



## MISSION STATEMENT



*Advance the rights of persons with disabilities, support and empower families, and inform and involve professionals and others interested in the healthy development and education of children and youth.*

## WHO WE ARE

The Disability Rights Center of the Virgin Islands (DRCVI) is the federally-mandated and funded protection and advocacy corporation for the U.S. Virgin Islands. DRCVI advocates for the rights of people with a wide range of physical and mental disabilities, and provides training and information that promotes the health, education and welfare of the disability community.

## CONTACT US

### St. Croix Office

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### Email

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### Website

[www.drcvi.org](http://www.drcvi.org)

### Facebook

[Facebook.com/DRCVI](https://www.facebook.com/DRCVI)

# DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

**Advancing Justice  
through Protection and  
Advocacy**



# WHAT TYPES OF LEGAL PROBLEMS DOES DRCVI HANDLE?

DRCVI provides trainings and outreach for clients, parents/guardians and community groups.

## FAMILY

- Civil Rights
- Education
- Employment
- Healthcare
- Transportation

## HOUSING

- Public Accommodation Accessibility
- Public/Subsidized Housing Discrimination

## PUBLIC BENEFITS

- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Social Security Information
- Medicare Discrimination
- Unemployment Compensation
- Medicaid Card Eligibility Issues
- Worker Compensation

## OTHER

ADA Issues related to ADA, FMLA, persons with mental illness, developmental disabilities, assistive technology, voting rights, and other individuals rights.

### Community Economic Development

#### Community Legal Education

- Consumer Problems
- Hearings before the VI Labor Dept.

# SERVICES

## 01. ADVICE AND CONSULTATION

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## 02. DIRECT CLIENT REPRESENTATION

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## 03. REFERRALS TO APPROPRIATE PUBLIC OR PRIVATE AGENCIES

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## 04. TRAININGS AND OUTREACH

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## 05. INFORMATION DISSEMINATION



# WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR LEGAL SERVICES?

Persons with disabilities as described by the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA).

# HOW ARE SERVICES PROVIDED?

DRCVI employs attorneys, advocates and other support personnel. The agency will determine the scope and extent of services for each case, based upon available resources.

*The Disability Rights Center of the Virgin Islands is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Service Provider.*

**1****IDENTIFICATION**

Parent, school, or other agency, initiates the *initial* evaluation process.

**2****EVALUATION**

The evaluation occurs in a “*reasonable time*,” *within 60 days after* parental consent is granted.

**3****INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)**

A meeting is scheduled to develop the IEP *within 30 days after* the evaluation is conducted.

**4****FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION (FAPE)**

Special education and related services are provided at public expense, with no charge to the parents.

**5****EDUCATION IN THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE)**

Children are educated alongside non-disabled peers, to the *maximum extent possible*.

**6****COMPENSATORY EDUCATION (CE): AN EQUITABLE REMEDY**

Students may be eligible for additional education services if they experience skill loss from disruptions, delays, or changes.

**7****ANNUAL REVIEWS**

Annual reviews determine if the child is meeting their educational goals and if revisions are needed to the IEP.

**8****SUSPENSION AND OTHER DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

If a child's behavior is connected to a disability or not, guidelines and time frames must include a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA).

**9****COMPLAINT PROCESS**

A written complaint initiates an informal process or a due process (formal hearing). Both allow parents to resolve disputes with the school about the student's education.

**10****SCHOOL TO KINDERGARTEN**

Parents help preschoolers transition from Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) to kindergarten by preparing them for a positive experience and knowing what to expect from the school.

**11****TRANSITIONS**

The SpEd Transition Plan sets goals to explore student interests and potential careers post-high school, starting at or before age 16.





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## PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to assist jobseekers with disabilities learn how to best navigate O\*NET OnLine. O\*NET OnLine is a free, accessible online database, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor ([www.onetonline.org](http://www.onetonline.org)), to assist individuals with career exploration and job analysis.



*O\*NET OnLine is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (USDOL/ETA), and developed by the National Center for O\*NET Development.*

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The Disability Rights Center of the Virgin Islands

# GUIDE TO O\*NET OnLine

[WWW.ONETOnLine.ORG](http://WWW.ONETOnLine.ORG)



## O\*NET OnLine features

Introduction

Occupation Keyword Search

Assistant

## JOB LISTINGS

O\*NET OnLine has over 1,000 job summaries in its database, for a variety of occupations. The listings are easy to understand and printable. The listings include information about wages, job qualifications, and required duties of a job. The V.I. Department of Labor and Vocational Rehabilitation use similar job summaries.

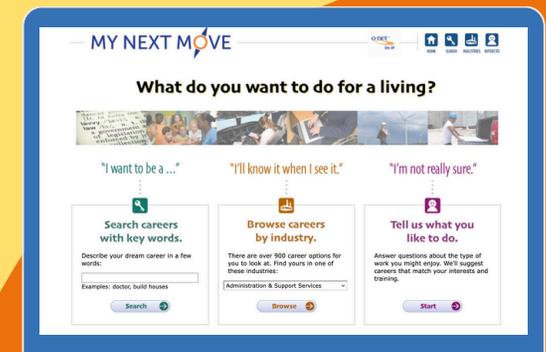
## TIPS FOR JOBSEEKERS WITH A DISABILITY

- Explore your interests through “My Next Move” to learn more about your potential in specific occupations and your limitations.
- The Job Summaries are so thorough that they can assist with a reasonable accommodation, if needed to perform the essential functions of the job.
- Job Zone provides projections of how long it will take you to transition into the career you want. This is particularly useful to jobseekers that may need to switch careers due to a recent disability.
- Related Occupations is useful for job searches that result in a job summary that is not the right fit. Related occupations provide jobs that are related and may be a better option for you and your disability.
- Bright Outlook displays what careers are growing. If you are looking for vocational training, most workforce programs want to fund “bright outlook” jobs because they know the jobs are not going away any time soon.
- The Wage section of O\*NET OnLine displays the average pay of a job.

## MY NEXT MOVE

O\*NET OnLine operates another website, “My Next Move”(www.mynextmove.org) to help jobseekers find an occupation that aligns with their interests. No login is required. The user answers questions about job activities and individual preferences. Based on the results of the user’s responses, O\*NET will generate an “interest profile.”

There is a specialized section on MyNextMove.org for Military personnel, with its own portal that includes military and civilian job opportunities.



# HYGIENE HABITS 101



## Student Checklist for Health and Cleanliness



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### WASH YOUR HANDS FOR AT LEAST 20 SECONDS.

**Why?** Hand washing, with soap bubbles on your skin for 20 seconds, kills germs, kills viruses, and kills bacteria.

**Pro Tip:** Wash your hands often - after using the bathroom, before preparing food, before and after eating, after playing, after touching animals, and after touching surfaces.

### BRUSH & FLOSS AT LEAST TWO TIMES A DAY.

**Why?** Maintaining healthy teeth and gums prevents bacterial problems that cause cavities, tarter & other infections.

**Pro Tip:** Brushing is not enough. Flossing removes food particles, bacteria, & plaque that is stuck between teeth.

### BATHE AT LEAST TWO TIMES A DAY.

**Why?** Daily bathing removes sweat, dirt, and dead skin cells, preventing infections and unpleasant odors.

**Pro Tip:** Bathe in the morning, after exercise, and when you return home for the day.

### TRIM NAILS, WASH HAIR, & MOISTURIZE.

**Why?** Proper grooming helps prevent bacterial growth, fungal growth, and skin and hair-related issues.

**Pro Tip:** Make it a habit by scheduling a time and day to repeat these self-care activities.

**FEEL YOUR BEST. SMELL YOUR BEST. BE YOUR BEST.**



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Paid for by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education

THE DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS



# ANNUAL REPORT 2023



## MISSION STATEMENT

Advance the legal rights of people with disabilities, support and empower families, and inform and involve professionals and others interested in the healthy development and education of children and youth.

## PARENT TRAINING & INFORMATION CENTER

The Disability Rights Center of the Virgin Islands (DRCVI) helps parents participate in their children's education and development. This year, parents successfully represented themselves at administrative hearings in response to formal complaints to the Virgin Islands Department of Education and the Office of Civil Rights.

DRCVI collaborated with the Virgin Islands Department of Human Services to provide training for Head Start staff. The training sessions focused on enhancing the attendees' understanding of their roles and responsibilities regarding the various educational laws supporting students with disabilities.

## EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES & TRANSITION SERVICES

DRCVI found creative ways to connect job seekers and employers in the unique "post-pandemic" job market. We regularly host Employer Recruitment Roundtable events tailored to individual job seekers, where local businesses share their job openings, application processes, career ladders, and diversity initiatives.

The sessions also help Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries understand myth vs. fact and ensure that clients have the necessary Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) job accommodations when returning to work.



*Kishma Francis, Esq., Parent Training & Information Center Project Director; Cheri Meade, Vocational Teacher; and Shammi Carr, DRCVI Advocate, with the first Youth Empowerment Leadership Program (YELP) class. The students choose to cover their faces with emoji graphics to represent their chosen career paths.*

## WORKING WITH THE YOUTH

In 2023, DRCVI developed the Youth Empowerment Leadership Program (YELP), which aims to provide career readiness classes to at-risk youth, focusing on self-esteem and leadership. The program has proven successful, leading DRCVI to present its teachings to other Parent Information Centers at the Navigating Excellence -- Parent Center Assistance and Collaboration Team (NE-PACT) Conference in New Jersey.

The program was established at the Edith Williams Alternative Academy located on St. Thomas. Plans are underway to expand the program to include St. Croix and St. John schools, enabling more at-risk youth to benefit from the program.

## CONTINUING OUR WORK FOR A MORE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

DRCVI continues to attend as many community events as possible so that staff can continue to share information about our protection and advocacy duties. In 2023, DRCVI utilized its advocacy platform to meet the community in their neighborhoods and collaborated with organizations in the public and private sectors to help with outreach in churches and residential facilities.

DRCVI is partnering with the Virgin Islands Department of Health's Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) - Community Paramedicine Program project to reach individuals who are homebound. This will help connect them with the appropriate services and programs based on their individual needs, allowing our advocate to assist a previously hidden population through one-on-one assessments and referrals.

## MEDIA OUTREACH

Executive Director Angus Drigo had two op-eds published in the Virgin Islands Daily News. One op-ed aimed to raise public awareness about the importance of expanding care for individuals with mental illness. The other op-ed addressed the ongoing need for jet bridges at local airports.

The Executive Director, as well as other staff members, also frequently appear on local talk show programs to speak about DRCVI's role in our community and the services offered to residents with disabilities and mental health illnesses.

*Able to Raise*, the archived WTJX show, can now be found on [www.drcvi.org](http://www.drcvi.org) and *YouTube*.

A Public Service Announcement (PSA) about Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) was created in-house and aired during the St. Croix Festival season.

DRCVI also reaches the public through its radio program, *Ability Radio*, which airs on WTJX, the Virgin Islands Public Broadcasting System, every Saturday at 11:30 a.m. and is available to stream on [www.drcvi.org](http://www.drcvi.org), *YouTube*, and most podcast platforms.



Advocates Shammi Carr, center, and Dawn O'Bryan explain the services offered by DRCVI to one of the attendees at the 2023 Vulnerable Community Expo on St. Croix.

## MONITORING LOCAL RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

DRCVI, as authorized by law, is the protection and advocacy agency responsible for conducting monitoring visits at residential facilities in the U.S. Virgin Islands. This mandate ensures that clients not only receive appropriate care and treatment, but also that they are not subjected to abuse or neglect, and their rights are not violated. In 2023, DRCVI's legal staff conducted in-person and virtual monitoring visits at eight (8) facilities.

## MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

DRCVI advocates and our community partners hosted quarterly lunchtime discussions on mental illness with partners and community members. The topics covered during these sessions include mental health awareness, reshaping attitudes around stigma, self-care, and mental health during the holidays.



## **2023 DRCVI Board of Directors**

Veronica Handy Esq., Chairperson  
Kennessa Bedminster  
Karen Brown, PhD.  
Flavia Logie Esq., Treasurer  
Sherilyn Pogson, Secretary  
Chevell Simeon

## **2023 Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Mental Illness (PAIMI) Advisory Council**

Karen Brown, PhD., Chairperson  
Stephanie Berry, PhD.  
Richard Callwood  
Suzette Lettsome, PhD.  
Patricia Towal, LPC

## **DRCVI Staff and Support**

Angus Drigo, Executive Director  
Vincent Anderson, CPA, Fiscal Administrator  
Shammi Carr, Advocate  
Kishma Creque, Administrative Legal Assistant  
Kishma Francis, Esq., Staff Attorney  
Archie Jennings, Esq., Director of Advocacy  
Rebekah Kubla, Communications Manager  
Amelia Headley LaMont, Former Executive Director  
Dawn O'Bryan, Advocate  
Nadia Paul, Administrative Assistant

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This report was made possible by 100% funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Administration on Developmental Disabilities/Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the U.S. Department of Education/Rehabilitation Services Administration, and Office of Special Education Programs.

The contents of this report are solely the responsibility of DRCVI and do not necessarily represent the official view of any of these agencies.

DRCVI is an equal opportunity employer and service provider.



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VISIT US AT [WWW.DRCVI.ORG](http://WWW.DRCVI.ORG)

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## DECLARACIÓN DE MISIÓN



*Avanzar los derechos legales de las personas con discapacidad, apoyar y empoderar a las familias y proporcionar capacitación e información que promueva la salud general y el desarrollo educativo de niños y jóvenes.*

## QUIÉNES SOMOS

El Centro de Derechos de Discapacidad de las Islas Vírgenes (DRCVI) es la corporación de defensa y protección financiada y con mandato federal para las Islas Vírgenes de EE. UU. La misión de DRCVI es promover los derechos legales de las personas con discapacidades, apoyar y empoderar a las familias y brindar capacitación e información que promueva la salud general y el desarrollo educativo de niños y jóvenes.

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### Facebook

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## Centro de Derechos Para Personas con Discapacidad de las Islas Vírgenes

Avanzando Justicia a Través de la Protección y Promoción



# ¿QUE TIPOS DE PROBLEMAS LEGALES MANEJA DRCVI?

DRCVI ofrece capacitaciones y alcance para clientes, padres/guardianas y grupos comunitarios.

## FAMILIA

Derechos Civiles  
Educación  
Empleo  
Cuidado de la salud  
Transporte

## VIVIENDA

Accesibilidad a las Acomodaciones Públicas  
Discriminación en vivienda pública/subsidiada

## BENEFICIOS PÚBLICAS

Servicios de Rehabilitación Vocacional  
Información del Seguro Social  
Discriminación de Medicare  
Compensación por Desempleo  
Problemas de Elegibilidad de la Tarjeta de Medicaid  
Compensación para trabajadores

## OTROS

Problemas relacionados con la ADA, FMLA, personas con enfermedades mentales, discapacidades de desarrollo, tecnología de asistencia, y otros derechos individuales

Desarrollo Económico Comunitario

## Educación Legal Comunitaria

- Problemas del Consumidor
- Audiencias ante de al Departamento de Labor

# SERVICIOS

01. CONSEJO Y CONSULTA

02. REPRESENTACION DIRECTA DEL CLIENTE

03. REFERENCIAS A AGENCIAS PUBLICAS O PRIVADAS APROPIADAS

04. CAPACITACIONES Y ALCANCE PARA CLIENTES

05. DIFUSION DE INFORMACION



# ¿QUIEN ES ELEGIBLE PARA SERVICIOS LEGALES?

Personas con discapacidades descrito por a la Ley sobre Estadounidenses con Discapacidades (ADA).

# ¿COMO SE OFRECEN LOS SERVICIOS?

DRCVI emplea abogados, defensores y otro personal de apoyo. La agencia determinara el alcance de los servicios para cada caso, en función de los recursos disponibles.

*El Centro de Derechos de Discapacidad de las Islas Vírgenes es un empleador de servicios que ofrece igualdad de oportunidad.*

## PROPÓSITO DE LA GUÍA

El propósito de esta Guía es ayudar a las personas discapacitadas que buscan empleo a aprender a navegar de la mejor manera posible en O\*NET OnLine. O\*NET OnLine es una base de datos en línea, gratuita y accesible, patrocinada por el Departamento del Trabajo de los EE.UU. ([www.onetonline.org](http://www.onetonline.org)), destinada a ayudar a las personas a explorar carreras y analizar empleos..



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The Disability Rights Center of the Virgin Islands

# LA GUÍA DE O\*NET OnLine

[WWW.ONETOnLine.ORG](http://WWW.ONETOnLine.ORG)

## O\*NET OnLine features

### Introduction

### Occupation Keyword Search

Assistant

## LISTADO DE EMPLEOS

O\*NET OnLine tiene más de mil (1,000) descripciones de cargos en su base de datos correspondientes a una variada serie de ocupaciones. Los listados son fáciles de entender y sencillos de imprimir. Los listados incluyen información acerca de los sueldos y salarios al igual que los requisitos y responsabilidades inherentes a cada empleo. El Departamento del Trabajo y de Rehabilitación Vocacional de las I.V. usa las mismas descripciones de cargos.

## SUGERENCIAS PARA LAS PERSONAS DISCAPACITADAS QUE BUSCAN EMPLEO

- Explore sus intereses en “Mi próximo paso” para informarse mejor acerca de su potencial y limitaciones para desempeñar ocupaciones específicas.
- Las Descripciones de cargos son tan detalladas que literalmente pueden ayudarle a decidir si usted necesita hacer ajustes razonables para desempeñar las funciones esenciales del cargo.
- Zona de empleo le ofrece un pronóstico sobre el tiempo que le tomará hacer la transición hacia la Carrera que desea. Esto es particularmente útil para quienes buscan empleo y puede que necesiten cambiar de Carrera debido a una reciente discapacidad.
- Ocupaciones afines es útil para quienes buscan trabajo y encuentran una descripción de cargo que no se ajusta a sus condiciones. Ocupaciones afines muestra empleos similares que podrían ser una mejor opción para la persona teniendo en cuenta su discapacidad.
- Perspectivas brillantes muestra las carreras en expansión. Si busca adiestramiento vocacional, la mayoría de los programas de fuerza laboral están dispuestos a financiar empleos que ofrezcan “perspectivas brillantes” porque saben que esos empleos no desaparecerán en el futuro cercano.
- Sueldos y salarios de O\*NET muestra el sueldo o salario promedio de cada empleo.

## MI PRÓXIMO PASO

O\*NET OnLine opera otra página Web denominada “Mi próximo paso” ([www.mynextmove.org](http://www.mynextmove.org)) con el objeto de ayudar a quienes buscan empleo a encontrar una ocupación adecuada a sus propios intereses. No es necesario que inicie una sesión (Log in). El usuario contesta preguntas acerca de las actividades del empleo y sus preferencias individuales. Sobre la base de los resultados de las respuestas del usuario, O-net genera un “perfil de intereses”.

Hay una sección especializada para personal de las fuerzas armadas, MyNextMove.org, con su propio portal que incluye oportunidades de empleo para militares y civiles.

