

COUNTY CONNECTIONS

The Newsletter of the
Virginia Association of Counties

August 23, 2019



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VACo's County Officials' Summit brings perspectives from all over the Commonwealth



When county officials hailing from all corners of the Commonwealth converge in one place to engage with state legislators, discuss current electoral concerns, dialogue with their colleagues, and deliberate VACo policy positions, it can only mean one thing: It's VACo Summit Day! On August 15, VACo hosted its annual County Officials' Summit in Richmond, continuing on a long tradition of political engagement by the Association.

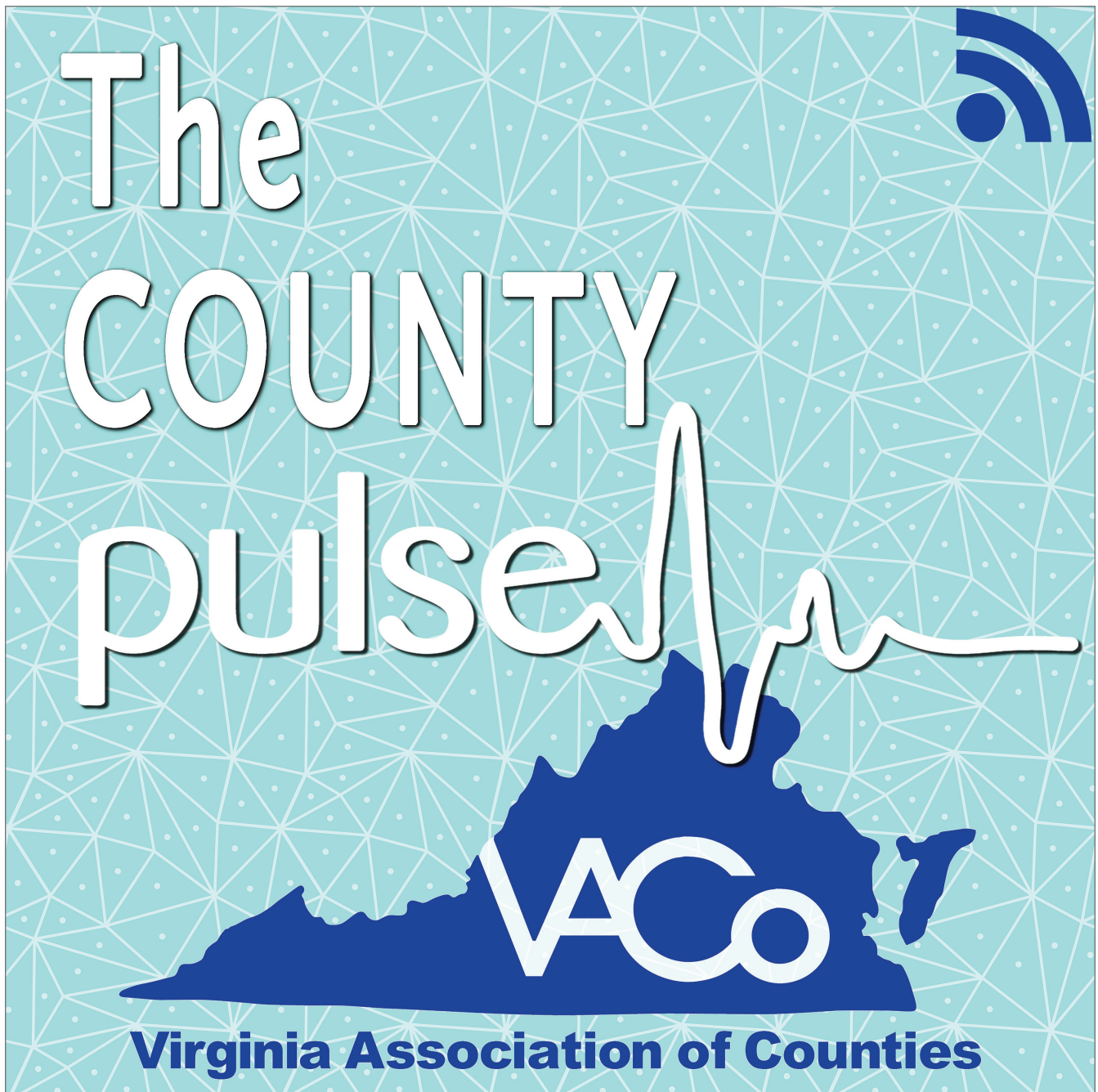
The Summit is known for bringing VACo members together with Virginia's state and federally elected officials, fostering dynamic conversations about the challenges facing the Commonwealth and its communities. We are happy to say that this year's iteration of the event exceeded expectations, as VACo members heard from a variety of bipartisan voices emanating from the General Assembly.

With both chambers of the General Assembly closely divided, and all seats on the ballot in November, VACo invited senior members of the General Assembly to discuss their priorities for the 2020 Session, and to offer thoughts on the policy goals of each caucus. We started off the day with Delegate Vivian Watts, who expressed her desire to provide counties with equal taxing authority and additional revenue raising tools. Next, Senator Emmett Hanger shared his thoughts about upcoming legislative battles between the parties. Delegate Robert Orrock then took the stage to discuss possible changes in the make-up of the General Assembly, and the differences between urban and rural representation.

In addition to legislators, several VACo members took this opportunity to share their expertise with their colleagues. Supervisor Meg Bohmke (Stafford County) and County Administrator Christian Goodwin (Louisa County) together spoke about the importance of advocacy and relationship building between local and state representatives. Lastly, Supervisors Billy Kyger (Rockingham) and Jeff McKay (Fairfax) discussed perceptions of the Urban/Rural Divide and provided strategies for collaboration between these communities.

The 2019 County Officials' Summit was a spectacular success, and we offer our deepest thanks to our guest speakers and to all of those who made time to join us for this event.

VACo Contact: [Angela Inglett](#)



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

[VACo County Pulse Podcast](#)

Virginia's Veterans – Innovative Partnerships to Serve Those Who Served Us

Welcome to the County Pulse! Carlos Hopkins, Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs and a member of the Governor's Cabinet, and Ruby Brabo, at-large Supervisor for King George County, join VACo's Jeremy Bennett to discuss partnerships, challenges, and opportunities between county and state government addressing the needs of Virginia's veteran population, collaboration with U.S Military installations in the Commonwealth, and the role of counties in this effort.

ACF Regional Administrator Visits County Human Services Programs



Two of VACo's member counties hosted special guests from the Administration for Children and Families, a division of the federal Department of Health and Human Services, on August 22. Dr. Martha Okafor, Regional Administrator, and Special Initiatives Coordinator Darlene Tart-Scott spent the day meeting with senior human services staff in Hanover County and Chesterfield County, part of Dr. Okafor's efforts to learn about program innovations at the local level and explore opportunities for her agency to assist localities in the provision of services.

Dr. Okafor and Ms. Tart-Scott kicked off the morning in Hanover County, where Deputy County Administrator Jim Taylor hosted a meeting with leadership of the County's human services agencies, including the Health Department, Community Services Board, Department of Community Resources, and Department of Social Services. Staff provided an overview of the services offered by their agencies and some of the top issues facing the County. Dr. Okafor and Ms. Tart-Scott then had the opportunity to accompany a parent educator from the Parents as Teachers program on a home visit. This program, a public-private partnership between a local nonprofit, Family Lifeline, and Hanover County, works on an evidence-based model and serves at-risk families with very young children. Participating families are able to build parenting skills and learn about child development in their own homes, and the program has a strong track record of success, with 100 percent of the children served in FY 2018 regularly receiving well-child checks and immunizations, screenings for developmental delays, and connections to early intervention services if necessary.

Chesterfield County hosted Dr. Okafor and Ms. Tart-Scott for the remainder of the day. Deputy County Administrator Sarah Snead coordinated discussions of three major initiatives undertaken by the Chesterfield-Colonial Heights Department of Social Services in recent years to meet community needs. Director of Social Services Kiva Rogers discussed her agency's successful efforts to improve recruitment and retention in the local social services workforce, which is a problem in many social services agencies statewide, as local workers struggle with emotionally difficult situations and high caseloads. The department was able to reduce its turnover rate from 24.7 percent in FY 2016 to 13 percent in FY 2018 through a multifaceted approach that included increasing compensation, engaging and empowering staff in solving problems, providing realistic descriptions of challenges associated with social services work to prospective hires, and providing opportunities for employees to manage the stress and secondary trauma associated with their work.

Assistant Director Danika Briggs moderated a panel of local nonprofit partners and department staff who are working to recruit and support foster families, as well as to support the department's child welfare workers. Collaboration with the faith community has been a success, as a local congregation, Clover Hill Church, has made foster care part of its ministry and strives to work in partnership with the Department; Janet Kelly of Virginia's Kids Belong expressed her hope that this type of collaboration could be replicated in other communities. Jackie Cowan discussed the department's Foster Care Advisory Committee, which provides a venue for community members to become involved in improving the foster care system; the committee is currently focusing on the needs of older youth, support for foster families, and awareness about psychotropic medication prescribing for foster youth. The afternoon concluded with a presentation from Valerie Dunbar-Brooks and Rosa Marshall, who highlighted the agency's work to expand its employment services offerings to assist all interested residents in improving their ability to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Throughout the day, Dr. Okafor stressed the importance of local service delivery, noting that although federal agencies provide funding and guidance for the provision of services, problems are solved at the local level. She pledged that the day's discussions were the beginning, not the end, of a dialogue with localities. VACo was honored to assist with Dr. Okafor's visit and grateful to our member counties for their hospitality.

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

VACo
SPOTLIGHT

**William
McCarty**
Isle of Wight
County
Supervisor



Q1. In addition to serving on the Isle of Wight County Board of Supervisors, you're the pastor of a large church that has grown significantly during your tenure. What made you decide to serve your community in an elected capacity in addition to your ministry?

William McCarty: *Several years ago, I observed that there was a great disconnect within our own community between citizens and the local government. I decided to run for the Board because I knew I would be able to bring a trustworthy and transparent voice to our County's governing body. The Board, at that time, had become a rubber-stamping board where they would open their agenda packets the night of meetings and approved anything presented to them by staff. I wanted to and have brought strong leadership to the Board and created a community partnership for citizens to participate in local government.*

Q2. You've made community engagement a priority in your time in office. What methods have you found to be the most effective in fostering dialogue between community members and county government?

WM: *Showing up matters. Whether it is showing up to community gatherings, civic group meetings, association meetings, Ruritan Club meetings, or something else, it is important that we don't lose sight of what is important to the people we represent. For me, standing in the local grocery store, gas station, restaurant, car wash for a few extra minutes have been a great way to communicate with citizens. My cell phone is published, office is open and this, while very busy at times, has made our county government more accessible.*

Q3. Your master's degree in counseling includes a focus on trauma and addiction. There is a lot of interest among researchers and policymakers in the long-lasting effects of adverse childhood experiences and how individuals can be supported in overcoming difficult life events. What do you think are the best ways to help communities address the effects of trauma and build resilience?

WM: *It is hard to understand trauma if you haven't experienced some form of it in your own life, but having opportunities for those affected to share their stories and the barriers they've faced is the first place to start in terms of crafting policy. We have to understand the problem before we can develop an effective solution.*

Q4. In your view, what are the greatest challenges and opportunities facing Isle of Wight County in the next ten years?

WM: *The greatest challenge facing our families heading into the future is our school system. We have to make sure that our children are equipped with a top-tier education in safe schools. Keeping taxes low and reducing regulations so small businesses can thrive will create high-paying careers for those students to stay in our community once they graduate. Keeping Isle of Wight County one of the safest places to live and raise a family is a top priority for our future success.*

Q5. What are the "must-do" activities for a first-time visitor to Isle of Wight County?

WM: *Our historic areas are second to none, whether you visit historic downtown Smithfield or Fort Huger and Fort Boykin, Historic Nike Park or walk the Windsor Castle Park, visit the numerous local restaurants and experience great seafood and specialty bakery items, there are treats to be enjoyed all throughout our great County. We would love folks to come out to the 25th Annual Isle of Wight County Fair from September 12th - 15th at 21311 Courthouse Hwy in Windsor VA. Isle of Wight County is also listed on the National Registry for Historic Places with three distinct designations.*

Visit Prince William County and the Neabsco Creek Boardwalk



[CLICK HERE](#) FOR MORE INFORMATION
ON THE NEABSCO CREEK BOARDWALK



Mark Your Calendars



Become a Certified Supervisor



SIGN UP TODAY! | [The Supervisors' Certification Brochure](#)

VACo is pleased to offer the Virginia Certified County Supervisors' Program, an educational opportunity for county supervisors who wish to enhance their knowledge of governance, and effectively and efficiently lead their communities.

Since its inception in 2005, more than 75 supervisors, representing more than 40 counties, have completed this training program, earning their credentials as a certified county supervisor.

Of greater importance, each supervisor has gained the insight, perspective, and confidence needed to address the challenges and opportunities that constitute the governance challenge.

**[Inventing Your County's Future:
The Role of Community Planning](#)**

[Registration Form](#) | [Register Online](#)

Opening Session | September 6
Albemarle County

Closing Session | November 1
VACo Training Center

Registration Deadline | August 27



VACo Associate Member SPOTLIGHT



A S S U R A

The recent Capital One breach has everybody wondering if they are next. The simple answer is most likely - Yes - if you do nothing to protect yourself. Local counties and cities are a top target for cybercrime in the U.S. right now, and even the smallest locality can be a target. Just look at the most recent data breach from a rural county in Jackson, Georgia. Once ransomware hit their network, they had to pay attackers \$400,000 to get their data back. The sad news is that the FBI now warns that it's no longer a question of *if* you'll be hacked, it's *when*. But you *can* defend against most intrusion attempts and significantly limit the damage even if they do happen to get through your defenses.

Why stand by and wait to be a victim? There are simple, low cost things that can be done to help your locality become more secure and help you sleep at night. The first thing to do is to talk about cyber security at the board and executive levels in your locality. As a board member, county administrator, or city manager; do you know how susceptible your organization is to an attack or breach? A locality needs a cyber security program that includes not just the information technology controls, but policies, risk assessments, and security plans that reach all levels of management.

So, what does it mean to be secure and where do you start? It is important to realize that just because you have a great information technology staff, that it does not mean you have a great cyber security program. They are two different things. Simply put, expecting your IT administrators to secure your organization is like expecting your primary care physician to perform heart surgery.

To fight off the hackers, you need a plan of attack. You need to make sure your networks and devices are secure. This can be a scary thought. If you're not secure, how do you get there? How much is it going to cost? Do you need to hire someone to accomplish this? Those 3 questions alone are a big enough hurdle, but there are many more to worry about.

This is where Assura can step in. With Assura's Virtual ISO™, you get experienced, professional cyber security guidance and advice as well as complete coverage of all regulatory requirements your locality will ever encounter. You'll get weekly status updates, progress reports, and monthly reviews and we do all of the grunt work. There are multiple plan levels that can fit into any businesses budget. Best part of all, we stand behind our work. With Assura, you get our AuditArmor™ & Audit Defense™. Audit Armor™ is a 100% guarantee that our work is compliant and we'll respond to any issues that arise. Audit Defense™ promises that we will work with your auditors to defend your program and prevent unnecessary findings.

Keeping your data secure is difficult in this scary landscape. Let Assura help get you to where you need to be. Give us a call at 855-9NOHACK today or go to www.assurainc.com and fill out a contact form. If you're really nervous (and trust us, we understand why you would be) you can call me on my direct number: 804.672.8714 x301.

Karen Cole | Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer | Assura

Governor Northam Reports to “Money Committees” on State Revenues



Governor Northam made his annual late-summer address to the “money committees” on August 20, providing an update on the status of state revenues in FY 2019 and offering a preview of the Administration’s expectations and priorities for the upcoming 2020-2022 biennium budget. The overall tone of both the Governor’s remarks and Secretary of Finance Aubrey Layne’s presentation was one of caution. While the state concluded FY 2019 with a significant surplus, those revenues are largely committed to tax relief, deposits to reserve funds, and water quality improvements, and there are concerns about the sustainability of this revenue growth in the next biennium.

In his [remarks](#), Governor Northam touted recent successes, such as Virginia’s reclamation of the top ranking in CNBC’s annual ratings of the best states for business and a host of business relocations and expansions comprising more than \$20 billion in investment over the last 20 months, as well as Virginia’s continued low unemployment rate. He also pointed to the significant commitment of monies to the state’s reserves, which are expected to reach record levels of \$1.6 billion by 2021, representing 7 percent of General Fund revenue, as a successful collaboration between the legislature and the Administration.

Although the Governor indicated that the Administration expects continued revenue growth in the upcoming biennium, he pointed out that there are significant spending obligations that must be addressed, such as the biennial rebenchmarking of the Standards of Quality and growth in the Medicaid forecast, as well as the continued rollout of community-based behavioral health services. He cited economic headwinds that are out of the state’s control, such as trade tensions and high levels of federal debt, as reasons for Virginia to position itself for the future by protecting its bond rating and making “strategic investments in our long-term success.” He signaled that several issues are likely to continue to be priorities in the biennium budget, including broadband access, affordable housing, school readiness, and workforce development.

Secretary Layne provided [further details](#) on FY 2019 revenues and the process for developing the FY 2020 “caboose” and 2020-2022 biennium budgets that will be presented to the money committees in December. As reported earlier in the summer, the FY 2019 surplus was largely attributable to increases in nonwithholding income tax collections, which is typically a volatile revenue source. Two mainstays of state revenues, individual income tax withholding and sales and use taxes, slightly underperformed expectations. Withholding collections increased by 3.6 percent, rather than 3.8 percent as forecasted, representing a shortfall of \$26.1 million, and sales tax collections grew by 3.4 percent, rather than the expected 3.7 percent, for a \$10.7 million shortfall. Secretary Layne pointed out that most of the growth in sales and use tax collections was attributable to growth in use taxes, likely from remote sellers newly required to collect and remit use taxes as a result of the *Wayfair* decision and subsequent legislation in Virginia, rather than in brick-and-mortar stores.

Given the underperformance of withholding and sales tax collections and uncertainty about the sustainability of growth in nonwithholding, Secretary Layne expressed some concern about whether revenues will be able to meet the FY 2020 projections included in the 2019 Appropriations Act. He outlined the process by which revenue forecasting will be conducted this fall, with a meeting of the Joint Advisory Board of Economists in October, a meeting of the Governor’s Advisory Council on Revenue Estimates in November, and the presentation of the Governor’s budget, along with the revenue forecast, to the money committees on December 17. In addition to the major funding commitments outlined by the Governor, Secretary Layne also listed several other items that are likely to require attention in the next budget, including potential changes to the VRS discount rate that may require an offsetting increase in employer contributions, increases in construction costs for capital projects, and the potential effects on lottery proceeds of the [proliferation of “skill” games](#) in many retail locations that also sell lottery tickets.

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

Auditor of Public Accounts Reports on Revised “Early Warning System” for Local Fiscal Distress



The Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) released a report on August 2 detailing the most recent application of a revised “early warning system” for detecting financial troubles in local governments. The APA was directed to develop the original version of this system in budget language in the 2017 Appropriations Act, which set out a procedure by which the APA would make a preliminary determination that a locality appeared to be experiencing fiscal distress and begin the process by which some state assistance might be made available to the locality. The revised version incorporates several suggestions made by local representatives during discussions in late 2017 about how the model could be improved to present a more holistic version of a locality’s financial condition.

Under the version of the model employed in 2017, the APA’s Office developed an overall Financial Assessment Model (FAM) score for each locality by calculating ten ratios, which were each ranked relative to other localities and then averaged to produce a composite FAM score. The APA’s Office established a threshold at which the Office would follow up with the locality with a more detailed questionnaire. In meetings and correspondence with the APA’s Office, local representatives encouraged the use of broader metrics to evaluate a locality’s financial condition, as there may be minor discrepancies in reporting methods from locality to locality that might provide a distorted picture of a locality’s true capacity to meet its financial obligations.

Under the new model, each ratio is calculated for each locality independently of other localities’ scores; the ratio is compared to a benchmark established by the APA’s office, and points are assigned based upon whether the ratio suggests a weak or strong performance for that indicator. (Five ratios were retained from the 2017 model, and seven new ratios were added.) The ratio is weighted based on importance. Higher numbers of points indicate less-favorable outcomes, and the APA’s Office established a cut-off score above which APA staff would undertake additional qualitative analysis to determine whether the locality’s condition warranted further follow-up. This additional layer of analysis includes demographic factors, such as population growth or decline and unemployment rates (review of such qualitative factors was a suggestion of local government representatives in discussions in 2017). After completing both steps of this review, the APA’s Office made a preliminary determination of the need to have additional discussions with localities that appeared to be experiencing fiscal distress. Fourteen localities were identified as needing further review; the report details the additional interactions between the APA’s Office and these jurisdictions.

The report may be found on the APA’s [website](#), along with an [executive summary](#).

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

Broadband Expansion Initiative Updates



The Commonwealth Connect Coalition met on July 24 in Williamsburg to provide the latest updates in the effort to empower Virginia communities to reach functionally universal broadband coverage. As part of this process, the Coalition released a “[Broadband Toolkit](#),” which is a set of documents including a step-by-step guide, model solicitation, and example RFPs/RFIs intended to support local leaders on the path to broadband access. VACo staff submitted comments as part of the drafting process. The Coalition also has a new website which provides information on the work of Commonwealth Connect, planning, funding opportunities, relevant legislation, and more - www.commonwealthconnect.virginia.gov.

As previously [reported](#), the Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) FY2020 grant round public notices are posted online and can be viewed on [DHCD’s website](#). DHCD is encouraging providers (ISPs) who may take issue with a potential project to reach out to the applicants well before the September 3 application deadline. By communicating now, projects can potentially be changed, and challenges can be avoided. Applicants who have questions can reach out to the VATI team anytime at vati@dhcd.virginia.gov.

For more information on VATI, including [Program Guidelines and Criteria](#) and an archived [How to Apply Webinar](#), go to <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/virginia-telecommunication-initiative-vati>.

Appalachian Power and Dominion have begun a pilot program allowing them to partner with localities and provide “middle mile” fiber to unserved areas of the state. This program has the potential to significantly reduce the cost for rural broadband deployment and we encourage both ISPs and localities to reach out to the folks listed below. The Coalition is strongly encouraging potential VATI or Tobacco Commission applicants to consider utilizing this program. Contact information for Appalachian Power and Dominion can be found below:

- Amanda Cox, Appalachian Power - accox@aep.com
- Nate Frost, Dominion - Nathan.j.frost@dominionenergy.com

Dominion Energy recently released a Request for Information (RFI) for localities and internet service providers (ISPs) pertaining to this initiative. The RFI and more information on the pilot program can be found [here](#) and [here](#) respectively. We encourage interested applicants to review it. Submissions are due Monday, September 9, 2019.

Lastly, VACo has partnered with VML and VCTA Broadband Association of Virginia to host a Broadband Summit on September 5 as an opportunity to hear from local government officials and industry leaders about broadband in Virginia. The event will be held at the Richmond Marriott (500 E. Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219). Registration will open at 9 a.m. Programming will run 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Topics to be covered include: grant programming and assistance opportunities, new technologies made possible with broadband, successful local government industry partnerships, opportunities for expanded broadband access for school children and how broadband enhances economic development opportunities across Virginia. More information and registration can be found [here](#).

VACo Contact: [Joe Lerch, AICP](#) and [Jeremy R. Bennett](#)

SAVE THE DATE

BROADBAND SUMMIT

2019

SEPT. 5

RICHMOND MARRIOTT

Co-sponsored by VML, VACo and VCTA this summit will discuss innovative and economical ways for local government to offer connectivity to their communities.



Mental Health Commission Discusses Major Changes to Structure, Funding of Public Behavioral Health System



The System Structure and Financing work group of the Joint Subcommittee Studying Mental Health Services in the Commonwealth in the 21st Century held a wide-ranging discussion at its meeting last week as it grappled with fundamental questions about how behavioral health services should be organized, funded, and delivered in Virginia. Joint Subcommittee Chairman Senator Creigh Deeds encouraged workgroup members to contemplate broad questions, such as whether the state's existing network of 40 Community Services Boards (CSBs) represents too many entities, or too few; how the relationship between the state and the CSBs should be calibrated; and what the overall goals of the publicly-funded system should be.

Rather than scheduling formal presentations for the work group's meeting, members instead invited experts from the audience to respond to questions and offer items for consideration. Members initially called upon Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) Daniel Herr to discuss recent media reports about individuals who are clinically ready for discharge from state hospitals, but who must wait for appropriate placements, such as assisted living facilities that are able to provide higher levels of care. Deputy Commissioner Herr explained that DBHDS has used some funding provided by the General Assembly to assist with discharge planning to meet the needs of some of these individuals in the community, but pointed out that finding placements can be challenging, as reimbursement rates for many assisted living facilities do not account for the intensity of care that must be provided for individuals leaving the state hospitals. Members discussed a similar situation regarding Auxiliary Grants, which are intended to supplement income for certain individuals residing in assisted living facilities, adult foster homes, or supportive housing, but often do not cover the costs of care for recipients and thus are not accepted by some providers.

Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Resources Marvin Figueroa and Virginia Hospital and Health Care Association Director of Intergovernmental Affairs Jennifer Wicker also discussed issues surrounding overcrowding at the state hospitals, which is the subject of a legislatively-directed workgroup that has been meeting since April. The workgroup is discussing potential extensions to the initial period of time during which an individual in crisis may be held, particularly for individuals who may be intoxicated, as well as possible alternatives to hospitalization. Delineating the proper role of the state hospitals relative to private hospitals, such as by defining the population the state hospitals are intended to serve, was a topic of discussion members agreed to pursue in future meetings.

Members also discussed how DBHDS should oversee the provision of services in communities. Senator Deeds voiced his view that more accountability is needed from the CSBs, in part to assure policymakers that investments in behavioral health services are being well-spent. He suggested that dispersing DBHDS staff into regional offices throughout the state might offer better support for CSBs. Deputy DBHDS Commissioner Heidi Dix offered that the Department is engaging regional consultants more extensively, and noted that funding for program administration, including data collection and analysis, is an important aspect of service provision. Jennifer Faison, Executive Director of the Virginia Association of Community Services Boards, encouraged members to provide these funds separately and avoid redirecting funding for services to program administration. Senator Hanger, who chairs the System Structure and Financing Work Group, suggested that he would prefer to provide more state support to CSBs rather than to exert more state control over their operations. He reiterated his interest in the state's sustained commitment to implementing STEP-VA, indicating that he prefers the state to be "aggressive" in continuing the roll-out of services.

Members agreed to continue the discussion in future meetings and encouraged interested parties to submit ideas for consideration. The Joint Subcommittee's next meeting is scheduled for September 23.

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

JLARC Presents Virginia Retirement Service (VRS) Oversight and Outlook Report Ahead of Employer Contribution Rate Deliberations

On July 15, VACo staff attended the meeting of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) in which commission staff delivered their annual report on VRS oversight. JLARC is responsible for the ongoing oversight of VRS under the provisions of the [Virginia Retirement System Oversight Act](#). JLARC provides a yearly report in July on the health and status of VRS, which administers retirement plans and other benefit programs for state and local government employees. VRS staff also gave presentations to the Commission.

According to JLARC, the funded status of VRS plans has increased by 10 percent in the last five years due to sustained market investment returns and fully funded state and local employer contributions to the plans. However, VRS's December 2018 stress test and sensitivity [analysis](#) concluded that existing unfunded liabilities expose VRS plans to increased risk in the event of a market downturn. Unfunded liabilities are the future obligations owed to VRS beneficiaries and the fund's ability to cover them and amount to approximately \$20 billion. As investment income currently accounts for about two-thirds of the money used to pay VRS plan obligations, the decrease over the past year in global economic growth, increase in trade tensions, and cuts to the Federal Reserve's interest rates are potential causes for concern.

In October, the VRS plan actuary will present the State and Teacher plan actuarial reports to the VRS Board and recommend to the VRS Board contribution rates to support the plans. In November, the VRS Board will receive a report from the plan actuary that will provide information on all political subdivision plans in aggregate. Each local government will receive its custom actuarial report after the first of the year, which will include its contribution rates for the next biennium.

Due to recent market instability, the VRS annual rate of return may fall below the anticipated 7 percent, which may necessitate a lowering of the assumed annual rate of return going forward and lead to higher employer contribution rates. This would have a direct impact on state and local government budgets. Though Virginia [code](#) mandates the determination of employer contribution rates in "a manner so as to remain relatively level," VRS estimated that lowering the assumed rate of return by 0.25 percent could have a fiscal impact of more than \$200 million.

Lowering the assumed rate of return to reflect the realities of a changing market would likely be beneficial to the long-term fiscal health of VRS, even if it is painful to the budgeting process. However, additional state cash infusions to VRS may help offset any lower rate of return and maintain the funded status of the pension plans that VRS administers, contributing to the long-term fiscal stability of state and local government. This was done in recent years when the General Assembly made large one-time appropriations to pay down the 2010-2012 deferred contributions for State and Teacher plans.

Relatively speaking, the health of Virginia's pension system remains close to the national average according to [data](#) from the Pew Charitable Trusts, which ranked Virginia's funded pension ratio as 20th in the nation based on the most recent FY 2017 data. The report demonstrates the range of health between different state pension systems and their direct impact on state and local fiscal policy. For instance, employer contribution rates in the three states with the best-funded systems averaged only 8 percent of payroll, while rates in the three worst-funded systems averaged 30 percent of payroll for covered employees.

In addition to the Oversight Report, the Commission also heard presentations from VRS senior staff, particularly on the Hybrid Retirement Plan. Implemented in 2014, the Hybrid Plan combines a defined benefit plan and defined contribution plan and features a mix of mandatory and voluntary employee contributions. According to VRS, studies show that employers play an integral role with employees to make the decision regarding voluntary contributions to their plan.

VRS has prepared a variety of resources for employers to use to support their orientation programs and counseling sessions with their employees, including:

An [employer toolkit](#) provides tools for employers to communicate about the plan, including special communications for voluntary contributions and auto escalation, which is coming January 2020.

[SmartStep](#) allows members to set increases to their voluntary contributions annually at a date they choose. They don't have to wait for auto-escalation.

The [hybrid paycheck calculator](#) allows members to see the impact on their paychecks and the tax benefits when they increase their voluntary contributions.

VRS has developed the [Hybrid Retirement Plan Learning Channel](#), a new showcase featuring several short videos that lay out key aspects of the plan at different stages during members' careers, which employers can use during orientation sessions or send to members to view.

As the hybrid plan population changes with new hires and those exiting employment, about 48 percent of these employees are making a voluntary contribution. However, VRS anticipates this number to increase. The Hybrid Retirement Plan was designed with an auto-escalation feature to encourage employees to save. Every three years, employees' voluntary contributions to their Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan accounts will automatically increase by 0.5 percent (payroll deduction) until reaching the maximum 4 percent. The next automatic escalation takes place January 1, 2020.

VRS serves 722,187 total members, retirees, and beneficiaries. The fiduciary net position of the trust fund is \$80.4 billion and as based on assets, is the 19th largest among public and private pension systems in the United States. 86 percent of VRS retirees remain in Virginia. The funded status of the State, Teacher, and Political Subdivisions plans was 76.8 percent, 75.1 percent, and 89.9 percent respectively.

The full JLARC report and VRS presentation can be found [here](#) and [here](#) respectively. The VRS Board of Trustees will [meet](#) next on October 10 at 1:30 p.m. in Richmond. VACo staff will continue to report and engage on these issues.

VACo Contact: [Jeremy R. Bennett](#)

State EMS Advisory Board Considers Expansion of Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) Statewide and Discusses Funding Opportunities



On August 2, VACo staff attended the quarterly meeting of the State EMS Advisory Board in Richmond. This Board is a group of 28 Governor’s appointees who serve as a formal liaison between the public and the Virginia Office of Emergency Services (OEMS), a division within the Virginia Department of Health (VDH). VACo’s representative on the Board is Gary Tanner of Appomattox County.

During the meeting of the Board’s Communications Committee, discussion focused on OEMS’s strategic initiative to promote Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) standards and accreditation among all 911 Public-Safety-Answering-Points (PSAP’s) statewide. EMD is a systemic program of handling medical calls that allows trained telecommunicators to determine the nature and priority of the call, dispatch the appropriate response, and give the caller appropriate instructions to help treat the patient until a responding EMS unit arrives on the scene. OEMS currently maintains an EMD accreditation [program](#) for PSAPs and emergency dispatch centers to promote training and standards established by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHSTA).

Currently, approximately 91.6% of Virginia’s population is served by EMDs when they place an emergency call to a PSAP. OEMS staff and members of the committee have expressed concern regarding the remaining approximately 712,000 Virginians living in approximately 40 localities without access to EMD service, the concern being one of equity of access to service – the outcome of a Virginian experiencing a medical emergency should not necessarily be impacted by the location in which it occurs.

While there are clear benefits to EMD services including the initiation of pre-hospital care before or during EMS dispatch and improved patient outcomes, barriers to EMD implementation remain, two of the largest being local budget constraints and program maintenance cost once implemented. As with many enhanced services, required staff training and renewal of accreditation come with fiscal impacts to local budgets.

Although legislatures in nearly 20 states have mandated EMDs at all PSAPs within their jurisdictions, there is no current mandate in Virginia. VACo expressed concern about the potential for new unfunded mandates and the need to examine collaborative solutions between state and local government. This could include the expansion of existing state financed funding opportunities and/or the creation of new ones.

The Board also discussed the latest round of funding opportunities available through the Virginia Rescue Squad Assistance Fund (RSAF), which among other services can be used for EMD implementation and training. This is a multi-million-dollar matching grant program for Virginia governmental, volunteer and non-profit EMS agencies and organizations to provide financial assistance based on financial need. Eligible applicants include nonprofit licensed EMS agencies and other Virginia EMS organizations operating on a nonprofit basis exclusively for the benefit of the general public pursuant to the [Code of Virginia](#). The funds are primarily used for EMS equipment and vehicles along with EMS programs and projects.

The program has two grant cycles per year, a spring and a fall cycle. For the spring cycle the awards were [announced](#) on July 1 and over \$4 million will be awarded to various recipients. The current fall cycle opened on August 1 and closes on Monday September 16.

VDH offers training throughout the year in various Regional EMS Council areas on the grant program along with webinars. More information and how to apply for the program can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

More information on the EMS Advisory Board and minutes of the August meeting can be found [here](#) and [here](#) respectively.

VACo Contact: [Jeremy R. Bennett](#)

Virginia Association of Counties

PREMIER PARTNER

SPOTLIGHT SERIES

VACo Members - Learn about VACo's Partners and how they can help Counties save money and become more efficient. Contact Executive Director Dean Lynch at dlynch@vaco.org for more information.

[VACo Premier Partner Spotlight Podcast](#)

Omnia Partners

Stephen Maxwell and Greg Melenchen of Omnia Partners join host Dean Lynch on the latest episode of VACo's Premier Partner Podcast. Omnia Partners is the largest and most experienced purchasing organization for public and private sector procurement. Most of us in Virginia know US Communities and National IPA – these two organization have combined to form Omnia Partners. We are pleased to welcome Omnia Partners to our Virginia Counties.



COUNTY OF LOUISA
R.T. Williams, Jr., Chairman
Board of Supervisors

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 7, 2019

Contact: Alexandra McKinley
Phone: (540) 967-3499
Email: amckinley@louisa.org

LOUISA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS APPOINTS NEW COUNTY ATTORNEY

LOUISA, VIRGINIA – The Louisa County Board of Supervisors is pleased to announce the appointment of Helen Phillips as County Attorney for Louisa. Ms. Phillips will join the County on November 1, 2019.

Ms. Phillips comes to Louisa with more than 30 years of demonstrated private and local government law and trial experience. Since 2009, she has been counsel for the Central Virginia Regional Jail, of which Louisa is a member locality, where she provided counsel in state and federal courts on numerous matters. She has extensive experience with employment law, procurement, Freedom of Information Act matters, contracts, real estate and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

“On behalf of the Board, I congratulate Ms. Phillips on her appointment,” said Board of Supervisors Chairman Toni Williams. “She brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the position, and we are confident in her ability to advise and inform our efforts from a legal perspective.”

Ms. Phillips earned her Juris Doctor degree from the University of Virginia School of Law and is an active member of the Virginia State Bar. She is admitted to practice in District courts in the Eastern, Western, and Southern Districts of Virginia, and to practice in the Supreme Courts of Virginia, West Virginia, and Tennessee. She has served on a number of other entities including the Judicial Candidate Evaluation Committee and the Mandatory Continuing Legal Education Committee of the Virginia State Bar

“I am delighted to return to Central Virginia to serve as Louisa County Attorney,” said Phillips. “I am extremely grateful to the Board of Supervisors for giving me this opportunity and I look forward to serving Louisa County as it continues to flourish.”

###

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 14, 2019

For further information contact:
Percy C. Ashcraft – (804) 722-8600
Email: pashcraft@princegeorgecountyva.gov

BOS Names Daniel Whitten New County Attorney

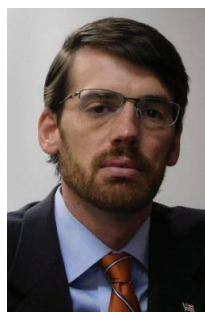
Prince George, VA – The Board of Supervisors at its meeting August 13 unanimously supported Daniel Whitten to be the next County Attorney.

Whitten, 36, replaces Steve Micas, who retired August 1. He was the successful candidate among 11 applicants for the position.

Whitten is currently the County Attorney in Warren County and he and his family live in Front Royal. He is a graduate of the William & Mary School of Law and received his undergraduate degree at the University of Virginia.

“We are very pleased to be able to appoint Mr. Whitten to this very important County position,” commented Donald Hunter, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. “His approach to public service is exactly what we are looking for in our County Attorney. He has excellent credentials. He has broad local government experience that easily prepares him for the challenges facing our government operations on a daily basis. We expect the transition to be a smooth one.”

The County Attorney is one of three positions that report directly to the Board of Supervisors, the other two being the County Administrator and County Clerk. Whitten will begin his service on September 16 at a salary of \$117,300.



- 30 -

SANDS ANDERSON

21 Sands Anderson attorneys named to 2020 Best Lawyers® List

[Sands Anderson PC](#) is pleased to announce that **21 lawyers have been included in the 2020 Edition of *The Best Lawyers in America***. Since it was first published in 1983, *Best Lawyers* has become universally regarded as the definitive guide to legal excellence.

Best Lawyers has published their list for more than three decades, earning the respect of the profession, the media, and the public as the most reliable, unbiased source of legal referrals.

Lawyers on *The Best Lawyers in America* list are divided by geographic region and practice areas. They are reviewed by their peers on the basis of professional expertise, and undergo an authentication process to make sure they are in current practice and in good standing.

Sands Anderson PC would like to congratulate the following attorneys named to 2020 *The Best Lawyers in America* list:

[L. Lee Byrd](#) – Commercial Litigation, Litigation - Banking and Finance, Litigation - Environmental, Litigation - Municipal

[C. Michael DeCamps](#) – Employment Law - Management, Litigation - Labor and Employment

[Robert B. “Chip” Delano, Jr.](#) – Appellate Practice, Insurance Law, Litigation - ERISA

[C. Thomas Ebel](#) – Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights / Insolvency and Reorganization Law

[Benjamin W. Emerson](#) – Municipal Law, Real Estate Law

[Terrence L. Graves](#) – Personal Injury Litigation - Defendants, Transportation Law

[Matthew D. Green](#) – Insurance Law

[Margaret F. Hardy](#) – Legal Malpractice Law - Defendants

[Bradford A. King](#) – Education Law

[Michael T. Marr](#) – Medical Malpractice Law - Defendants

[Edward J. McNelis, III](#) – Personal Injury Litigation - Defendants

[Bruce L. Mertens](#) – Trusts and Estates

[Brian G. Muse](#) – Employment Law - Management

[Brian R. Pitney](#) – Closely Held Companies and Family Businesses Law, Real Estate Law

[Douglas P. Rucker, Jr.](#) – Corporate Law, Professional Malpractice Law - Defendants

[Cullen D. Seltzer](#) – Mass Tort Litigation / Class Actions - Plaintiffs

[Daniel M. Siegel](#) – Litigation - Municipal, Municipal Law

[Roy M. Terry](#) – Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights / Insolvency and Reorganization Law

[William N. Watkins](#) – Commercial Litigation, Litigation - Construction, Personal Injury Litigation - Defendants

[Elizabeth L. White](#) – Litigation - Real Estate

[Douglas A. Winegardner](#) – Admiralty and Maritime Law, Litigation - Insurance

Attorneys [Douglas P. Rucker, Jr.](#) and [Bradford A. King](#) were also named in Best Lawyers' *Lawyers of the Year* list.



THURSDAY, AUGUST 29 | 6-8PM
VACo REGIONS 10 & 11
MEETING | HENRY COUNTY

THANK YOU HENRY COUNTY FOR HOSTING!

Join us at the 2019 VACo Regions 10 & 11 Meeting on Thursday, August 29, at the New College Institute located at 191 Fayette Street, Martinsville, VA 24112.

Attendees will engage in discussion about the challenges and opportunities facing communities in VACo Regions 10 & 11.

REGIONAL MEETINGS SPONSORS



REGIONAL MEETINGS PARTNERS



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REGIONS 10 & 11
AGENDA

INTRODUCTIONS

Jim Adams | Chairman
 Henry County

Dean Lynch
 VACo Executive Director

CONVERSATIONS WITH
STATE LEGISLATORS

EDUCATION
 TBA

TOP ISSUES

VACo STAFF UPDATES

VACo REGIONS 10 & 11

Region 10

[Appomattox County](#) | [Campbell County](#) | [Floyd County](#) | [Franklin County](#) | [Halifax County](#) | [Henry County](#) | [Montgomery County](#) | [Patrick County](#) | [Pittsylvania County](#)

Region 11

[Bedford County](#) | [Botetourt County](#) | [Craig County](#) | [Giles County](#) | [Roanoke County](#)



CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO

A central graphic with a teal background. It features a hand holding a money bag with a dollar sign, a gold coin, and a plant growing from it. The hand is positioned over a blue pedestal. Surrounding the hand are various financial icons: a line graph with an upward arrow, a bar chart, a document with a list, and several dollar signs. The background also includes a map of Virginia and a path leading towards the center.

**2019 Virginia
Local
Government
Investment Conference**

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

**Richmond Marriott Short Pump
James River Room
4240 Dominion Blvd
Glen Allen, VA 23060
10:30am – 3:00pm**

The Virginia Local Government Investment Conference brings together Treasurers, investment officers, and other local leaders to hear the latest on fixed income and long-term investing strategies. Conference highlights include commentary by industry experts and updates on the billion-dollar VIP and Pooled OPEB Trust portfolios. It's the one conference focused on local government investments you don't want to miss.



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12 | 2-4PM

**VACo REGIONS 12 & 13 MEETING
WASHINGTON COUNTY**

THANK YOU WASHINGTON COUNTY FOR HOSTING!

Join us at the 2019 VACo Regions 12 & 13 Meeting on Thursday, September 12, at the [Washington County Board of Supervisors Auditorium](#) located at 1 Government Center Place, Abingdon, VA 24210.

Attendees will engage in discussion about the challenges and opportunities facing communities in VACo Regions 12 & 13.

REGIONAL MEETINGS SPONSORS



REGIONAL MEETINGS PARTNERS



REGIONAL PARTNERS



**REGIONS 12&13
AGENDA**

INTRODUCTIONS
Washington County

**CONVERSATIONS WITH
STATE LEGISLATORS**

EDUCATION
Tourism as Economic
Development
Eric Young, JD | Tazewell County
Administrator

TOP ISSUES

VACo STAFF UPDATES

VACo REGION 12

[Bland County](#) | [Carroll County](#) |
[Grayson County](#) | [Pulaski County](#) |
[Smyth County](#) | [Washington
County](#) | [Wythe County](#)

VACo REGION 13

[Buchanan County](#) | [Dickenson
County](#) | [Lee County](#) | [Russell
County](#) | [Scott County](#) | [Tazewell
County](#) | [Wise County](#)



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 | 6-8PM
VACo REGION 9 MEETING
AUGUSTA COUNTY

THANK YOU AUGUSTA COUNTY FOR HOSTING!

Join us at the 2019 VACo Region 9 Meeting on Thursday, September 19, at the Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport Passenger Terminal located at 77 Aviation Circle, Weyers Cave, VA 24486.

Attendees will engage in discussion about the challenges and opportunities facing communities in VACo Region 9. **Come early for dinner at 530pm.**

REGIONAL MEETINGS SPONSORS



REGIONAL MEETINGS PARTNERS



REGIONAL PARTNERS



REGION 9 AGENDA

Dinner | 530pm

INTRODUCTIONS

Augusta County

CONVERSATIONS WITH STATE LEGISLATORS

EDUCATION

2020 Census: What Counties Need to Know

Kathleen O'Connell | US Census Bureau

Lauren Snellings | Voices for Virginia's Children

Bradford R.R. Dyjak | Rockingham County

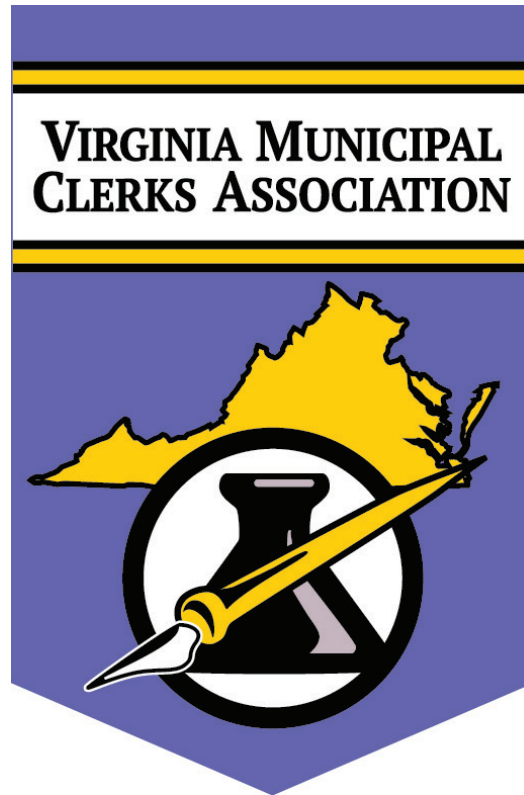
TOP ISSUES

VACo STAFF UPDATES

VACo REGION 9

Region 9 Director
 Billy Kyger | Rockingham County

Region 9
 Alleghany County | Amherst County | Augusta County | Bath County | Highland County | Rockbridge County | Rockingham County



Annual Institute and Academy

October 9 – 11, 2019

Virginia Beach

www.vmca.com

The Virginia Municipal Clerks Association will hold its Annual Institute and Academy October 9 – 11, 2019 in Virginia Beach. A Pre-Institute and Academy Workshop, (The Power of “Yes, And” – Improving Communication Through Improv Comedy, facilitated by David Webster) will be held October 8, 2019. In addition to the Pre-Institute and Academy, clerks may also participate in an Athenian Leadership Society Dialogue on Saturday, October 12, 2019 facilitated by Dr. Jane Long, IIMC Education Director and VMCA Clerk Libby Hume, MMC, from Cape Charles. For additional information regarding these events, please visit www.vmca.com.

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Contact Valerie Russell: vrussell@vaco.org or call 804.788.6652

Virginia Association of Counties | 1207 East Main Street, Richmond, VA 23219

VIRGINIA COUNTY SUPERVISORS' MANUAL

EIGHTH EDITION, 2019

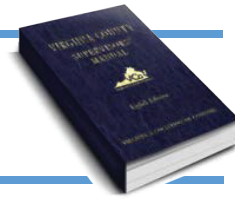


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employment opportunities



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).



DATA COLLECTOR | Frederick County | Posted August 20



NETWORK ADMINISTRATOR | Frederick County | Posted August 20



PRETRIAL/PROBATION OFFICER | Frederick County | Posted August 20



SITE SUPERVISOR | Frederick County | Posted August 20



PARK RANGER | Frederick County | Posted August 20



PARK MAINTENANCE | Frederick County | Posted August 20



BUDGET & FINANCE MANAGER | Stafford County | Posted August 19



COMMUNICATIONS SUPERVISOR | Orange County | Posted August 19



FAMILY SERVICES SPECIALIST I/II | New Kent County | Posted August 19



FINANCIAL REPORTING ANALYST IV | Chesterfield County | Posted August 19



GIS AND RESEARCH ANALYST | Chesterfield County | Posted August 19



MANAGEMENT FELLOW | Loudoun County | Posted August 19



PLANNER I | Fauquier County | Posted August 19



LANDSCAPING LABORER | Montgomery County | Posted August 19



DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION | City of Harrisonburg | Posted August 20



CITY MANAGER | City of Salem | Posted August 20



WELLNESS COORDINATOR | Hanover County | Posted August 20



GIS ANALYST | City of Harrisonburg | Posted August 20



CORRECTIONAL NURSE | Frederick County | Posted August 20



ANIMAL CONTROL

OFFICER | James City County | Posted August 19



INDUSTRIAL

ELECTRICIAN, INSTRUMENTATION AND CONTROL SPECIALIST | James City County | Posted August 19



CONVENIENCE CENTER

ATTENDANT | James City County | Posted August 19



COUNTY ATTORNEY

Warren County | Posted August 14



MARKETING & TOURISM

MANAGER | Dinwiddie County | Posted August 14



WASTEWATER PLANT

MANAGER | Stafford County | Posted August 13



ASSISTANT

COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY I OR II | Gloucester County | Posted August 13



OFFICE ASSISTANT -

PARKS, RECREATION & TOURISM PT | Gloucester County | Posted August 13



PERMIT TECHNICIAN I II

III | City of Alexandria | Posted August 13



BUDGET SYSTEMS

SPECIALIST | Hanover County | Posted August 13



BUILDING OFFICIAL

| City of Winchester | Posted August 12



CHILDREN'S

SERVICES ACT COORDINATOR | Botetourt County | Posted August 12



AIRPORT ATTENDANT

New Kent County | Posted August 12



GENERAL SERVICES

DIRECTOR | New Kent County | Posted August 12



FAMILY SERVICES

SPECIALIST | Roanoke County | Posted August 12



BUYER | Roanoke County

| Posted August 12



STRATEGIC PLAN

PROJECT MANAGER | Stafford County | Posted August 9



FINANCIAL SERVICES

PROFESSIONAL | Central Virginia Planning District Commission | Posted August 9



LIFEGUARD (INDOOR)

PT TEMP | James City County | Posted August 9



LIFEGUARD (INDOOR) PT

| James City County | Posted August 9



SENIOR ASSISTANT

GENERAL REGISTRAR | James City County | Posted August 9



PROGRAMMER ANALYST

PROJECT MANAGER | James City County | Posted August 9



PARK ATTENDANT

(WARHILL SPORTS COMPLEX) | James City County | Posted August 9



HUMAN RESOURCES

MANAGER | Surry County | Posted August 8



CITY MANAGER | City of

Lexington | Posted August 7



FINANCE DIRECTOR

| Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission | Posted August 6

COUNTY CONNECTIONS

1207 East Main St., Suite 300
Richmond, VA 23219-3627



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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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County Connections is a semimonthly publication.

Editor: A. Gage Harter
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