

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Residents Will Receive Tax Refunds By Mid-December, Mapp Tells The Consortium

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Ernice Gilbert **December 02, 2016**



Governor Kenneth Mapp has assured this publication that come mid-December, the Public Finance Authority will release funds to the Bureau of Internal Revenue to make tax refund payments to residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The news will sure to please residents who are depending on their refunds as the holiday season draws near. But not all 2016 tax refunds will be paid in December, the governor said.

"I don't know that we will pay all of it out," Mr. Mapp told The Consortium Thursday night following a [candlelight vigil](#) held at Fort Christianvaern as part of World AIDS Day

activities. "When we close on the [working capital loan](#) around December the 15, part of that money is going to be used for tax refunds."

Asked whether that meant residents would see refund checks in their mailboxes before Christmas, the governor reiterated his statement.

"There will be. I'm telling you, there will be," he said, referring to tax refunds this month. "I can't tell you how much, but when we pull down the working capital loan, which will be closing around the 15-16 of December, the commissioner of Finance will release some funds."

Residents have been frustrated because tax refunds that government officials said [would be released by Thanksgiving](#) following the passage and subsequent approval of the governor's \$247 million working capital measure -- which, through an amended sponsored by Senator Nereida Rivera-O'Reilly, secured some \$15 million in refunds -- [were never issued.](#)

But, as stated by the governor, funds from the working capital measure won't be available until December 15, after closing. (PFA officials did make mention of a line of credit with about \$60 million that the government had available, and the possible immediate drawdown of \$40 million from the working capital measure even before it closes.)

Last month, the Mapp administration's communications director, Cherie Munchez, sidestepped the issue relative to why refunds weren't paid out in November; she would only say that the Mapp administration had issued over \$64 million in tax refunds. She also shifted the goalpost, adding that the administration would continue working diligently to make available refund checks to residents by this Christmas; a promise, through Mr. Mapp's confirmation last night, that should hold.

In all fairness, the Mapp administration has delivered its promise on refund checks. It [lifted a freeze](#) on refunds that had been instituted by the de Jongh administration, and has since delivered overwhelming, with payments dating back to 2012.