

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Base Pay For Teachers To Start At \$44,000 From August 1, Gov't Minimum Wage Rises To \$13 Per Hour

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Governor Kenneth Mapp on Monday at the West Indian Company in St. Thomas made some announcements affecting government employees and the wider territory, the most significant being the signing of an [executive order](#) that increases the base pay of the entire executive branch of government, which includes most government employees, bar the legislative and judicial branches of government, along with government-owned autonomous and semi-autonomous agencies. The governor encouraged the aforementioned to increase their minimum wage as well.

As of August 1, the minimum wage of government employees in the executive branch will be \$13 per hour or \$27,040 annually. Before the governor's executive order, the

minimum wage of government employees stood at \$9.61 per hour, or \$20,000 annually. The minimum wage of private sector employees currently stands at \$10.50 per hour.

Along with the minimum wage increase for government employees, the governor also announced increases in starting salary for all departments and agencies, including the Department of Education: Beginning August 1, the starting salary of teachers territory-wide will be \$44,000 annually, or roughly \$21.15 per hour. (If a teacher's base salary is at or above \$44,000 annually, this teacher will see no change in pay, the governor said.)

Teachers have long been calling for a salary increase, and Mr. Mapp is hoping that the base pay raise will help slow the flow of educators who leave the territory for better paying education jobs on the mainland.

Watch: Mapp announces pay increases at press conference

[View the original embedded media](#)

"It's about providing a living wage for workers in the Virgin Islands," the governor said, giving a reason for his momentous action.

Along with the Department of Education, the following departments and agencies were also included in the governor's executive order for base pay increases.

The Department of Health

- Emergency Medical Technician, Basic: \$35,159
- Emergency Medical Technician, Intermediate: \$37,100
- Emergency Medical Technician, Paramedic: \$41,140
- Environmental Officer: \$37,100

The Department of Planning and Natural Resources

- Enforcement Officer Recruit: \$33,000 while on probation; \$38,000 once probation period is completed.
- An Environmental Officer of any rank beneath the rank of chief who completes and maintains an annual certification as a registered EMT, Basic, will receive a salary increase of \$4,500 annually.

The Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs

- Enforcement Officer Recruit: \$33,000 on probation; \$38,000 once probation period is completed.

Bureau of Corrections

- Officer Cadets: \$35,000 on probation; \$40,000 upon completion of probation period
- The salary of a Corrections officer of any rank below chief will increase by \$4,500 annually once this officer completes and maintains EMT, Basic, certification.

VI Fire Service

- Fire Fighter Recruit: \$33,000 during probation period; \$38,000 upon completion of probation.
- The salary of a firefighter in any rank beneath chief increases by \$4,500 if this firefighter is able to maintain EMT, Basic certification.

Virgin Islands Police Department

- Base salary for police officers [was increased from \\$30,715 to \\$40,953 in June](#). However, it was also included in the governor's executive order (albeit at a lesser amount of \$40,000).

Department of Human Services

- Social Worker I: \$45,130
- Social Worker II: \$49,455
- Social Worker III: \$54,180
- Social Worker IV: \$57,395
- Teachers employed with the Department of Human Services (D.H.S.) for the Head Start Program who meet the qualifications as teachers employed at the Department of Education (D.O.E.), shall be paid an annual income equal to the August 1, 2018 base salary at D.O.E. of \$44,000
- Preschool Teacher Assistant at D.H.S. and Head Start: \$35,000

Governor Mapp told The Consortium that the salary increases will be paid for and sustained by economic growth, including the recently ratified oil refining agreement on the south shore of St. Croix, along with economic activity spurred by hurricane recovery projects.

"None of the revenues that are going to be derived from the Limetree Bay [agreement] is currently contained in the proposed Fiscal Year 2019 budget," Mr. Mapp said. "And as you may know, the Fiscal Year 2019 budget provides for \$131 million of new revenues as a result of the recovery and the projects that we are undertaking in the community. And so these revenues that we expect within the next year have to be quantified and added into our budgets that will be able to accommodate these changes in salary, but more importantly, allow us the opportunity to drive our recruitment campaign forward."

[Read the original document](#)

Corrections: July 30, 2018

Because of a text error, our original title for this story said the minimum wage for government employees was raised to \$13.25, however, the correct figure is \$13.

The government minimum wage as \$9.61, not 7.25. We've updated the story.