

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Division Of Personnel Fails Again; Out Of 876, Only 9 Jobs Posted On Website

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ST. CROIX -- Governor Kenneth Mapp caused a [stir of excitement](#) by announcing that there were 876 funded government jobs waiting to be filled. He encouraged residents and diasporas to send in their resumes. In fact, the announcement was a major part of the governor's [second](#) State of the Territory Address.

"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 January 25.

But following the governor's lofty proclamation, a Consortium story making known that new jobs had come online within the GVI, exposed a major problem: the Division of Personnel was woefully unprepared not only to handle the load of inquiries, but to post jobs availability on its website.

A press release issued on Friday stated that the division had faced "various technical difficulties while trying to upload an increased volume of information related to the number of new job listings." And Milton Potter, the division's director, promised job seekers a wide array of job options by Monday.

"We will focus earliest on filling vacancies at the police and education departments, as well as the Corrections Bureau," he said. "However, in the next few days we will also be posting listings for job openings in Human Services, Public Works, Health and the Bureau of Internal Revenue." But a quick scan on Monday and early Tuesday of the website showed openings for police officer, tax revenue clerk, network system support specialist, receptionist/collector, office manager, mass transit bus operator and social worker. In total, according to the website, only [9 openings](#) were available -- a far cry from the governor's 876 number. Furthermore, there was not a single opening on the site for the Department of Education; an area Mr. Potter said would be top priority.

Mr. Potter indicated that some of the vacancies required updates before they could be posted, and that the public would see "new additions to the job listings on a regular basis over the next few weeks as this information is finalized." But with near 900 vacancies, many of which are critical, and with unemployed residents hoping to start work soon, the process, in its current form, stands to discourage job seekers from applying for work with the government.

And funding for these jobs were included in the government's 2015-16 budget, which means which means that with each passing month, monies set aside to hire employees sit unspent. The job openings were also a way of decreasing the amount of funds the government expends on overtime, as various lawmakers have argued that these funds could be used to employ new people, which would in turn spur more economic activity locally.

"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,'" Mr. Mapp told The Consortium during [an interview in 2014](#) preceding the general elections.

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.