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\$7.7 Million in Retroactive Payments to Current and Former Gov't Employees Made as of May 2022; \$173 Million Still Owed

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Division of Personnel Director Cindy Richardson told the Senate Committee on Finance Wednesday that the government of the Virgin Islands owes \$173.17 million in retroactive payments to former and some current employees.

Testifying before the committee, she said that one of her department's focuses last fiscal year, which got carried over into the 2023 fiscal year, is the repayment of retroactive payments to retirees over the age of 65 and survivors of deceased retirees.

Ms. Richardson said that as of May 31, 2022, \$7.7 million had been paid out to 4,600 individuals. “This payment impacted retirees who were owed past retroactive payments for the period of the Fiscal Year 1990 through Fiscal Year 2001,” she told the committee while giving testimony on Personnel's proposed fiscal year 2023 executive budget.

Sharing more clarity on the payments, Cordell Rhymer Jr, chief of Human Resources at Personnel, said that the starting amount owed was \$221 million and that was calculated prior to 2010.

“In 2010 when individuals, former and current government employees were paid 16.75 percent of that total obligation, is what you see in the chart. We wanted to show where we started from,” he said while explaining that Personnel has been working to make it clear to individuals and the estate of survivors what they are owed.

“So even individuals who were paid back in 2010, some individuals may have been paid, some individuals may have been deceased... we are trying to make it totally transparent and as we move forward, individuals can see what they were owed, what they were paid and what they are entitled to moving forward,” Mr. Rhymer explained to Senator Dwayne DeGraff, who was seeking details about the type of information that can be found on the Division of Personnel website via the portal, seen [here](#).

That portal allows retirees and survivors of deceased retirees to query the website using personal identifiable information which gives them the ability to view the anticipated payout. Originally, when the retroactive project was conducted, it was determined the 10,715 employees (living and deceased) had to be paid.

Regarding the 8 percent salary restoration, Ms. Richardson told the committee that it is of high priority for her department. The 8 percent was deducted during the period of July 28, 2011, through September 30th, 2013 during the John P. de Jongh administration. “We encourage all payees to refer to the [portal for additional information](#),” she said.

Ms. Richardson also told the committee that the team at the Department of Finance in collaboration with the Information Technology team at the Division of Personnel have conducted further analysis to determine the actual hours worked for each employee.

She explained that the team captured and shared employee-related data with the staff at the Schneider Regional Medical Center and Juan F. Luis Hospital. “This was critical because both institutions separated from the central government’s financial system during the time of the salary reduction,” she told the committee, revealing that payments were already processed for thousands of employees.

“As of May 2022, [8 percent salary restoration payments] totaling over \$41.9 million were processed to more than 6,000 current and former employees. Thus far, 118 survivors have been paid a total of \$153,889.23. Our survivor payments are currently being paid out on a weekly basis once all documentation has been received,” she said while reminding the senators that the project is a collaborative effort between the Division of Personnel and the Dept. of Finance.