



GOVERNMENT OF THE **VIRGIN ISLANDS**

Minister for Education, Youth Affairs
and Sports

Virgin Islands Assistance Grants Programme Policy

February 2023

Table of Contents

- Mission 3
- Vision..... 3
- Policy Objective 4
- Policy Statement 4
 - 1. Introduction..... 5
 - 2. Application Process 5
 - 3. Eligibility 6
 - 4. Assistance Grants Committee..... 7
 - [5. Monitoring.....8](#)
 - 6. Funding..... 8
 - [7. Appeal Process.....9](#)
 - [8. Award Scale.....9](#)
 - 9. Exceptions 10
- Guidelines for Assistance Grant – Internal.....12

Policy for Assistance Grants
Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports

Mission

The mission of the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports Assistance Grants programme is to reward exemplary individuals and organizations who strive to achieve excellence in fields of education, sports and creative arts that would benefit the Territory.

Vision

To consistently be the arm of Government that provides financial assistance to aspiring leaders in the respective fields of study, passion and career choices which contributes to the development of the Virgin Islands, now and in the future.

Policy Objective

The assistance grants programme under the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports is available to aid Virgin Islanders who require financial support in the areas of education, sports, and the creative arts. These areas are a part of the educational, economical, sports development and creative enhancement of the territory that raises productivity and creativity. As such, the Ministry endeavours to provide such opportunities to Virgin Islanders.

The objective of the Assistance Grants Programme Policy is to:

- a) provide a framework for the administration of grants;
- b) set clear guidelines to be followed in the administration of the assistance grants programme;
- c) set clear parameters for objective awarding of grants to individuals in the territory;

Policy Statement

The Government is committed to providing access to opportunities that assist those seeking to develop themselves and the territory through education, sports, and creative arts. Through this commitment, the assistance grants programme is intended to provide funding to persons and organizations pursuing technical or professional courses of study, sports development, and creative practice.

Assistance Grants Programme

1. Introduction

1.1 Assistance Grants, in so far as it relates to education, sports and creative arts, can only be sought at this Ministry, depending on available funding. As is relate to educational Assistance Grants, **the Ministry of Education will determine the Priority areas for Assistance Grants funding awards each year based on the critical assessment of the territory's forecasted needs.** These assistance grants are categorized within the areas cited below:

- 1.1.1 An assistance grant request shall be specific to a technical or professional course of study. This includes funding for travel, tuition, room and board.
- 1.1.2 An assistance grant request shall be specific to athletic and sporting pursuits. This includes funding for participation in international sporting events and financial support for elite training and competition.
- 1.1.3 An assistance grant request shall be specific to development of the creative arts.
- 1.1.4 The recommendation from the Committee shall include the monetary amount to be awarded if the application receives a favorable response. The maximum amount that can be awarded for one-off grants is \$9,000.00.

2. Application Process

2.1 **Applications must be submitted through the online portal on the Government of The Virgin Islands website at (link to be set up by DoIT).** As part of the online application process, requests for assistance grants are to be accompanied by submitting a letter outlining the details of the request. This letter should be addressed to the Permanent Secretary for Attention to the Assistance Grants Committee. Additionally, documentation supporting the request must be uploaded along with the abovementioned letter. **Failure to upload all requested documents within 3 months of an application will result in the rejection of an application (See 5.2).**

2.2 In this application of request, applicants should provide the following information:

- a) For the purposes of satisfying grants from this Ministry, state whether the request is specific to technical or professional courses of study, athletic or sporting pursuits, or creative arts.
- b) The monetary amount required;
- c) Supporting documentation to substantiate the request for the assistance grants such as proof of registration and registration or tuition costs, copies of any relevant reports, evidence of citizenship, evidence of employment status, room & board expense breakdown, approved book list from educational programme, training centre for athletes/sports programme
- d) Any other necessary information that may assist the Ministry to understand the request for assistance.
- e) An applicant may only apply once during a calendar year. **If the proposed course of study is a multiple years programme, the applicant must re-apply each year for funding. Additional annual grant funding is not guaranteed for subsequent years.**

3. Eligibility

3.1 Persons applying for a grant must be deemed to belong to the Virgin Islands as per the Virgin Islands Constitution Order 2007.

3.2 Persons who are not Virgin Islanders/Belongers and have completed **a minimum of five (5) years of** secondary education in the BVI are eligible to apply.

3.3 Public Officers are eligible to apply for assistance grants under the Ministry.

3.4 Scholarship recipients are eligible to receive a Grant as long as they are in good standing.

3.5 All applicants for educational grants should possess an acceptance letter into the programme from a recognized /accredited institution. This acceptance must align with the year of application.

4. Assistance Grants Committee

- 4.1 The Grants Committee shall consist of no more than six members who shall be appointed by the Permanent Secretary in consultation with the Minister.
- 4.2 **The Committee shall convene no less than once a quarter to review applications that have been submitted to the Ministry.**
- 4.3 A member of the Committee shall be deemed to have resigned if they have been absent from three consecutive meetings of the Committee without the permission of the Chairman.
- 4.4 The Permanent Secretary in consultation with the Minister shall appoint the Chair.
- 4.5 The members of the Committee shall consist of persons as set out below.:
- Senior Officer in the Ministry
 - Senior Education Officer in the Ministry
 - Principal/Teacher (Active)
 - Sports Representative
 - Virgin Islands Creative Arts Representative
 - Member of Scholarship Unit in the Ministry (*non-voting*)
- 4.6 In exercise of the powers conferred and in the performance of the duties imposed by this policy, the Committee should take into account any guidance given to it by the Ministry in conformity with the criteria and principles set out in this policy. **Any guidance given should be in writing.**
- 4.7 **The Chair of the Committee shall report to the Permanent Secretary.**
- 4.8 Recommendations of the Committee may be taken at meetings using a ranking system to be developed by the Committee **and this could be changed as deemed necessary after discussions between the Ministry and the Committee. (See Internal Guidelines)**
- 4.9 **Where the recommendations of the Committee are not accepted/approved by the Permanent Secretary, a reason must be stated in writing.**

4.10 The members of the Committee shall be offered a stipend of \$1600.00 per quarter. The members of the Committee who are Public Officers should be offered an honorarium.

4.11 In instances where applicants seeking educational grants may have been awarded scholarships, a Scholarship Unit Member shall sit on the committee as an ex-officio **(non-voting)** member to provide a report on the status of those individuals requesting grants. The status check shall confirm if they are a current scholarship recipient **and in good standing** or whether any penalties are being applied or if their scholarship has been revoked

5. Monitoring

5.1 Persons who have received funding from the Assistance Grants Programme shall provide documents evidencing how the funds received were used for the purposes documented in the application. These documents are to be in the form of receipts, payment documentation, or other legitimate documents from third-party vendors.

5.2 Should a recipient submit another request for assistance grants and the post-documentation requirement has not been satisfied for the previous grant, the new grant request may be delayed until documents are received. If the documents have not been received within 3 months of the date of the new application for assistance grants, the request shall be denied and no further requests will be considered. This protocol does not apply to grant requests where the Ministry paid the request directly to the third-party vendor for which the monies were being sought.

5.3 **The Assistance Grants Programme must be audited annually by the Director of Internal Audit.**

6. Funding

6.1 Funds shall be appropriated annually by the Government of the Virgin Islands in the Ministry's appropriate Head and Subhead or other sources to support Virgin Islands assistance grants recipients.

6.2 The Ministry reserves the right to pay the amount approved for the assistance grants recipient directly to the institution or vendor, if deemed necessary. Satisfaction of payment for the assistance grants request will be communicated to the recipient if the institution or vendor was paid directly.

- 6.3 Where the funds are awarded directly to the individual, that person must submit a receipt or other valid evidence to show proof of payment within one month of receipt of the funds. Should the recipient require an extension for the submission of receipts, a written request is to be sent to the Assistance Grants Committee and the Committee will deliberate and determine whether an extension can be granted by vote. Failure to submit receipts in a timely manner **may** result in that person having to repay the Government the amount received and forfeiture of ability to receive any further funding.
- 6.4 Persons who have received a grant in any given year cannot request another assistance grant in that same year. Requests for assistance grants should not be seen as a reoccurring opportunity.
- 6.5 The Ministry will not assume the responsibility for any debts incurred by recipients of grants, nor will the Ministry assume the responsibility to fulfill any obligations by applicants or recipients of assistance grants.
- 6.6 Permission to process approved assistance grants can only be authorized by the Accounting Officer. Under no circumstances can department heads provide authorization for the processing of payments for grants without the explicit written consent of the Accounting Officer.

7. Appeal

Any applicant who is dissatisfied with the process may write to the Permanent Secretary to request a review of his/her application within 10 days of receipt of correspondence from the Ministry. The Permanent Secretary may set up a Tribunal to look into the matter and the Tribunal will make a decision on the case. The decision of the Tribunal is final.

8. Award Scale

8.1 Applicants who have requested **Grants shall receive funding within **an established scale** based on the degree the applicant is striving for or the requested amount stated in the application if it falls below the respective ranges. This **scale** is subject to change from year to year and the specific needs of an applicant may be taken into account.**

8.3 Creatives and Sports - Pursuant to the Policy, creative and sports requests range in type, occasion, funding and the number of persons involved. Due to the variations in these types of requests, it has been found prudent to establish a ceiling amount of \$25,000 as opposed to a scale for objective determination of the funding amounts for these categories.

Requests are to be accompanied by an annual budget and supporting documents.

9. Exceptions

9.1 Annual contributions will be made to national sports associations, such as the BVI Softball Association, the BVI Basketball Association, and the BVI Volleyball Association.

9.2 An assistance grant is to be paid to the Top Awardees of all Secondary Schools and H. Lavity Stoutt Community College as outlined in the Scholarship Policy.

9.3 Assistance grants for the winner of the Miss BVI pageant. This can be made available for the Virgin Islands Festival Fairs Committee upon request. The Permanent Secretary and Minister can consider whether the winner of the Miss BVI can be the recipient of an educational grant up to \$25,000. This grant can only be awarded with prior approval to the Miss BVI pageant event from the Permanent Secretary and Minister for the current year's pageant winner. It cannot be retroactively requested and awarded after the winner has been chosen for any given year. Upon crowning the winner, the Ministry should be informed within a month of doing so, in writing.

9.4 All Assistance grants for Education, Youth and Sporting organizations and other associations geared towards development initiatives, must be registered, fully compliant NPOs. Assistance Grants requests must be accompanied by a budget of the event to be attended or itemized needs of the initiative.

9.5 Professional athletes or elite athletes in training may be paid a grant not exceeding \$25,000 annually to assist with training costs to maintain their competitive levels once the relevant information is provided to the Permanent Secretary.

9.6 Professional athletes, who are medalists in regional and international sporting competitions, will be paid a cash award based on the Cash Awards Structure for Professional Athletes that was approved by the Cabinet of The Virgin Islands in 2007.