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Bryan to Release \$40 Million in Stimulus for Private and Public Sector Employees Who Worked Throughout Pandemic

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High shot of Plaza Extra East grocery store cashiers serving customers. Governor Bryan intends to release stimulus funds to these private sector employees, bank tellers and others, along with those in the public sector such as nurses. By. ERNICE GILBERT/V.I. CONSORTIUM

The Bryan administration has set aside \$40 million in stimulus payments for Virgin Islands employees in the public and private sectors who had to work through the pandemic, among them nurses, grocery store employees and others.

"We have prioritized money to make direct payments to people because we know people in the community have been adversely impacted by Covid," Governor Bryan told the Consortium during an interview Monday. "It's actually for people that have worked directly with the public."

Mr. Bryan mentioned funding [going out at the end of January](#) to school lunch employees as an example of what to expect.

"All those people in our community like tellers, grocery store workers, restaurant workers — all the people who couldn't stay home during the pandemic — police officers, nurses. Of course there are guidelines on how we distribute any compensation, but those people who had to go out and work when everybody else stayed home, we're looking to see how we could reward those people," the governor said.

The total sum set aside for the stimulus is \$40 million, according to Office of Management and Budget Director Jenifer O'Neal. Speaking during a Senate hearing in the Committee on Disaster Recovery and Infrastructure, she [referred to the \\$40 million](#) as "Premium Pay for Public and Private Sector Employees".

"We are currently developing a retroactive premium pay program for public and private sector workers who were deemed essential and unable to telework during the first 12 months of the local State of Emergency," Ms. O'Neal said. "The recovery plan earmarks \$40,000,000 for this purpose."

The Bryan administration last year [provided stimulus checks](#) to teachers for personal costs expended on certain school supplies and services that made virtual learning possible.

"All the extra tools, resources, internet, whatever it needs," he said at the time, referring to the resources educators made available out of their personal funds. "Our teachers have gone way out of the way to make sure they're finding new, innovative ways to keep the students involved. It's not easy and we want to encourage them."

Mr. Bryan added, "We want to assist in easing any financial burdens incurred as a result our virtual learning mandate."