

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bryan “Not In Any Immediate Concern” About Federal Funds Being Spent on Time

Governor Bryan confident in avoiding return of federal funds; emphasizes importance of expedited spending in education and other sectors

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Following Hurricanes Irma and Maria, and during the Covid-19 pandemic, the government of the Virgin Islands received an influx of federal funds to address infrastructural and other challenges in the territory. These funds, however, come with a due date by which they must be expended. Any monies remaining after the deadline must be returned to the federal government.

Some of the funding is set to expire in 2024, however Governor Bryan expressed confidence that significant sums would not be flowing back into federal coffers.

Responding to a question from the Consortium during a press briefing on Tuesday, the governor confirmed that efforts have already been made to secure an extension for some of the allocations, particularly some “ educational funds” in the estimated amount of \$2 million. “I'm not in any immediate concern about money going back,” affirmed Mr. Bryan.

He disclosed that he regularly reminds various departments including the Department of Education that they “need to spend more and pick up their spending clip, because they have a lot of money to spend, and they got a short period to spend it in.” Complicating factors may also impact the speed at which departments and agencies can complete projects.

“A hurricane comes or we have a lead and water crisis, or the contractor can't find bonding or they dig and next thing you know, we have an Indian burial ground. So there are so many things that can happen when you're doing capital projects,” the governor explained. Instead of battling the risks of capital projects, Mr. Bryan noted that he has tried to “steer money away from that and try to do programs,” specifically those with an educational focus.

“The money's there. We need to spend it. We need more providers. We need people to come forward and provide activities for students to do. Apply to education to get our money,” pleaded Mr. Bryan, ostensibly referring to the millions allocated for childcare providers that [have not yet been claimed](#). He told reporters that he is aware that several nonprofits are currently struggling to raise money to roll out their projects.

“Education is putting out solicitations constantly for people to apply and give services to our young people. There's a lot of federal funds in the territory.” As the governor explained, the V.I. Department of Human Services is currently overseeing the disbursement of approximately \$18 million, providing grants of \$300,000 to \$400,000 to qualifying recipients.

Though admitting that “we may have insignificant dollars go back for whatever reasons,” he remained resolute in his estimation that “we're solid.”