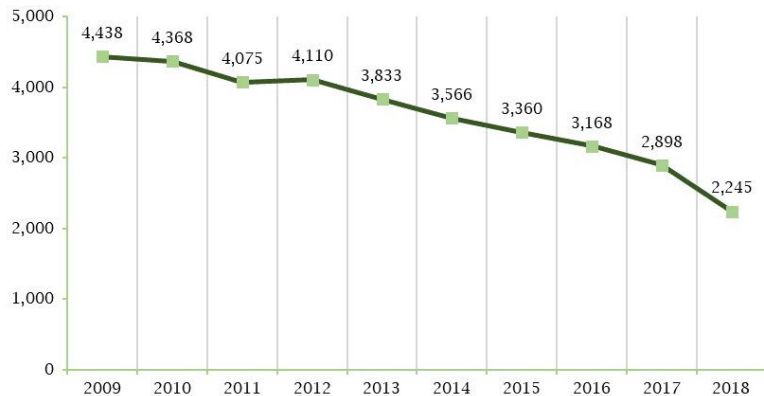
Children in Families Receiving SNAP



- From 2009-2012, the number of children in families receiving SNAP benefits had been on a steady increase (27.3% in 3 years.)
- However, since that time a persistent decline has occurred, with a 16.1% decrease observed from 2012 to 2018.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

Children in Families Receiving WIC



- Between 2016 and 2018, the number of children receiving WIC benefits has decreased by 29%.
- Since the year 2009, the number of children in families receiving WIC benefits has decreased by almost 50%.

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

The declining rate of families receiving benefits over the last few years mirrors the decline in other public support programs, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

Children in Families Receiving TANF

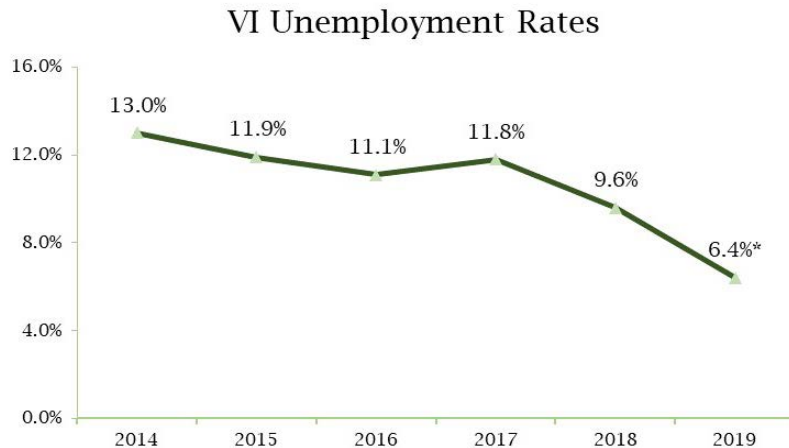


- The number of children in families receiving TANF benefits has also continued to decrease throughout the years. Between 2016 and 2018, the number of families with children receiving TANF benefits decreased by 40.7%.
- Since 2009, TANF benefits have decreased by 66%.

These statistics should be interpreted within the context of the declining child population.

Unemployment*

The level of unemployment across the U.S. Virgin Islands has remained static in recent years; however, the decline seen in the last two years has begun to approach rates at the beginning of the decade (unemployment rate of 8.9% in 2011).



*2019 reports averaged first quarter rates from January to May

- **In 2018**, the VI unemployment rate (9.6%) continued to decline from the previous year (12.0% in 2017; down from 13.0% in 2014). However, rates remain high and continue to be more than double the national average.
 - Over the course of 2018, the unemployment rate in the VI ranged from a low of 5.9% in November to a high of 10.7% in January.
 - During **2017**, the unemployment rate in the VI ranged from a low of 10.0% in July to a high of 17.1% in October.
 - Throughout **2016**, the unemployment rate in the VI ranged from a high of 11.6% in January to a low of 9.9% in July.³⁸
- U.S. unemployment rate in 2018: 3.9% (down from 5.6% in 2014).³⁹*

- **In 2017**, the VI civilian labor force numbered 48,245 (an increase of 161 from 2016), of which 42,418 were employed.
- **In 2018**, the VI civilian labor force numbered 41,774 (a large decrease of 6,471 from 2017), of which 37,194 were employed.⁴⁰

...by location:

- St. Croix recorded an unemployment rate of 9.5% in 2018 (down from 11.8% in 2017 and 11.6% in 2016).
...Over the course of the year, the monthly unemployment rate ranged from a low of 5.7% in December to a high of 13.0% in March.
- St. Thomas/St. John recorded an unemployment rate of 9.7% in 2018 (down from 12.1% in 2017 and 11.2% in 2016).
...Over the course of the year, the monthly unemployment rate ranged from a low of 5.8% in November to a high of 11.5% in January.

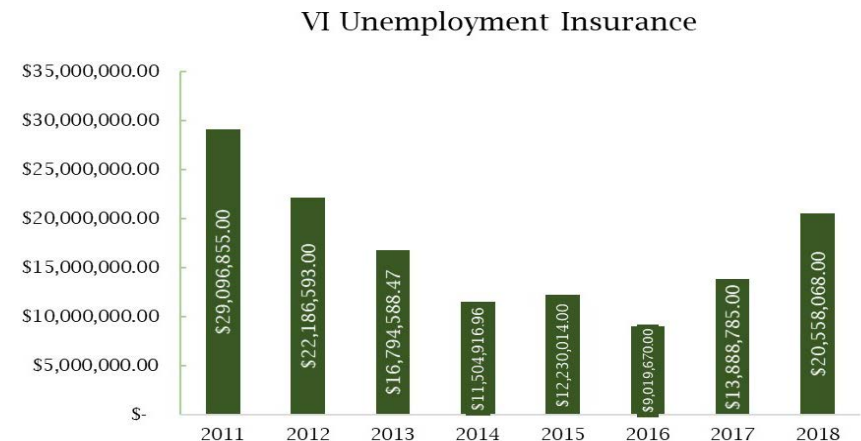
*Note: A community's unemployment rate is likely to be higher than officially measured, as the rate reflects workers age 16+ actively seeking work, and excludes 'discouraged' unemployed workers who have given up searching for a job.

In February 2018 and November 2018, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducted community assessments focused on various topics related to hurricane recovery. Roughly a quarter of respondents reported that their employment status had "decreased": 26% of respondents in February 2018 and 23% of respondents in November (Community Assessments for Public Health Emergency Response [CASPER] addressing Hurricanes Irma and Maria Recovery – United States Virgin Islands, 2018).

Federal/State Unemployment Insurance (UI)

Federal/State Unemployment Insurance programs give temporary payments to eligible unemployed workers. The total amount of claims doubled from 2016 to 2018, likely as a result of the increased number of layoffs resulting from Hurricanes Irma and Maria in September 2017.

- **In 2016**, UI payouts on claims totaled \$9,019,670.00 (decrease from \$12,230,014.00 in 2015 and \$16,794,588.47 in 2013).
- **In 2017**, UI payouts on claims totaled 13,888,785.00 (an increase of \$4,869,115.00 from 2016).
- **In 2018**, UI payouts on claims totaled \$20,558,068.00 (almost matching the total amount of \$22,186,593 in 2012).



³⁸ [USVI Bureau of Economic Research, Unemployment Rates U.S. Virgin Islands](#)

³⁹ [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey](#)

⁴⁰ [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment for Virgin Islands in All time periods](#)



EDUCATION

The severe impact of the hurricanes on the educational system, from Pre-K to secondary schooling, continues to be significant. Conditions such as split-session scheduling (i.e., half-day school days), fluctuations in enrollment, structural damage to schools, shared campuses, teacher vacancies (which pre-dated the storms, but have been exacerbated) and the need to repair/rebuild facilities have created myriad challenges for students, families, and school staff/administrators.

Early Head Start / Head Start

Decades of research demonstrate the short- and long-term positive effects of Head Start on participating children and their families. Children who attend Head Start show marked academic and social progress, and are more likely to enter kindergarten ready to learn⁴¹.

In the USVI, Head Start (HS) center closures have had major implications for providing the full scope of services and learning experiences for low-income families with young children. This is the case particularly for enrolled HS children who have had to attend HS in makeshift facilities, or for families who planned to enroll their children but are now unable to (due to lack of slots available, as the closures exacerbated an extensive waiting list that has existed for the last few years (as discussed in Part 1).

Early Head Start Enrollment

There are two Early Head Start Centers in the Territory, both operated in St. Croix.

During the 2016-2017 school year:

- 116 children ages birth to 3 were enrolled in Early Head Start programs throughout the Territory.
- 12% of children were identified as having a disability.
- 51 unserved children were on the waiting list for Early Head Start programs (a decrease of 60 children from the previous year).

During the 2017-2018 school year:

- 115 children ages birth to 3 were enrolled in Early Head Start programs throughout the Territory.
- 30% of children were identified as having a disability.
- 86 unserved children were on the waiting list for Early Head Start programs (an increase of 35 more children than the previous year).

During the 2018-2019 school year:

- 97 children ages birth to 3 were enrolled in Early Head Start programs throughout the Territory.
- 20.6% of children were identified as having a disability.
- 63 unserved children were on the waiting list for Early Head Start programs (a decrease of 23 children from the previous year).

Head Start Enrollment

According to the Community Needs Assessment (2019), in the aftermath of the storms there were four Head Start Centers in St. Croix that closed and one in St. John that closed. In St. Thomas, many centers had to adjust classrooms and accommodate building restructuring due to the impact of the storms.

- **In school year 2016-2017**, 894 children ages 3 to 5 were enrolled in Head Start programs throughout the Territory, with 374 funded slots in St. Thomas and 520 slots in St. Croix. In total, 953 total children were served during the 2016-2017 school year.

...Gender: 496 (52%) male students and 457 (47.97%) female students

...In 2016, 14.8% of enrolled children were identified as having a disability.

...81.7% of enrolled children were covered by the Medical Assistance Program (MAP).

- **In school year 2017-2018**, 894 children ages 3 to 5 were enrolled in Head Start programs throughout the Territory, with 414 funded slots in St. Thomas and 480 slots in St. Croix. In total, 921 total children were served during the 2017-2018 school year.

...Gender: 500 (54.2%) male students and 421 (45.7%) female students

...In 2017, 15.3% of enrolled children were identified as having a disability.

...81.7% of enrolled children were covered by the Medical Assistance Program (MAP).

- **In school year 2016-2017**, the majority of enrolled children and their respective families received nutrition and income assistance

...78.5% (702 children) received SNAP benefits

...4% (35 children) received TANF benefits

...63.5% (568 children) received WIC benefits

- **In school year 2017-2018**, the majority of enrolled children and their respective families received nutrition and income assistance

...59.1% (529 children) received SNAP benefits

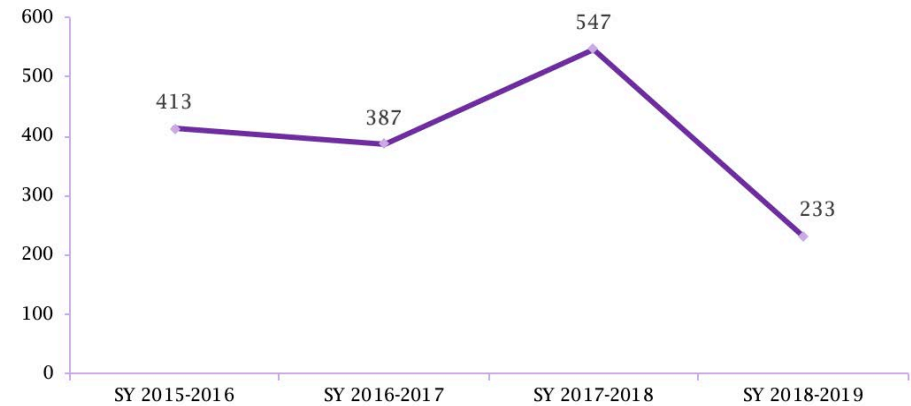
...2.6% (24 children) received TANF benefits

...48.0% (430 children) received WIC benefits

Data from school year 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 represent information collected before the September storms in 2017.

- The waiting list for enrollment increased by 30% in the school year in which the two major storms hit the Territory. However, it decreased by 57% the following school year.

VI Head Start Waiting List



*Children on the waitinglist included those that were enrolled to begin the Head Start program in September 2017, but were unable to receive services due to capacity limitations as some centers/classrooms were not operational following the storms.

Early Childhood Centers and Youth Facility Closings

According to the Community Needs Assessment (2019), for many daycare centers, enrollments were more than 50% lower than the facilities' capacity in the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria⁴².

- The USVI Department of Human Services reported that in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, 27 centers that provide services to youth in the St. Thomas-St. John District closed.
- In the St. Croix district, 12 centers closed in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria.

⁴¹ [First Five Years Fund, Head Start is a Bipartisan Success Story](#)

⁴² These data should be interpreted with caution, as VIDHS staff shared that YTD comparative data are not available annually, so there are no similar data to which these data can be compared. (Community Needs Assessment, 2019, p. 113).

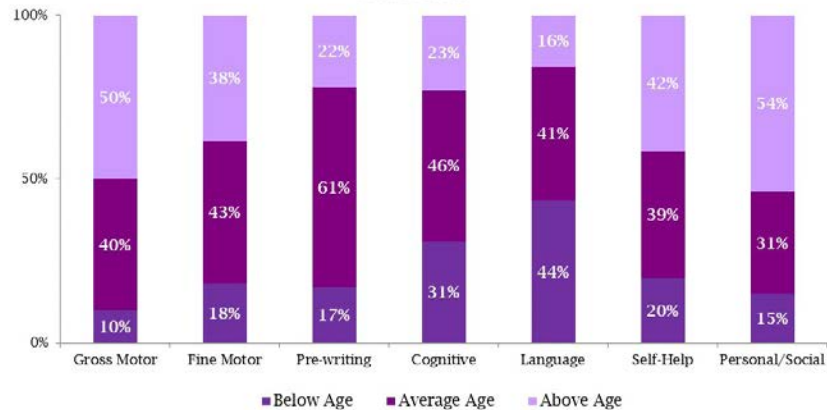
Children's Readiness for School (LAP-3 Data)

The Learning Accomplishment Profile Third Edition (LAP-3) measures students readiness for kindergarten, and was completed in the fall of 2016 and fall of 2018 (no school readiness assessments were conducted in SY 2017-2018 because of the impact of the storms).

In the school year 2016-2017...

- Over a third (44%) of children entering public kindergarten were 6 months to over a year behind developmental age-expectations in language and comprehension skills (a continued pattern as reflected in the 51% of children behind in 2014 and 55% in 2013).
- Almost one-third of VI children entering public kindergarten lacked adequate cognitive skills (31%).

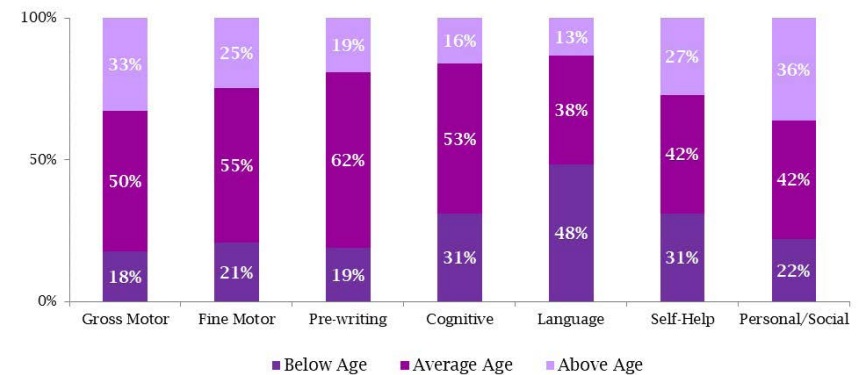
VI Children's Learning Skills at Entry to Public Kindergarten, Fall 2016



In school year 2018-2019...

- Almost half (48%) of children entering public kindergarten were 6 months to over a year behind developmental age-expectations in language and comprehension skills (a continued pattern as reflected in the 44% of children behind in 2016 and 50% in 2015).
- Matching the rate in 2016 almost one-third or more of VI children entering public kindergarten also lacked adequate cognitive skills (31%).

VI Children's Learning Skills at Entry to Public Kindergarten, Fall 2018



“The teachers expressed concerns about the regression in learning that has taken place, noting that it is especially evident among students with special needs. Speculative explanations include the fact that after the hurricanes special needs students did not have designated classroom spaces and teachers were forced to move around and “make do” in spaces that were not designed to meet their needs”

Community Needs Assessment, 2019, p. 98

Children Enrolled in Early Intervention: Birth-Age 3

Unless addressed effectively, delays or disabilities experienced by a child during these early years can impact his or her foundation for positive learning and social development.

In 2016:

- 107 children birth through age 3 were receiving Early Intervention (EI) services (down from 121 in 2015 and 142 in 2014).
- ... Birth to age 1: 17 children
- ... Ages 1 to 2: 32 children
- ... Ages 2 to 3: 58 children
- Males represented 65% of children identified as receiving EI services.
- 57% of all children served were located in St. Croix.

In 2017:

- 88 children birth through age 3 were receiving Early Intervention (EI) services.
- ... Birth to age 1: 7 children
- ... Ages 1 to 2: 32 children
- ... Ages 2 to 3: 49 children
- Males represented 59% of children identified as receiving EI services.
- 74% of all children served were located in St. Croix.

Children Enrolled in Special Education: Ages 3 - 17

The number of students enrolled in Special Education has continued to decrease each year, mirroring the decrease in enrollment in both public school districts. Over the last three school years, the number of children receiving special education services has dropped by about 10%.

In the **2016-2017 school year**, 1,089 children ages 3-17 were enrolled in Special Education IEP programs (a decrease of 20 students from the previous year).

- In St. Croix, 583 children received special education services.
- In St. Thomas/St. John, 506 children received these services.

During the **2017-2018 school year**, 1,014 children ages 3-17 were enrolled in Special Education IEP programs (a decrease of 75 students from the previous year).

- In St. Croix, 568 children received special education services.
- In St. Thomas/St. John, 446 children received these services.

Within the **2018-2019 school year**, 978 children ages 3-17 were enrolled in Special Education IEP programs (a decrease of 36 students from the previous year).

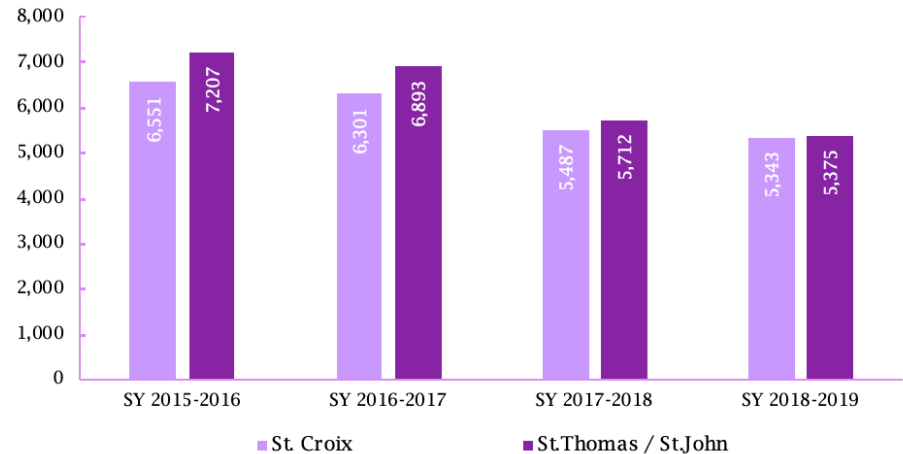
- In St. Croix, 544 children received special education services.
- In St. Thomas/St. John, 434 children received these services.

While children, in general, are at increased physical risk during disasters, children with special healthcare needs and disabilities are even more vulnerable. In addition, there is limited research on how to assist in disaster preparedness for children with disabilities.⁴³

Public School Enrollment

Public school enrollment over the last 3 school years has shown a continued decline. In the 2016-2017 school year, total enrollment was 13,194. Since that time, public school enrollment has decreased by 19% (2,476 students).

VI Public School Enrollment



⁴³According to Stough, Ducey and Kang (2017), studies find children more physically and psychologically vulnerable in emergency situations; “children with disabilities may need additional assistance to evacuate and take shelter, as well as experience compromised physical or mental health following disaster”. In addition, following disasters or conflict, it was indicated that typically children with disabilities are less likely to receive appropriate psychological, medical, and rehabilitative services. Finally, school emergency plans often do not incorporate the needs of students with disabilities during disaster. (Stough, L.M., Ducey, E.M. & Kang, D. *Curr Psychiatry Rep* (2017) 19: 24. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.neu.edu/10.1007/s11920-017-0776-8>)

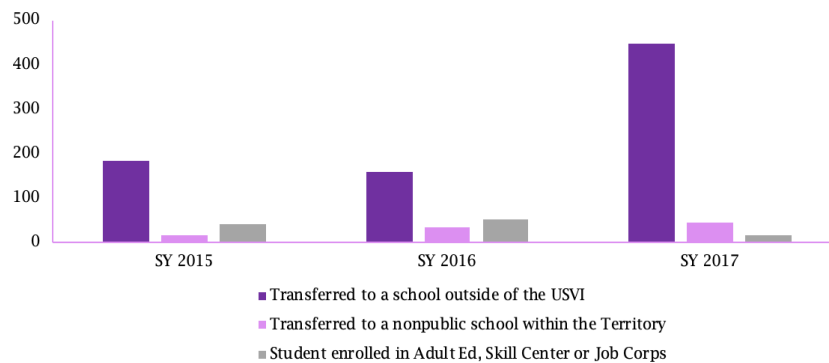
Change in Public Secondary Withdrawals/Dropout Rate

The 2017-2018 school year was a major casualty of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, with children across the Territory experiencing major disruptions in their schooling. Challenges in the educational system present before the storms were further exacerbated, according to leadership in the USVI Department of Education (Community Needs Assessment, 2019, p. 89).

The declining student population continued following the storms, as many families relocated to the mainland U.S. or sent their children to relatives in the States to finish school*. According to VIDE data there was a 63.4% increase in withdrawals of public school students in SY 2017-2018 (934 students in SY 2017-18, compared to 341 students in SY 2016-17), with many children and families attending schools outside the USVI (and others transferring to local private/parochial schools).

- Within the St. Croix school district there was an increase of 65% in transfers to a school outside of the USVI during school year 2017- 2018.

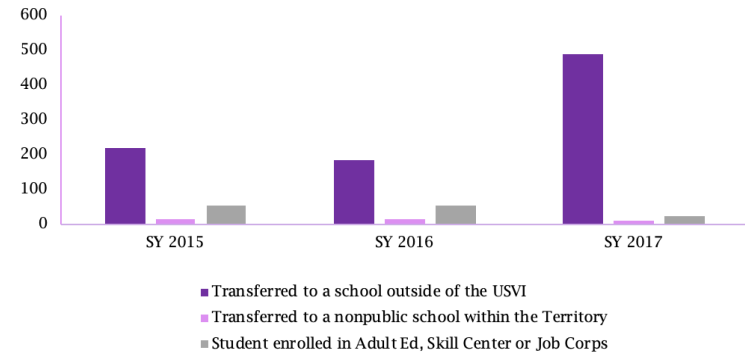
St. Croix District Public School Withdrawals



* In November 2018, nearly half (45.7%) of 169 individuals surveyed by the CDC reported “know[ing] somebody who has left and has not returned” (Community Assessments for Public Health Emergency Response [CASPER] addressing Hurricanes Irma and Maria Recovery – United States Virgin Islands, 2018).

- Within the St. Thomas/St. John school district, there was an increase of 62.2% in student transfers to a school outside of the USVI during school year 2017-2018.

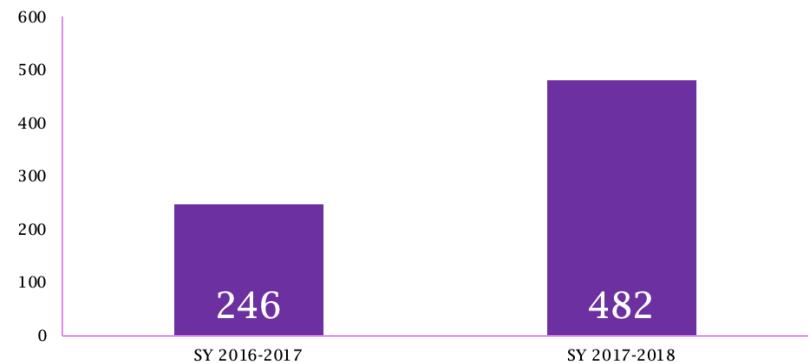
St. Thomas / St. John District Public School Withdrawals



Shifts in Public School Dropouts - SY 2016-2017 and SY 2017-2018

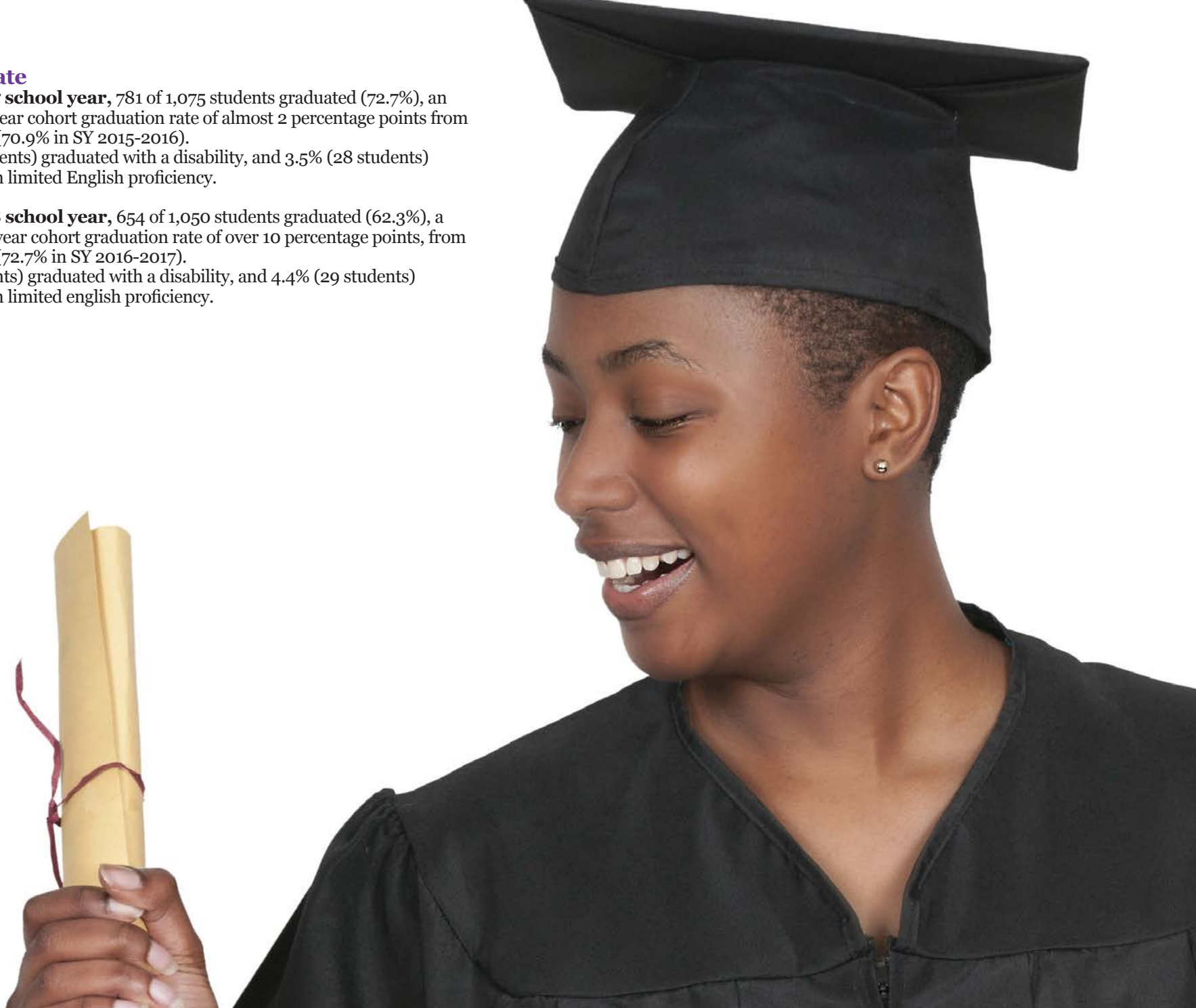
- Among students in grades 7th-12th, and between the ages of 13-22, there was a significant increase in the reported number of students in public school who dropped out.
- Across the Territory, public secondary dropouts doubled between SY 2016 and SY 2017.
- Within SY 2017-2018, the majority of reported dropouts were from the St. Thomas/St. John school district (80%, or 383 students) while St. Croix reported a much smaller number (20%, or 99 students).

VI Public School Secondary Dropouts



Graduation Rate

- In the **2016-2017 school year**, 781 of 1,075 students graduated (72.7%), an increase of the 4-year cohort graduation rate of almost 2 percentage points from the previous year (70.9% in SY 2015-2016).
 - 7.4% (58 students) graduated with a disability, and 3.5% (28 students) graduated with limited English proficiency.
- In the **2017-2018 school year**, 654 of 1,050 students graduated (62.3%), a decrease in the 4-year cohort graduation rate of over 10 percentage points, from the previous year (72.7% in SY 2016-2017).
 - 9% (59 students) graduated with a disability, and 4.4% (29 students) graduated with limited english proficiency.





HEALTH & SAFETY

"Many businesses closed after the storms, and the loss of jobs caused a loss of insurance for many. Some residents have been able to pick up little construction and recovery associated jobs, but unfortunately many of these do not offer insurance as they are temporary. This became a challenge for many residents as their earnings were too high for our Medicaid eligibility standards. The VI's eligibility for Medicaid is a maximum of \$15,000 for the head of household. These residents made more than \$15,000 but their employers did not offer health insurance. Additionally, no vendor offers individual health insurance in the Virgin Islands so even if the person makes enough to purchase their own health insurance, this is not an option."

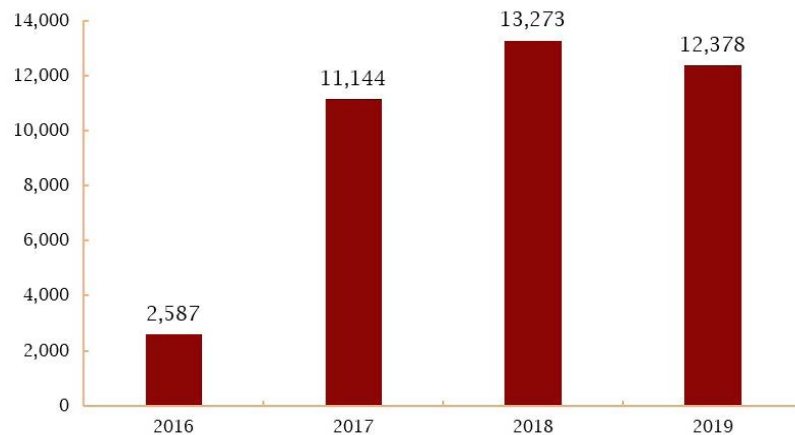
-Jelesmaire Woods, UDS Contact for the Fredericksted Health Center

Children with Medicaid Health Coverage

The number of children under 18 receiving Medicaid benefits has increased significantly within the last 3 years.

- Between 2016 and 2017, the number of children under 18 who received Medicaid benefits increased by almost 77%.

VI Children 0-18 Receiving Medicaid Benefits



Mental Health and Behavioral Support Findings from Community Needs Assessment

Immediate response efforts following a natural disaster tend to focus on the more tangible needs of shelter, food, water, electricity and transportation, while the impact on the psychological well-being of community members receives less attention (Community Needs Assessment, 2019, p. 153). "It has also been concluded, based on a review of numerous studies, that school-age children are more likely than adults to experience severe impairment following disasters (Norris et al., 2002)⁴⁴."

Through the use of a number of tools and instruments from a variety of self-report measures⁴⁵, the data from the CNA suggest high levels of risk for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and depression in the school-age population surveyed, as well as in adults accessing primary health care services at the Federally Qualified Health Centers in the Territory (Community Needs Assessment, 2019, p. 85).

⁴⁴ Becker-Blease, K. A., Turner, H. A., & Finkelhor, D. (2010). Disasters, victimization, and children's mental health. *Child Development*, 81(4), 1040-1052.

⁴⁵ Over 2,200 students participated in study assessments (4th-6th graders in all public schools, and 7-12th in nearly all private/parochial schools). Additionally, over 430 adults participated in the study. (Community Needs Assessment, 2019, p. 6)

- According to the findings of this study, approximately 42.5% of secondary students may be at risk for PTSD (Community Needs Assessment, 2019, p. xv). The Child Trauma Screening Questionnaire (CTSQ), administered to students in grades 4th-6th, showed an array of affirmative responses in connection to traumatic stress reaction.
 - Over 50% of all students who participated indicated an affirmative response to the question "Do you have lots of thoughts or memories about the hurricanes that you don't want to have?"
 - Over 50% of all students provided an affirmative response to the question "Do you feel or act as if the hurricanes are about to happen again?"
 - Additionally, almost three out of four children (74%) who participated in the study indicated an affirmative response to the question "Are you on the "look-out" for possible dangerous things that might happen to yourself and others?"
 - According to the CNA, there is evidence that elementary aged students across the Territory may have future issues with PTSD as a result of experiencing Hurricanes Irma and/or Maria and that girls may have more challenges with future PTSD than boys (p. 48).
- It is important to note that the data does not speak to cause and effect, but rather show associations between the hurricanes and some key outcomes, particularly with respect to the primary data collected (CNA, 2019, p. 159).
- Compounding these concerning findings, the CNA also suggests that the behavioral health services available one year following the storms may not be adequately reaching all those in need (CNA, 2019, p. 85).

Other Health Indicators

Formal assessments of post-hurricane health effects are extremely limited, particularly with respect to children. In February 2018 and November 2018, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducted community assessments focused on various topics related to hurricane recovery. Around half of respondents reported having mold or mildew in the home in February 2018 (52%), while that number had decreased slightly by November 2018 (to 42.5% in November 2018); however, it is unknown whether (or how many of) these homes had children living in them. The same survey found that, as of November 2018, only 25% of respondents reported that all children in their household were up to date on vaccinations.

Child Maltreatment

Across the Territory, the number of child maltreatment cases between 2016 and 2018 has shown an encouraging decline (though the overall decrease in the child population must be taken into account).

- Between 2016 and 2018, child maltreatment cases within the USVI decreased by about a quarter (25.7%).
 - **In 2016**, physical abuse accounted for over half (51.4%) of the child maltreatment cases.
 - **In 2017**, physical abuse accounted for 43% of child maltreatment cases.
 - **In 2018**, neglect accounted for 65.8% of child maltreatment cases, and the highest number of neglect cases since 2013 (160 or 49% of child maltreatment cases).

VI Total Child Maltreatment Cases, 2015-2018



Children Placed in Out of Home Care

2016

- **... in regular foster care:**
 - 96 children under age 18 were placed into foster care (66 in St. Croix; 30 in St. Thomas/St. John).
- **... in protective care:**
 - 185 children under age 18 were placed temporarily in protective care (53 in St. Croix; 132 in St. Thomas/St. John).

... in residential care:

- A total of 110 children and youth were served in residential facilities (similar to that of 116 in 2015 and 112 in 2014; a large decrease from 226 in 2010).
- Of these, 93 (84.5%) were in on-island facilities and 17 (15.4%) were in out-of-Territory facilities.

2017

... in regular foster care:

- 116 children under age 18 were placed into foster care (71 in St. Croix; 45 in St. Thomas/St. John).

... in protective care:

- 179 children under age 18 were placed temporarily in protective care (48 in St. Croix; 131 in St. Thomas/St. John).

... in residential care:

- A total of 98 children and youth were served in residential facilities (small decrease from the 110 in 2016).
- Of these, 87 (88.7%) were in on-island facilities and 11 (11.2%) were in out-of-Territory facilities.

2018

... in regular foster care*:

- 108 children under age 18 were placed into foster care (62 in St. Croix; 46 in St. Thomas/St. John).

... in protective care:

- 172 children under age 18 were placed temporarily in protective care (45 in St. Croix; 172 in St. Thomas/St. John).

... in residential care:

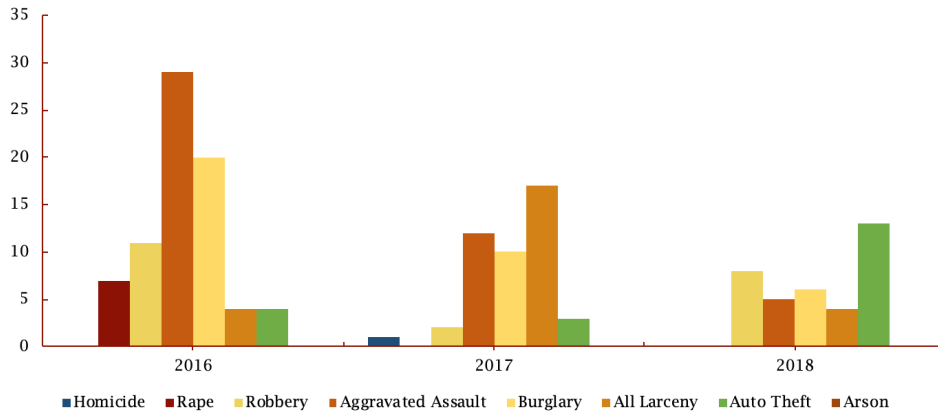
- A total of 92 children and youth were served in residential facilities.
- Of these, 82 (89.1%) were in on-island facilities and 10 (10.8%) were in out-of-Territory facilities.

*2018 data for foster care under the Division of Children and Family Services only represents information up until May 2018 and therefore is not yet complete for the year.

Juvenile Justice / Rehabilitation

Arrests for both violent and property crime among juveniles ages 10-17 have shown continued declines within the last 3 years.

VI Juvenile Violent and Property Crime Arrests, 2016-2018



Juvenile Violent Crime Arrest Rate

2016

- There were 47 juvenile violent crime arrests in 2016:
 - 0 / Homicide
 - 7 / Rape
 - 11 / Robbery
 - 29 / Felony Assault
- St. Croix: 24 arrests (increase from 15 arrests in 2015; and down significantly from 47 in 2011)
- St. Thomas/St. John: 23 arrests (identical to the number of arrests in 2015; and down from 37 in 2013)

2017

- There were 15 juvenile violent crime arrests in 2017:
 - 1 / Homicide
 - 0 / Rape
 - 2 / Robbery
 - 12 / Felony Assault
- St. Croix: 9 arrests (large decrease from the 23 arrests in 2016; and 15 arrests in 2015)
- St. Thomas/St. John: 6 arrests (significant decrease from the 23 in 2016)

2018

- There were 13 juvenile violent crime arrests in 2018:
 - 0 / Homicide
 - 0 / Rape
 - 8 / Robbery
 - 5 / Felony Assault
- St. Croix: 7 arrests (continued decrease from the 9 arrests in 2017; and 23 arrests in 2016)
- St. Thomas/St. John: 6 arrests (identical to number of arrests in 2017; and significant decrease from the 23 in 2016)

Juvenile Property Crime Arrest Rate

2016

- There were 28 juvenile property arrests in 2016:
 - 20 / Burglary
 - 4 / Larceny
 - 4 / Motor Vehicle Theft
 - 0 / Arson
- St. Croix: 14 arrests (decrease from 20 arrests in 2015; and increase from the 4 arrests in 2014)
- St. Thomas/St. John: 14 arrests (decrease from the 25 in 2015; and 31 in 2013)

2017

- There were 30 juvenile property arrests in 2017:
 - 10 / Burglary
 - 17 / Larceny
 - 3 / Motor Vehicle Theft
 - 0 / Arson
- St. Croix: 14 arrests (identical to number arrests in 2016, and small decrease from 15 arrests in 2015)
- St. Thomas/St. John: 16 arrests (small increase from arrests in 2016)

2018

- There were 23 juvenile violent property arrests in 2018:
 - 6 / Burglary
 - 4 / Larceny
 - 13 / Motor Vehicle Theft
 - 0 / Arson
- St. Croix: 3 arrests (significant decrease from 14 arrests in 2016)
- St. Thomas/St. John: 20 arrests (small increase from the 16 in 2017 and 14 in 2016)

Overview of Data Collection for the 2019 Data Book

This book compiles information available on U.S. Virgin Islands children and families for the year 2015 and, where available, with data for previous years to reveal trends of up to 20 years in the status of children. Due to challenges collecting data from some local data partners, certain indicators reported in previous years were not available at the time of printing; however, data will be added to the online Data Center and to the electronic version of this Data Book posted online, as they become available.

National comparison data are sourced from the U.S. Census, the Population Reference Bureau, the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services, Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and others. Local data are sourced from the Virgin Islands Community Survey (VICS), and from the VI Departments of Health, Human Services, Education, Police, Justice, and Labor.

This data book uses specific indicators and rates to conform with the national KIDS COUNT Data Book published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Rates are also used when a percentage is very small, due to a small number of incidences. Caution must be used in interpreting rates, as small changes in incidences, as in the USVI, can result in large changes in rates.

All non-Census surveys are subject to sampling error (studying a subset of the whole population to make quantitative inferences about the population surveyed). The VICS, which uses 5% of VI households for a total sample size of 2,500 households, seeks to minimize human and machine-related errors through careful editing and follow-up telephone or personal interviewing. Use caution when comparing data across various surveys and censuses, as questions, measures or definitions may change over time.

Definitions and Data Sources

Births to Teens. The number of births to girls ages 15 to 19 per 1,000 females in this age group.

SOURCE: VI Dept. of Health

Child Death Rate.

The number of deaths to children ages 1 to 14, per 100,000 children this age.

SOURCE: VI Dept. of Health

Child Maltreatment.

This includes child abuse and neglect. These numbers reflect children age birth to 18 reported to the VI Department of Human Services as victims of physical or sexual child abuse or neglect. These numbers do not include children who are in foster care, who may have been placed due to abuse or neglect.

SOURCE: VI Dept. of Human Services

Children in Families.

Reports on children age 0-18 in various living arrangements.

– A two-parent or married-parent family refers to parents who are married to each other and living in the same household. They may be biological, adoptive, or include stepparents.

– Single-parent families refer primarily to families in which only one parent is present, but may include some families where both parents are present but unmarried.

– Single female-headed families refer to families headed by a female parent with own children.

– Grandparent families refer to children living in the home of grandparents where parents may or may not be present.

– Non-relative families primarily refer to families headed by a non-relative, where neither parent of the child lives in the household.

SOURCE: VICS; 1990 - 2010 US Census

Children in Families Receiving Income Assistance.

The rate or number of children 18 and below living in families receiving cash assistance through the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) federal program, or unemployment assistance through the Federal-State Unemployment Insurance (UI) program.

SOURCE: VI Dept. of Human Services; VI Dept. of Labor

Children in Families Receiving Nutrition Assistance.

The rate or number of children 18 and below living in families receiving health and food assistance through the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC) federal program, or food subsidy assistance through the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SOURCE: VI Dept. of Human Services; VI Dept. of Health

Children in Poverty.

The number and percent of children age birth to 18 who live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level. Poverty data is based on income earned during the preceding year.

SOURCE: VICS; 1990 - 2010 US Census

Children's Readiness for School.

The percentage of 5-year old children entering public kindergarten scoring below/at/above age level expectations for seven key developmental learning-readiness skills, as per the Learning Accomplishment Profile, 3rd Edition test.

SOURCE: VI Dept. of Education

Children with Special Needs.

The portion of children with a chronic disease, disability or delay that requires educational services beyond that required generally by children of that age.

SOURCE: Virgin Islands Department of Health, Infants & Toddlers Program; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Data Analysis System

Children without Health Insurance.

The percent of children under age 18 not covered by any kind of private or public health insurance including Medicaid.

SOURCE: VI Bureau of Economic Research; VICS

Chronic Absence.

An indicator reflecting all absences: excused, unexcused, and suspensions.

SOURCE: VI Dept. of Education

Civilian Labor Force.

The sum of all civilian persons classified as employed or unemployed in accordance with the definitions of each.

SOURCE: VI Bureau of Economic Research

'Detached' or 'Disconnected' Youth.

Youth ages 16- 19 who are not enrolled in school, and not working. Included are teens who have dropped out of high school and are jobless, as well as a smaller portion of teens who are recent high school graduates and who are unemployed. Employment may be full-time or part-time work.

SOURCE: VICS

Foster Care.

These data reflect children removed under the authority of the VI Department of Human Services from the custody of a parent or caregiver due to abuse or neglect, and placed temporarily with a family who will provide care.

SOURCE: VI Dept. of Human Services

Graduation Rate.

Cohort 4 indicates students who have entered the 9th grade in the same year and are expected to graduate in a normal 4 year progression. Graduation rate is based on students who meet all conditions and graduate within their cohort group as a percentage of all students who entered the cohort in the first year regardless of where their education began and excluding all students who die, or emigrate to a legitimate educational entity.

SOURCE: VI Dept. of Education

Infant Mortality.

The rate of deaths occurring to infants under 1-year-old per 1,000 live births.

SOURCE: VI Dept. of Health

Juvenile Property Crime Rate.

The rate or number of arrests of youth age 10 to 17 for burglary, larceny/theft, auto theft, arson, and destruction of property. Data may include repeated arrests of the same individual at different times and for different offenses.

SOURCE: VI Police Dept.

Juvenile Violent Crime Arrests.

The rate or number of arrests of youth age 10 to 17 for homicide, forcible rape, robbery or aggravated assault per 100,000 youth this age.

SOURCE: VI Police Dept.

Kinship Care.

These data reflect children who have been formally placed with kin as part of the Territory's foster care system.

SOURCE: VI Dept. of Human Services

Low Birthweight Babies.

The portion of infants born weighing less than 5.5 pounds, per all live births.

SOURCE: VI Dept. of Health

Median Income for Families.

The dollar amount which divides VI family households into two equal groups: half of households have incomes above the median and half have incomes below the median. VI data is available only for all families, irrespective of related children.

SOURCE: VICS; 1990 - 2010 US Census.

Per Capita Income.

The average income of every man, woman and child.

SOURCE: VICS; US Census

Public School Report Card.

The percentage of public school students scoring below, at or above the proficiency level for reading and math on the Smarter Balanced Assessments and National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) Alternate Assessments

SOURCE: VI Dept. of Education

Public Secondary School Dropouts.

The percentage of students enrolled in public schools in 7th to 12th grades who did not report for class at the beginning of the school year, graduate, or meet the exclusionary conditions of transfer to another school, suspension, illness or death.

SOURCE: VI Dept. of Education

Teen Deaths.

The rate or number of deaths to teens age 15 to 19, per 100,000 teens this age.

SOURCE: VI Dept. of Health

Teen High School Dropouts.

The percentage of teenagers ages 16-19 who are not enrolled in school and are not high school graduates.

SOURCE: VI Dept. of Education

Third Grade Reading.

The percentage of third-grade public school students scoring below/at/above the proficiency level for reading on the Smarter Balanced Assessments and National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) Alternate Assessments, administered in the spring semester in advance of students' entry into fourth grade.

SOURCE: VI Dept. of Education

Truancy.

Truancy refers to unexcused absences from school.

SOURCE: VI Dept. of Education

Unemployment Rate.

The unemployment rate represents the number unemployed as a percent of the labor force. Unemployed persons are defined as those persons aged 16 years and older who had no employment during the reference week, were available for work, except for temporary illness, and had made specific efforts to find employment sometime during the 4-week period ending with the reference week. Persons who were waiting to be recalled to a job from which they had been laid off need not have been looking for work to be classified as unemployed.

SOURCE: VI Bureau of Economic Research

Very Low Birthweight Babies.

The portion of live infants born weighing less than 3.3 pounds.

SOURCE: VI Dept. of Health

Vocational Training.

The percent of teens ages 16-24 who engaged in some vocational training, including: the certificate program, technical preparation course, on the job training, and technical college program.

SOURCE: VICS

Youth Employment.

The percent of teens 16-19, 20-24 in the labor force who are employed.

SOURCE: VICS

Acknowledgements

The U.S. Virgin Islands KIDS COUNT Data Book for 2019 was made possible by the generous financial, technical and collaborative assistance and support of the national KIDS COUNT team at the Annie E. Casey Foundation. We thank them for their support but acknowledge that the findings and conclusions presented in this report are those of the author(s) alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Foundation.

This 18th Data Book is also the result of sustained local partnerships involving the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands (CFVI), the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI), the Virgin Islands government, community organizations, and service-providing agencies.

2019 USVI KIDS COUNT Data Team & Partners:

- Anna W. Scarbriel, Director of Grants and Programs; Sakile Braithwaite-Hall, Foundation Projects Manager; Judith Richardson, Consultant; Laurence Blake, Data Analyst; Lisa Meersman, Designer
- Frank Mills and Asha DeGannes, UVI Eastern Caribbean Center (ECC)
- Natalie Lewis, Charise Hart, Clarence Payne, Evril Powell, Van Walwyn, Celia Victor, Eavey-Monique C. James, Masika Lewis, Gary Smith, and Emmanueline Archer, Department of Human Services
- Radmur Carty, Lorna Concepcion, and Nona McCray, Department of Health
- James Richardson, Kaliah Edwards, Alexandra Baltimore-Hoofkin, Kathleen Merchant, Belinda Sanderson, Joleen Carty, and Renee Charleswell, Department of Education

- Ivan Rampersad, Naomi Joseph, Carolyn Wattle, Josephine Greer, and Patricia Potter, Virgin Islands Police Department
- Junia John-Straker and Brandy Humphreys, Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands
- Andrea Shillingford, Catholic Charities of the Virgin Islands
- Masserae Sprauve Webster, Frederiksted Health Care, Inc.
- Noreen Michael, Janis Valmond, LaVerne Ragster, Deborah Brown, and Gloria Callwood, UVI Caribbean Exploratory Research Center (CERC)

Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands

For nearly 30 years, the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands (CFVI) has been a catalyst for positive change in the Territory through initiatives committed to youth, learning, family support and the environment. With a professional staff and a volunteer Board of Directors composed of community leaders, CFVI is a trusted advocate and supporter of programs that ensure opportunity and sustainability for current and future generations.

Since September 2017, CFVI has been serving as a vehicle for receiving and distributing funds to support hurricane relief efforts throughout the Territory. In addition to providing administrative oversight to over 100 named funds, and programs, CFVI is focused on meeting the emergency, immediate and long-term needs of children, youth and families in the aftermath of two Category 5 hurricanes. CFVI is a registered non-profit organization entirely supported by individual donors, grants, trusts, corporate donations and estate planning.

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University of the Virgin Islands

Founded in 1963, the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) is a liberal arts, multi-cultural, land-grant institution, with dual campuses: one on St. Croix and one on St. Thomas.

Within UVI, the Research Institute at the Eastern Caribbean Center (ECC) is a division engaged in domestic and international research, and in supporting the work of the U.S. Bureau of the Census, compiling and carrying out scientific sample surveys.

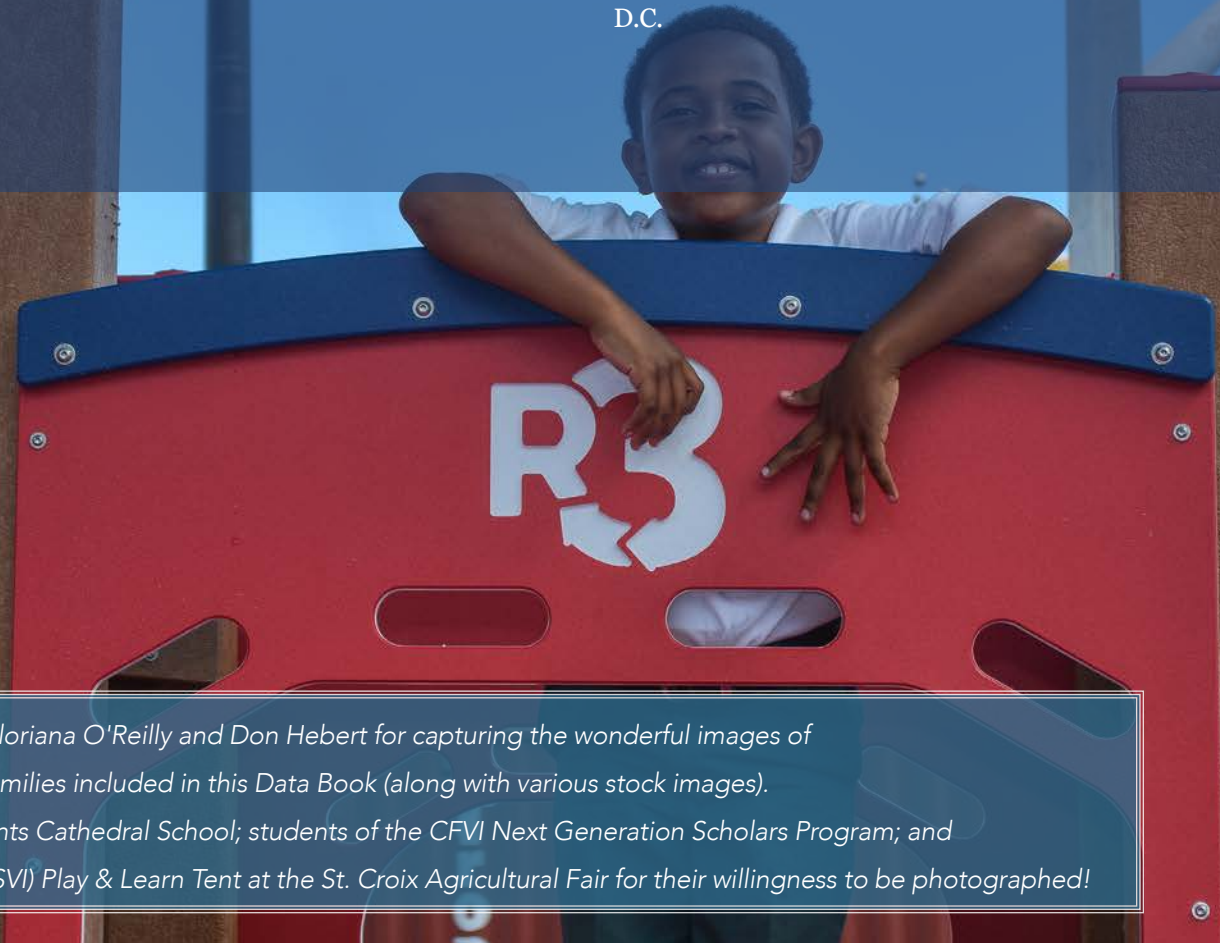
The U.S. Census, coordinated by staff of the ECC at the end of each decade, and the annual U.S. Virgin Islands Community Survey, produced by the ECC in intervening years, provide social and economic data which are vital sources for the USVI KIDS COUNT Data Books.

Annie E. Casey Foundation

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is devoted to developing a brighter future for millions of children at risk of poor educational, economic, social and health outcomes. The work of AECF focuses on strengthening families, building stronger communities and ensuring access to opportunity, because children need all three to succeed. AECF advances research and solutions to overcome the barriers to success, help communities demonstrate what works and influence decision makers to invest in strategies based on solid evidence.

The United States Virgin Islands

The United States Virgin Islands (USVI) are an unincorporated insular Territory of the United States, with a total land area of 134 square miles. The Virgin Islands includes 68 separate islands and cays, but all residents are categorized as living on one of three main islands—St. Thomas, St. Croix, or St. John. The U.S. Census Bureau treats the three main islands as the statistical equivalents of counties, and considers the fourth island, Water Island, to be a subdivision of St. Thomas. The USVI has a smaller population than any U.S. state. The territory has about one-fifth the population—and twice the land area—of Washington, D.C.



Thank you to Shanna-Gloriana O'Reilly and Don Hebert for capturing the wonderful images of local children and families included in this Data Book (along with various stock images).

Thank you also to children at All Saints Cathedral School; students of the CFVI Next Generation Scholars Program; and visitors to the CFVI/Lutheran Social Services (LSSVI) Play & Learn Tent at the St. Croix Agricultural Fair for their willingness to be photographed!

BUILDING FORWARD for OUR CHILDREN NOW!

US VIRGIN ISLANDS KIDS COUNT DATA BOOK 2019

17 previous USVI KIDS COUNT Data Books document the status of children and families in the US Virgin Islands.

- (2016) Our Children In Focus
- (2015) By the Numbers: Where Do We Stand?
- (2014) Our Commitment Matters
- (2013) Pausing for Review
- (2012) Strengthening Supports for Children
- (2011) Investing in Our Children's Future
- (2010) Measuring What Matters
- (2009) How Do We Compare?
- (2008) Moving Forward by 10%
- (2007) Our Children Matter!
- (2006) Prosperity in the Future
- (2005) Stepping Up to the Challenge
- (2004) Mapping a Road to Success
- (2003) Getting off to a Good Start
- (2002) Where Is Our Commitment?
- (2001) Views from the Community
- (2000) A Call to Action!

Additionally, two special KIDS COUNT/Population Reference Bureau reports, titled "A First Look at Children in the US Virgin Islands" and "Children in the US Virgin Islands: Results from the 2010 Census," provide social and economic data trends for children in the USVI - derived from the 1990, 2000, and 2010 US Censuses - and elaborate on the findings reported in the annual USVI KIDS COUNT Data Books.

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