

# COUNTY CONNECTIONS

The Newsletter of the  
Virginia Association of Counties

September 7, 2018



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By Sherrin Alsop | VACo President

## Spotlight on Early Childhood

## 2018 Presidential Initiative: Healthy Virginia Counties in Action



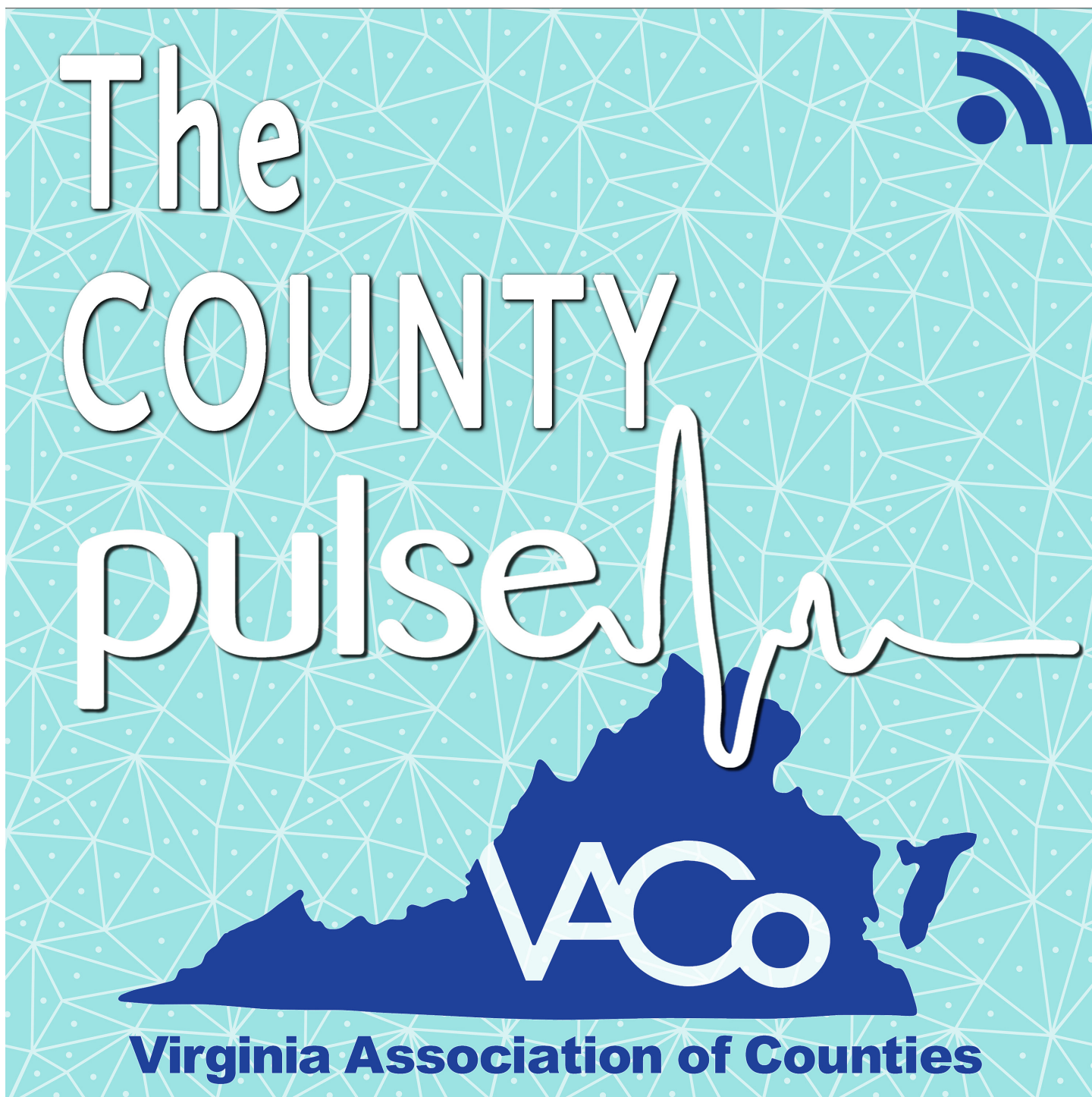
The start of each school year is always a time of new beginnings, especially as children board the bus for the first day of kindergarten. While the first day of school often marks the official start of a child's journey into formal education, research has demonstrated that the initial steps on that path are taken years before his or her enrollment. A child's arrival at kindergarten ready to learn is the culmination of developmental processes that began before birth and were supported by nurturing relationships with caregivers, adequate nutrition, and appropriate intellectual stimulation.

In my August columns, we looked at the effects of trauma in early childhood and how adverse childhood experiences could affect health outcomes later in life. This month, we'll be looking more deeply at the importance of early childhood and how investments in our youngest residents can prepare children for healthy lives as adults.

### Why early childhood matters

Anyone who has observed a small child working to master a new skill such as speech or walking knows intuitively that very young children are continuously absorbing information about their surroundings – adults often liken children to sponges, soaking in stimuli and learning how to make sense of the world around them. Modern brain science has also made a strong empirical case for the importance of our early years in the development of the cognitive foundations for future learning. According to Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child, in the first years of life, an estimated one million new neural connections are made every second as the brain's architecture is formed, with more complex cognitive functions built on earlier connections.

**HEALTHY Continued on Page 12**



Guests share the legislative pulse of Virginia Counties with host Dean Lynch. Click on the link below to listen to the next episode. Thank you for listening to the County Pulse Podcast.

## **[VACo County Pulse Podcast](#)**

### **Medicaid Expansion and What it Means for County Governments**

VACo Executive Director Dean Lynch interviews Dr. Jennifer Lee, Director of the Department of Medical Assistance Services, about Medicaid expansion and how her agency is working with local departments of social services, Community Services Boards, and jails on its implementation. Details about new coverage are available at [www.coverva.org](http://www.coverva.org).

## Virginia Retirement System Announces FY 2018 Investment Returns



The Virginia Retirement System (VRS) announced on August 29 that its FY 2018 return on its investment portfolio was 7.5 percent, net of fees. VRS assumes an average annual rate of return of 7 percent, so the FY 2018 performance, by exceeding this target, will help to improve the funded status of VRS's retirement plans. In July, VRS reported to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) that the funded status of the state employee plan was 75.3 percent in FY 2017; the teacher plan was 72.6 percent funded; and the political subdivision plans, in aggregate, were 88 percent funded.

At the same July JLARC meeting, members discussed whether to continue to assume a 7 percent rate of return or to reduce that assumption to a more conservative estimate, and Secretary of Finance Aubrey Layne echoed this concern in [an article in the Richmond Times-Dispatch](#), lauding the strong FY 2018 returns as "great," but cautioning, "I think we're taking a lot of risk in assuming 7 percent based on what the markets are doing." GRS Retirement Consulting, which performed an actuarial audit on VRS earlier this year, reported to JLARC in July that the 7 percent assumption is "reasonable," but suggested VRS might want to re-examine it in the future: "When next reviewing and setting the investment return assumption, VRS should give due consideration to both short-term and long-term investment horizons and document the weighting of each in the next experience study report. The short-term investment horizon is important to consider since a significant portion of VRS's liability is expected to be payable in the short-term." Reducing the assumed rate of investment return would require additional employer contributions.

VRS's FY 2018 performance summary is available at [this link](#). GRS Retirement Consulting's July report to JLARC is available at [this link](#), and VRS's report to JLARC is available at [this link](#).

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

## Regions 7 and 8 Meet in Stafford County



Stafford County hosted representatives from Regions 7 and 8 on August 30 at the Gari Melchers Home and Studio for a lively discussion of issues of concern. Attendees who arrived early had the opportunity to tour the galleries and learn about the career and work of artist Gari Melchers, whose home and studio are preserved on the property.

Attendees participated in a roundtable discussion about top issues in their respective counties. Shared areas of interest included potential additional flexibility in the Children's Services Act that could assist localities in serving children closer to home; transportation needs, including addressing interstate highway congestion and secondary road maintenance, as well as meeting the needs of transit systems; school safety; the importance of affordable internet access in underserved areas; limitations on local flexibility imposed by 2016 legislation regarding proffers, and the potential benefits and drawbacks of impact fees; and stormwater management.

Delegate Bob Thomas discussed issues he expects to be the subject of legislation in the upcoming 2019 Session, including school safety, stormwater management, and the Children's Services Act. He encouraged attendees to continue to have discussions with their legislators about issues of concern, and recommended that counties provide information tailored to individual localities to the extent possible.

Jim Regimbal of Fiscal Analytics, Ltd., made a [presentation](#) about the status of transportation funding in Virginia. He reviewed the changes in funding structure enacted as part of the landmark transportation legislation passed in 2013, pointing out the slow growth in major revenue sources, such as motor fuels taxes, relative to the significant demand for transportation projects, as evidenced by the small portion of applications for funding under the Smart Scale program that are selected for funding. He also discussed challenges in funding for transit capital and operating needs, and explained the policy questions facing the General Assembly as it responds to the United States Supreme Court ruling in the Wayfair case regarding collection of sales and use taxes from remote sellers.

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

# Visit Stafford County and the Gari Melchers Home and Studio



He was one of the most successful painters of his time, sought out by the rich and famous. She was a beautiful, young art student, and his biggest fan. They fell in love on an ocean liner and spent their lives sharing art.

More than a hundred years later, the story of Gari and Corinne Melchers lives on in their home, Belmont. Be a part of this story. Come and explore this unique historic home, tour the stunning studio and art galleries, visit the restored gardens, shop in our museum store, and explore our trails. Share it with someone you love!

The Museum Shop is the official home of the Stafford County Visitor Center, where visitors can find information about Stafford County attractions, restaurants, hotels and other amenities.

SOURCE: [garimelchers.umw.edu](http://garimelchers.umw.edu)



# Mark Your Calendars



**November 11-13, 2018**  
**The Omni Homestead**  
**Bath County, Virginia**

Interested in VACo Education? Attending VACo's Annual Conference is a great way to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing localities today. VACo members discover innovative ways to solve problems and meet opportunities, simply through conversation with other local leaders. Counties across Virginia often face similar concerns, yet community leaders don't always take advantage of an invaluable resource: their neighbor in the next county. With roughly 1,000 local government officials, state representatives, speakers, and exhibitors in attendance, the Annual Conference is the perfect place to learn from and join forces with peers from across the Commonwealth. Don't miss this chance to visit with your neighboring counties, listen to experts, and experience the benefits of collaboration and innovation with your fellow local leaders.

This year's theme is  
**COMMONWEALTH OF OPPORTUNITIES: Preparing Counties for the Future**

The 2018 conference registration form is now available

[Annual Conference Registration Form](#) | [Online Conference Registration Preliminary Agenda](#)



## The School Employee Guidance Program: Meeting teachers where they are

As one suburban school teacher put it: “The stress never ends.”

She was responding to a 2017 Aetna survey that proved she wasn’t alone. The findings showed school employees with a higher prevalence of depression, anxiety and turnover compared to other professions due to a variety of factors such as classroom behavioral issues, increased class sizes and the focus on standardized testing scores.

With more than 1 million public school employees as members, Aetna is addressing the unique needs of this group by launching The School Employee Guidance program, the latest in the company’s ongoing commitment to improve its members’ emotional, physical and mental health.

“A teacher’s workday doesn’t end when the last bell rings. With the School Employee Guidance Program, teachers can connect to support when and how they need us, so that when the first bell rings the next day, they have all the tools in their back pocket to do the job they were inspired to do,” said Brooke Wilson, head of Worklife Services, Aetna Resources for Living.

Many existing school programs have been created in response to a tragic event or crisis, but The School Employee Guidance Program is different because it uses a combination of proactive individual and onsite group training and counseling for student behavior-based conflicts. The program also includes workshops on relevant topics including:

- Preventing burnout
- Coping with anxiety
- Managing challenging interactions
- Handling stress
- Addressing autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and ADHD

Additionally, school employees enrolled in the program have access to a 24/7 help line for clinician support, confidential self-assessments, online webinars and videos on stress management and ADHD, and more.

The program is the result of a 2017 research study that Aetna conducted. The survey included teachers, professional staff and administrators nationwide from a cross-section of large and small districts in high and low communities to determine the top challenges in their industry. The research findings concluded that:

- 80 percent of survey participants said managing class behavior for ADD and ADHD caused significant stress
- 24 percent of survey participants expressed the need for an on-staff counselor, social worker or therapist
- The average class size has almost doubled from 15.1 to 27.1 students over time

To learn more about the program, visit the [Aetna Public Sector website](#) or contact your Aetna representative.

# Health options made easier



## A new offering for VACo members

For more than 160 years, Aetna has helped people lead healthier lives. And now, our **dedicated Public Sector team is providing health solutions to VACo members**, with a focus on long-term cost sustainability, innovative benefit options, and **improved experiences for your members**.

The heart of our VACo offering is consumer-directed coverage, which combines industry-leading health and condition management programs with cost-conscious behavior that **helps Virginia's working families save** for future medical expenses.

Bottom line? The right health plan should do more than just pay medical bills. It should also give you the facts and support you need to make the right decisions. Our customized offer for VACo members – with special programs and online services – will help you understand and use your health care benefits to the fullest. All to help simplify the process, eliminate the guesswork, and bring your health ambitions to life.

### For more information, contact:

**Marcus Duckworth**, Vice President of Client Management

**Phone:** (770) 685-9877

**Email:** DuckworthM@aetna.com

Health benefits and health insurance plans contain exclusions and limitations. Providers are independent contractors and are not agents of Aetna. Provider participation may change without notice. Aetna doesn't provide care or guarantee access to health services. Health information provides general health information and isn't a substitute for diagnosis or treatment by a physician or other health care professional. Information is believed to be accurate as of the production date; however, it's subject to change. For more information about Aetna plans, refer to [aetna.com](http://aetna.com).

As a VACo member, you'll have access to all this, plus some of Aetna's industry-leading interactive member tools, including:

#### **Aetna Member Services Concierge**

Think of this feature as your personal assistant to guide you through the health care process. Your concierge will help answer all your questions, and help find solutions that fit your budget and needs. It's simple – just call one number to get the answers you need, from understanding your benefits to finding the right resources available to you.

#### **Member Payment Estimator tool**

Compare and estimate costs of up to 10 different network doctors or facilities at once. This way, you can make better health care decisions that will help you save on out-of-pocket costs.

#### **Aetna In Touch Care<sup>SM</sup> program**

We help members with the greatest acute and chronic needs to work toward their best possible outcomes. This means you don't need to buy disease or case management to go with it.



[aetna.com](http://aetna.com)



# VACo Board of Directors adopts resolution supporting the applications of Northern Virginia Counties for the location of Amazon HQ2

## RESOLUTION

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

### VACo Amazon HQ2 Resolution

**Whereas**, the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) exists to support county officials and to effectively represent, promote and protect the interests of counties to better serve the people of Virginia; and,

**Whereas**, VACo supports economic development policies and programs that bolster local and regional development efforts; and,

**Whereas**, in 2017 Amazon announced a search for a second headquarters site in North America, called Amazon HQ2, which will be equivalent to Amazon's current campus in Seattle; and,

**Whereas**, Amazon expects to invest over \$5 billion in construction and create 50,000 high-paying jobs at the HQ2 site, with the ongoing operation of Amazon HQ2 expected to create tens of thousands of additional jobs and tens of billions of dollars in additional investment in the surrounding community, including \$7.7 billion in employee compensation and more than \$17 billion in augmented business sales; and,

**Whereas**, three Virginia counties have been selected as finalists for HQ2, including a joint application by Fairfax and Loudoun Counties and an application by Arlington County, all located in Northern Virginia; and,

**Whereas**, such an unprecedented, vast investment will create tremendous economic development benefits to counties throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia, including increased revenues to the Commonwealth, substantial employment opportunities, innovation partnerships and research opportunities for the state's colleges and universities, expanded entrepreneurship in e-commerce and cyber-security, and increased exports spurring global investment in Virginia.

**Now Therefore, be it Resolved** that the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) strongly supports the applications of the Northern Virginia counties for Amazon HQ2 and the benefits such investments will bring to all Virginia counties.

Adopted this seventeenth day of August, 2018.



*JL. C. Aye*  
President, Virginia Association of Counties

*David L. ...*  
Executive Director, Virginia Association of Counties

# VACo Presents Achievement Awards at Board of Supervisors Meetings



Congratulations to Charles City County (top left), Albemarle County (top right), Chesterfield County (center), Page County (bottom left), and Prince George County.



# Join us for a seminar on social security benefits

VACo, in partnership with Nationwide Retirement Solutions, is offering an educational seminar regarding Social Security benefits for county employees in Brunswick County on Tuesday, September 11 from 10 – noon. Our speaker will be Carlo Cordasco, Vice President of the Nationwide Retirement Institute. Mr. Cordasco will speak about all aspects of Social Security benefits. The presentation will last approximately 90 minutes and each attendee will be provided a 360 Analyzer, which is a brief questionnaire they can complete and submit to the Institute for suggested optimal scenarios regarding how and when to take their Social Security benefits. The seminar is extremely robust, and we are very excited about this opportunity to provide such relevant content on a regional level. We will also be offering this program again in Stafford County on October 9. **Any county employees in these regions are invited to participate, regardless of whether their county participates in the Nationwide deferred compensation program.** We anticipate this seminar to be educational and helpful for county employees as they seek to navigate and understand their benefits under SSA.

## Social Security— It's the choice of a lifetime.

*Your choice on when to file could increase your annual benefit by as much as 76%.\**

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*Learn more at our upcoming seminar.*

Filing for Social Security is one of the biggest financial decisions you'll make. That's why it's the choice of a lifetime. At this seminar, you'll learn key filing rules and strategies to help you make the choice that fits with your overall retirement income plan.



Please bring a recent Social Security statement to this seminar. Download your statement on the Social Security website [ssa.gov/myaccount](http://ssa.gov/myaccount).

\* Nationwide as of December 2017. Based on an individual with full retirement age of 66, comparing early filing at age 62 and receiving reduced benefits of 75% of primary insurance amount versus delayed filing at age 70 and receiving credits to increase benefits by 32% of primary insurance amount. NRM-13475AO.3 (01/18)

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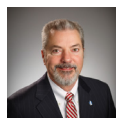
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### SOCIAL SECURITY SEMINAR

**Presented by Carlo Cordasco, VP of Nationwide Retirement Institute  
Tuesday, September 11th from 10 am - 12 noon  
Southside VA Community College - Cavan Workforce Development Center**

**Reserve your spot and see additional details online at  
<https://socialsecurityvaco.timetap.com>**



RSVP your Nationwide® Retirement Specialist:  
**Les Thompson**  
804-399-0459  
[thomps51@nationwide.com](mailto:thomps51@nationwide.com)



Or RSVP your home office Retirement Specialist:  
**Frank McCafferty**  
888-401-5272  
[mccaffff@nationwide.com](mailto:mccaffff@nationwide.com)

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[Click to enlarge](#)

**HEALTHY Continued from Page 1**

With such rapid brain development occurring in these critical early years, children’s experiences early in life have a profound connection with their experiences later in life, even long into adulthood. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation writes in a [policy brief](#), “Research has strongly linked brain, cognitive and behavioral development early in life to an array of important health outcomes later in life, including cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, obesity, preventable morbidity and premature mortality in the United States.” The brief explains that the developing brain may be hampered by “inadequate stimulation and nurturing by adults and toxic stress,” which is thought to change the brain’s structure, in particular the systems that respond to stress. Social factors “such as educational attainment and health-related behaviors” are affected by these developmental effects, and these social outcomes are strongly linked to health outcomes.

**How is Virginia doing?**

In recognition of the connections between well-being in early childhood and later health outcomes, a “Strong Start for Children” is one of the overarching aims of Virginia’s Plan for Well-Being. Goals associated with that aim include reduction in the teen pregnancy rate, reduction in infant mortality for African-American infants, an increase in the number of children who are ready for kindergarten, and an increase in the percentage of third-graders passing the reading Standards of Learning test. State Commissioner of Health Norman Oliver recently reported to the Joint Commission on Health Care on the state’s progress toward its goals in these areas; the [2018 update is available online](#). Pregnancies per 1,000 women ages 15-19 declined in 2016 (the most recent year captured in the 2018 update) to 20.9 and have already met the 2020 target. African-American infant mortality also declined, to 10.7 deaths per 1,000 live births, but rates still exceed the 2020 goal (5.2 deaths per 1,000 live births). The percentage of third-graders demonstrating reading proficiency in 2016-2017 (74.6 percent) declined slightly relative to the 2017 update (75.4 percent in 2015-2016), but remains above the 2016 baseline (69 percent). The percentage of kindergarteners who did not meet literacy skills benchmarks for school readiness increased (to 15.9 percent); the 2020 goal is 12.2 percent.

A 2017 [report](#) by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) cited a 2014 assessment of a representative sample of children’s kindergarten readiness in social skills, self-regulation, literacy, and math through the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP), which found that two-thirds of children assessed were ready for kindergarten in all four areas. Of the one-third of children who were found not to be ready, most of the children lacked appropriate social and self-regulation skills. Budget language adopted in 2018 requires all kindergarteners to be screened with VKRP by the end of the 2019-2020 school year, so more robust data on kindergarten readiness is expected to be available in the future. The same report points out that children living in poverty were less likely to be ready for kindergarten; an estimated 17 percent of children younger than five live in poverty in Virginia. Other risk factors include premature birth or low birth weight and prenatal exposure to alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. In 2015, 9.3 percent of babies in Virginia were born prematurely, and 7.9 percent of babies were underweight at birth; in 2014, 7.8 percent of mothers reported smoking during pregnancy and 0.6 percent of babies were born with neonatal abstinence syndrome.

**What can be done to promote healthy development in early childhood?**

High-quality early childhood programs can help to mitigate some of the risk factors that might otherwise hamper young children’s development, and economists have estimated that such programs provide significant positive returns on investment. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation discusses the long-term protective effects of several programs in a [policy brief](#), pointing out that participants in the Carolina Abecedarian Project in the 1970s, who were studied from early childhood to age 35, demonstrated lower risk factors for cardiovascular and metabolic disease, such as diabetes. Nobel Laureate economist James J. Heckman’s [review](#) of this program and a similar one concluded that “high quality birth-to-five programs for disadvantaged children can deliver a 13 percent per year return on investment.” Economists Arthur J. Rolnick and Rob Grunewald at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis [made a similar case in a 2007 paper](#), citing an annual inflation-adjusted rate of return for several programs of between 7 and 18 percent.

Quality in early childhood programs continues to be the subject of discussion – for example, how best to improve the skills of child care providers and preschool staff when compensation levels are often low – but basic elements of a successful program are generally understood to include a stimulating, language-rich learning environment for children with supportive interactions with caregivers, and often include support for parents or caregivers at home. Early childhood programs can include formal preschool, child care, programs specifically targeted to children with disabilities, and voluntary home visiting programs that may begin even before birth to support at-risk parents.

**HEALTHY Continued on Page 13**

**Key programs in Virginia**

Significant federal, state, and local dollars are invested in early childhood in Virginia, and state policymakers are increasingly interested in maximizing the benefits of these investments. The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation's [2017 Children's Budget Report](#) tallied early childhood spending in Virginia and found that \$1.37 billion in state and federal funds was spent in FY 2018 on children aged 0-4, with 54 percent of that funding supplied by the federal government and 46 percent contributed by the state. The bulk of the state dollars are spent through Virginia's Medicaid program, followed by the Virginia Preschool Initiative, which serves at-risk four-year-olds.

The 2017 JLARC report helpfully categorizes major early childhood programs in Virginia, to include voluntary home visiting programs such as Healthy Families, Resource Mothers, and Nurse-Family Partnership, which all aim to promote parenting skills; pre-kindergarten programs such as the Virginia Preschool Initiative; the child care subsidy program, which helps to support children's development as well as parents' ability to work, and programs for children with special needs (Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education). Localities contribute to many of these programs, such as the Virginia Preschool Initiative, which requires a local match based on the local composite index (with a cap of 0.5). These programs are administered through different state agencies across secretariats, and language in the recently-adopted state budget directs state agencies to examine whether funding could be better used if it were consolidated in an integrated early childhood fund; a report is due in October.

Earlier this summer, Governor Northam issued an [executive order](#) establishing the Children's Cabinet, which is chaired by First Lady Pamela Northam and charged with promoting school readiness, improving access to nutrition for children and pregnant women, enhancing school safety, and coordinating a system of care that responds to childhood trauma and helps to build resilience. First Lady Northam has embarked on a "back to school" tour of early childhood programs and elementary schools with Virginia's Chief School Readiness Officer, Jenna Conway, to promote the importance of early childhood programs in preparing children to succeed in school.

In my next column, I'll be highlighting some of the great work happening in Virginia counties to prepare our youngest residents for healthy, successful lives.

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## Government Relations/ Legislative Liaison

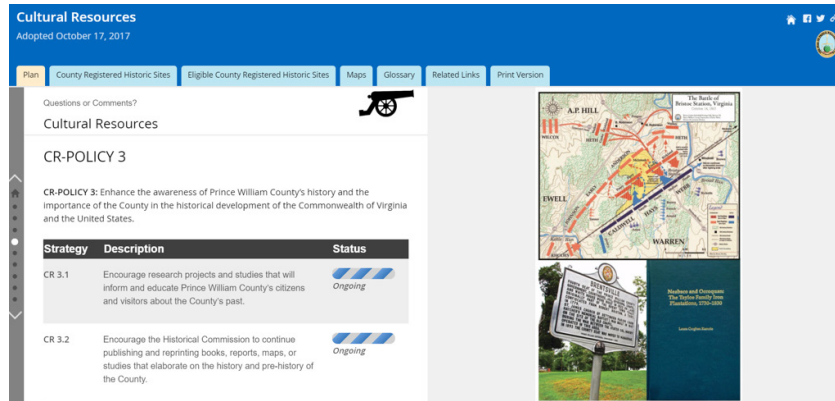
The Virginia Association of Counties seeks a dynamic individual with experience in government relations. Knowledge and experience in local, state and federal government public policy process including legislative, executive and regulatory desired. Strong analytical, oral advocacy and writing skills and a willingness to cover various aspects of government relations required. Problem-solving skills to define problems, collect relevant information and to recommend policy solutions important.



Preference for local or state government experience, particularly within the Commonwealth of Virginia. Demonstrated understanding of local government operations and policies. Public policy experience and knowledge of environmental, human services, education, tax, labor and industry, land-use, tax finance and transportation helpful. Flexibility and ability to work under time constraints and deadlines, and to perform multiple tasks important.

Graduation from an accredited four-year college or university with course work that includes public administration, political science, communications, policy analysis or a related field required. Please provide resume, writing sample, references and salary requirements to the Virginia Association of Counties, 1207 E. Main St., Suite 300 Richmond, VA 23219. [vrussell@vaco.org](mailto:vrussell@vaco.org)

# APA Virginia recognizes several localities for excellent planning



To the left is a screenshot of the Prince William County online comprehensive plan update. Note the status bar that keeps citizens informed. [Click](#) to enlarge.

## They Stepped Up Their Planning Game... And Took Home the Prize.

Updating a comprehensive plan is a ton of work, as every county official knows. But thanks to technology (ArcGIS Story Map Journal), viewing a comprehensive plan that reflects real-time information just got easier for Prince William County residents. The County created an interactive map for its [latest update](#) of the comprehensive plan that allows citizens to select and view layers of information instead of searching in a massive pdf.

"It's such a powerful tool for people to explore," said Long-Range Planning Manager David McGettigan, AICP. By getting away from the traditional paper version, he noted, "the plan doesn't sit on a shelf for five years – it's continuously assessed and monitored."

Nick Rogers, AICP, CZA, Vice President of External Affairs for the Virginia chapter of the American Planning Association (APA) agrees. "Not only is the plan interactive and user-friendly, but the use of technology allows for this to be a living document." APA Virginia recently presented Prince William with its Old Dominion Innovative Approaches of the Year award that recognizes pioneering planning efforts in the Commonwealth.

The interactive map makes it easier for people to learn key facts about a property, such as the parcel's zoning or its location in a floodplain. Patton noted that previously, you had to flip between three different maps for the same parcel to see all the cultural resource information; now, one map does it all.

McGettigan said they experienced some technical challenges in the beginning and benefited from feedback they solicited from the community and from research on what other planners are doing. The team discovered that Plano, Texas, used a progress bar to keep the public informed on its comprehensive plan implementation and liked the idea so much, they adopted it. "I think that's really important, the accountability aspect that every good government has," County Archaeologist Justin Patton commented.

## Winners Circle

APA Virginia recognized several other county and city governments for excellent planning at the 2018 awards ceremony:

Albemarle County Planning Commission, recipient of the Dogwood Award – Virginia's Citizen Planners of the Year, for its [2016 Planning Commission Annual Report](#)

Fairfax County and the City of Bristol, co-winners of the Commonwealth Plan of the Year award. Fairfax for [Embark Richmond Highway](#) (comprehensive plan amendment) and Bristol for its [Comprehensive Plan](#)

Frederick County Conservation Easement Authority, given the Nelsonite Award (Virginia's Planning Advocates of the Year) for its [Landowner Informational Video Series](#)

City of Alexandria earned the Terry Holzheimer Economic Development Award for the zoning overlay for the [Old Town North Arts and Cultural District](#)

City of Norfolk, named Resilient Virginia Community of the Year for its new zoning ordinance, [Building a Better Norfolk – A Zoning Ordinance for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century](#)

APA Virginia will begin accepting nominations for 2019 awards later this fall. For more information, including submission guidelines and deadlines, please contact Nick Rogers at [nrogers@arlingtonva.us](mailto:nrogers@arlingtonva.us).

# Mixed-Delivery Preschool Grant Program



We are pleased to share with you the official [Request for Proposals \(RFP\)](#) and [instructions](#) for applying for the FY19 Mixed-Delivery Preschool Grant Program! The grant program provides Virginia communities the unique opportunity to field-test strategies and solutions to barriers that have prevented all eligible children from participating in Virginia's preschool initiative. Grantees will promote flexible public-private partnerships to increase the proportion of preschoolers served in private child care sites, demonstrating community-driven collaboration and shared decision-making among education leaders.

Completed applications are **due by 5 p.m. on November 9** and will be submitted through an online grant process. You can join an informational webinar reviewing the RFP on Tuesday, September 11 at 2 p.m. by registering [here](#). Additional details about the FY19 Mixed-Delivery Preschool grants, including grant priorities, eligibility requirements, and award amounts can be found in the [Grant Announcement](#).

#### Important dates:

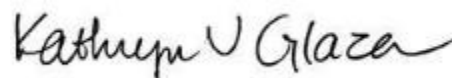
- September 5, 2018 - Request for Proposals released
- September 11, 2018 at 2:00 PM – RFP Informational Webinar [[Register now](#)]
- Week of September 24, 2018 – Individual TA sessions for applicants by phone, as requested
- October 4, 2018 at 2:00 PM – Q&A Webinar [[Register now](#)]
- November 9, 2018, 5 PM - Applications due
- December 2018 – Award notification

\*Technical assistance in the form of webinars, FAQs, and phone calls will be provided throughout the application period.

To receive announcements and reminders about the grant program, follow VECF on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#). Visit our [Mixed-Delivery webpage](#) for all information regarding the grant program and application process. For questions or comments, please send inquires to [mixeddelivery@vecf.org](mailto:mixeddelivery@vecf.org).

A mixed-delivery system made up of early learning services in both public and private settings is not only an important strategy for reaching the most at-risk children but also contributes to an integrated systems approach to quality early education for all young children in Virginia. We hope to engage many of you and your communities in this important work.

Sincerely,



Kathy Glazer | President



## How to Save Time & Money While Giving Employees Benefits They Want

Benefits are an important part of retaining and attracting valuable employees. Budget cuts and the rising costs of healthcare are making it hard for employers to provide their workforces the competitive benefits they expect and deserve. It sometimes seems that the only way to provide these benefits is to shift some of the healthcare cost to the employees.



Pierce Group Benefits' goal is to help our clients navigate through these challenges. We are a family operated, full-service benefits consulting firm that specializes in building comprehensive benefits packages and customized solutions for public sector employees. Pierce Group Benefits is the leading regional provider of employee benefits to the public sector, currently serving over 150,000 employees. Our buying power is a tremendous advantage to both employers' and employees' budgets. We consistently enhance our clients' benefits packages in several ways, often increasing the benefits while reducing or maintaining current rates.

Here are some examples of how Pierce Group Benefits has successfully implemented strategies with our public sector clients:

**Customized Benefits Package** - Benefits should be comprehensive and customized to the age and circumstances of each employee. In evaluating health plans, offering multiple plan designs is an important component in lowering employer costs while meeting the needs of all employees.

Moving non-core benefits to employee-paid voluntary benefits and offering value-added programs are two ways the public sector can provide more customization to offset employees' benefits costs. Voluntary benefits can augment employee benefit portfolios at no additional cost to the employer, and they can help employees avoid higher deductibles and increased out-of-pocket expenses.

**Enhanced Employee Experience** – Modernizing benefits enrollment improves employee satisfaction and saves money for local government employers. A successful benefits program begins with a strong benefits communication strategy. Effective benefits communication encompasses online tools (websites & videos), written materials (benefit booklet), and face-to-face conversations (on-site benefit counselors). Employees of different generations rely on different modes of communication to educate themselves and make benefits decisions.

With the right benefits and cost, an employer can attract and retain the best personnel. But, planning a benefits package is complex and involves making decisions that will impact employers and employees alike. When you partner with Pierce Group Benefits, you can obtain a comprehensive employee benefits package without making sacrifices, without creating more costs, and without having to make cuts elsewhere.



Please visit us at [www.piercergroupbenefits.com](http://www.piercergroupbenefits.com)  
or call at 800-387-5955 to learn more.





*Virginia Freedom  
of Information  
Advisory Council*

## **2018 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOIA) “RECORDS” TRAINING**

October 3 | October 10 | November 7 | November 14

The Commonwealth of Virginia’s Freedom of Information Advisory Council will conduct its 2018 FOIA “Records” training in Richmond starting July 25. The training sessions will be held at the Pocahontas Building located at 900 East Main Street, Richmond, VA 23219, near the Virginia State Capitol.

Citizens, media representatives, public officials, and public employees with an interest in learning more about access to public records under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) are invited to register for this free training presentation. The presentation will provide an overview of the legal requirements regarding access to public records under FOIA, including what is a public record, how to make a public records request, how to respond to records requests, information on exemptions from mandatory disclosure, and the remedies available should a violation occur.

The training sessions are scheduled for October 3, October 10, November 7 and November 14. Each session will provide 1.5 hours of continuing legal education credit for attorneys, and will also count as the required annual training for FOIA officers.

For registration information, check the FOIA Council’s website at <http://foiacouncil.dls.virginia.gov/foiacouncil.htm> OR contact the FOIA Council directly at 866.448.4100.

**Contact:** Darlene Jordan

**Organization:** Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council

**Telephone No:** 804.698.1810 / 866.448.4100

**Email:** [djordan@dls.virginia.gov](mailto:djordan@dls.virginia.gov)

**Website:** <http://foiacouncil.virginia.gov>

## Upcoming broadband conferences focus on increasing internet access



Two separate summits scheduled for this fall will be bringing public and private partners together to seek solutions on providing high speed internet access to unserved areas.

On September 25-26 the Botetourt Broadband Commission (BBC) will be hosting the [Rural Broadband Technology Solutions Summit](#) at the [Greenfield Education & Training Center](#). The objective of the summit is the implementation of advanced, affordable, high capacity internet for all Botetourt County. To achieve this, the BBC is inviting all parties involved and interested in the planning, buildout, procurement, and implementation of high capacity internet in Botetourt County. The BBC will serve to host, facilitate, and connect all components and parties for a collaborative union in an effort to enable a path to meet the summit objective. For more information go to [www.BoCoSummit.com](http://www.BoCoSummit.com).

On October 30 The National Telecommunications and Information Administration's [BroadbandUSA Program](#), in partnership with Virginia's Center for Innovative Technology, will host the [Virginia Broadband Summit in Roanoke](#) at the [South County Library](#). The purpose of the Summit is to engage the public and stakeholders with information to accelerate broadband connectivity, improve digital inclusion, and support local priorities. The Summit will provide information on topics including local broadband planning, funding and engagement with service providers. Speakers and attendees from Virginia, federal agencies and across the country will come together to explore ways to facilitate the expansion of broadband capacity, access and utilization. The Virginia Broadband Summit is open to the public. [Pre-registration](#) is required and space is limited. Registration information, meeting updates, including changes in the agenda, and relevant documents will be available on NTIA's website at [Virginia Broadband Summit – Partnerships for Connecting the Commonwealth](#). For more information, contact: [BroadbandUSAevents@ntia.doc.gov](mailto:BroadbandUSAevents@ntia.doc.gov).

VACo Contact: [Joe Lerch, AICP](#)

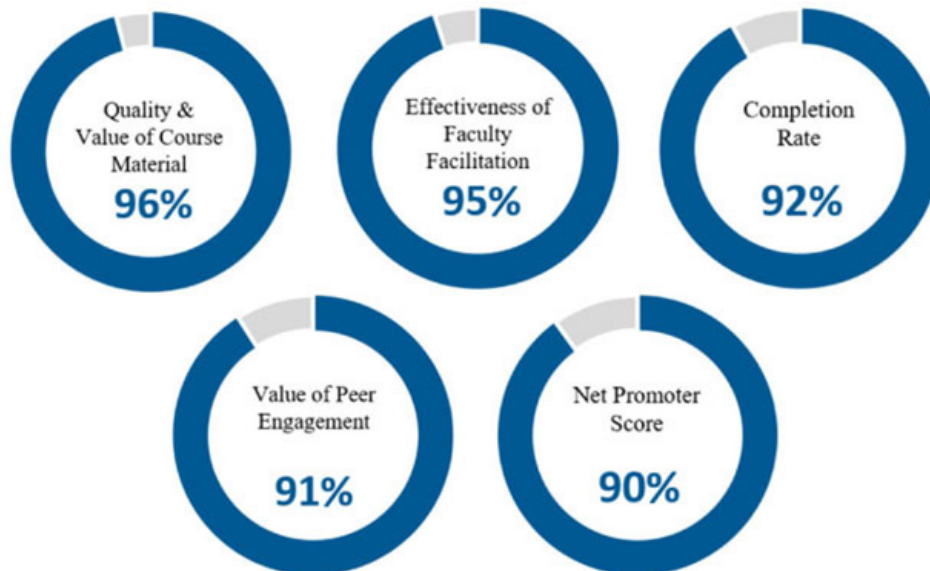


Special thanks to those of you who have enrolled individuals in NACo's new [High Performance Leadership Academy](#), the 12-week online program to enable frontline county staff to achieve their fullest potential and become more effective leaders.

More than 100 professionals from dozens of counties have enrolled in the inaugural cohorts beginning on September 17. And there is still time to enroll.

Anyone who [completes this form](#) will be contacted for enrollment or to discuss the program. Please submit nominees as soon as possible so that we can optimize the cohorts for our charter session.

The enrollment form includes information about the program, and here are some highlights that help convey how impactful this program has been to previous participants across the private, public and non-profit sectors:



This high-impact program is financially accessible thanks to NACo's scholarship program. The course costs \$495 to each NACo member county's first enrollee, and \$1,495 thereafter.

Join us in strengthening counties' frontline leaders and driving success at a local level.

# SIGN UP

## Questions

Brian Namey, Director of Public Affairs  
202.942.4220 | [bnamey@naco.org](mailto:bnamey@naco.org)



VACo Webinar | Chris Piper | Commissioner of Elections

### Commissioner of Elections Webinar on Mis-Assigned Voters

Commissioner of Elections Chris Piper presented information on the issue of potentially mis-assigned voters in a July 30 webinar hosted by VACo. Commissioner Piper discussed efforts at the Department of Elections to identify voters who may have been mis-assigned, as well as the potential complications that may result from situations where a house straddles a boundary line or other “edge cases.” An initial review of Congressional district assignments was completed by the Department earlier this year, and the Commissioner indicated that the Department’s review of state House and Senate districts was being transmitted to general registrars last week. The Commissioner advised members of local governing bodies to discuss the issue with their general registrars and legal counsel. VACo will continue to work with the Administration and legislature on potential solutions to this issue.

A recording of the webinar is available on [VACo's YouTube channel](#).

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)



Asset Protection Group “AP Group” is proud to continue its partnership with the Virginia Association of Counties “VACo.” Aflac is proud to be part of AP Group’s team. This unique partnership is being led by Monty Dise, President of AP Group. This relationship will benefit VACo members by combining AP Group’s experience in designing comprehensive benefit solutions with Aflac’s sixty years of experience in the public sector serving over 36,000 clients. This partnership will help VACo members navigate a constantly evolving benefits landscape while providing exclusive value added benefits and incentives through Aflac to VACo members.



Please contact Monty Dise, [mdise@apgroupinc.com](mailto:mdise@apgroupinc.com) or at 1-800-644-9840, to learn more about this opportunity.





# Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

## Upcoming Kentland Farm Beef & Forage Day to offer latest techniques and practical tips to producers

On Wednesday, September 12, 2018, Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences will host the Kentland Beef & Forage Day. This event will highlight the research at Kentland Farm as well as focus on hay quality and baleage production. Speakers from VCE, Virginia Tech, and industry will deliver workshops and demonstrations on the following topics:

- Hay quality
- Hay storage
- Baleage production
- Low-lignin alfalfa
- Vegetable production
- Estimating forage mass
- Drones in livestock systems
- Dairy Science Complex tour



Kentland exists to support the research, teaching, and Extension programs of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, which include many of Virginia's major agricultural crop and livestock species. Programs are conducted at the farm by many different colleges and departments of the university, including Engineering, Science, Veterinary Science, and Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. The farm is rich in local history, and Virginia Tech has maintained that history through the manor house, slave cemetery, Native American sites, and other early farm buildings.

**Registration:** \$10 - includes lunch

**To register, please send contact info and payment to:**

Pulaski County Extension Office  
Attn: Kentland Field Day  
143 Third Street NW Suite 3  
Pulaski, VA 24301

Checks payable to: "Treasurer - Virginia Tech"


# employment opportunities




The Virginia Association of Counties accepts employment ads in a PDF file or a link to a job site. Please include information for applying, and a link to other important information. Please do not fax your employment ad. VACo members are not charged for placing an employment ad. The cost is \$50 per ad for non-VACo members. VACo publishes the ad on its website and mobile app as well as the upcoming County Connections issue. If you have any questions or concerns, please email [Valerie Russell](mailto:Valerie.Russell@vacounty.org).

 **GOVERNMENT RELATIONS/LEGISLATIVE LIAISON** | Virginia Association of Counties

 **SOLID WASTE DIVISION MANAGER** | Bedford County | Posted September 7


 **ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY III** | City of Chesapeake | Posted September 7

 **REVENUE SPECIALIST/DEPUTY COMMISSIONER I** | New Kent County | Posted September 7


 **CERTIFIED POLICE OFFICER I/II** | James City County | Posted September 7

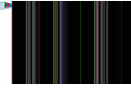
 **PLANNING DIRECTOR** | Town of Christiansburg | Posted September 6

 **REAL PROPERTY FIELD INSPECTOR** | New Kent County | Posted September 6

 **COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR** | Bedford County | Posted September 5


 **COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR** | Surry County | Posted September 5


 **DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF - OPERATIONS** | Bedford County | Posted September 5


 **TRANSIT MANAGER** | Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission | Posted September 5

 **COMMERCIAL SENIOR REAL ESTATE APPRAISER** | Fairfax County | Posted September 5


 **PLANNER I/II/III** | James City County | Posted September 5

 **SENIOR UTILITY LOCATOR** | James City County | Posted September 5

 **UTILITY LOCATOR** | James City County | Posted September 5

 **CONVENIENCE CENTER ATTENDANT** | James City County | Posted September 5

 **MIDDLEBURG TOWN ADMINISTRATOR** | Town of Middleburg | Posted September 4

 **BENEFIT PROGRAMS SUPERVISOR** | New Kent County | Posted August 30

 **UNIT SUPPORT STAFF** | Virginia Cooperative Extension | Posted August 30

 **DIRECTOR OF FACILITIES & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES** | Albemarle County | Posted August 30



**INDUSTRIAL  
PRETREATMENT COORDINATOR** | Stafford County | Posted August 30



**VICTIM WITNESS  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR** | Westmoreland County | Posted August 29



**GIS ANALYST/PUBLIC  
SAFETY HELP DESK SPECIALIST** | Orange County | Posted August 29



**DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC  
WORKS** | City of Harrisonburg | Posted August 28



**BUILDING CODE  
TECHNICAL ASSISTANT/  
COMPLIANCE OFFICER** | Essex County | Posted August 27



**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR** | Town of Middleburg, VA | Posted August 27



**DIRECTOR OF PARKS  
AND RECREATION** | King George County | Posted August 27



**CUSTOMER SERVICE  
REPRESENTATIVE** | James City County | Posted August 27



**REGIONAL JAIL  
SUPERINTENDENT** | Southside Regional Jail Authority | Posted August 27



**BUILDING OFFICIAL** | Powhatan County | Posted August 24



**SENIOR APPRAISER** | Albemarle County | Posted August 24



**MANAGEMENT ANALYST  
II** | Albemarle County | Posted August 24



**PROJECT COORDINATOR** | Albemarle County | Posted August 24



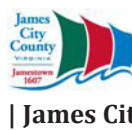
**CAREER OPPORTUNITIES** | Gloucester County | Posted August 24



**CSA FISCAL ANALYST** | Chesterfield County | Posted August 24



**BENEFIT PROGRAM  
ASSISTANT** | James City County | August 24



**TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR** | James City County | Posted August 24



**TRANSIT BUS  
OPERATOR (PART TIME)** | James City County | Posted August 24



**SHELVER CLERK** | James City County | Posted August 24



**ENVIRONMENTAL  
INSPECTOR I/II/III** | James City County | Posted August 24



**HUMAN SERVICES  
ASSISTANT II** | Montgomery County | Posted August 23



**OFFICE SPECIALIST -  
SCREENER** | Montgomery County | Posted August 22



**ENVIRONMENTAL CODE  
ENFORCEMENT OFFICER I** | Campbell County | Post August 22



**SENIOR NETWORK  
ENGINEER** | City of Winchester | Posted August 22



**HUMAN RESOURCES  
DIRECTOR** | Gloucester County | Posted August 22



**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT  
PROFESSIONAL** | Stafford County | Posted August 22



### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**President:** Sherrin C. Alsop | King and Queen County  
**President-Elect:** Tim A. Reeves | Wythe County  
**1st Vice President:** Stephen W. Bowen | Nottoway County  
**2nd Vice President:** Jeff C. McKay | Fairfax County  
**Secretary Treasurer:** Donald L. Hart | Jr., Accomack County  
**Immediate Past President:** Mary W. Biggs | Montgomery County

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**Executive Director:** Dean A. Lynch, CAE  
**General Counsel:** Phyllis A. Errico, Esq., CAE  
**Director of Administration and Finance:** Vicky D. Steinruck, CPA  
**Director of Communications:** A. Gage Harter  
**Director of Government Affairs:** Katie Boyle  
**Director of Government Relations:** Chris J. McDonald, Esq.  
**Director of Local Government Policy:** Joe Lerch, AICP  
**Director of Member Services:** Carol I. Cameron  
**Director of Program Development:** Angela Inglett  
**Director of Technical Services:** John N. Kandris, A+, ACT, CCA  
**Administrative Secretary:** Valerie M. Russell  
**VACORP:** Chris Carey, Administrator, 888.822.6772

VACo exists to support county officials and to effectively represent, promote and protect the interests of counties to better serve the people of Virginia.

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