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## V.I. Dept. of Labor in 'Final Phase' of Testing for Implementation of \$600 Federal Unemployment Payments Into Local System

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Virgin Islanders waiting to receive the \$600 per week from the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) program, will have to wait a bit longer as the V.I. Department of Labor finalizes implementation of the program into its local system, with Labor Commissioner Gary Molloy telling this publication that the department was in the finalize phases of integration, and that a roll out is expected as soon as next week.

The \$600 from the FPUC is unemployment funding made available through the CARES Act, and is funding provided on top of local unemployment payments. "VIDOL is in the final testing phase within our VIDOL\$ system and we expect to roll out implementation as soon as next week barring no problems with the programming tests," Mr. Molloy said. "Claimants will receive an additional

\$600 per week on top of their regular unemployment weekly benefit amount. This payment will be retroactive to April 4th and will continue weekly until July 31st."

"As for the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) claims for the self-employed, 1099 or independent contractors, Taxi driver's, gig workers, and those who would have exhausted their benefits, the programming and testing of our VIDOL\$ system is still another 30-45 days away from being able to test for the implementation of the PUA process. It is our plan that by early June, the latest by the second week of June, the PUA program will be rolled out," the commissioner added.

Mr. Molloy said the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), which gives an additional 13 weeks of weekly benefits, is in the same place as the PUA, meaning 30-45 days away from implementation. "VIDOL is working diligently to get these program implemented as smoothly and efficiently as possible," he said.

During an interview with the Consortium in April, V.I. D.O.L. Legal Counsel and Assistant Commissioner, Nesha Christian-Hendrickson said the U.S. Dept. of Labor had sent about 400 pages of laws along with another 300 pages of explanation of said laws that had to be understood before implementation of the federal programs. "For the last few weeks we have been furiously trying to implement that, so in the next couple of weeks a lot more will go out from us," she said at the time.