



In 1962, Act No. 903 of the Virgin Islands Legislature established the agency as the Virgin Islands Housing Authority.

VIHA is empowered with the responsibility for planning, financing, constructing, maintaining, and managing public housing developments on the islands of St. Croix and St. Thomas. Its mission statement is as follows: “To create vibrant, dynamic, sustainable communities so families can evolve economically, and to improve lives and strengthen communities through quality, safe, and affordable housing and by providing a myriad of services to empower public housing residents.”

AT A GLANCE

WHO: The Virgin Islands Housing Authority

WHAT: A public housing corporation that is responsible for planning, constructing, and maintaining public housing in the U.S. Virgin Islands

WHERE: St. Thomas and St. John, U.S. V.I.

WEBSITE: www.vihousing.org

Robert Graham, VIHA's Managing Director, talks about the agency's past, present, and future initiatives: “In the 1950s, the Territory sought to reduce rural slums and, in that process, to build public housing to provide affordable housing for residents and reduce the reliance on slum dwellings. So it began a series of acquisitions and development of properties and requested HUD (The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) to designate them as public housing, so that they would be eligible for operating subsidies as well as capital improvement subsidies.”

By the early 1970s, Graham says that the number of VIHA units had reached a total of 4,127 apartments in approximately 35 developments across the two islands. “That was the largest number of units that the Housing Authority owned and managed,” he continues. “Subsequently, in the late ‘80s and ‘90s, a series of hurricanes destroyed a great deal of property in the Territory, including some public housing developments. And so, the Housing Authority had to demolish a number of them. And that took the number down to approximately 3,300 units – about 25 percent of the inventory. So, currently, we manage 3,287 units in 27 developments.”