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USVI Jobs for America's Graduates Earn National Recognition at EDGE 2026

The Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE) is proud to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of the U.S. Virgin Islands Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) delegation following its participation in the EDGE 2026 National Conference, the nation's premier education-to-employment conference.

Hosted by Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG), the EDGE Conference brought together educators, workforce development leaders, employers, policymakers, and practitioners from across the country to explore innovative strategies that strengthen education, career readiness, and workforce development opportunities for young people. Replacing the organization's traditional National Training Seminar, the conference provided participants with valuable professional learning experiences focused on advancing student success through collaboration, innovation, and leadership.

Throughout the conference, attendees engaged with nationally recognized keynote speakers and thought leaders who challenged participants to reimagine leadership, education, and workforce development. One of the conference's most impactful presentations was delivered by Coach Ken Carter, whose inspiring message on accountability, leadership, and believing in the potential of every young person resonated with educators nationwide.

Conference participants also heard remarks from Governor Albert Bryan Jr. of the U.S. Virgin Islands, who emphasized the importance of investing in the Territory's youth while strengthening pathways to education, career readiness, and employment. Additional panel discussions featuring workforce development experts, including Bob Morales and Mayor Rex Richardson, highlighted innovative workforce solutions, community partnerships, and equitable opportunities that prepare students for lifelong success.

Specialized professional development sessions provided JAG Specialists and Managers with practical strategies to strengthen classroom engagement, student recruitment and retention, employer partnerships, leadership development, career readiness, and data-informed decision-making. Participants also received comprehensive training on the enhanced JAGHub platform, gaining new tools to improve program management, streamline documentation, strengthen communication, and enhance the overall student experience.

The conference also served as a celebration of excellence, as the U.S. Virgin Islands JAG affiliation earned national recognition for the outstanding achievements of its educators and programs. VIDE proudly congratulates Jaynilah Williams, JAG Specialist at St. Croix Educational Complex High School, and Josette Illis, JAG Specialist at Ivanna Eudora Kean High School, for receiving JAG's highest and most prestigious honor the 6 of 6 Award. This distinguished recognition is presented to Specialists who demonstrate

exemplary performance across all national program standards. Their unwavering dedication, commitment to excellence, and passion for empowering students embody the mission of Jobs for America's Graduates and serve as an inspiration throughout the Virgin Islands and the national JAG network.

The Virgin Islands affiliation also came remarkably close to earning the prestigious 6 of 6 Affiliation designation, missing the national benchmark by just three percent. While narrowly falling short of the designation, the accomplishment reflects the continued growth and strength of the Territory's JAG programs and reinforces the affiliation's commitment to achieving this national distinction in the coming year.

Adding to the celebration, Felisha Felix received the Community Impact Award in recognition of her exceptional leadership in developing meaningful partnerships that expand opportunities for JAG students. Through her efforts, students have participated in numerous community service initiatives, leadership development experiences, and collaborative partnerships that strengthen civic engagement while preparing them for future academic and career success.

As the Department prepares for the 2026–2027 school year, the knowledge, innovative strategies, and best practices gained through the EDGE Conference will further strengthen JAG programs across the Territory. The Virgin Islands Department of Education remains committed to providing students with transformative educational experiences that prepare them for success in school, the workforce, and life.

Building upon the momentum of this year's conference, the U.S. Virgin Islands JAG affiliation looks forward to implementing new strategies, expanding opportunities for students, and continuing its pursuit of national excellence. With dedicated educators, strong community partnerships, and an unwavering commitment to student achievement, the future of JAG in the U.S. Virgin Islands has never been brighter.

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