

The Virgin Islands Consortium

U.S. TREASURY DEPT. AWARDS MORE THAN \$4.3 MILLION TO SUPPORT TERRITORY'S SMALL BUSINESSES

BY ERNICE GILBERT

ST. THOMAS – The U.S. Treasury Department and the Virgin Islands Economic Development Authority (VIEDA) today announced that the Virgin Islands has received \$4,345,555 in State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) funds to help small businesses access the capital they need to grow and create jobs, according to press releases the federal agency and the VIEDA issued this afternoon.

The \$4.3 million release, according to the VIEDA, is a direct result of Governor Kenneth Mapp's request to the federal agency to provide much-needed aid to local businesses.

To date, \$8,691,111 in SSBCI funds have been disbursed to the U.S. Virgin Islands Economic Development Authority (VIEDA) to support small businesses and the local economy.

"Small businesses are the nation's leading job creators, and the State Small Business Credit Initiative connects sources of capital to the small businesses that need it," said Jeffrey Stout, Director of SSBCI. "The funds announced today will continue to support loans and investments in small businesses on the U.S. Virgin Islands."

"The USVI's SSBCI Program has led to the potential creation of 115 jobs and the retention of 412 jobs in the Territory as a result of our local small businesses that are participating in this program," said VIEDA Acting Chief Executive Officer Wayne L. Biggs, Jr. "We are grateful that the U.S. Virgin Islands will receive this second disbursement of funding so that we can continue to grow our local small businesses and the USVI economy," added Biggs, Jr.

SSBCI's most recent Quarterly Report shows that the U.S. Virgin Islands has deployed \$3,545,505 in SSBCI funds. The Treasury Department has disbursed more than \$1.2 billion in SSBCI funds to participating states, municipalities, and territories since the beginning of the program. SSBCI is designed to help spur new private sector lending or investments in small companies by leveraging the federal support offered by the program. Through 2014, participants were able to generate \$7.36 in private sector lending and investments for every \$1 of federal support.

SSBCI was created by the Small Business Jobs Act on September 27, 2010. Through the SSBCI, the Treasury Department will award nearly \$1.5 billion to state programs across the country that support small businesses, including small manufacturers. Each participant designs its own small

business programs, and the U.S. Virgin Islands has established loan guarantee and collateral support programs through the SSBCI.

To build on the momentum of the program's success and capitalize on new working relationships among states and small business lenders and investors, President Barack Obama proposed an extension of SSBCI in his Fiscal Year 2016 Budget request with an additional \$1.5 billion in funding. A new authorization of the SSBCI program will keep local economic development efforts strong and allow states to continue supporting small businesses, job creation, and greater levels of private lending and investments.

For more information on SSBCI and Treasury's other small business programs, please visit www.treasury.gov/smallbusiness. For more information on the SSBCI program in the Virgin Islands, please visit: www.usvieda.org.