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B.I.R. Sending Out 7,000 Stimulus Checks This Week; Territory's Allotment From \$1.9 Trillion Covid Aid Bill Detailed; Bryan Lauds Excise Tax Reinstatement

Government / **Published On March 16, 2021 06:14 AM /**

Staff Consortium **March 16, 2021**

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The Bureau of Internal Revenue will send out an additional 7,000 stimulus checks worth \$600 each this week, totaling a payout to Virgin Islanders of \$5 million. Last week, B.I.R. released 9,738 checks, according to Government House.

The administration also detailed the territory's allotment of the more than \$500 million from \$1.9 trillion covid aid bill, which was signed into law by President Joe Biden Thursday.

According to Gov't House, in addition to the \$1,400 stimulus checks that will sent to most adults, the aid package also includes the following:

- Supplemental unemployment benefits of \$300 per week will be extended through September 6
- The Child Tax Credit is temporarily expanded to \$3,000 for children ages 6 to 17 and to \$3,600 for children younger than 6.
- Additional funding has been authorized for the Paycheck Protection Program to issue small business loans with a special push to include nonprofits.
- Additional grant funding is available for the Virgin Islands Department of Education and the University of the Virgin Islands.
- Additional funding is available to help support child care facilities.
- Support for low-income families includes more funding for the Energy Assistance Program and to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children
- Public health funding to administer and distribute COVID-19 vaccines, provide contact tracing and buying testing supplies and personal protective equipment.
- Targeted support for bars and restaurants.
- Additional funding for the Emergency Rental Assistance program, which the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority will launch at the end of March.
- Expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit, raising the tax credit from \$530 to \$1,500 for adults without children and raising the income limit from \$16,000 to \$21,000.

Governor Albert Bryan, who is believed to be out of the territory, relayed through Gov't House Communications Director, Richard Motta, that he was pleased with the District Court's decision to reinstate the excise tax, which had been halted for two years while [an exhaustive and landmark court battle](#) dragged on.

The government survived and was able to balance the budget without the excise tax. Therefore, the funds will be used [to restore gov't employees' 8 percent cut](#), an action that took place during the John P. de Jongh administration. The move to pay employees monies owed was announced by Mr. Bryan during his third State of the Territory Address in January.