

2023 U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS ECONOMY

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR,
BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH



ECONOMY OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The United States Virgin Islands (USVI) economy in 2023 performed well by key headline indicators, such as a record low unemployment rate, growing economic output, and solid tourism performance. Economic challenges such as the closure of HOVENSA in 2015, the two category-five hurricanes in 2017, and the 2020 global pandemic have impacted the USVI.

Despite these global headwinds and obstacles, the labor market is performing its strongest in two years, with unemployment rates below pre-pandemic levels and more workers employed. Visitor arrivals have also been buoyant, sustained by solid demand across all major visitor markets.

Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) returned to trend growth in 2022 since 2019. This growth has now matched pre-HOVENSA closure levels.

While inflation continues to be a concern, there are encouraging signs of improvement, particularly in the food and energy categories. The inflation rate, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), has decreased by 3.4 percentage points from its peak in October 2022.

The positive developments in 2023, including a modest recovery in employment, increased output, and a decrease in inflation, are all indicative of a resilient and advancing economy.



USVI 2020 Census Demographics

- USVI had a population of 87,146, with 42,343 males (48.6%) and 44,803 females (51.4%).
- 21.3% of the population was aged 65 or over, and 1.8% were aged 85 or over.
- Children ages 0-17 accounted for 19.6% of the population.
- The median age of USVI's population was 45.9 years.

U.S. Virgin Islands Economic Overview

87,146

2020 Population

\$4.7B

2022 USVI GDP

2,300

2022 Number Of
Businesses

8.4%

2023 Inflation Rate

3.4%

2023 Unemployment Rate

\$346.7M

2023 Building Permit

2.4M

2023 Visitor Arrivals

63.9%

2023 Hotel Occupancy Rate

698

2023 High School Grads.

2023 Petroleum Products exports from the U.S. Virgin Islands totaled **\$3.35B**.

Economic Census 2022

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

U.S. Census Bureau released statistics on businesses with paid employees for the U.S. Virgin Islands from the 2022 Economic Census of Island Areas. The Economic Census of Island Areas is the U.S. government's official 5-year measure of employer businesses in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Establishments in the Retail Trade (NAICS 44–45) sector in the U.S. Virgin Islands reported average revenue per establishment of \$3.73 million in 2022. The average revenue per establishment across All Sectors (NAICS 00) was \$3.10 million.

Figure 1

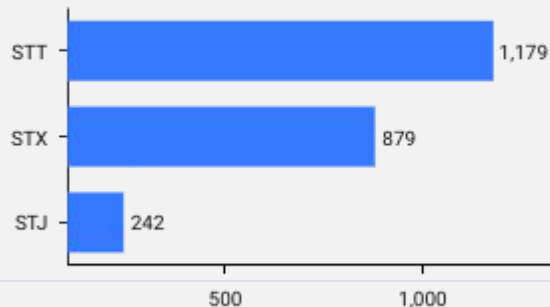
Top 5 sectors by Sales, Value of Shipments or Revenue
Year 2022 (millions of Dollars)



Establishments in Retail Trade reported revenue per employee of \$287,281 in 2022. The average revenue per employee across All Sectors (NAICS 00) was \$269,075. Establishments in Retail Trade reported payroll per employee of \$28,984 in 2022. The average payroll per employee across All Sectors (NAICS 00) was \$43,165.

Figure 2

Number of Establishments by Island: 2022



FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO:

<https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2022/econ/economic-census/virgin-islands.html>

Gross Domestic Product 2022

BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS (BEA)

In 2022, the U.S. Virgin Islands' real GDP decreased by 1.3%, as seen in Figure 3, following a 3.7% increase in 2021. This was due to reductions in exports, private investment, government spending, and personal consumption, partially offset by an increase in inventory investment. Imports also decreased.

Exports in 2022, the export of goods and services decreased by 18.9%. Goods exports declined due to lower crude oil and petroleum products exports, while services exports increased due to higher visitor spending. Total visitor arrivals surged by 69.7%, according to the USVI Government.

Private Fixed Investment witnessed an 18.6% decrease, mainly reflecting declines in spending on equipment and structures. This decline continued after previous years of elevated levels to support capital improvement projects, including the restart of the oil refinery on St. Croix.

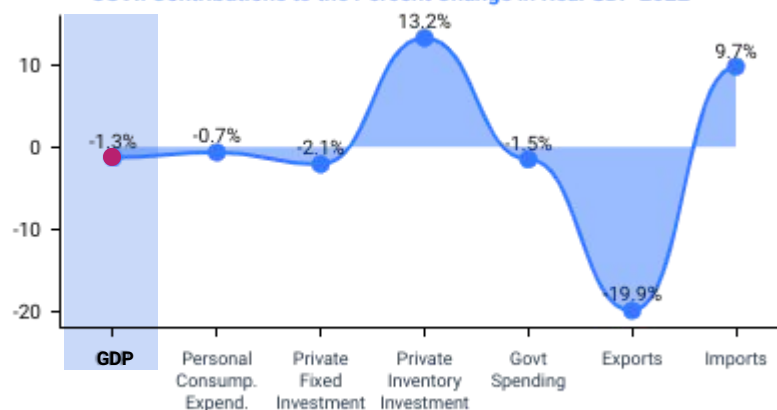
Government Spending decreased by 4.4% in 2022, driven by declines in territorial and federal government spending. Territorial government spending declined by 2.6% due to decreased construction activity, while federal government spending remained downward after supporting post-2017 hurricane reconstruction.

Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) declined by 1.0% due to increased consumer prices that outpaced the rise in current-dollar PCE.

Private Inventory Investment increased due to a smaller decline in private inventories, as there was a reduced drawdown in crude oil and petroleum product inventories compared to 2021.

Figure 3

USVI: Contributions to the Percent Change in Real GDP 2022



Note: the chart shows the percent change of total real GDP and the contributions (in percentage points) of each major component to that change. For example, government spending accounted for 1.52 percentage points of the 1.3 percent decrease in real GDP in 2022. Imports are a subtraction item, thus, a decrease in imports results in a positive contribution to GDP.

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO:

<https://www.bea.gov/news/2024/gross-domestic-product-us-virgin-islands-2022>

Ocean Economy 2021

NOAA OFFICE FOR COASTAL MANAGEMENT



The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has released the Ocean Economy statistics for the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) for 2021. The USVI's Blue Economy comprises 303 establishments, providing employment for 5,372 individuals with a total wage amounting to \$166.2 million. Additional marine industry sectors, such as Marine Transportation, encompass 17 establishments, employing 427 individuals with a total wage amounting to \$15 million.

TABLE 1: TOTAL OCEAN ECONOMY USVI 2019-2021

YEAR	2019	2020	2021
ESTABLISHMENTS	300	309	303
EMPLOYMENT	5,882	6,286	5,372
WAGES	\$174.7M	\$142.1M	\$166.2M

National Coastal Resilience Fund
Recipient: Coral Bay Community Council
Grant Amount: \$836,500 | Total Project Amount: \$1,024,500
Beaches and Estuaries: 175 miles of coastline

This award will design comprehensive resiliency solutions that improve the use of flat lands in Coral Bay to protect and enhance community infrastructure and critical mangrove, seagrass, and coral reef ecosystems that can benefit species such as shorebirds, pelicans, coral, and sea turtles. Project will mitigate sediment deposition and flooding to improve resiliency against threats from urbanization, flooding, storm surge, and sea level rise.

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO: <https://coast.noaa.gov>

The Tourism and Recreation sector within the marine industry consists of 280 establishments that employ 4,836 individuals, yielding \$145.7 million in salaries. Furthermore, the Utilities sector comprises two establishments employing 463 individuals and producing \$29.6 million in wages as of 2022. Other marine sectors include Living Resources, Marine Construction, Ship and Boat Building, and Offshore Mineral Extraction. The ocean-dependent sectors contribute 21% to the total employment of the USVI workforce.

Imports & Exports 2023

FROM U.S. & FOREIGN REGIONS

In 2023, the total import value of the U.S. Virgin Islands was \$4.06 billion, marking a 16.3% decrease from the previous year, as seen in Figure 5. Foreign imports for 2023 amounted to \$402.6 million, showing a 51.1% decrease, while U.S. imports declined by 9.2%. Total Petroleum Products imported to the USVI amounted to \$2.1 billion, representing 52.1% of the total imports to the USVI.

Concurrently, the total exports from the USVI were valued at \$3.9 billion. Exports from the USVI to the United States decreased to \$599.9 million in 2023, representing a 22.7% decline from the total exports to the U.S. in 2022. Meanwhile, foreign exports from the USVI totaled \$3.39 billion, indicating a \$905.9 million increase from the previous year. As seen in Figure 4., 84% of the total exports are Petroleum Products from the USVI.

Figure 4: USVI Petroleum Exports vs. Total Exports

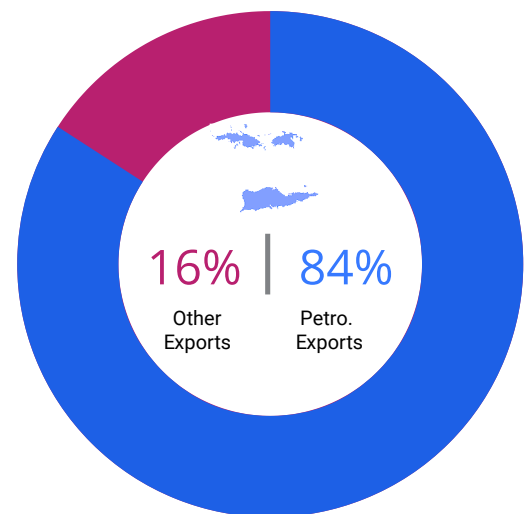


Figure 5

Total Imports to the USVI from U.S. & Foreign Regions 2019-2023

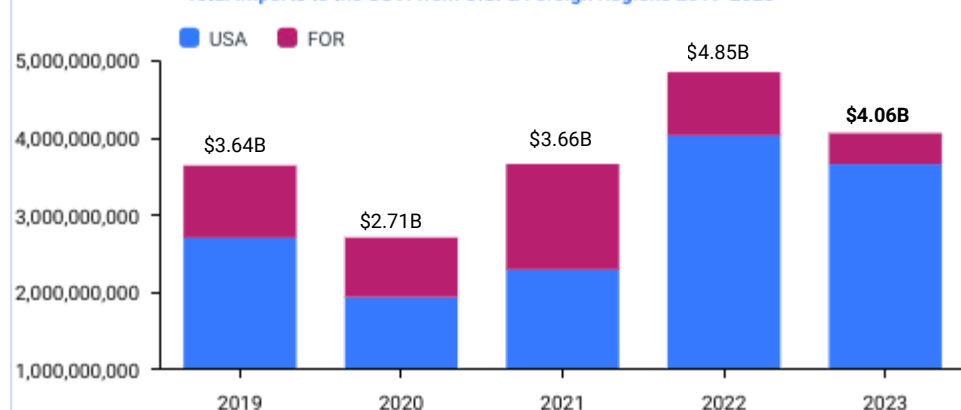


TABLE 2: PETROLEUM FROM THE U.S.V.I TO THE U.S. & FOREIGN REGIONS 2017-2023

YEAR	U.S.	FOR.	TOTAL
2017	\$24.9M	\$972.2M	\$997.2M
2018	\$21.7M	\$860.8M	\$882.5M
2019	\$10.3M	\$950.2M	\$960.5M
2020	\$26.7M	\$698.2M	\$724.9M
2021	\$629.2M	\$2.0B	\$2.7B
2022	\$50.0K	\$2.5B	\$2.5B
2023	\$14.0K	\$3.3B	\$3.3B

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO: www.usviber.org

All data subject to revision.

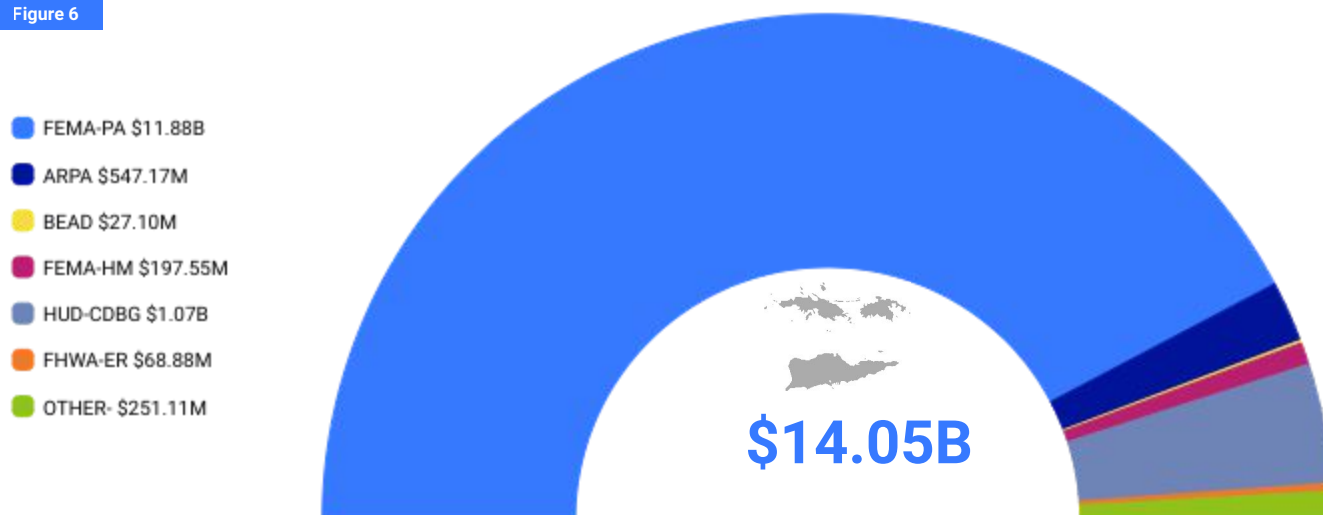
Policy & Initiatives

Since 2018, the Government of the Virgin Islands received approximately \$14.05 billion from several federal programs to aid in recovery efforts after Hurricanes Irma and Maria, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding source comes from four main federal programs: the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)'s Public Assistance (PA) and Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s Community Development Block Grant Program – Disaster Recovery Program (CDBG-DR), and the Federal Highway Emergency Relief Program (FHWA-ER). Over 1,500 projects across these federal funding sources are monitored by the Office of Disaster Recovery (ODR) and the Office of Management & Budget (OMB). There were also additional federal programs not related to recovery, such as Broadband Equity Access & Deployment (BEAD) and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which totaled \$574.28 million.

TABLE 3: THIS TOTAL REFLECTS THE ALLOCATED AMOUNT FOR EACH FUNDING SOURCE

FEMA-PA	\$11.88B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$3.8B - VIDE • \$1.7B - WAPA • \$1.1B - SRMC • \$1.0 B - JFL 	The FEMA Public Assistance Program provides extra funding to help communities respond to and recover from disasters. It covers debris removal, emergency measures, and infrastructure restoration, supporting hazard mitigation measures during recovery.
HUD-CDBG	\$1.07B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$483M - Housing • \$476M - Infrastructure 	The HUD's CDBG-DR provides flexible grants to aid in the recovery from presidentially declared disasters, particularly in low-income areas. Additional funding for the CDBG-DR Program can be appropriated by Congress as a Disaster Recovery grant to rebuild affected areas. This assistance can fund various recovery activities to aid communities and neighborhoods with limited resources.
ARPA	\$547.17M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$261.6M Revenue Replacement • \$106.5M Negative Economic Impact i.e. \$20 Million VI Slice • \$31.8M Premium Pay 	The U.S. Virgin Islands has received funds from the American Rescue Plan Act 2021. The government plans to allocate funding to improve infrastructure and address the economic impacts of the pandemic on households, small businesses, and nonprofits, with a focus on aiding the most affected citizens.
FEMA-HM	\$197.55M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$77.5M - VITEMA, VIFEMS • \$33.9M - Transportation, e.g. PW 	This grant program provides funding to communities for implementing hazard mitigation measures after a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration. Its goal is to reduce long-term risk to people and property from future disasters. Recipients prioritize, select, and administer local hazard mitigation projects.
FHWA-ER	\$68.88M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$68.88M- VIPW 	The Department of Transportation, via the Federal Highway Administration, allows for the repair or reconstruction of Federal-aid highways and roads on Federal lands that have suffered severe damage due to natural disasters or catastrophic failures from an external cause.
BEAD	\$27.10M	The BEAD Program, funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, allocates \$42.45 billion to expand high-speed broadband internet access, prioritizing unserved or underserved communities nationwide. BEAD aligns with the Vision 2040 Plan to bridge the digital divide and ensure residents can benefit from online education, telehealth, and the digital economy.	
OTHER	\$251.11M	There are a total of 19 other Government agencies and non-profits that have allocated funding to the recovery.	

Figure 6



FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO: <https://www.usviodr.com> | www.omb.vi.gov

Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands Budget

The proposed expenditures outlined in the budget aim to support crucial areas such as reconstruction, bolstering infrastructure resilience, addressing public health issues, and extending economic assistance to the community. Furthermore, the budget includes provisions for reconstructing the Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands (GVI) workforce and implementing long-awaited salary increases to support the territory's progress.

In the fiscal year 2023, the largest fund allocations comprise \$4.42 billion for the Disaster Relief Fund, \$1.04 billion for the General Fund, and \$290.9 million from federal sources except the Department of Education (DOE). Funding from federal sources except DOE, will be utilized for various grants, including Technical Assistance, Maintenance Assistance Programs, and Capital Improvement Project grants administered by the Department of the Interior, to supplement local funds. The expenditure for the GVI in fiscal year 2023 totaled \$2.40 billion, covering a range of projects and ongoing support for infrastructure.

The USVI witnessed a total collection of \$1.9 billion in revenues in the fiscal year of 2023, showing a decline of 59.7% from the previous fiscal year, according to GVI's Open Finance portal, as of August 2024. Income Taxes and Gross Receipts decreased by 6.5% and 17.7% respectively. The collection from Property Taxes amounted to \$30.3 million, while revenue from Hotel Occupancy taxes reached \$31.9 million, encompassing the currently budgeted GVI funding. Significantly, excise taxes increased by 11%; 86.2% of excise collections were attributable to the online excise payment system, which gave taxpayers a more convenient and efficient transaction experience.

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO: <https://transparency.vi.gov/#!/dashboard>

Major Tourism Market Trends

Tourism Market

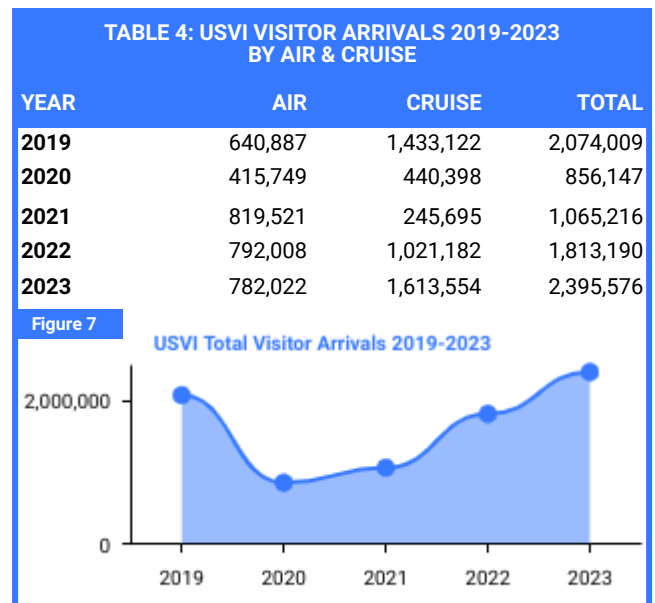
Visitor Arrivals

Visitor arrivals reached roughly 2.4 million in 2023, marking a rise of around 582,386 visitors over 2022—or a 32.1% increase (Table 4). Furthermore, visitor arrivals surpassed pre-pandemic levels by 15.5%. Air arrivals totaled 782,022. A total of 1.6 million Cruise guests visited the territory in 2023, accounting for 67.4% of visitor arrivals in 2023. This significant expansion testifies to the industry's resilience and ability to bounce back from the challenges posed over recent years.

Major Carrier Direct Flights

In 2023, the average seating capacity for Major Carrier Direct Flights was 19,112, increasing from 17,097 seats in 2022. Some routes include Frontier's service from St. Thomas to Orlando, Miami, and San Juan, JetBlue's connection from St. Thomas to Boston, and direct flights by American Airlines from Florida, New York, Boston, and San Juan. Additionally, Spirit Airlines now offers direct flights to Miami, while United Airlines has expanded its offerings from Chicago, Dulles, and Newark. As for St. Croix, travelers can now avail themselves of direct flights from Atlanta through Delta, and destinations in Florida are also being served by Spirit Airlines, Frontier, and American. The number of direct airline routes is constantly growing, significantly increasing U.S. Virgin Islands connectivity.

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO: www.usviber.org



Hotel Occupancy Rates & Short Term Rentals

In 2023, the U.S. Virgin Islands experienced consistent Hotel Occupancy Rates, with an average of 63.9%. Anticipated growth in 2024 is expected to be influenced by the addition of 3,000 rooms in the territory, stemming from the opening of the Westin Beach Resort on St. Thomas in December 2023. The occupancy rate has shown a stabilized growth, reaching 62.6% in 2022. This period of stability began in 2021 with an occupancy rate of 63.2%, a significant increase from the 34.9% rate in 2020, representing the lowest occupancy rate since the Irma-Maria hurricanes, which was higher at 44.1%, as seen in Figure 8.



Short-term homestay accommodations, such as those offered by AirBnB, are estimated to consist of 436 establishments in the USVI, with a minimum estimated capacity to accommodate 432,820 overnight guests annually.

Major Workforce Trends in the Sectors

Public and Private

Public sector jobs for the past twelve months of 2023 averaged 10,485, remaining stable. Territorial Government jobs averaged 10,000 compared to 9,945 in 2022. In 2023, Local Government employment averaged 10,970 versus the 10,881 reported in 2022. Federal jobs rose by 3.8% in 2023.

2023 showed Private employment inclined 3% to 24,671 from 23,939.

Leisure & Hospitality

In 2023, the average employment in the Leisure & Hospitality sector saw a commendable increase of 7%, amounting to 6,718 employees. This influential growth can be attributed to the opening and reopening of accommodation establishments throughout the year. Additionally, the Accommodation & Food Services sector exhibited a positive trend, achieving a 7.1% growth and totaling 5,954 employees in 2023.

Construction

In 2023, the Construction sector experienced moderate growth, largely attributed to the ongoing restoration of disaster-affected infrastructure. The total number of construction jobs reached 2,049 workers by the end of 2023, demonstrating a growth rate of 4.4%. Presently, the Construction sector contributes to 5.7% of nonfarm employment, and it is anticipated that this figure will increase in 2024 with the commencement of new capital projects such as hospitals, schools, and roads as seen in Table 3.

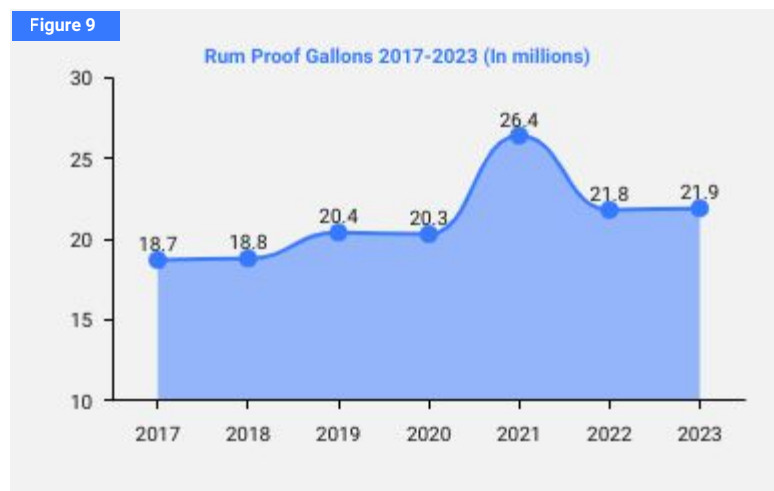
Manufacturing

The Manufacturing sector includes the production of rum, concrete-cement mixtures, and goods made by small firms. In 2023, employment in this sector remained stable, with an average of 538 jobs, compared to 509 employees in 2022, representing a slight 5.7% year-over-year increase.

Rum Industry

Cruzan VIRIL, Ltd. (Cruzan Rum) produces about 10.19 million proof gallons of rum per year, while the Diageo distillery (Captain Morgan) can produce 11.67 million proof gallons annually (Figure 9). Rum produced in the U.S. Virgin Islands is mainly exported to the United States in bulk and then sold to local and regional bottlers under various brands.

The territory's rum export value for 2023 totaled \$102.9 million, an 8.4% increase from 2022's \$95.9 million. This increase can be attributed to inflation as rum production has remained consistent over the past two years. This rum export total reflects Cruzan Rum, Captain Morgan and smaller distilleries.



FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO: <https://www.vidolviews.org/> | www.usviber.org

Trade, Transportation & Utilities

The Trade, Transportation, & Utilities sector had an average of 6,897 jobs in 2023, marking a 3.7% increase from the previous year. After declining in 2018 due to two category five hurricanes in 2017 and the pandemic in 2020, the sector has rebounded with a 6.8% increase compared to 2020.

The employment averages for Retail Trade, Wholesale Trade, and jobs in Trade, Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities have remained stable. The Retail Trade sector has 4,818 employees. There has been an average of 761 employed in Wholesale Trade throughout 2023, and a 3.8% increased average of 4,159 jobs in the Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities sector over the past twelve months.

Financial Activities & Professional, Real Estate Business Services

In 2023, the local economy added 523 jobs on average, primarily driven by growth in the Private sector, especially in the Hospitality industry, due to new or re-opening hotels and guest houses. The Financial Services sector in the USVI sustained a 2.6% rise in employment. The Business and Professional Services sector increased by 5.3%. The Economic Development Commission (EDC) offers a competitive tax incentive program for businesses in the USVI, sanctioned by the U.S. Government to encourage private sector development.

2023 Real Estate services increased to 932 from 911 in 2022, a 2.3% rise. We can attribute this to The V.I. Slice Program, which offers gap financing to qualifying first-time moderate-income homebuyers in the USVI. The program will support long-term sustainability, resiliency, and economic viability across the territory by providing financial assistance to expand affordable homeownership opportunities, as seen in Table 3.

2023 Labor Market

The labor market has been at its strongest for over two years, displaying sustainability with more workers now employed than when the pandemic first struck in March 2020 and compared to 2022. An average of 35,641 nonfarm workers were employed in 2023 compared to 34,820 at the end of 2022. The unemployment rate has consistently stayed below 4% for twelve consecutive months beginning in January 2023, and it decreased to a low of 2.9% in December 2023.

In the ongoing process of labor market rebalancing, the growth in employment for 2023 is primarily attributed to specific sectors. The Leisure & Hospitality sector, which had experienced a decline after the post-hurricane reconstruction activities ended in 2017, has exhibited the most pronounced job gains. Additionally, there has been growth in the Education & Health Services, Wholesale, and Government sectors compared to 2022. There has been a noticeable reduction in the Manufacturing job sector since the closure of the refinery in 2015, but has shown signals of rebounding in 2023. Encouragingly, the Professionals & Businesses, Retail Trade, Transportation & Utilities, Financial Activities, and Construction sectors are displaying signs of recovery from their pandemic-related losses.

Figure 10

USVI Unemployment Rate 2015-2023



Figure 11

Net Employment Change 2022-2023



Building Permit Value

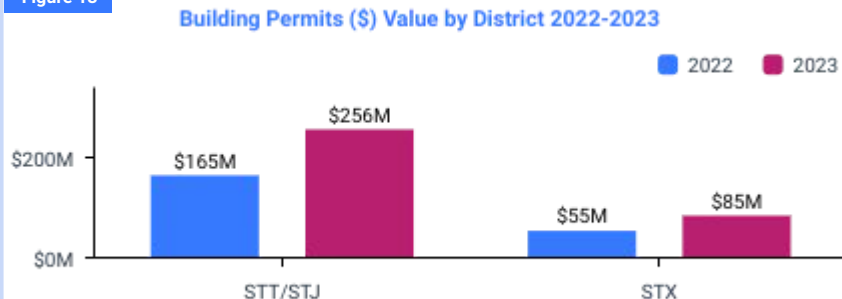
The year 2023 presented promising indicators for future construction starts, as new Building Permits displayed a significant increase. The total value of Building Permits escalated by 55.4% to \$341.1 million, surpassing the previous year's figure of \$219.5 million. Private Residential construction exhibited robust growth, reaching \$185.1 million, marking a 19.1% increase. Additionally, Non-Residential building permits exceeded \$81.2 million, reflecting a more than 100% surge. Furthermore, the value for Public construction permits nearly doubled to \$58.8 million. It's noteworthy that in 2023, total Building Permits reached its highest total value since its peak in 2021, which was driven by recovery.

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO: www.usviber.org

Figure 12



Figure 13



Limetree Bay Terminal Update

The HOVENSA Refinery in the USVI can process over 200,000 barrels of crude oil daily and includes a terminal with a capacity of 34 million barrels. The facility has been a crucial part of the USVI industrial economy for over 50 years, supporting 800 jobs and contributing \$633 million to the USVI gross domestic product. It has 167 tanks and deep-water access to 11 docks, including an offshore mooring buoy for large vessels up to 1,540 feet long. HOVENSA officially closed its doors in 2015 and was purchased by Limetree Bay Terminal in 2018.

In December 2021, Limetree Bay Terminals filed for bankruptcy due to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) violations. Port Hamilton acquired the refinery at a bankruptcy auction. The fuel storage facility, rebranded as Ocean Point Terminals now operates independently but shares some infrastructure with the refinery on the same 2,000-acre stretch of industrial land on the south shore of St. Croix. They operate as separate businesses under a shared services agreement for infrastructure costs.

In 2023, the EPA completed the extraction of ammonia, amines, and liquefied petroleum gas from the refinery owned by West Indies Petroleum Limited and Port Hamilton Refining and Transportation, LLLP, on St. Croix.

FOR MOR INFORMATION: <https://www.epa.gov>

Energy Baseline Report

The U.S. Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (WAPA) heavily relies on imported fossil fuels for power generation, water desalination, industry, and transportation. Electricity costs in the USVI are higher than the U.S. national average, with residential customers paying around \$0.41/kWh and commercial customers paying \$0.47/kWh, including a \$0.22/kWh fuel surcharge. Four new 9-megawatt

generating units from Wartsila are being installed at the Randolph Harley Power Plant on St. Thomas to improve electricity service in the St. Thomas-St. John District. These engines are designed to use both light fuel oil diesel and liquid propane gas. Despite the USVI's current reliance on fossil fuels, there is potential to utilize solar, water, and wind resources for renewable power generation. About 2% to 3% of WAPA's customer loads are supplied by renewable energy from two solar power plants.

To boost resilience against future storms, WAPA replaced wooden utility poles with wind-resistant carbon fiber poles and is working on undergrounding distribution infrastructure. FEMA is funding microgrid projects, and HUD has allocated federal funding for the installation of a 9-MW, 18-MWh BESS, and 35 MW of traditional thermal generation, acquiring propane supply infrastructure is vital for electricity and water production in the USVI.

FOR MOR INFORMATION: <https://www.vi.wapa.vi> | www.nrel.gov/publications

TABLE 5. COMPARATIVE ENERGY RATES, U.S. AVERAGE TO VIWAPA CUSTOMERS

CUSTOMER TYPE	U.S. AVERAGE, MAY 2023 (CENTS/KWH)	WAPA CUSTOMER AVERAGE, AUGUST 2023 (CENTS/KWH)
Residential	16.21	40.85 for first 250 kWh 43.47 for all other
Commercial	12.91	47.36
Industrial	8.09	47.36a

Figure 14

VIWAPA Fuel Consumption Fraction by Type in 2022

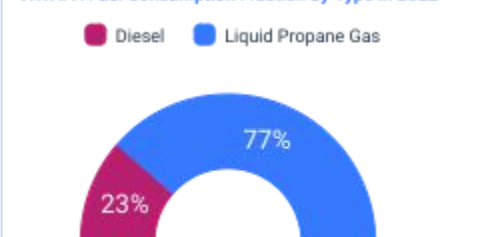


Figure 15

USVI Inflation 2020-2023 All Islands

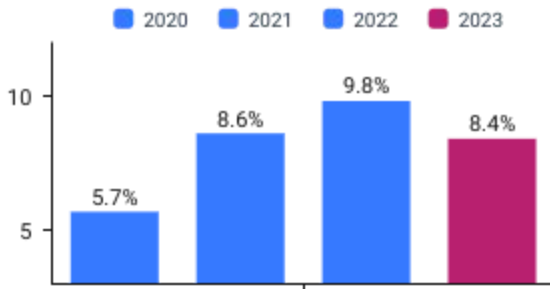
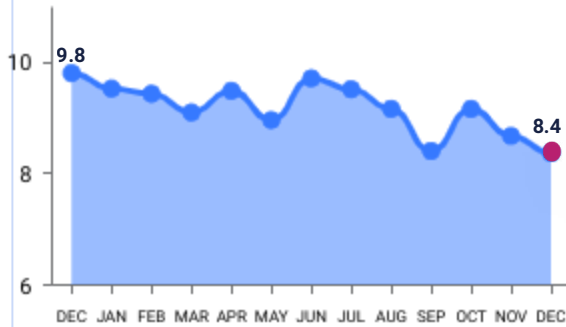


Figure 16

USVI CPI from December 2022-2023



FOR MOR INFORMATION: www.usviber.org

Consumer Price Index: 2023

Overall consumer prices, measured year-over-year, declined to 8.4% in 2023 from 9.8% in 2022 (Figure 15). While prices have eased in some categories over the past twelve months, including food and energy, they remain elevated in others. The housing market experienced the highest inflation rate at 10.7% in 2023. Rising rental prices, which grew 6.2%, were the most significant contributor to price growth in the housing sector.

In 2023, food prices decreased 7.3% from the previous year's 14.2%. Lower prices for fresh fruit and vegetables primarily drove this decrease. However, consumers had to bear increased egg prices, which rose 38.1%. The Transportation index decreased 2.2% in 2023 due to lower gasoline prices. However, the price of tires under the Transportation index increased by 3% in 2023.

Meanwhile, the overall prices for Other Goods & Services increased by 10% from the previous year, and remittances grew by 5.2%. The primary reason for the inflation in the Other Goods & Services category was an increase in property taxes, which now range from 2% to 3% for properties worth up to \$350,000.

Education

The Board of Education plays a pivotal role in the USVI's public education system by certifying educational professionals, exercising oversight over federal dollars, and managing the Territorial Scholarship Program. This system, administered by the U.S. Department of Education, is currently comprised of a State Education Agency (SEA) and two (2) Local Education Agencies (LEAs), one for the St. Thomas/St. John District and one for the St. Croix District.

The St. Thomas/St. John District has two (2) high schools, seven (7) elementary schools, one (1) middle school, two (2) elementary/middle schools, and two (2) alternative schools, with a total of 437 teachers.

The St. Croix District has two (2) high schools, one (1) junior high school, one (1) vocational school, three (3) elementary/middle schools, and four (4) elementary schools with a total of 471 teachers.

There were 10,312 students enrolled in the USVI Public School system for 2023-2024.

There were 698 high graduates in 2022-2023 compared to 682 high school graduates in 2021-2022, an increase of 2.3%.

FOR MOR INFORMATION: www.vide.vi

Figure 17

Public School Enrollment by Grade

All Islands 2023

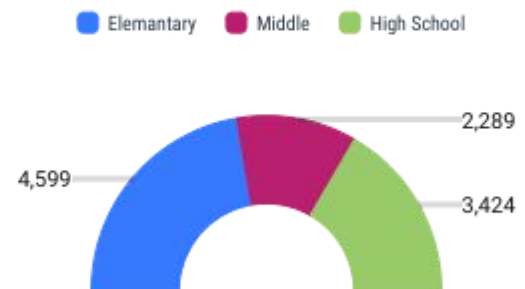


Figure 18

Total Public School Enrollment

All Islands 2019-2023

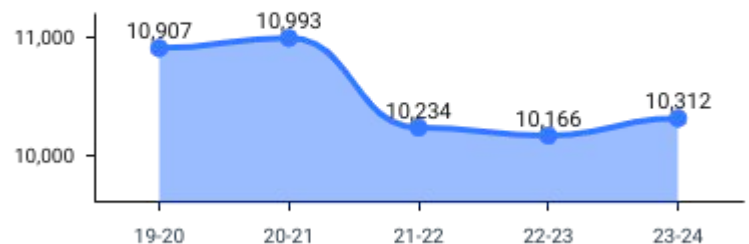
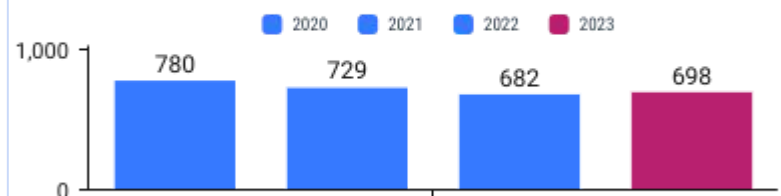


Figure 19

Public School Graduates

All Islands 2020-2023



ECONOMIC REVIEW DATA INDEX	2020 (COVID)	2021	2022	2023
Tourism				
Total Visitor Arrivals	857.78K	1.07M	1.81M	2.40M
Cruise Arrivals	442.03K	245.69K	1.02M	1.61M
Air Arrivals	415.75K	826.39K	792.01K	782.02K
Accommodations				
Hotel Occupancy Rates	35%	63%	62%	58%
STT/STJ Occupancy Rates	33%	67%	68%	63%
STX Occupancy Rates	38%	54%	47%	48%
Labor Force (Number of Employees)				
Total Non-Farm	36,416	34,972	34,820	35,641
Accommodation & Food Services	5,994	7,271	3,023	8,734
Leisure & Hospitality	4,900	5,805	6,275	6,718
Financial Activity	946	925	906	970
Construction	3,826	2,415	1,962	2,049
Trade, Transport, Utilities	6,405	6,420	6,651	6,897
Federal	925	939	936	970
Government	10,904	10,664	10,881	10,970
Private	25,512	24,309	23,939	24,671
Education				
Total Enrollment	10,506	10,234	10,166	10,312
Students (Elementary)	5,309	4,384	4,441	4,599
Students (Middle)	1,741	2,533	1,252	2,289
Students (High)	3,456	3,317	1,559	3,424
Teachers	935	912	893	908
Imports Value (\$)				
Total Imports	\$2,711,789,669	\$3,662,966,517	\$4,853,599,812	\$4,063,564,822
Imports United States	\$1,936,726,000	\$2,295,035,000	\$4,029,978,000	\$3,660,909,000
Imports Foreign	\$775,063,669	\$1,367,931,517	\$823,621,812	\$402,655,822
Exports Value (\$)				
Total Exports	\$1,024,943,648	\$2,943,906,095	\$3,256,645,502	\$3,986,777,595
Exports United States	\$308,146,000	\$897,179,000	\$775,680,000	\$599,878,000
Exports Foreign	\$716,797,648	\$2,046,727,095	\$2,480,965,502	\$3,386,899,595
Inflation Rate				
USVI Inflation Rate	5.7%	8.6%	9.8%	8.4%
St. John	5.7%	5.1%	4.8%	3.4%
St. Thomas	6.8%	9.4%	14.6%	11.9%
St. Croix	5.0%	11.0%	9.7%	9.0%

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

2024 Economic Outlook

As of July 2024, the economy of the U.S. Virgin Islands is thriving. Jobs in the Tourism industry, particularly in Leisure & Hospitality, have experienced growth year-over-year (8.1%) following the pandemic. Moreover, other sectors, such as Wholesale Trade (13.1%) and Education & Communication (7%), have also made notable improvements. The job market has remained robust, with unemployment rates consistently below 4% since 2023. Visitor arrivals have surpassed pre-pandemic levels by 9.3% as of July 2024, demonstrating the economy's resilience. It's crucial to acknowledge that global economic challenges and escalating geopolitical tensions may present risks to the favorable outlook in the upcoming year. However, several economic indicators have exhibited positive growth year-to-date, reflecting the government's dedication to sustaining economic advancement.



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