

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 59008)

James E. Rivera,

Associate Administrator for Disaster Assistance.

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SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

[Disaster Declaration #15320 and #15321; U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS Disaster Number VI-00011]

Presidential Declaration Amendment of a Major Disaster for the U.S. Virgin Islands

AGENCY: U.S. Small Business Administration.

ACTION: Amendment 4.

SUMMARY: This is an amendment of the Presidential declaration of a major disaster for the U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS (FEMA-4340-DR), dated 09/20/2017.

Incident: Hurricane Maria.

Incident Period: 09/16/2017 through 09/22/2017.

DATES: Issued on 12/08/2017.

Physical Loan Application Deadline Date: 01/08/2018.

Economic Injury (EIDL) Loan Application Deadline Date: 06/20/2018.

ADDRESSES: Submit completed loan applications to: U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: A. Escobar, Office of Disaster Assistance, U.S. Small Business Administration, 409 3rd Street SW, Suite 6050, Washington, DC 20416, (202) 205-6734.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The notice of the President's major disaster declaration for the U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS, dated 09/20/2017, is hereby amended to extend the deadline for filing applications for physical damages as a result of this disaster to 01/08/2018.

All other information in the original declaration remains unchanged.

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James E. Rivera,

Associate Administrator, for Disaster Assistance.

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SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

[Docket No. SSA-2017-0053]

Cost-of-Living Increase and Other Determinations for 2018

AGENCY: Social Security Administration.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: We are republishing the Cost-of-Living Increase and Other Determinations for 2018 with revisions to the average wage index and certain related dollar amounts. Under title II of the Social Security Act (Act), there will be a 2.0 percent cost-of-living increase in Social Security benefits effective December 2017. In addition, the national average wage index for 2016 is \$48,642.15. The cost-of-living increase and national average wage index affect other program parameters as described below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Susan C. Kunkel, Office of the Chief Actuary, Social Security Administration, 6401 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235, (410) 965-3000. Information relating to this announcement is available on our internet site at www.socialsecurity.gov/oact/cola/index.html. For information on eligibility or claiming benefits, call 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778), or visit our internet site at www.socialsecurity.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Because of the 2.0 percent cost-of-living increase, the following items will increase for 2018:

- (1) The maximum Federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) monthly payment amounts for 2018 under title XVI of the Act will be \$750 for an eligible individual, \$1,125 for an eligible individual with an eligible spouse, and \$376 for an essential person;
- (2) The special benefit amount under title VIII of the Act for certain World War II veterans will be \$562.50 for 2018;
- (3) The student earned income exclusion under title XVI of the Act will be \$1,820 per month in 2018, but not more than \$7,350 for all of 2018;
- (4) The dollar fee limit for services performed as a representative payee will be \$42 per month (\$80 per month in the case of a beneficiary who is disabled and has an alcoholism or drug addiction condition that leaves him or her incapable of managing benefits) in 2018; and
- (5) The dollar limit on the administrative-cost fee assessment charged to an appointed representative such as an attorney, agent, or other

person who represents claimants will be \$93 beginning in December 2017.

The national average wage index for 2016 is \$48,642.15. This index affects the following amounts:

- (1) The Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) contribution and benefit base will be \$128,400 for remuneration paid in 2018 and self-employment income earned in taxable years beginning in 2018;
 - (2) The monthly exempt amounts under the OASDI retirement earnings test for taxable years ending in calendar year 2018 will be \$1,420 for beneficiaries who will attain their Normal Retirement Age (NRA) (defined in the *Retirement Earnings Test Exempt Amounts* section below) after 2018 and \$3,780 for those who attain NRA in 2018;
 - (3) The dollar amounts ("bend points") used in the primary insurance amount (PIA) formula for workers who become eligible for benefits, or who die before becoming eligible, in 2018 will be \$895 and \$5,397;
 - (4) The bend points used in the formula for computing maximum family benefits for workers who become eligible for benefits, or who die before becoming eligible, in 2018 will be \$1,144, \$1,651, and \$2,154;
 - (5) The taxable earnings a person must have to be credited with a quarter of coverage in 2018 will be \$1,320;
 - (6) The "old-law" contribution and benefit base under title II of the Act will be \$95,400 for 2018;
 - (7) The monthly amount deemed to constitute substantial gainful activity (SGA) for statutorily blind persons in 2018 will be \$1,970. The corresponding amount for non-blind disabled persons will be \$1,180;
 - (8) The earnings threshold establishing a month as a part of a trial work period will be \$850 for 2018; and
 - (9) Coverage thresholds for 2018 will be \$2,100 for domestic workers and \$1,800 for election officials and election workers.
- According to section 215(i)(2)(D) of the Act, we must publish the benefit increase percentage and the revised table of "special minimum" benefits within 45 days after the close of the third calendar quarter of 2017. We must also publish the following by November 1: The national average wage index for 2016 (215(a)(1)(D)), the OASDI fund ratio for 2017 (section 215(i)(2)(C)(ii)), the OASDI contribution and benefit base for 2018 (section 230(a)), the earnings required to be credited with a quarter of coverage in 2018 (section 213(d)(2)), the monthly exempt amounts under the Social Security retirement earnings test for 2018 (section 203(f)(8)(A)), the