

The Virgin Islands Consortium

31st Legislature's Summer Employment Program Underway, 140 Students Hired

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ST. CROIX - Senate President Neville James announced on Monday that the “2015 LEGVI Summer Employment Program” is in full swing, employing local high school and college students across the territory for the remainder of the summer, according to a press release issued from James' office.

However, it remains unclear as to whether the program was announced to the public, as *The Consortium* received no notification of employment opportunities for the territory's youth being made available by the senate.

According to the press release, this year's program has hired a total of 140 students, placing them in various positions throughout government agencies, both on the local and federal level. Students will be working in their assigned positions for four to six weeks.

Each senator was given the opportunity to hire a total of eight students using funds allotted within the budgetary confines of the Legislature's annual budget. That total of 120 students was augmented by an additional 20 students, who were hired by senators using their office's personal allotments.

Senators praised the program and the opportunity for the Virgin Islands youth to network and explore career options.

"I thank the Senate President and welcome the opportunity to participate in this year's summer program. A summer program such as this is essential in providing hands on experience for our youth while providing an opportunity to earn finances to assist with their need." - Senator Jean Forde.

"As a longtime supporter of our youth, it gives me hope and great pleasure to participate in the 31st Legislature of the Virgin Islands Summer Employment Program. This Summer Employment Program not only provides income for our youth, but also allows for our young adults to use this summer experience as an opportunity to develop their interests and strengths while finding ways to stand out from the crowd." - Senator Samuel Sanes

"I think this summer internship program is a wonderful engagement with the youth and their educational pursuits. I was pleased to place students in areas of their interest and look forward to monitoring their progress at their respective colleges and institutions. "This is a good investment for our children. I commend the Senate President for this initiative." – Senator Myron D. Jackson

"The students I've employed are very excited in developing their skills, attitudes, and commitments necessary to succeed in today's world of work. Their gaining exposure to various exciting career industries, and interacting with dynamic working professionals." – Senator Kurt Vialet

"I have been so pleased to offer these internships through my office as a result of the Senate President's initiative. The excitement of the young people has been palpable, and I am certain that this opportunity will have an enduring impact as they continue on their various career paths." – Senator Tregenza A. Roach

"It was a pleasure to place students with employers in their career interests. We have employed potential businessmen, sports directors, registered nurses, information technologists, construction managers, marketers, and financial gurus. Each student has brought value to the employers and each student has received experience relevant to their chosen career path. Being able to facilitate such a union is truly the essence of investing in the Territory's future." – Senator Clifford F. Graham

"We made it a priority to expose these students to potential careers in locally relevant industries. This summer my office placed four young men in entry level jobs in the marine industry, where Virgin Islanders remain sorely under represented. It is critical that we provide opportunities and training for the kind of work that is actually in demand here in the territory." Senator Almando "Rocky" Liburd.

Senator Terrence “Positive” Nelson expressed his appreciation to Senate President James for identifying the funds to operate the six weeks summer employment program and is pleased to have had the opportunity to hire eight energetic students, ranging from high school freshmen to juniors in college who will gain valuable work experience, new skills and possibly discover their future career paths at the end of the program.

“This was a positive experience for our students,” said Nelson.

Senate President James said no preference, in terms of number of students employed, was given to any senator, irrespective of majority versus minority.

“It is always a pleasure to give students an opportunity to explore career options, build their networks, and polish their skills in professionalism and leadership. This year’s program was realized through the support of the majority caucus, allowing me to re-implement a program that has benefited many of our young people over the years,” James concluded.

Feature Image: Aerial view of the Earl B. Ottley Legislative building in St. Thomas.