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Bryan Expands Capacity of Places of Worship Ahead of Easter; Rental Assistance Program Starts Today

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The Bryan administration announced Monday what was described as “good news for our faith-based community”: Governor Albert Bryan, in recognition of Holy Week "and moving forward," has ordered that places of worship be allowed to house up to 200 persons, if the aforesaid amount is 50 percent or less than the church's capacity.

In simple terms, if a facility can seat 400 individuals or more, it will be allowed to seat 200. This rule applies evenly to faith-based facilities of all capacities. Previously, the limit for people allowed to gather in places of worship was 100 people at 50 percent of capacity.

All social distancing and mask-wearing guidelines remain in place, the administration said.

Rent Assistance Program

The Emergency Rental Assistance Program to assist families who have fallen behind on rent payments as a result of the pandemic opened to residents on today, according to Gov't House.

To qualify, residents must:

- Owe at least one month rent or utility payment or anticipate a need for future rental assistance
- Prove they have suffered loss of income because of COVID-19
- Have one or more household members at risk of homelessness because of nonpayment of rent
- Have an annual income at or below 80 percent of area median income

For more information, go to www.vihfa.gov/erap or contact the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority at 340-772-4432 or 340-777-4432.

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