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## VI Residents to Receive \$1,200 Directly as Part of \$2 Trillion Congress Package; VI Government Gets \$75 Million, Plaskett Says

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Washington's \$2 trillion coronavirus relief package will put \$1,200 directly into the hands of nearly every American, including Virgin Islanders, through income tax rebates, with the money arriving in a matter of weeks.

The amount of those direct payments to individuals is tied to family size and income. Under the stimulus plan signed by Pres. Donald Trump on Friday, most U.S. adults are to receive \$1,200 coronavirus aid payment. For married couples filing taxes jointly, the payment is \$2,400. Payments phase out for individuals with adjusted gross incomes over \$75,000 (\$150,000 for couples). Anyone making over \$99,000 would not get a payment (\$198,000 for couples). Additionally, there is \$500 allotment per child under 17, Ms. Plaskett said, adding that

arrangements will be made for “non-filers” people who did not file federal or territory income taxes last year. “There is no earned income requirement for the rebate, but non-filers may need to take additional steps.”

Small and large businesses and local government can also expect federal assistance help staying afloat amid the COVID-19 outbreak, said Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett on Friday.

### **Plaskett: VI Government to Manage Coronavirus Relief Payments to Individuals**

For tax purposes, the territory operates under a mirror tax system - the “mirror code” — whereby USVI taxpayers pay taxes to the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), just as stateside taxpayers file returns to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. Under the “mirror code,” the coronavirus relief payments will be made by the Government of the Virgin Islands, the Congresswoman said. The territory will be reimbursed for those payments by the U.S. treasury, she said.

Estimates are that 90 percent of Americans will receive a direct payment, based on the formula set up by Congress. The money is expected to go out by direct deposit into individual bank accounts or paper checks delivered by mail.

It was unknown on Friday how much the Government of the Virgin Islands will have to expend upfront to make direct payments to residents. It also was unclear whether the territory has made provisions for the BIR to disburse the relief funds locally.

Government House spokesman Richard Motta could not be reached Friday. Ms. Plaskett's spokesman Michael McQueery said she and Gov. Albert Bryan will likely discuss the logistics of the individual payments and other provisions of the stimulus package over the weekend.

### **\$150 Billion Coronavirus Relief Fund Carves Out \$75 Million to GVI in FY2020**

Ms. Plaskett briefed local media by phone on the federal government’s Coronavirus aid package - the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES) - on Friday afternoon before the House of Representative approved the \$2 trillion plan to keep local governments, American families and small businesses afloat amid the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The \$150 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund for state, local and tribal governments includes a total of \$3 billion for the U.S. territories, to include the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, the Marshall Islands, Guam and American Samoa. The Virgin Island gets a 2.5 percent cut of the funding, or a grant of \$75 million. The V.I. government and businesses are assured some share of billions of dollars of additional grants, loans and other funding.

Ms. Plaskett said she has confident that the territory will get due. “I’m not concerned that the Virgin Islands will not get its fair share. The numbers were bumped up to ensure that through the funding we will receive an amount that is based on our needs, on our population,” she said. “We are not one of the smallest territories (that would be the Northern Marianas, American Samoa). We are little but larger than Guam, but definitely dwarfed by our sister of Puerto Rico,” she said. “Members were cognizant of the change in population.” Guam's population as of 2017 was 164,229. The USVI has roughly 110,000 people.

“In terms of stabilization loans, loan guarantees and other investments that are available to the Virgin Islands, as well as funding that is sitting there (\$100 billion) for emergency funds for hospital, health care, will be determined by what the government of the Virgin Islands - our governor and our legislature - as well as our hospitals, and health clinics determine they need,”

Ms. Plaskett said.

Here are a few further details of the coronavirus stimulus package:

- \$153.75 million of the \$30.75 billion education stabilization fund is reserved for school systems in the small U.S. territories.
- \$55 million is provided to the Dept. of Interior's Office of Insular Affairs for assistance to the small U.S. territories to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus, and for general technical assistance.
- A \$150 Billion State and Local Coronavirus Relief Fund: Creates a \$150 billion State and Local Coronavirus Relief Fund to provide states and localities additional resources to cope with the coronavirus pandemic. It is estimated that the Virgin Islands and the other Territories will receive approximately \$3 billion in desperately needed funds to benefit our residents.
- \$260 Billion in Dramatically Expanded Unemployment Benefits: Includes numerous provisions to improve unemployment benefits including providing an additional \$600 per week for the next four weeks, providing an additional 13 weeks of federally funded benefits, and expanding eligibility to include workers in the gig economy and self-employed workers.
- Immediate Direct Cash Payments to Lower and Middle-Income Americans: Provides for immediate, direct cash payments to lower-and middle-income Americans of \$1,200 for each adult and \$500 for each child, beginning to phase out at an annual income of \$75,000 for an individual and \$150,000 for a household. These payments will provide individuals with the cash they need right now to survive with much of the economy currently shut down.
- More Than \$375 Billion in Small Business Relief: Provides more than \$375 billion in small business relief, including \$349 billion for forgivable loans to small businesses to pay their employees and keep them on the payroll; \$17 billion for debt relief for current and new SBA borrowers; and \$10 billion in immediate disaster grants.

-> Approximately \$200 Billion for Our Hospitals, Health Care Workers, and Health Research: Provides an investment of about \$200 billion in our hospitals, health systems, and health research, including expanding funding for the personal protective equipment desperately needed by our health care workers, including ventilators, n95 masks, gowns, gloves, etc.

-> More Than \$100 Billion in Additional Emergency Appropriations, Including the Following:

- Child Care and Development Block Grant: Supports child care and early education by providing \$3.5 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant.
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP): Provides \$900 million to help low-income families pay their heating and cooling bills.
- Byrne-Justice Assistance Grant Program: Provides \$850 million for this program, giving additional support to state and local law enforcement agencies, thereby allowing them, for example, to obtain the personal protective equipment and other medical items they may need during this public health emergency.

-> CDC Coronavirus State, Local and Tribal Grants Minimum Awards: Provides about \$750 million in CDC State, Local, and Tribal Grants Minimum Awards to help agencies cope with the public health emergency. The minimum award for our state is \$466,000. In addition, states can apply for additional funds above their minimum award, based on their needs.

“The American people need and deserve a coordinated, fully-funded, whole-of-government response to keep them and their loved ones safe from the coronavirus epidemic. On behalf of the hard-working families of the Virgin Islands and all Americans, I will continue to join House Democrats to work relentlessly and in a bi-partisan way to put Families and Workers First and protect Americans’ health, safety and economic security.”

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