

The Virgin Islands Consortium

First Set Of VIPD Officers Will Leave For New York Police Academy In April

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Ernice Gilbert **January 26, 2016**



ST. THOMAS -- The first batch of Virgin Islands Police Department officers will depart the territory for training at the New York Police Academy in April, according to Governor Kenneth Mapp, speaking during his second State of the Territory Address here on Monday night. The announcement fulfills yet another [promise the governor made early in his administration](#).

"Tonight, I am pleased to announce that the New York Police Department has approved our request to accept and train Virgin Islands Police Officers at the New York Police Academy. Our attorney general and legal counsel for the NYPD are finalizing a memorandum of understanding and legal agreements so we may begin. In April of this

year, the first 8 police officers from the territory will be sent to New York City for training," Governor Mapp said.

He added: "All officers selected for this training will be asked, as a condition of attending the academy, to commit to a minimum period of service to the VIPD upon their return. Our objective is to dispatch 16 officers per year representing both districts for training at the New York Police Academy."

In an [exclusive interview](#) with The Consortium earlier this month, Mr. Mapp revealed that the youngest officers of the VIPD would be trained at the New York City Police Academy, after NYPD Commissioner William Bratton approved an agreement sealing the partnership.

"We're happy to have the NYPD as the mentor agency for VIPD, and we're going to be doing a tremendous amount of cross-training and collaboration in bringing together and modernizing our law enforcement capacity in the territory," said the governor.

It's part of Mr. Mapp's strategy to improve the police department's standing. He also mentioned a VIPD assessment that was conducted in 2015, and how it was being used to shape the VIPD's improvement efforts.

And senior officers will receive training as well: "We will send more senior officers to specialized and leadership training courses in investigations, forensic science, traffic and community policing. Last summer we sent 23 police officers representing both districts of the School Security Bureau unit to the National Association of School Resource Officers for training," he said.

In the interview earlier this month, the governor said a partnership between the University of the Virgin Islands and [John Jay College of Criminal Justice](#) was being formalized that would "open up and restart at UVI the curriculum for criminal justice administration, and police science courses," which would speed up the recruitment process. According to Mr. Mapp, there are "tremendous vacancies" at the VIPD and Bureau of Corrections waiting to be filled.

As for progress on the longstanding federal oversight of the VIPD, the territory's leader said, "For the first time from since we've been under the consent degree, Judge Curtis V. Gomez commended Police Commissioner Richards and the team at the VIPD for making tremendous progress just in [2015] on the issues under the consent decree."

And on improvements at the Bureau of Corrections, the governor, who announced [pay increases for BOC employees last night](#), said Judge Wilma Lewis had commended Director Rick Mulgrav for progress made, even while under a 21-year federal consent decree that still remains.

"These kinds of works and efforts and collaborations are going to bore the territory tremendous results as we move forward to the future," Mr. Mapp concluded.