

The Virgin Islands Consortium

New \$12 Minimum Wage Takes Effect Across USVI as Labor Promises Enforcement

Act 9069 pushed the Virgin Islands minimum wage from \$10.50 to \$12 today, with Labor Commissioner Gary Malloy warning that payroll records must reflect the change as businesses face compliance checks and workers weigh the impact.

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Friday, April 26th 2026, marked “Day 0” of the implementation of the new minimum wage rate of \$12.00 an hour across the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Act 9069, which adjusted the minimum wage, required that the new amount take effect ninety days after enactment. The next adjustment to the minimum wage will be on June

1, 2027, when it will increase once more to \$14.00. On June 1, 2028, the minimum wage will move up to \$15.00 per hour. Using economic data, the Virgin Islands Wage Board must then determine the amount that will take effect in June 2029.

The new minimum wage applies to all businesses across the Virgin Islands, both small and large.

Appearing before the Legislature for an unrelated discussion on Friday, Labor Commissioner Gary Malloy reminded business owners that implementation is mandatory. "Everything yesterday could be \$10.50, but from today, we need to see your records to reflect the \$12.00," Malloy said.

The increased minimum wage has been regarded by some as long overdue and perhaps insufficient.

"The reviews are mixed...on both sides. Some employers already have been above that minimum wage, so it's not impacting them," Malloy told Senator Avery Lewis, who inquired about public reviews.

Some smaller businesses, he said, are "complaining a little bit, but they're doing what needs to happen."

Employees, whose paylips will reflect a higher amount, are also standing on either side of the divide. Malloy shared that while some are thrilled, others are "worried that they will be no longer eligible for the social programs."

Senator Lewis, too, shared that he had encountered individuals who feared that their SNAP benefits would be impacted, as they would now earn too much to qualify for those benefits. He characterized these as the "domino effects" of the legislation.

Notwithstanding the public sentiment, the Department of Labor has promised to enforce Act 9069 without exception. "I like to say we come in peace, but if we have to come with enforcement, we are coming with enforcement," he stated. Businesses can expect compliance checks and random visits. Malloy reminded business owners that "we have the authority under Title 24 to ask for your payroll, your records, and to review."