

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Sammy Davis, A Former Foster Child, Is Set To Receive His \$8,889 Held By Human Services For Over 4 Years

VIC News / **Published On September 20, 2019 11:58 AM /**

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Sammy Davis Jr.

ST. CROIX -- Sammy Davis, Jr., the former foster child whose hard-earned money saved during his adolescence years was being held by the Department of Human Services -- some \$8,889 in a manager's check -- will soon have his funds after over four years of attempting to get it from D.H.S. From landscaping to mechanic work, the young man labored over the years to earn the money.

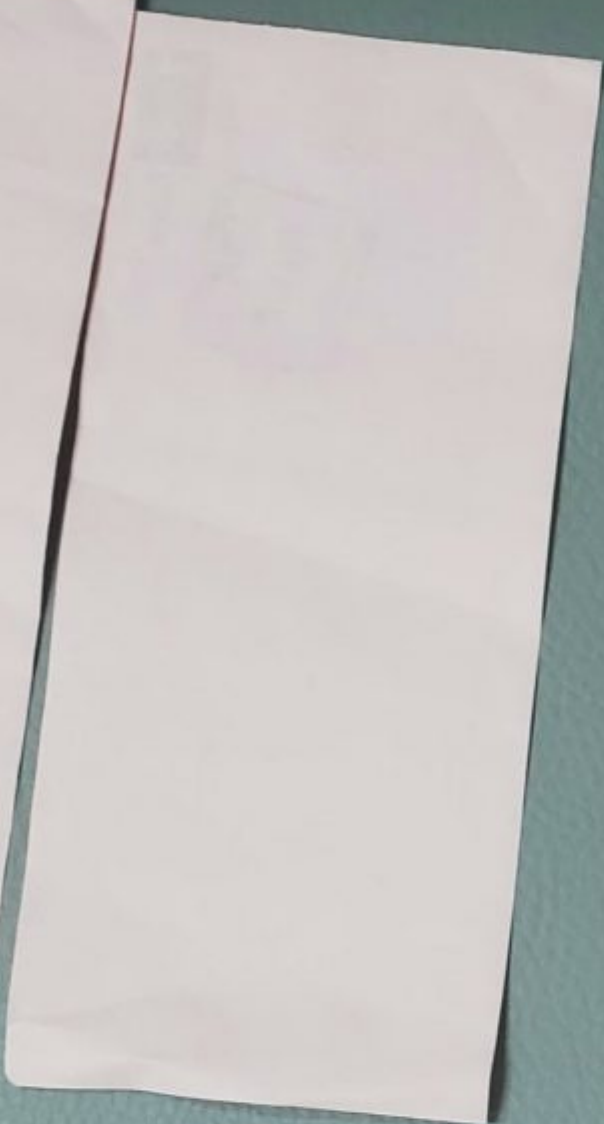
That's according to new D.H.S. Commissioner Kimberley Causey-Gomez, who told the Consortium that the department had been working diligently [following the publication of the Consortium story](#) about Mr. Davis's plight, to give the young man his money. She said in order to get the First Bank VI manage's check that D.H.S. had in its possession changed, D.H.S. had to provide the names and Social Security numbers of Mr. Davis's former foster parents. Additionally, the department had to provide to the bank a death certificate of one of Mr. Davis's foster parents who passed away; Mr. Davis told the Consortium he was raised by three families before becoming an adult, as his biological parents were both schizophrenic.

"We've done all of that. We had to do that to get the money and we've done it all so" it's a matter of coordinating with First Bank, Ms. Causey-Gomez told the Consortium Thursday.

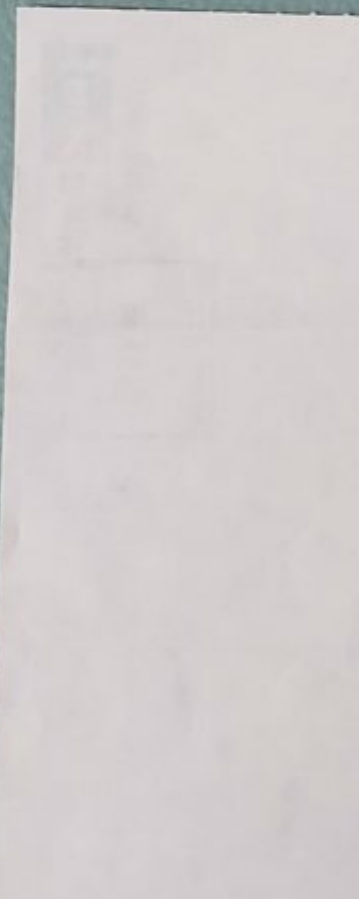
Mr. Davis, 22, had reached out to the Consortium in August after years of attempting to gain control of his money saved in his Firstbank account. He said the funds were turned over to D.H.S. by his last foster mother, Susan Cissel. In an email provided to the Consortium, Ms. Cissel explained her reason behind that decision.

"I opened a checking account with Sammy when he was under my care to teach him how to save money and not carry large sums on his person. He had full access to the account. Department of Human Services wanted access and I refused until such time as I needed to leave island for health reasons almost three years after Sammy lived with me. A draft was made out to Human Services in Trust for Sammy Davis, Jr. when the account was closed. His social worker did not want him to have that much cash on hand. I explained to Sammy what was happening and he made no objections at that time," she said.

Ms. Cissel added, "Human Services has his money and they need to return it to him. I have a copy of the check along with a signature of the person who received it at Human Services. I did my due diligence."



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Sammy Davis Jr. brought receipts of deposits he has made to his account with First Bank

Mr. Davis said his effort to collect his funds began after he turned 18. But that effort lasted years — four years to be exact — with no positive results. As a last resort, he turned to the media for help. He said though he was supposed to be under the care of D.H.S. at 18 because of developmental issues, D.H.S., he said, left him to fend for himself even as the department continued to hold his money.

That's when he took the fight to court.

While battling in court, the young man said he felt relegated by then-Family Court Judge Denise Hinds Roach. Mr. Davis said he told Judge Hinds Roach not to give his savings to D.H.S. "because there's a lot of cases with people losing their monies in this system. And unfortunately the judge decided to wave my opinions off," he said.

At the time in August, the Consortium attempted to reach Carole Burke, D.H.S. PR person, but she was not available. The publication also attempted to reach Ms. Causey-Gomez, but she was said to be at a cabinet meeting. The assistant commissioner, Michal Rhymer-Brown, was supposed to return our call, but she did not.

Mr. Davis provided evidence of deposits that he has made to his Firstbank account. He also brought a statement copy of the manager's check to Consortium's offices that was written out to D.H.S. in the amount of \$8,889.28.

He said Firstbank has refused to give him the money because it was placed in the care of D.H.S.

"The Department of Human Services needs to stop denying me of my savings," he said in August. "And not just me, but other people as well who are under their program who are also going through this same experience but don't want to speak out."

Mr. Davis, who is working part-time as a landscaper, said he needs his money to take care of his obligations as an adult.