

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Government Of The Virgin Islands Now Hiring: Over 800 Jobs Available, Mapp Says

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ST. THOMAS -- Dust off and make current your résumé, and [apply for a job](#) with the Government of the Virgin Islands; as there are currently 876 funded vacancies waiting to be filled, Governor Kenneth Mapp said during his State of the Territory Address here on Monday.

The announcement, which was also made during an interview with The Consortium [weeks before the address](#), is used by the governor to answer questions aimed at his incomplete promise to hire 1,000 employees during his first year in office. He revealed, however, that 590 new employees had been hired by his administration in 2015.

"The Government of the Virgin Islands is now hiring teachers, police officers, firefighters, EMTs, correction officers, DPNR enforcement officers, revenue agents, school lunch workers, environmental enforcement officers, doctors, nurses, administrative personnel and recreation leaders to name a few. These 876 funded vacant positions are in addition to the 590 new employees we have hired since January 5, 2015," the governor said at the Earl B. Ottley Legislature on Monday.

During an interview [just days preceding the 2014 General Election](#), then-gubernatorial candidate Mapp said part of the strategy was to eliminate overtime, which would then save considerable dollars and enable the hiring of new workers. He used the Virgin Islands Police Department as an example.

"We have police officers working two and three shifts, two three and four days each and every week without consent -- meaning the employees don't have any say; they have to do it -- because we don't have enough bodies. So we spend twelve to fourteen million dollars [a year] on overtime, but nobody is stopping to say, 'wait a minute, we're spending that kind of money in overtime, but we don't have enough police officers.'"

In June of 2015, during [a Committee On Finance hearing](#) at the Frits E. Lawaetz Legislative Hall, VIPD Commissioner Delroy Richards, Sr., revealed that the force was expending \$11 million annually on overtime pay, almost matching Mr. Mapp's assessment even before he became governor.

The funding for the 876 vacancies was made available in the 2015-16 budget. But the governor also announced pay raises to a myriad of government department and agencies, the [most recent](#) being the Department of Education with its over 3,000 classified employees, the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, Bureau of Corrections and the Human Services. He'd [previously announced](#) pay raises for the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the Division of Personnel, the Virgin Islands Police Department (to include sworn and civilian personnel), the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs, the Virgin Islands Fire Service, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Finance.

Asked by The Consortium how would the administration sustain the salary increases, the governor said there were new sources of revenue coming online, although he didn't identify any, and added that his administration would increase the budget to some degree.

"[The pay raises] are sustainable because a number of these raises are going to be shared by federal dollars because some of these will include federal employees," he said, adding that there was growth in the government's revenue stream, and monies owed were being paid. "And we believe that we can, to a certain level, allow an increase to the budget of the Virgin Islands without busting the budget," the governor said.