

The Virgin Islands Consortium

D.H.S. Receives \$425,000 Food Stamp Grant From U.S.D.A.

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ST. CROIX -- Department of Human Services Commissioner Vivian Ebbesen- Fludd announced on Friday that the department recently received a \$425,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps.

According to the release, the federal grant is in response to the department's successful application for the 100 percent additional funding from the Food and Nutrition Service of U.S.D.A.

"We are well aware of the standards that are established by the federal government for states and territories as it pertains to SNAP. We also understand how these established measures drive our intended outcomes towards self- sufficiency for clients," Mrs. Ebbesen-Fludd said.

Over the years, the department relaxed its approach regarding employment and training initiatives, hence it received significantly fewer federal funds, according to the release. "These are the signs that we've awaited in our determination to expand services by stirring this pot to ensure that SNAP participants are given a hand up, not a hand out", Mrs. Ebbesen-Fludd added.

The territory receives federal waivers for able-bodied adults as a result of its unemployment rates.

"As the local economy strengthens however, our agenda will be tailored towards meeting the demands of the workforce. We will be reenergized to surpass standards and simultaneously enhance the employment and training component to ensure our participants are truly job ready," concluded the commissioner.

According to the release, D.H.S.'s request highlights the expansion of services to over 800 participants. More than one half the amount of the grant award will be used for contractual services with community partners, and the remainder will be equally divided between systems improvement and marketing.