

The STATUS of CHILDREN in the US VIRGIN ISLANDS

The **USVI KIDS COUNT Data Book 2011** provides an updated look at how children and families in the US Virgin Islands are doing.

Tracking trends over the past twelve years, this annual report provides data on areas of gain — or increased risk — in the well-being of all the territory's children.

Note: **USVI Kids Count Data Book 2011** uses latest figures available, ie. 2009 data

Child Population

- The number and portion of VI children (birth to 18) is decreasing in the territory...
 - in '09: 25,523 children, or 23.8% of the total VI population. In '97: 36,179 children (32%).

Children's Family Structure and Economic Security

Challenges '09

- VI family median income is \$43,691, lower by \$16,400 than in the nation.
- 25% of all VI families with children live in poverty.
- Almost 30% of VI children live in poverty — 7,625 children (ie. 29.9% of all VI children)...
 - 35% of all St. Croix children live below the poverty level
 - 24% of all St. Thomas children live below the poverty level
 - 20% of all St. John children live below the poverty level.
- 75% of VI families with children in poverty are headed by single mothers.
- In a rising trend, 49% of all VI families with children are single mother families...
 - US rate: 23% of all families with children are single mother families.
- 41% of VI children live in single mother families — 10,625 children...
 - US rate: 25% of children live in single mother families.
- 55.8% of VI children live in single parent families (with single mother or single father).

Children's School Readiness; Educational Attainment

Challenges '09

- More than 40% of representative VI young children entering public kindergarten have skills below age-level expectations in areas crucial to learning.
- More than half of the measured public middle and high school students demonstrate academic proficiency below grade level expectations in reading and math...
 - 73% of 7th graders are below 'proficiency' levels in **reading**
 - 45% of 7th graders are below 'proficiency' levels in **math**
 - 61% of 11th graders are below 'proficiency' levels in **reading**
 - 52% of 11th graders are below 'proficiency' levels in **math**.
- 19% of VI teens age 16-19 are not in school and not working...
 - US rate of 'detached' teens: 9% — less than half the VI rate.
- Only 65% of VI youth age 18-24 have a high school diploma or higher degree.

Children's Health and Safety

Positives '09

- The VI low birthweight rate lowered to 8.1% of all live births in 2009...
 - The VI rate is the lowest measured by KIDS COUNT since 1997
 - The VI rate is better than the US low birthweight rate of 8.2%.
- The VI rate of 5.7 infant deaths per 1000 live births continues to be exceptionally low...
 - The VI rate is better than the US infant death rate of 6.8 per 1000 live births.
- The VI rate of deaths to children age 1-14 lowered to 15.7 per 1000 in 2009...
 - The VI rate is better than US child death rate of 19 per 1000 children.
- The VI rate of deaths to teens age 15-19 lowered to 88.2 per 1000 teens in 2009...
 - The US teen death rate: 62 per 1000 teens this age.

Challenges '09

- Almost 2/3 (63%) of VI children under age 5 qualify for (ie. need and receive) the nutritional support provided by WIC federal health intervention benefits.
- Almost half (47%) of VI children under age 18 need and receive "SNAP" federal food assistance benefits.
- Only half (51%) of young VI children between one and a half and three years old are up-to-date with the 4:3:1:3:3 vaccine series of early-childhood immunizations federally recommended for child health, and required for VI school entry...
 - The VI is 20 percentage points behind the 70% national rate of immunization-compliance.
- 27% of the VI child population age birth through age 17 lacks any health insurance, representing 7,047 VI children without health coverage...
 - US rate: 10.3% of children in the nation lack health insurance.
- The VI teen birth rate of 51/1000 girls age 15-19 exceeds the US rate of 41/1000...
 - 216 babies born to VI teens 15-19 represented 12% of all live VI births in '09.
- The VI has an exceptionally high rate of juvenile violent crime arrests...
 - VI rate: 673 arrests per 100,000 youth age 10-17
 - US rate: 306 arrests per 100,000 youth this age.
- Child maltreatment rose in the territory, to a rate of almost 14 per 1000 children, representing 352 VI children reported for abuse and/or neglect in 2009...
 - US rate: 9 per 1000 children are reported for abuse and/or neglect.

USVI KIDS COUNT is an annual project of the **Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands (CFVI)**. Funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, **KIDS COUNT** tracks the status of children state by state in the US and in participating US territories.

CFVI has compiled and published the **USVI KIDS COUNT Data Book** report annually since 2000. Through **KIDS COUNT**, **CFVI** works with our community partners towards strategies driven by facts, evidence, analysis, results, and heightened standards of political and public accountability for children and families.

Created to serve donors and non-profit organizations of the US Virgin Islands, **CFVI** is committed to building a growing collection of permanent funds, and using the income to enhance the educational, physical, social, cultural and environmental well-being of the islands' people.

Today, **CFVI** manages more than ninety named funds, administers scholarships and awards programs, and coordinates the establishment of memorial funds.

CFVI was established in 1990 with a \$500,000 endowment, grown now to \$7+ million.

This year more than \$2 million was distributed in grants, awards and scholarships to the people and nonprofit organizations of St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. John and Water Island.

CFVI is managed by a professional staff and governed by a volunteer Board of Directors made up of Virgin Islands community leaders.

CFVI is a public charity.

Contributions are deductible to the fullest extent of the law.



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USVI Kids Count 2011 Data Book is available online at **www.cfvi.net**



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