

The Virgin Islands Consortium

\$25 Million in Tax Refunds Currently Being Distributed; Gov't Projects Stable Outlook for Economy

Government / **Published On March 29, 2022 06:38 AM /**

Staff Consortium **March 29, 2022**



The Bureau of Internal Revenue is currently distributing \$25 million in income tax refunds which includes refunds from tax year 2020. The Consortium [previously reported](#) on the distribution, which Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Jenifer O'Neal said earlier this month would be issued by the end of March.

This latest issuance addresses 2019 and prior year refunds that have been filed on time and are not under audit or otherwise contain any errors. It also includes approximately 1,431 refunds for tax year 2020 that were filed on or before February 12, 2021, according to Gov't House.

To date, the Bryan administration has paid off several years of income taxes that had been in arrears, and the administration has budgeted for the distribution of quarterly refunds totaling \$25 million for Fiscal Year 2022, the administration said.

Gov't House communications director, Richard Motta, said Monday that the latest release "is the closest the Virgin Islands Government has ever been to paying out refunds to taxpayers in the same year their income tax returns were due."

The administration also said that OMB during the 2022 Spring Revenue Estimating Conference revealed that it is preparing to send down the FY2023 and FY2024 Executive Budgets to the Legislature.

As part of the conference, the Government of the Virgin Islands' revenue-generating agencies are required to report their financial forecasts.

Among the highlights at the 2022 Revenue Estimating Conference were that:

- Hotel revenues are up 75%.
- 1st Quarter 2022 visitors are almost double the same period in 2021.
- Unemployment hits lowest level in years at 7.9%;
- The restart of the Limetree Bay refinery and the reopening of the Marriott are expected to provide a major additional boost to Government finances.

According to presentations from 21 revenue generating GVI agencies, autonomous entities and, for the first time the Chambers of Commerce from both districts, the financial outlook for the U.S. Virgin Islands is stable and growing, with revenues on par with, or better than, pre-Covid levels, according to Gov't House.

Bolstering the projections for positive revenue increases, which are forecast to trend into Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024 is:

- The territory's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) remains stronger than that of the average of most states and territories in the aftermath of the pandemic.
- Tourism has rebounded strongly, with air arrivals and hotel taxes eclipsing pre-COVID levels.
- More than 200 upcoming private sector and GVI capital projects are forecast to substantially boost government revenues in Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024.

St. Thomas Administrator's Abandoned Vehicle Task Force

The administration also informed St. Thomas-Water Island community of a temporary halt in the operations of the abandoned vehicle task force on those islands until May.

Under some emergency situations, vehicles still will be tagged and removed during the temporary halt to the abandoned vehicle program, said Mr. Motta.

In the interim, residents still can contact the St. Thomas-Water Island Administrator's office at 340-693-4350 if they have an abandoned vehicle or need one removed so that arrangements can be made to have that vehicle removed when the task force resumes operations.

COVID-19 cases as of March 28

- 1.76% seven-day positivity rate
- Currently tracking 40 active cases (28 STX; 11 STT; 1 STJ).
- 110 fatalities.
- There are no COVID-19 patients hospitalized at Luis Hospital on St. Croix or at Schneider Regional Medical Center on St. Thomas.?

Free Vaccinations

Free vaccinations are available in both districts at the Community Vaccination Centers at the Charles Harwood Complex on St. Croix and at Schneider Hospital on St. Thomas:

- St. Croix (ages 5 and older) – 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday.
- St. Thomas (ages 12 and older) – 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday.
- Pediatric vaccinations for children ages 5 to 11 on St. Thomas are available by appointment from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays and Fridays at the Maternal Child Health Center at Schneider Hospital. Call 340-777-8227 to make an appointment. Please bring IDs for the child and parent or guardian, as well as a copy of the child's birth certificate.

Pop-Up Vaccinations

As of March 31, 2022, the pop-up vaccination program will be discontinued on St. Croix and St. Thomas.

This includes the locations at The Market (formerly Plaza Extra West) and the Farmers Market at the Agriculture Fairgrounds on St. Croix and the Cost-U-Less parking lot on St. Thomas.

On St. John, vaccinations will remain available for all age groups from 1 to 4 p.m. on Wednesdays at the V.I. Port Authority gravel parking lot.

Covid-19 Testing

The Department of Health is offering testing for people with COVID-like symptoms or who suspect they were exposed from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. by appointment.

Testing on St. John is available from noon to 3 p.m. on Wednesdays at the V.I. Port Authority gravel lot.

Pre-register for an appointment at covid19.usvi.care/testing.

More Covid-19 information

The hours for the Department of Health hotlines will change beginning March 2 to 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays-Fridays. Anyone who thinks they may have contracted COVID-19 can call the Epidemiology hotline at 340-712-6299 (STX) or 340-776-1519 (STT-STJ). For more information, visit covid19usvi.com.

For information about the COVID-19 vaccines or to schedule an appointment to get vaccinated, call the VITEMA hotline Mondays-Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 340-777-VACS (8227).

Vaccination appointments also can be scheduled online at covid19usvi.com/vaccines. The Department of Health will bring the COVID-19 vaccine to children and adults who are homebound.