



PR# 042

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Government of Belize to Launch COVID-19 Cash Transfer Program**

Belmopan. December 15, 2020. 12:00 p.m.

The Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs, in partnership with the National Bank of Belize Limited, Digi, and Belize Social Investment Fund, is launching a cash-transfer program to provide support to vulnerable households affected by COVID-19.

The Belize COVID-19 Cash Transfer Program (BCCAT) will provide supplementary short-term emergency cash to households that have not qualified for other social assistance schemes. Beneficiaries will receive approximately \$150 to \$600 per month depending on the household composition. So far, 36,000 beneficiaries have been assessed through the Food Assistance Program for the cash-transfer with priority being placed on poor families with pregnant women, children, the elderly, and persons living with a physical disability.

The BCCAT application will be open to the public from December 15 to 23, 2020, for families who meet the eligibility requirement and did not apply in the first instance. Households that apply will be required to participate in a poverty assessment and must meet the program's eligibility criteria in order to benefit. Countrywide screening and enrolment into BCCAT are being conducted in eight phases.

BCCAT beneficiaries will be notified of their successful application and payment dates using MobilePayz, a new mobile payment solution developed by Digi. The application will allow beneficiaries to cash out their funds using their mobile phones. Beneficiaries will be notified of their payment amount, when and where to collect via bi-monthly text messages.

A series of informational ads, frequently asked questions, a website, and two hotlines are being created to provide information on the program design, eligibility requirements, appeals process and payment timelines.

The BCCAT program is being funded by the Government of Belize with funds from the World Bank, which has allocated BZ\$19 million to provide financial assistance to over 18,000 households during a six-month period.

For further information on the BCCAT, applicants can call the Ministry's hotline 0-800-MHD-HELP or 0-800-CALL-MHD during normal working hours (Monday to Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) or visit [humandevlopment.gov.bz/bccat](http://humandevlopment.gov.bz/bccat).

**Ends**