

# **U.S. Department of Education**

## **Certification and Agreement for Funding under the Education Stabilization Fund Program Outlying Areas-Governors**

**CFDA Number: 84.425H**



## **PROGRAM BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **Purpose**

Under the Education Stabilization Fund (ESF), the U.S. Department of Education (Department) allocates funds to the Outlying Areas for the purpose of providing State educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), institutions of higher education (IHEs), and other education-related entities with emergency assistance to address the impact of the Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

### **Funding**

The Department will award \$153,750,000 to the Outlying Areas. Of this amount, \$30,750,000 (20%) is made available to Governors under this Certification and Agreement and \$123,000,000 (80%) is made available to SEAs under a separate Certification and Agreement.

Of the ESF amount awarded to Outlying Area Governors under this Certification and Agreement, 60 percent is based on population ages 5-24 and 40 percent is based on the relative number of children counted under section 1124(c) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA). By statute, the Department used this same formula to make allocations to Governors under the Governor's Emergency Relief Fund.

For purposes of this Certification and Agreement, ESF funds awarded to Governors in the Outlying Areas will be referred to as ESF-Governor funds.

### **Eligibility**

Governors in American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the United States Virgin Islands.

### **Timeline**

The Department encourages each Governor to award funds within one year of receipt of ESF-Governor funds. The funds must be obligated by the Governor and subgrantees no later than September 30, 2022.

### **Uses of Funds**

1. Provide emergency support through grants to SEAs<sup>1</sup> and, where applicable, to LEAs to address impacts of the coronavirus in elementary and secondary schools and to support the ability of these agencies to continue to provide educational services to their students and to support the ongoing functionality of the SEA and, where applicable, LEAs;
2. Provide emergency support through grants to IHEs to address the impacts of the coronavirus on IHEs and to support the ability of such institutions to continue to provide educational services and support the ongoing functionality of the institutions; and
3. Provide support to any IHE, LEA, or education-related entity within the Outlying Area that the Governor deems essential for carrying out emergency educational services to students, the provision of childcare and early childhood education, social and emotional support, and the protection of education-related jobs.
4. Governors may use a reasonable and necessary amount of the ESF-Governor funds for administrative costs related to the allocation and management of the funds. Entities that

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<sup>1</sup> SEAs may subgrant to LEAs, as well, where applicable.

receive ESF-Governor funds may also use a reasonable and necessary amount of the funds for administrative costs related to the management of the funds.

**Contact**

Email: [esf.outlying@ed.gov](mailto:esf.outlying@ed.gov)

# CERTIFICATION AND AGREEMENT INSTRUCTIONS

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

To receive ESF-Governor funds, a Governor must submit a signed PDF Certification and Agreement, by email, to the Department at [esf.outlying@ed.gov](mailto:esf.outlying@ed.gov) no later than July 1, 2020. The Certification and Agreement must include the following:

- A completed Certification and Agreement cover sheet that includes the signature of the Governor or authorized representative. *(Part A)*
- Programmatic, fiscal, and reporting assurances. *(Part B)*
- Information on the uses of the ESF-Governor funds. *(Part C)*
- Other assurances and certifications. *(Part D)*

## APPENDICES

Appendix A – Authorizing Statute

Appendix B – Outlying Area Allocation Data

**EDUCATION STABILIZATION FUND  
OUTLYING AREAS-GOVERNORS**

**PART A: CERTIFICATION AND AGREEMENT COVER SHEET  
(CFDA No. 84.425H)**

Legal Name (Office of the Governor):

United States Virgin Islands Office of the G

Mailing Address:

Office of the Governor of the US Virgin Isla

DUNS Number:

001570469

Contact Information for Program Representative:

Teri.Helenese@go.vi.gov

Name:

Teri Helenese

Position and office:

USVI Director, State-Federal Relations & Washingt

Mailing address:

(b) (6)

Telephone:

(b) (6)

Email address:

Teri.Helenese@go.vi.gov

To the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information and data in this Certification and Agreement are true and correct. I acknowledge and agree that the failure to comply with all assurances and certifications in this document, all relevant provisions and requirements of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), Pub. L. No. 116-136 (March 27, 2020), or any other applicable law or regulation may result in liability under the False Claims Act, 31 U.S.C. § 3729, *et seq.*; OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3485; and 18 USC § 1001, as appropriate.

Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Typed Name):

Teri Helenese

Telephone:

(b) (6)

Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor:

[Redacted Signature]

Date:

June 26, 2020

## **EDUCATION STABILIZATION FUND OUTLYING AREAS-GOVERNORS**

### **PART B: PROGRAMMATIC, FISCAL, AND REPORTING ASSURANCES**

The Governor (or his/her authorized representative) assures the following:

- ESF-Governor funds will be used for one or more of the following:
  - To provide emergency support through grants to SEAs and, where applicable, to LEAs to address impacts of the coronavirus in elementary and secondary schools and to support the ability of these agencies to continue to provide educational services to their students and to support the ongoing functionality of the SEA and, where applicable, LEAs;
  - To provide emergency support through grants to IHEs to address the impacts of the coronavirus on IHEs and to support the ability of such institutions to continue to provide educational services and support the ongoing functionality of the institutions; and
  - To provide support to any IHE, LEA, or education-related entity within the outlying area that the Governor deems essential for carrying out emergency educational services to students, the provision of childcare and early childhood education, social and emotional support, and the protection of education-related jobs.
- The Governor will use no more than the amount of ESF-Governor funds that is reasonable and necessary for administrative costs related to the allocation and management of the ESF-Governor funds. The Governor will ensure that entities that receive ESF-Governor funds use no more than the amount of ESF-Governor funds that is reasonable and necessary for administrative costs related to the management of those funds.
- Equitable services, as determined through timely and meaningful consultation with non-public school officials, will be provided to students and teachers in non-public elementary and secondary schools in the same manner as provided under section 8501 of the ESEA.
  - The Governor will ensure that a public agency will maintain control of ESF-Governor funds for services and assistance provided to a non-public school.
  - The Governor will ensure that a public agency will have title to materials, equipment, and property purchased with ESF-Governor funds.
  - The Governor will ensure that services to a non-public school with ESF-Governor funds will be provided by a public agency directly, or through contract with another public or private entity.
- The Outlying Area will comply with the maintenance-of-effort requirements in section 18008 of the CARES Act.
- The Governor and each SEA, LEA, IHE, or other education-related entity that receives ESF-Governor funds shall, to the greatest extent practicable, continue to pay their employees and contractors during the period of any disruptions or closures related to COVID-19 in compliance with section 18006 of the CARES Act. CARES Act funds generally will not be used for bonuses, merit pay, or similar expenditures, unless related to disruptions or closures resulting from COVID-19.
- The Governor will submit to the Department, within 45 days of receiving ESF-Governor funds, an initial report detailing the Governor's process for determining the amount of funds to be awarded to the SEA, LEAs, IHEs, or other education-related entities.
- The Outlying Area will comply with all reporting requirements including those in section 15011(b)(2) of Division B of the CARES Act and submit required quarterly reports to the

Secretary, at such time and in such manner and containing such information as the Secretary may reasonably require. (See 2 CFR 200.327-200.330). The Secretary may require additional reporting, which may include:

- Specific entities awarded ESF-Governor funds;
  - Uses of funds by the SEA, LEAs, IHEs, or other education-related entities, as described in section 18002(c) of the CARES Act, including how any use of funds was applied to support addressing digital divide and related issues in distance learning;
  - The number of public and non-public schools that received funds or services; and
  - A description of the internal controls the Outlying Area has in place to ensure that funds are used for allowable purposes and in accordance with cash management principles.
- The Governor will ensure that every recipient and subrecipient of ESF-Governor funds will cooperate with any examination of records with respect to such funds by making records available for inspection, production, and examination, and authorized individuals available for interview and examination, upon the request of (i) the Department and/or its Inspector General; or (ii) any other Federal agency, commission, or department in the lawful exercise of its jurisdiction and authority.
  - The Governor will use best efforts to award funds on an expedited basis.

Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Typed Name):

Teri Helenese

Signature:



Date:

June 26, 2020

**EDUCATION STABILIZATION FUND  
OUTLYING AREAS-GOVERNORS**

**PART C: USES OF ESF-GOVERNOR FUNDS**

The Department is interested in learning how and to what extent each Outlying Area intends to use ESF-Governor funds to establish, develop, improve, or expand the availability, accessibility, capacity, and use of remote learning techniques and technologies, which includes both distance education as defined in section 103(7) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA), and distance learning as defined in ESEA section 8101(14). The Department requests the following information:

1. Does the Outlying Area intend to use any ESF-Governor funds to support remote learning for all students?
  - a. Please describe whether the Outlying Area considered conducting an assessment of the barriers to implementing effective remote learning for all students, or utilizing an existing assessment, to help target resources toward greatest needs.
  - b. With respect to elementary and secondary schools, please describe how the Outlying Area intends to use the funds to help students and teachers adopt or improve remote learning that serves all students, including students with disabilities, students from low-income families, charter school students, and non-public school students.
  - c. With respect to IHEs, please describe how the Outlying Area intends to focus expenditures to ensure that all IHEs – public and private – have the needed supports to continue executing their missions and educating their students.

a: Remote learning is no longer optional but has become a necessity, not only due to the COVID-19 lockdown but to the hurricanes that have become more frequent and more violent in recent years as a result of climate change. The United States Virgin Islands, Office of the Governor looks forward to partnering with the Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE), along with private and parochial schools, and other organizations within the territory and beyond to achieve our goals and aspirations for a high-quality online, remote learning educational program for all students in the U.S. Virgin Islands: low-income children or students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, foster care and home-schooled youths--in Public, Private and Parochial schools. In summary, as Governor, I see remote learning as a short and long-term educational, economic and social value proposition.

To achieve the goal of implementing a comprehensive online, remote learning educational program, it is critical for our students to have the devices and tools to conduct and participate in learning activities. However, we recognize that there are technological, instructional, financial, cultural and other barriers to achieving the goal of high-quality online education. In order to determine and address existing barriers for our students, the VIDE conducted a preliminary analysis using current data on the economic status of our students to project a probable number of students that will need laptops and Internet access. We will also conduct community-based surveys (adhering to social distancing) to get a more accurate number of students that need computers, Internet access as well as, specialized equipment and support for our children with disabilities. Based on the numbers from our surveys and analysis, we will work with computer vendors and local telecommunications carriers to negotiate reduced prices or free devices and Internet (hotspot) access for students who need it.

It should be noted that the Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) has been working with technology partners to boost technological capacity and connectivity on the islands over the long term.



2. Does the Outlying Area intend to use any of the ESF-Governor funds to support technological capacity and access – including hardware and software, connectivity, and instructional expertise – to support remote learning for all students? If so, please describe how the Outlying Area will achieve its goals for elementary and secondary schools and IHEs. Please describe the strategies the Outlying Area will use to serve disadvantaged populations listed in section 18003(d)(4) of the CARES Act.

The Virgin Islands had the benefit of expanding its broadband capability in the last recession. Through a federal grant we were able to create a fiber ring around the territory with 360 nodes, where last mile providers can connect and provide cheaper and faster service to our residents. The pandemic has created a partnership between the wholly owned Government entity, Virgin Islands Next Generation Network (VINGN), the Virgin Islands Housing Authority (VIHA), The Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority (VIHFA), the VI Department of Education and the Governor's Office. Through this partnership and the compilation of grants, we are able to provide more access to students (Public and Private) in and around schools, libraries, community centers, public housing communities and some of our denser populated residential areas.

The plan is to use these access points and the funds to provide free low band internet to the majority of our students. This will not only bridge the distance learning access gap but will avail our students to more resources for their homework and reporting. We also hope that we can bring new and exciting extracurricular activities connected to business, music and recreational activity.

3. Does the Outlying Area intend to use any of the ESF-Governor funds to support remote learning by developing new informational and academic resources and expanding awareness of, and access to, best practices and innovations in remote learning and support for students, families, and educators? If so, please identify, generally, the resources, best practices, and innovations that the Outlying Area intends to develop and expand.

At present, the USVI has the capacity for remote learning but we have much to do in strengthening our delivery and student engagement in this regard. We recognize that online learning is no longer optional but has become a necessity, not only due to the COVID-19 lockdown but to the hurricanes that have become more frequent and more violent in recent years as a result of climate change. We look forward to partnering with others within the territory and beyond to achieve our goals and aspirations for a high-quality online, remote learning educational program.

We have reached out to consultants and school systems in the US mainland that have been utilizing online instruction and learning management systems to benefit from lessons learned and successful methodologies, approaches and project plans for system design and implementation, teacher development and support, student and parent training and online curriculum and course development and/or adaptation.

We expect to continue leveraging the online and virtual learning initiatives currently in process through the end of this school year. We are currently, developing a comprehensive plan to ensure the success of our online, remote learning program. This plan would not only lay out all our integrated tasks, activities, timelines, and roles but will have performance measures to ensure that we are accountable for the results.

We recognize that online learning, once considered cutting-edge, is no longer an add-on to the bricks-and-mortar classroom. Under pandemic conditions, it has become a necessity—an i wil

**EDUCATION STABILIZATION FUND  
OUTLYING AREAS-GOVERNORS**

**PART D: OTHER ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS**

The Governor (or his/her authorized representative) assures or certifies the following:

- The Governor will comply with all applicable assurances in OMB Standard Forms 424B and D (Assurances for Non-Construction and Construction Programs), including the assurances relating to the legal authority to apply for assistance; access to records; conflict of interest; merit systems; nondiscrimination; Hatch Act provisions; labor standards; flood hazards; historic preservation; protection of human subjects; animal welfare; lead-based paint; Single Audit Act; and the general agreement to comply with all applicable Federal laws, executive orders, and regulations.
- With respect to the certification regarding lobbying in Department Form 80-0013, no Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making or renewal of Federal grants under this program; the Outlying Area will complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," when required (34 CFR part 82, Appendix B); and the Outlying Area will require the full certification, as set forth in 34 CFR part 82, Appendix A, in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers.
- Any LEA receiving funding under this program will comply with the requirements of section 442 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), 20 U.S.C. 1232e.
- To the extent applicable, entities that receive funding will comply with the requirements of section 427 of GEPA, 20 U.S.C. 1228a.
- The Outlying Area and other recipients will comply with the *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* (Uniform Guidance) requirements in Subpart D—Post Federal Award Requirements (2 CFR 200.300-345) and Subpart E—Cost Principles (2 CFR 200.400-475) to ensure that ESF-Governor funds are being used for purposes that are reasonable, necessary, and allocable under the CARES Act.
- The Outlying Area will comply with the provisions of all applicable acts, regulations, and assurances; the provisions of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations in 34 CFR parts 75, 76, 77, 81, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98, and 99; the OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3485; and the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3474.

Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Typed Name):

Teri Helenese

Signature:



Date:

June 26, 2020

## **Appendix A: Relevant Excerpts from Title VIII of Division B of the CARES Act, the Emergency Appropriations for Coronavirus Health Response and Agency Operations**

### DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

#### EDUCATION STABILIZATION FUND

For an additional amount for “Education Stabilization Fund”, \$30,750,000,000, to remain available through September 30, 2021, to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus, domestically or internationally: Provided, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

### GENERAL PROVISIONS

#### EDUCATION STABILIZATION FUND

SEC. 18001. (a) ALLOCATIONS.—From the amount made available under this heading in this Act to carry out the Education Stabilization Fund, the Secretary shall first allocate—

(1) not more than 1/2 of 1 percent to the outlying areas on the basis of their respective needs, as determined by the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior;

(2) one-half of 1 percent for the Secretary of Interior, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, for programs operated or funded by the Bureau of Indian Education; and

(3) 1 percent for grants to States with the highest coronavirus burden to support activities under this heading in this Act, for which the Secretary shall issue a notice inviting applications not later than 30 days of enactment of this Act and approve or deny applications not later than 30 days after receipt.

(b) RESERVATIONS.—After carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall reserve the remaining funds made available as follows:

(1) 9.8 percent to carry out section 18002 of this title.

(2) 43.9 percent to carry out section 18003 of this title.

(3) 46.3 percent to carry out section 18004 of this title.

#### GOVERNOR’S EMERGENCY EDUCATION RELIEF FUND

SEC. 18002. (a) GRANTS.—From funds reserved under section 18001(b)(1) of this title, the Secretary shall make Emergency Education Relief grants to the Governor of each State with an approved application. The Secretary shall issue a notice inviting applications not later than 30 days of enactment of this Act and shall approve or deny applications not later than 30 days after receipt.

(b) ALLOCATIONS.—The amount of each grant under subsection (a) shall be allocated by the Secretary to each State as follows:

(1) 60 percent on the basis of their relative population of individuals aged 5 through 24.

(2) 40 percent on the basis of their relative number of children counted under section 1124(c) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (referred to under this heading as “ESEA”).

(c) USES OF FUNDS.—Grant funds awarded under subsection (b) may be used to—

(1) provide emergency support through grants to local educational agencies that the State educational agency deems have been most significantly impacted by coronavirus to support the ability of such local educational agencies to continue to provide educational services to their students and to support the on-going functionality of the local educational agency;

(2) provide emergency support through grants to institutions of higher education serving students within the State that the Governor determines have been most significantly impacted by coronavirus to support the ability of such institutions to continue to provide educational services and support the on-going functionality of the institution; and

(3) provide support to any other institution of higher education, local educational agency, or education related entity within the State that the Governor deems essential for carrying out emergency educational services to students for authorized activities described in section 18003(d)(1) of this title or the Higher Education Act, the provision of child care and early childhood education, social and emotional support, and the protection of education-related jobs.

(d) REALLOCATION.—Each Governor shall return to the Secretary any funds received under this section that the Governor does not award within one year of receiving such funds and the Secretary shall reallocate such funds to the remaining States in accordance with subsection (b).

#### ASSISTANCE TO NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SEC. 18005. (a) IN GENERAL.—A local educational agency receiving funds under sections 18002 or 18003 of this title shall provide equitable services in the same manner as provided under section 1117 of the ESEA of 1965 to students and teachers in non-public schools, as determined in consultation with representatives of non-public schools.

(b) PUBLIC CONTROL OF FUNDS.—The control of funds for the services and assistance provided to a non-public school under subsection (a), and title to materials, equipment, and property purchased with such funds, shall be in a public agency, and a public agency shall administer such funds, materials, equipment, and property and shall provide such services (or may contract for the provision of such services with a public or private entity).

## CONTINUED PAYMENT TO EMPLOYEES

SEC. 18006. A local educational agency, State, institution of higher education, or other entity that receives funds under “Education Stabilization Fund”, shall to the greatest extent practicable, continue to pay its employees and contractors during the period of any disruptions or closures related to coronavirus.

## DEFINITIONS

SEC. 18007. Except as otherwise provided in sections 18001–18006 of this title, as used in such sections—

(1) the terms “elementary education” and “secondary education” have the meaning given such terms under State law;

(2) the term “institution of higher education” has the meaning given such term in title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.);

(3) the term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Education;

(4) the term “State” means each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico;

(5) the term “cost of attendance” has the meaning given such term in section 472 of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

(6) the term “Non-public school” means a non-public elementary and secondary school that (A) is accredited, licensed, or otherwise operates in accordance with State law; and (B) was in existence prior to the date of the qualifying emergency for which grants are awarded under this section;

(7) the term “public school” means a public elementary or secondary school; and

(8) any other term used that is defined in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801) shall have the meaning given the term in such section.

**Appendix B: Outlying Areas Allocation Data  
ESF-Governor Fund**

| <b>OUTLYING AREA</b>     | <b>ALLOCATION<sup>1</sup></b> |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>TOTAL</b>             | <b>\$30,750,000</b>           |
| AMERICAN SAMOA           | \$7,272,191                   |
| GUAM                     | \$12,499,963                  |
| NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS | \$4,777,211                   |
| VIRGIN ISLANDS           | \$6,200,635                   |

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<sup>1</sup> The allocation to the Governor of each Outlying Area is based on the formula used under the Governor Emergency Education Relief Fund (60% Aged 5-24 Population/40% Title I formula child counts)

**EDUCATION STABILIZATION FUND**  
**OUTLYING AREAS-GOVERNORS**  
**PART C: USES OF ESF-GOVERNOR FUNDS**

The Department is interested in learning how and to what extent each Outlying Area intends to use ESF-Governor funds to establish, develop, improve, or expand the availability, accessibility, capacity, and use of remote learning techniques and technologies, which includes both distance education as defined in section 103(7) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA), and distance learning as defined in ESEA section 8101(14). The Department requests the following information:

1. Does the Outlying Area intend to use any ESF-Governor funds to support remote learning for all students?

- a. Please describe whether the Outlying Area considered conducting an assessment of the barriers to implementing effective remote learning for all students, or utilizing an existing assessment, to help target resources toward greatest needs.
- b. With respect to elementary and secondary schools, please describe how the Outlying Area intends to use the funds to help students and teachers adopt or improve remote learning that serves all students, including students with disabilities, students from low-income families, charter school students, and non-public school students.
- c. With respect to IHEs, please describe how the Outlying Area intends to focus expenditures to ensure that all IHEs – public and private – have the needed supports to continue executing their missions and educating their students.

a: Remote learning is no longer optional but has become a necessity, not only due to the COVID-19 lockdown but to the hurricanes that have become more frequent and more violent in recent years as a result of climate change. The United States Virgin Islands, Office of the Governor looks forward to partnering with the Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE), along with private and parochial schools, and other organizations within the territory and beyond to achieve our goals and aspirations for a high-quality online, remote learning educational program for all students in the U.S. Virgin Islands: low-income children or students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, foster care and home-schooled youths--in Public, Private and Parochial schools. In summary, as Governor, I see remote learning as a short and long-term educational, economic and social value proposition.

To achieve the goal of implementing a comprehensive online, remote learning educational program, it is critical for our students to have the devices and tools to conduct and participate in learning activities. However, we recognize that there are technological, instructional, financial, cultural and other barriers to achieving the goal of high-quality online education. In order to determine and address existing barriers for our students, the VIDE conducted a preliminary analysis using current data on the economic status of our students to project a probable number of students that will need laptops and Internet access. We will also conduct community-based surveys (adhering to social distancing) to get a more

accurate number of students that need computers, Internet access as well as, specialized equipment and support for our children with disabilities. Based on the numbers from our surveys and analysis, we will work with computer vendors and local telecommunications carriers to negotiate reduced prices or free devices and Internet (hotspot) access for students who need it.

It should be noted that the Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) has been working with technology partners to boost technological capacity and connectivity on the islands over the long term. However, the Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE) has a more urgent need to make online learning a reality for every student in the USVI, and to do so as quickly as possible. Consequently, the VIDE has already started to partner with non-profit organizations to provide computer devices and Internet access to students in need. We recognize that after all these efforts, we will still have to purchase computer devices and hotspots to lend to some students. These devices that will be on loan and will need to be returned to the VIDE by a designated date.

b: The Office of the Governor has coordinated closely with our LEA and VIDE to ensure that a comprehensive online education program is available to all our public, parochial and private school students including students that are home-schooled. This is with the recognition that the education of our students is critical to our overall social, economic and cultural advancement in the 21st century. The design, development, implementation and day-to-day operations of the online, state-of-art, learner-friendly education program for all our students is critical to the advancement of the territory and essential to the continuity of education during this pandemic. To achieve this, the Office of the Governor expects to play an important role overseeing this program. Key areas of focus are:

- Establish a coordinating and planning task force represented by public, parochial, and private schools' educators, parents, and students
  
- Ensure effective coordination with the Board of Education
  
- Oversee and facilitate public/private partnerships and engagement towards the success of our students participating in the online, remote education program(s)
  
- Assist in aligning and supporting the engagement of other essential governmental departments to ensure the success of this program
  
- Work with the VIDE to establish and agree on critical milestones and performance measures to ensure accountability for the targeted educational and community outcomes and results



- Ensure that the VIDE receives the financial and community support to be successful

The VIDE will focus on providing high-quality education to all our students. For example, the VIDE plans to include Google Classroom—a cloud-based learning management system as one of the many tools of engagement. Students will be able to access Google Classroom from laptop computers with web cameras. As previously stated, students who do not have computers at home will be provided with Mi-Fi's, laptops, or broadband access for Internet connections. An extensive orientation and training program will be conducted for teachers, students and parents in order educate them to benefit from the new technological tools and online learning opportunities.

Students will be able to complete their homework and receive their teachers' comments online. Online interconnectivity will enable students to prepare and submit their assignments easily. Teachers in turn will be empowered to create virtual classrooms where students can download and view educational materials and interact with their teachers and with each other. The VIDE plans to have a fully operational online education system with trained teachers fully implemented and ready-to-go at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year for all students. This will be feasible through broad collaboration and coordination across all the school systems in the territory along with coordination with Google for Education and school systems who have been successful with providing online education to their students especially during these critical times of the pandemic.

We recognize that implementing the individualized education plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities will pose challenges as we shift to predominantly online mode of educations. It will be critical for the VIDE not only to rethink their strategy and approach to educating students with physical and psychological disabilities but also identify and implement the specialized instructional products, tools and devices along with level of support in home that may be needed. The VIDE will be encouraged to work with other educational, academic and publishing institutions that are more experienced on delivering and innovating in this area.

We also recognize that a number of our low-income students even after provided the technological resources needed will have challenges and the education and support of their parents will be essential. The physical school often provides a structured environment that is conducive to learning that may not be available in the remote learning at home environment. This could be a challenge for all children but particularly children in crowded households. Finding innovative ways to work with parents, such as online tutorials and structured homework helpers is one way to bridge this gap in our community, Providing information to families on how to get assistance in these areas will help to relieve these challenges and is essential to our success. Educating our children will have to be everybody's business.

c: We currently only have one such institution, which is almost 100% funded by the local government. AS such the burden of the pandemic has put an incredible strain on the finances that would help to support the University. It is our intention to set aside funds to assist the University with losses due to students vacating the campuses and demanding reimbursement for room and board. As our largely tourism-based economy continues to suffer we have had to make drastic cuts to the budget and the university, is no exception.

As we are a remote location, many of our students have to travel to the mainland or rely on after school and summer jobs for their subsistence as they attend school locally. The pandemic has not only limited their parents earning potential but prohibited them from participating in employment. It is our intention to set up a scholarship fund to assist those students who would have otherwise gotten those dollars through employment. This assistance is key in allowing them to be able to attend Universities here as well as on the mainland. This is consistent with our goal to raise the amount of college graduates in the territory from 13% to 27%, which is the national average.

As a part of that effort, the Office of the Governor will continuously support collaboration across these groups in order to ensure that our students are prepared for the challenges and opportunities in our global economy. Coordination and support to the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) is essential to ensure that our students continue to have the opportunity for a college education in the Territory. The Office of the Governor is committed to advancing UVI's online education capabilities and we recognize that UVI is a critical research arm in the territory. Tighter coordination and collaboration between UVI and VIDE is expected to result in innovative approaches to online education.

2. Does the Outlying Area intend to use any of the ESF-Governor funds to support technological capacity and access – including hardware and software, connectivity, and instructional expertise – to support remote learning for all students? If so, please describe how the Outlying Area will achieve its goals for elementary and secondary schools and IHEs. Please describe the strategies the Outlying Area will use to serve disadvantaged populations listed in section 18003(d)(4) of the CARES Act.

The Virgin Islands had the benefit of expanding its broadband capability in the last recession. Through a federal grant we were able to create a fiber ring around the territory with 360 nodes, where last mile providers can connect and provide cheaper and faster service to our residents. The pandemic has created a partnership between the wholly owned Government entity, Virgin Islands Next Generation Network (VINGN), the Virgin Islands Housing Authority (VIHA), The Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority (VIHFA), the VI Department of Education and the Governor's Office. Through this partnership and the compilation of grants, we are able to provide more access to students (Public and Private) in and around schools, libraries, community centers, public housing communities and some of our denser populated residential areas.

The plan is to use these access points and the funds to provide free low band internet to the majority of our students. This will not only bridge the distance learning access gap but will avail our students to more resources for their homework and reporting. We also hope that we can bring new and exciting extracurricular activities connected to business, music and recreational activity.

The USVI Government plans to purchase the bandwidth to power this initiative in bulk, which will put us in a solid position to negotiate lower prices. With support from the VIDE, parochial and private schools along with the Office of the Governor and the US Department of Education, we expect to be able to acquire and roll out our online program and train our teachers to lead and teach in the online, virtual environment by the beginning of school year 2020-2021. We expect to fully launch this online, remote learning program at the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

3. Does the Outlying Area intend to use any of the ESF-Governor funds to support remote learning by developing new informational and academic resources and expanding awareness of, and access to, best practices and innovations in remote learning and support for students, families, and educators? If so, please identify, generally, the resources, best practices, and innovations that the Outlying Area intends to develop and expand.

At present, the USVI has the capacity for remote learning but we have much to do in strengthening our delivery and student engagement in this regard. We recognize that online learning is no longer optional but has become a necessity, not only due to the COVID-19 lockdown but to the hurricanes that have become more frequent and more violent in recent years as a result of climate change. We look forward to partnering with others within the territory and beyond to achieve our goals and aspirations for a high-quality online, remote learning educational program.

We have reached out to consultants and school systems in the US mainland that have been utilizing online instruction and learning management systems to benefit from lessons learned and successful methodologies, approaches and project plans for system design and implementation, teacher development and support, student and parent training and online curriculum and course development and/or adaptation.

We expect to continue leveraging the online and virtual learning initiatives currently in process through the end of this school year. We are currently, developing a comprehensive plan to ensure the success of our online, remote learning program. This plan would not only lay out all our integrated tasks, activities, timelines, and roles but will have performance measures to ensure that we are accountable for the results.

We recognize that online learning, once considered cutting-edge, is no longer an add-on to the bricks-and-mortar classroom. Under pandemic conditions, it has become a necessity—and it will remain so when the next wave of coronavirus infections strike the islands, predicted for the fall. Our children have already fallen behind in the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, which devastated the islands' schools. So, as we continue reconstruction and renovations resulting from the devastating hurricanes, we will be sure that our schools are designed and built to address pandemic-like conditions and complement the online, remote learning capabilities that we are currently designing and building.

Through a well-integrated and coordinated approach, the Office of the Governor expects to achieve future cost-savings and 21st century education resulting from the online capabilities that will be territorial and available to all our students across all our school systems – public, private, parochial and higher education. The Office of the Governor is committed to aligning and coordinating (where necessary) these groups and promoting the value-proposition of us working together to the benefit of all our children. Additionally, the Office of the Governor will assist the VIDE where needed, as they explore and implement best practices to provide online education to students with special needs. We will ensure that the VIDE acquire the appropriate tools and support systems that these students will need to benefit from the online education program(s). Essentially, we are all in this together to include public/private partnerships to get access to the best thinking and resources to ensure remote learning success.