

## **Bryan Orders Local SNAP Checks for November as Federal Shutdown Freezes U.S. Funding; Governor Prepared to Declare State of Emergency if Needed**

**Governor Bryan has ordered the use of local funds to send half-month SNAP relief checks to Virgin Islands households in November amid the federal shutdown, saying he will declare a state of emergency if conditions worsen or legislative action is delayed.**

Government / **Published On October 21, 2025 02:57 PM /**

Staff Consortium **October 21, 2025**

Image not found or type unknown



In light of the continuation of the federal government shutdown, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. has directed the use of local funds to provide immediate relief to Virgin Islands families who rely on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), in an effort to assure that no household is left without food support in November.

Under the governor's directive, the V.I. Department of Human Services (DHS), working alongside the V.I. Department of Finance, will issue paper checks to SNAP households across the territory. Each check will represent half of the household's monthly allotment for November and will be mailed to the address currently on file.

"We are not going to let a shutdown in Washington determine whether Virgin Islanders can eat," Governor Bryan said. "I have instructed our team to move now with local dollars so families, seniors and vulnerable residents receive at least half of their November benefit on time while we continue to work through the federal red tape."

Governor Bryan explained that sending paper checks was the quickest way to reach families. Loading partial benefits onto existing SNAP EBT cards would have required reprogramming the system, a process that experts at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (USDA-FNS) estimated could take at least a month.

"Mailing checks gets relief out faster. It is not perfect, but it is the most efficient path we can execute immediately," the governor said.

According to Government House, DHS officials have been coordinating with federal partners at USDA-FNS to meet all technical and legal requirements. These include eligibility verification, benefit calculations, audit procedures, and post-shutdown reconciliation. "We are navigating a complex set of federal requirements to make sure this temporary local intervention is done right," Governor Bryan added.

While stressing the need for swift action, the administration cautioned that this solution, though the most practical, is not foolproof. Delivery times may vary depending on mail service, and households must ensure their mailing information is accurate and current. Regular check-cashing requirements will still apply.

Governor Bryan expressed appreciation to Senate President Milton Potter for raising the issue and supporting the administration's efforts to safeguard residents during the shutdown. He assured that the 36th Legislature would have sufficient time to review or pass any necessary measures to sustain or expand assistance if the shutdown extends into future months.

The governor also stated that he retains authority to declare a state of emergency if circumstances worsen or if federal funding remains inaccessible.

"If legislative action is not timely or conditions worsen, I will declare a state of emergency to ensure uninterrupted relief for our residents," he said.

Human Services and Finance are finalizing the mail-out process for the November checks. Updates on timing and additional relief options will be shared by Government House and DHS in the coming days.

Governor Bryan called the program a "bridge" measure — a temporary but essential step to preserve food security while Congress debates a federal resolution.

"For our families, we will act with urgency and care," the Governor said. "This is a bridge to keep food on the table while the Congress determines how it should move forward in doing its job."