

The Virgin Islands Consortium

DHS Division of Family Assistance Issuing \$431,825 in ARPA Pandemic Emergency Funding to Qualifying Families

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The V.I. Dept. of Human Services has announced that its Division of Family Assistance has started the process of issuing the first round of Pandemic Emergency Allotment Funds Phase 2 (PEAF2).

According to DHS, heads of households who applied and were approved received notices last week. These notices contained information detailing the amount of their awards and a specific timetable of issuance based on alphabetic last name grouping.

Applicants that were not approved or were wait-listed also received a detailed notice last week, according to DHS.

This most recent allotment was authorized by the American Rescue Plan through the Administration of Children and Families. A total of \$431,825.04 was approved and available for disbursement to phase 2 beneficiaries this round in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

DHS said phase 2 will continue to be issued to eligible Virgin Island family households with a combined income maximum of \$50,000 per annum until Saturday, October 29. Application approval and benefit levels were determined via the Territorial PEA2 review committee. Benefit disbursements are issued via paper checks to applicants after verification of identifications and signature.

DHS said its Division of Family Assistance has maintained a chronological application review process to ensure equitable award disbursement. The department said it will award all PEA2 funds, but it should be noted that not all eligible applications may be able to be funded with the limited PEA2 funds this round.

"This funding will assist middle-income families with unmet needs resulting from pandemic/endemic financial hardships," said DHS Commissioner Kimberley Causey Gomez. "This group is a population that generally does not benefit from traditional Federal Government programs due to higher income brackets. As this funding is made available in tandem with ACF, all applicants must have at least one minor child residing in their household at the time of application submission."

DHS said that in order to receive PEA2 checks, approved applicants must have a valid picture ID, and the applicants name must appear on the check. Additionally, the Division of Family Assistance will continue to call and mail notices to approved applicants, informing them of their status and providing a timetable when they can pick up checks. The division said it will mail notices to applicants that were not approved and applicants that were wait-listed this round.