GOVERNMENT HOUSE
UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

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Press Contact
Richard Motta Jr.
340-474-2399
www.vi.gov
richard.mottajr@go.vi.gov



Governor Bryan: $1,400 Stimulus Checks Going Out This Week

$600 Distribution Completed With Checks Going to 92 Percent of 2019 Tax Filers

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — Governor Albert Bryan Jr. announced at Monday's Government House weekly press briefing that the $1,400 stimulus payments from the American Rescue Act will begin going out to tax filers who are eligible this week, following the completion of the $600 stimulus payments from the CARES Act II.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) sent out $600 checks to 41, 524 – or 92 percent – of the approximately 45,000 Virgin Islanders who filed their 2019 tax return.

"The vast majority of the remaining individuals either did not qualify because their income is too high, or they have an issue their 2019 tax filing," Governor Bryan said.

Persons who did not receive a $600 stimulus payment and believe they meet the qualifications for eligibility, should contact the Burau of Internal Revenue at their hotline number: 340-714-9325.

"I know that many in the public have expressed frustration with getting inContact with someone on the hotline. As you can imagine, there is an overwhelming volume of calls received daily," the Governor said. "So, I encourage you to visit the Bureau at their offices on St. Croix in Sunny Islae and on St. Thomas in Red Hook."

P-EBT 3

Also during Monday's weekly press briefing, Human Services Commissioner Kimberley Causey-Gomez announced that her department has submitted a state plan for a third round of P-EBT – or Pandemic Electronic

Benefits Transfer – food assistance for children and students in K-5 through 12th grade enrolled in public and eligible private schools offering free lunch programs.

"This was the most comprehensive plan our Division of Family Assistance has submitted thus far as it seeks to cover the entire 2020-2021 school year, from August 2020 to September 2021," Commissioner Causey-Gomez said. "With this plan, we are serving an additional 4,000-plus children, increasing the number of children served from 13,000 to more than 17,000."

In addition to students in public and eligible private schools, the third issuance of P-EBT will be extended to current SNAP families with children younger than 6. SNAP families do not need contact local SNAP offices to receive these benefits as they will automatically be added to their accounts.

For more information about P-EBT, visit the Department of Human Services (DHS) website at www.dhs.bov.vi, call the P-EBT customer service number at 340-772-7120 or send an email to pebt@dhs.vi.gov with the subject "P-EBT."

Medicaid In-home Care Business Opportunity
Commissioner Causey-Gomez also announced the launch of a new program to help small businesses grow, and new businesses get off the ground, through the DHS Personal Care Attendant In-home Service Program.

Personal Care Attendants (PCAs) assist DHS clients with activities of daily living, such as personal grooming, light housekeeping, walking, positioning, meal prep, shopping, feeding and other necessities.

The program is available to 501(c)3 churches, nonprofits, medical organizations and entrepreneurs, and any able-bodied persons with a clean background check and at least a high school diploma can become a PCA.

"This program will benefit one of our underserved populations: our senior citizens, as well as the USVI business community, the disabled and the entire Virgin Islands community," Commissioner Causey-Gomez said.

DHS will host virtual information forums on Friday, May 7, from 10:30 a.m. to noon and on Tuesday, May 11, from 1:30 to 3 p.m. To register for one of the information sessions, contact the DHS Medicaid Division at 340-772-7100 ext. 7186 or send an email to pcamap@dhs.vi.gov.

Pop-Up testing sites
This week, pop-up testing sites will be at the following locations:

- **Home Depot** on St. Thomas on Tuesday, May 4, from 1 to 3 p.m.
- **Canegata Rec Center** on St. Croix on Tuesday, May 4, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- **The V.I. Port Authority Gravel Yard** on St. John on Wednesday, May 5, from 1 to 4 p.m.
- **Buddhoe Park** on St. Croix on Thursday, May 6, from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
- **The National Park in Red Hook** on St. Thomas on Thursday, May 6, from 1 to 3 p.m.

Residents can pre-register for pop-up testing online at covid19usvi@.com/testing.

Anyone who thinks they may have contracted COVID-19 can call the Epidemiology hotline at 340-712-6299 or 340-776-1519. For more information, visit covid19usvi.com.

COVID-19 as of May 1

- Currently tracking 62 active cases (18 on St. Croix; 42 on St. Thomas; 2 on St. John).
- 103,134 individuals tested.
- 99,996 tested negative.
- 3,138 tested positive.
- 3,049 people have recovered.
- 27 fatalities.
- One non-vented COVID-19 patient is currently hospitalized at Juan F. Luis Medical Center on St. Croix.
- One non-vented COVID-19 patient is currently hospitalized at Schneider Regional Medical Center on St. Thomas.

Infrastructure projects
Governor Bryan also announced that he is submitting legislation requesting $1.5 million to complete improvements to the Frederiksted waterfront, spanning from Dorsch Beach along Strand Street to Buddhoe Park.

These new infrastructure upgrades and improvements in Frederiksted are part of the Bryan-Roach Administration's initiative to revitalize the Territory's downtown areas, which in turn is one of the foundations of upgrading, diversifying and expanding the Territory's Tourism offerings and improving the quality of life for Virgin Islanders.

In addition, the Governor announced that negotiations have begun for redevelopment of Hotel on the Cay, which also serves as a key component of the revitalization efforts currently underway in Christiansted town.

In Remembrance
Governor Bryan began the weekly press briefing on a solemn note and noted the passing of one of his key policy advisors, Schauna Bass, who succumbed after a long battle with cancer.

"Schauna Bass was an excellent human being and will be warmly remembered for her tenacious spirit, her dedication to the people of the Virgin Islands and her sometimes crazy candor with the Governor of the Virgin Islands," Governor Bryan said. "A lot of us here at Government House are overwhelmed by the feelings of sadness we had for Schauna, and she will be sorely missed. On behalf of the entire Government House, my family, we want to wish her family God's peace and condolences as they go through this difficult time."

The Bryan/Roach Administration continues to be committed to transparency, stabilizing the economy, restoring trust in government and ensuring that the disaster recovery is completed as quickly as possible.

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