

## Bryan Announces \$27 Million in Tax Refunds Amid Push for Minimum Wage Increase

In a bid to provide immediate relief to residents, the Bryan administration plans to disburse millions in refunds while urging the Legislature to raise the minimum wage from \$10.50 per hour

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Governor Albert Bryan Jr. announced on Monday that the Government of the Virgin Islands will disburse an additional \$27 million in income tax refunds over the next 30 days. This comes as part of the administration's ongoing efforts to deliver financial relief to residents, following earlier payments of \$5.1 million to 1,260 taxpayers in July and another \$5 million to \$5.1 million to 1,745 taxpayers in August.

In making the announcement during the administration's weekly press briefing, Mr. Bryan emphasized the need to address the economic pressures facing Virgin Islanders, particularly in

light of rising inflation. He also called on the 35th Legislature to consider legislation aimed at gradually raising the minimum wage, which currently stands at \$10.50 per hour.

“Today, I’m proud to announce an additional \$27 million in income tax refunds will be issued to Virgin Islanders who have been waiting patiently for what they are owed. This is just one part of our strategy to provide immediate financial relief to our people who are feeling the weight of inflation,” Governor Bryan said. “But we must go further. I’m calling on the 35th Legislature to consider legislation that would increase the minimum wage. Our workers deserve a fair wage that keeps pace with the rising cost of living in our territory.”

The \$27 million in planned refund payments will go to taxpayers who are due a refund, provided their filings are accurate and not under audit.

“We are making real progress in resolving the tax refund backlog, and this latest round of payments is proof of our dedication to getting Virgin Islanders their money,” said Governor Bryan. “Since taking office, we have paid out more than \$300 million in refunds, and we will not stop until every taxpayer who is owed a refund receives it. Every dollar back in the hands of our people is a dollar that strengthens our local economy.”

According to Government House, Mr. Bryan’s announcement is part of his broader fiscal and economic strategy aimed at mitigating the financial burdens facing Virgin Islanders. Alongside the income tax refund disbursements, the governor highlighted the need for long-term solutions such as the proposed minimum wage increase, which he sees as vital for providing more financial security to workers.

“Our income tax refunds are providing immediate relief, but we must also look toward long-term solutions,” he said. “An increase in the minimum wage is a step in the right direction, and I urge the Legislature to join me in supporting this necessary change. The people of the Virgin Islands should not have to choose between paying their bills and putting food on the table.”

In his remarks, the governor also reminded taxpayers to ensure that their filings are complete and free of errors to avoid any delays in receiving their refunds. Taxpayers whose filings meet the criteria will receive their refunds within the next 30 days.