



For Immediate Release

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Press Contact

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**USVI Department of Human Services Addresses Confirmed COVID-19
Positive Staff Test**

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — The Virgin Islands Department of Human Services (DHS), today confirmed that it is immediately closing the Kingshill Head Start location as a staff member has tested positive for COVID-19. The staff member had no contact with any Head Start family members.

In an abundance of caution, while DHS works with the Department of Health to get other Kingshill staff tested, that facility will remain closed. Other Head Start facilities will continue their normal operations. Additionally, meal distribution to students served through that facility will be postponed until after the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, resuming, Tuesday, January 19, 2021.

With the notification of the confirmed COVID positive test, DHS, in conjunction with the Department of Health, has initiated emergency response protocols that include widespread self-monitoring and testing of those who were in direct contact with the impacted staff person, appropriate notifications and continued distancing protocols.

“As cases rise across the Nation and in the Territory, we are reminded that we must be as vigilant as ever in our personal lives and interactions to continue best practice measures to help keep ourselves, family members and those we work with safe,” said Commissioner of the Department of Human Services, Kimberley Causey-Gomez.

CURRENT ACTIONS BEING TAKEN

- Specific staff members of the impacted unit have been advised and asked to quarantine until they get a negative result from testing.
- DHS has arranged for testing of all impacted persons within the auspices of DHS through the Department of Health.
- Cleaning and sanitization protocols, in line with Department of Health and CDC guidance, have been initiated.



DHS encourages all staff and members of the public to maintain CDC best practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Wear your mask (covering your nose and mouth while in the workplace).
- Maintain social distance.
- Wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds, often.
- Wear appropriate other PPE while in contact with other staff or clients.
- Use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol when you cannot your wash hands.
- Routinely clean and disinfect frequently used surfaces.
- Share FACTS, not rumors.

The Department of Human Services requests prayers for all their staff, on the front lines, daily caring for members of the public.

Head Start Contact Information

The DHS-Head Start Program registration process is on-going throughout the year. Children must be three years old by December 31st. Parents must bring the child's birth certificate and proof of income that shows the family meets the federal guideline for income eligibility.

Contact Information and Registration Portal

Feel free to create an account, if you have not already and apply through Head Start's online portal (COPA) at <https://vihs.mycopa.com/familyPortal/childCare.epl>

Questions for the Head Start office can be addressed at (340)773-1972 on St. Croix or (340)774-0930 ext. 4200 on St. Thomas.

For additional information, please visit the Department of Human Services website, www.dhs.gov.vi or on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/usvidhs>) at US Virgin Islands Department of Human Services.

The Department of Human Services (VIDHS) exists to provide social services to members in our community with diverse needs. In times of national uncertainty and hardship we act as a safety-net and exist to inspire hope and empower change through non-judgmental, quality delivery of needed services and resources. Please visit the Department of Human Services website, www.dhs.gov.vi for more information.

If you are experiencing any of the coronavirus symptoms listed on the Department of Health website (listed below), self-quarantine and immediately contact the Department of Health:

- V.I. DOH website: <https://doh.vi.gov/>
- **COVID-19 Hotline:** (340) 712-6299 or (340) 776-1519



For more information on Covid19, the new strain of coronavirus, please visit covid19usvi.com or text COVID19USVI to 888777.

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