

Difficult Decisions Loom as Local School Boards Consider School Reopening Plans in Wake of Updated Guidance

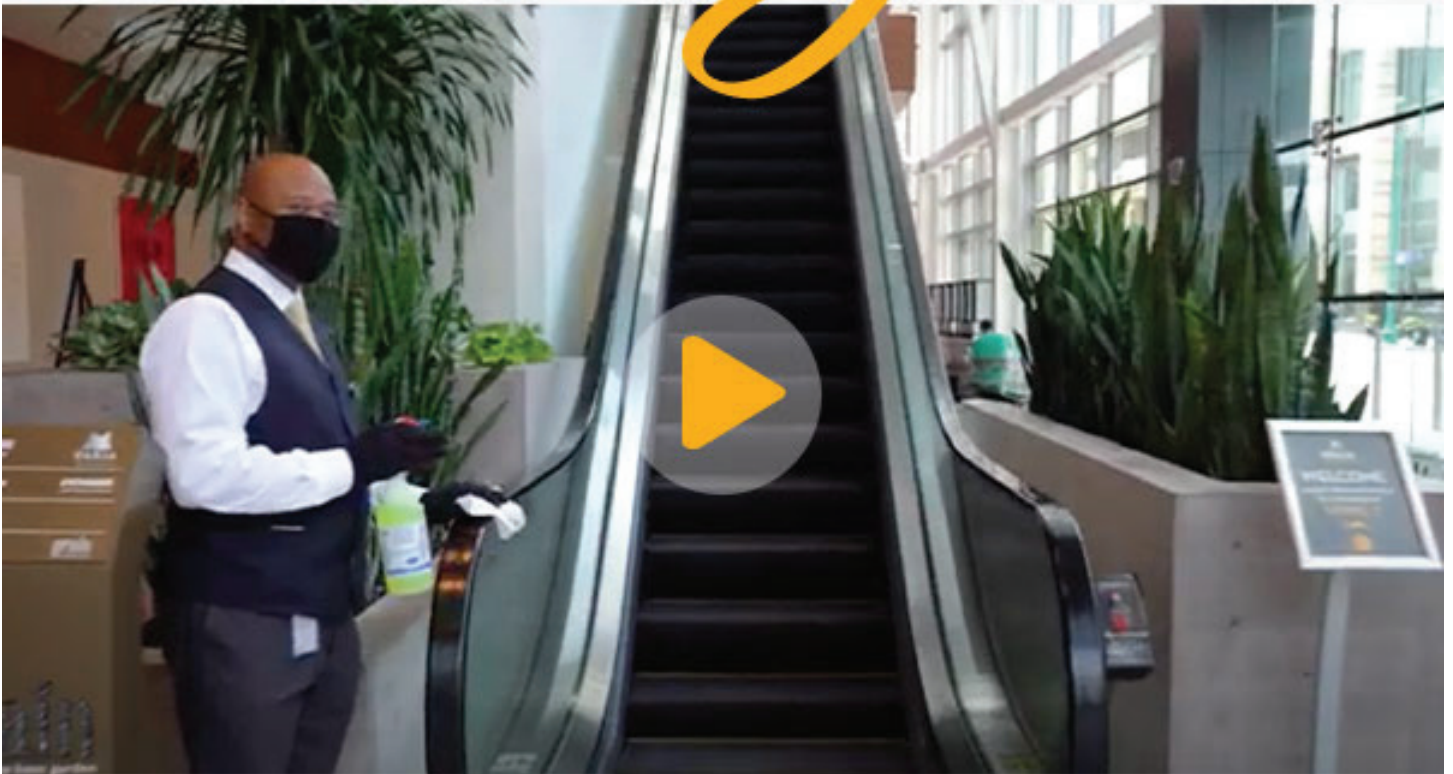


On July 6, 2020, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) announced updated [guidance](#) for the phased reopening of Virginia's K-12 schools for the 2020-2021 school year. This follows the June 9 release of initial VDOE guidelines and an announcement made on June 25 by Governor Ralph Northam's Chief of Staff, Clark Mercer, during the Governor's regular scheduled COVID-19 briefings that the previously issued guidance from the VDOE was just that, non-mandated guidance intended to inform the discussions happening at the local level and that the final decisions about K-12 reopening are in the hands of local school boards. As previously [reported](#), the initial guidance contained in the state framework was developed in consultation with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) [guidelines](#) and as a collaboration between the Virginia Department of Health and VDOE.

In a [letter](#) to local school superintendents and school leaders announcing the guidance, Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. James Lane and State Health Commissioner Dr. Norman Oliver say that the new guidance has been, "updated to reflect the latest science, and the best public health guidance and recommendations available intended to reduce, but not eliminate, the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in school settings." This has been done even as the authors acknowledge that "the role of children in the transmission of SARS-CoV-2, which is the virus that causes COVID-19, remains somewhat unclear and we are learning more every day." Though the updated guidance contains some new recommendations, the "process leaves the final decisions about reopening squarely in the hands of local school boards."

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HILTON CLEANSTAY

Arlington County Manager Mark Schwartz Appoints Samia Byrd as Chief Race and Equity Officer

As the Chief Race and Equity Officer for Arlington County, Samia Byrd will lead the County's work to advance racial equity, diversity and inclusion both internal and external to the organization. This includes guiding and facilitating the development and implementation of important policies and practices through an equity lens.

"Samia will be instrumental to helping Arlington better understand the cracks in our foundation," stated County Manager Mark Schwartz. "I am excited to have her in this new leadership role as we identify the solutions moving forward to ensure that everyone in Arlington has the same opportunities regardless of the color of their skin, their education level, their housing type, their job, or the Arlington ZIP code where they live. I am honored that she will take on this work. She will bring a deep sense of commitment, faith, and insight to a subject that is profoundly, at its core, about what type of community we want to be."

Ms. Byrd will continue to oversee and manage the County's coordinated work with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government (COG) Racial Equity Cohort comprised of Senior County and Arlington Public Schools staff, to inform the County's development of its plan for addressing race and equity issues. This includes working closely with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity, a national network of governments working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all, to help guide the development of a racial equity tool later this year.

Once developed, the racial equity tool will be used in guiding policy, practice, program and budget decisions and offer new strategies for achieving racial equity outcomes in Arlington. Ms. Byrd will also have a pivotal role in developing and implementing a Countywide Racial Equity Action Plan.

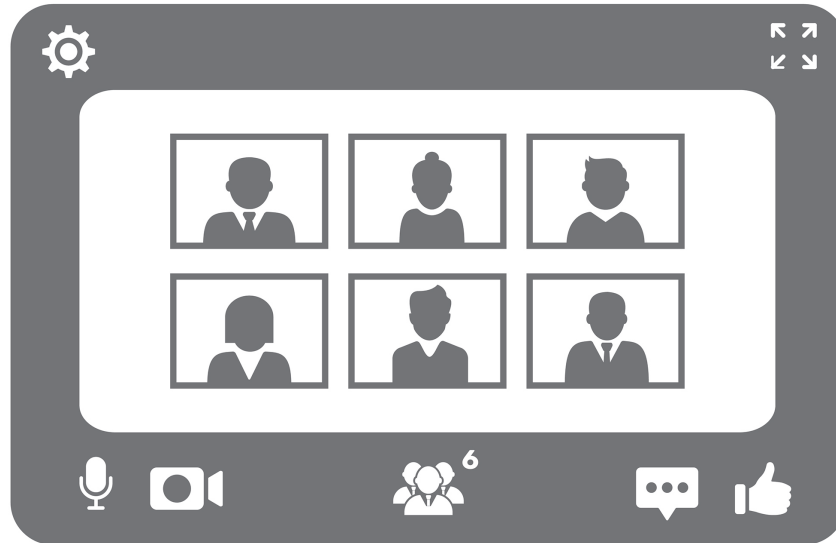
"The time is past due to dedicate and commit our time, resources and effort to advancing race and equity in achieving Arlington's vision of a diverse and inclusive community. It is an opportunity we should not take lightly or as a response to the moment, and one I approach with humility," stated Ms. Byrd. "I look forward to the journey as an organization and community to bring about sustainable, systemic change to improve opportunity, access and quality of life for all regardless of race."

Prior to this appointment, Ms. Byrd has served as Deputy County Manager for the past three years, after spending over a decade as a Principal Planner in the Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development. In addition to her time in Arlington County, Ms. Byrd also served as Manager with Quadel Consulting Corporation, the Director of State Fiscal Analysis and Policy for the National Council of Nonprofit Associations. Earlier in her career, she held a research position with the Urban Land Institute where she worked on strategic, community and master planning, short- and long-term organization and program-specific local housing authority plans; tax policy and its impacts on low income and vulnerable and disadvantaged populations; neighborhood and community economic development programs; and real estate development markets and trends.

Ms. Byrd, a native of Hampton, VA, earned a Master's Degree from Georgia Tech, and a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Virginia. Ms. Byrd received a Certification of Public Management (CPM) from The George Washington University-Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Institute for Regional Excellence in 2012. She serves on the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Planning Committee in Alexandria, the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Urban Plan Steering Committee, and ULI-Washington's Pathways to Inclusion Program and Diversity & Inclusion Working Group. Ms. Byrd is also a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated.



Local Government Recovery Task Force Meets with Governor's Staff



The Local Government Recovery Task Force, a joint effort by VACo and VML to provide a local perspective as Virginia works to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, held its second meeting on July 14. Members were pleased to be joined by Courtney Dozier, Policy Director for Governor Northam, and Carter Hutchinson, Deputy Policy Director, who provided an update on recent activities within the Administration and fielded questions from Task Force members. VACo is represented on the Task Force by President-Elect Jeff McKay, Immediate Past President Sherrin Alsop, Past President Mary Biggs, Past President William Kyger, and Region 2 Director Ruth Larson.

Ms. Dozier discussed the recently-developed Virginia Rent and Mortgage Relief Program, which uses \$50 million from the state's Coronavirus Relief Fund allocation to provide financial assistance with housing for certain eligible households. Mr. Hutchinson noted that the Administration is in the process of developing a revised revenue forecast in preparation for the upcoming special session; once the revenue projections are developed, the Administration will be able to review potential spending proposals, and is willing to consider innovative suggestions from localities to assist with revenue enhancements or temporary mandate relief.

Topics of discussion with Task Force members included assistance to localities with school reopening, such as procurement of personal protective equipment and other supplies, and the importance of child care in localities where in-person schooling may be supplemented by distance learning. Members discussed the need to support localities whose economies are supported by tourism-related industries that have been heavily affected by business closures and restrictions, and the overall need for assistance with lost local revenues. Ms. Dozier assured participants that expanding access to broadband is a top priority for the Administration, which is considering legislative options for the special session. Since law enforcement reforms are expected to be considered at the special session as well, members requested that these issues be a topic of conversation at the Task Force's next meeting, which will likely be held in early August.

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)



Visit Northumberland County and the LOVEworks Sign

Northern Neck Farm Museum, a five county regional museum fashioned to tell the story of agriculture in the Northern Neck, shows its “LOVE” with a giant ear of corn designed by a local student, Jamel Brown, and sculpted from iron. The Northern Neck of Virginia has a rich agricultural tradition. From the early American Indians who grew maize, squash and beans to the present-day farmer managing hundreds of acres of corn, soybeans, and small grains, the accumulated knowledge of the land from generations of participants in this life-sustaining activity is the mission of the Northern Neck Farm Museum.

Visitors are encouraged to take photos with the LOVEworks and share with loved ones on Facebook at <http://www.Facebook.com/VirginiaaisforLovers> or on Twitter with the special hashtag #LOVEVA.

A complete list of the LOVEwork locations is at www.Virginia.org/LOVE.

SOURCE: [Virginia is for Lovers](http://www.Virginia.org/LOVE)

Become a Certified Supervisor



The Virginia Association of Counties, in partnership with Virginia Tech, offers the Virginia Certified County Supervisors' Program: an opportunity for county supervisors to learn how to more effectively and efficiently lead in their communities.

Since its inception in 2005, 70 supervisors representing more than 40 counties have completed this training program, earning 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 of the local governance experience.

VACo slightly revamped the Supervisors' Certification Program to adjust to our current time while enhancing your learning experience. The Managing While Leading: Understanding Your Powers, Duties, and Responsibilities course started via Webex Teleconference on May 29 and will end with another Webex Teleconference on July 24.

Between the two classroom sessions - there will be several lunch hour teleconferences to discuss course work, reading materials, current events, local issues, and whatever comes up in conversation.

VACo Contact: [Karie Walker](#)

Funding Public Services: The Role of Budgeting

Registration Form | **Register Online**

Opening Session | August 28 | Webex Teleconference

Closing Session | October 30 | Albemarle County Office Building

Registration Deadline | August 20



Virginia Housing's Community Impact Grants help James City County plan for affordable housing

Virginia Housing's Community Impact Grant program is helping one of the fastest growing counties in the Commonwealth prepare for its future affordable housing needs.

The northernmost locality in Hampton Roads, located halfway between Virginia Beach and Richmond, James City County is an attractive community for new residents. So attractive that according to census data, the area's population is expected to increase 46% by 2040 – meaning the need for new and affordable housing will continue to rise.

To help plan for future housing needs, James City County applied for and received two grants from Virginia Housing's Community Impact Grant Program. The program provides resources to support a variety of critical planning and project development activities, from market assessment, planning and design to community engagement and land use evaluation.

The county used the first grant to create a task force comprised of community leaders and citizens from varied backgrounds. Together, they developed 15 strategy recommendations for increasing and preserving affordable housing.

The second grant gave the county the ability to collect valuable feedback from its residents through a new survey application called MetroQuest. County officials will use the data to help update its Comprehensive Plan – a long-range planning tool that helps steer future growth and development.

"Applying for these grants from Virginia Housing was worth the time and effort because they help us meet the needs of our citizens and ensure their voices are heard when it comes to growth in our region," said Vaughn Poller, James City County's neighborhood development administrator.

Have an affordable housing or community revitalization project? Contact Chris Thompson (Chris.Thompson@VirginiaHousing.com) to see how Virginia Housing can help.



Contacts

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The Circle of Governance

Take a moment to envision working with a partner that could help you streamline your board meeting and agenda creation process, leverage modern tools to give you a cutting-edge website and provide your staff and citizens access to the most powerful online research tools for your codes of ordinances. Well, the good news is that you are probably already partnered with just such a company...Municode.

As some of you may know, Municode has been serving local governments for over 65 years. Over this period of time, we've been extremely fortunate to have grown from one client, (Tallahassee, FL) to over 4,000 local government clients in all 50 states. At the center of everything we do is our desire to connect local governments with their communities in powerfully meaningful ways.

Municode enables you and your municipality to take advantage of what we believe is the easiest to use, most affordable, and most efficient local government platform available in our industry. Our team of developers has already completed our Meetings to Web integration and is working to integrate our Meetings solution with our code of ordinance platform.

Municode provides a broad range of online services to meet any legal publishing needs. Our team is continuously developing industry-leading technology in order to deliver your content in any form - web, mobile and even print. Whether you are interested in a brand new codification or recodifying your existing code, Municode will exceed your expectations.

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Municode Meetings is the most affordable, easiest to use, end-to-end meeting management solution available today. It provides a completely automated system for the creation of agendas and packets, even at the last minute, with just the click of a button.

JLARC Presents 2020 Workplan

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) met July 6 to approve a plan of work and schedule of reports for the remainder of 2020, and to receive briefings on the status of the Virginia Retirement System and the Virginia529 program. JLARC will be conducting several studies of particular interest to local governments this year, including a study of the Children's Services Act; JLARC staff are scheduled to report on the results of that study in November 2020.

JLARC's planned list of studies for 2020 is as follows:

- Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity: JLARC staff will review programs administered by the Department, to include small, women-owned, and minority-owned business certification, disadvantaged business enterprise certification, small business financing programs, and business technical assistance programs. *(Report date: September 2020)*
- Virginia Information Technologies Agency: JLARC staff will conduct a follow-up review to the 2019 study of VITA's transition to a new model of contracting with multiple vendors to provide the state's information technology services. *(Report date: October 2020)*
- Virginia Department of Education: JLARC will be reviewing the Department's oversight and support of local school divisions. *(Report date: October 2020)*
- Marijuana legalization: JLARC was charged by the General Assembly with developing recommendations for how the state should regulate the growth, sale, and possession of marijuana, should Virginia move to full legalization. VACo staff have provided information to JLARC staff regarding current local tax structures, existing revenue-sharing models, and local land use authority, and JLARC will be surveying counties for additional feedback. *(Report date: November 2020)*
- Children's Services Act: JLARC is reviewing the administration and oversight of CSA, with a particular focus on private special education day placements. In response to questions from JLARC members at the July 6 meeting, staff explained that the review will also be examining how Medicaid-funded services interact with CSA. VACo staff met with JLARC staff in the spring to provide a local perspective on these issues. *(Report date: November 2020)*
- Insurance coverage for behavioral health: JLARC was directed by the General Assembly to determine whether current reporting requirements for insurance plans allow for an assessment of parity in insurance coverage of behavioral health services relative to other medical care, and to evaluate whether insurance plans are meeting this standard. *(Report date: November 2020)*
- Special education: JLARC will be reviewing the special education system, to include identification of children for services, school divisions' capacity to provide special education, student outcomes, state oversight and support, and special education spending. *(Report date: December 2020).*

In addition, JLARC will conduct its continuing oversight, as required by statute, and will be reporting on its reviews of economic development incentives, state spending on the Standards of Quality, Medicaid spending and enrollment, and other periodic oversight activities. JLARC's workplan is available at [this link](#).

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

Virginia joins Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)



After years of legislative efforts and debate, Governor Northam has announced that Virginia is finally set to officially join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, becoming the first southern state to enter the collaborative program.

The [Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative](#), or RGGI, is a market-based program amongst several Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic states with the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from power plants while also encouraging new economic growth, particularly in the environmental, renewable energy, and energy efficiency sectors. Currently, there are 10 RGGI members: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Pennsylvania is currently working on a final regulation (expected by July 31, 2010) that will allow them to join RGGI as well.

Simply put, RGGI is a cap-and-trade program that targets pollution from fossil fuel power plants. Members states agree to a cap on carbon dioxide emissions, and power plants in those states in turn must reduce their pollution loads to meet this cap or are required to obtain allowances through quarterly auctions. Participating states can then use the proceeds of these auctions to invest in various renewable energy or energy efficiency projects or initiatives. According to [recent studies](#), since the program was launched in 2009, RGGI has resulted in a net economic benefit of over \$4.7 billion while carbon dioxide emissions have dropped by as much as 45% in participating states.

In Virginia, proceeds of allowance auctions will be used to invest in community flood preparedness, coastal resilience, and energy efficiency programs. [According to the Northam Administration](#), the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) will administer approximately 52% the proceeds for energy efficiency programs for low-income citizens, while 45% will be invested in flood prevention and resiliency programs and the final 3% will be used by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for climate planning efforts.

While the General Assembly has debated the merits of RGGI for years, the [enabling legislation](#) that structures Virginia's RGGI participation was only passed this legislative session, while the final regulation (the Virginia Carbon Rule) was just signed on June 25, 2020. Now, Virginia is set to become a fully participating member of RGGI on January 1, 2021.

VACo Contact: [Chris McDonald, Esq.](#)

Virginia first state nationally to create workplace regulations for COVID-19



After four separate day-long emergency electronic meetings, the [Virginia Safety and Health Codes Board](#) adopted on July 15 regulations and standards that employers (including Virginia Counties) must adhere to when addressing worker safety for COVID-19. The Northam administration (per E.O. 63) directed the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) to promulgate emergency regulations and standards to control, prevent, and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

“Workers should not have to sacrifice their health and safety to earn a living, especially during an ongoing global pandemic,” said Governor Northam in a [press release](#). “In the face of federal inaction, Virginia has stepped up to protect workers from COVID-19, creating the nation’s first enforceable workplace safety requirements. Keeping Virginians safe at work is not only a critical part of stopping the spread of this virus, it’s key to our economic recovery and it’s the right thing to do.”

As reported in a previous County Connections, public comment was due on Monday, June 22. DOLI received [3,366 comments](#) during the 10-day comment period.

VACo notes that the standards include the following requirements that counties will need to implement:

- Classification of all employees as “very high,” “high,” “medium,” or “lower” risk, based on the potential level of exposure in performing their duties;
- Development and implementation of an “Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response Plan” per [CDC Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)
- Designation of a person responsible for implementing the response plan;
- Provision of respiratory protection and personal protective equipment (PPE) for multiple employees occupying the same vehicle for work purposes, and for employees whose work or the work area does not allow them to observe physical distancing requirements.
- Screening of all “very high,” “high” and “medium” classified employees for COVID-19 symptoms prior to each work shift;
- Installation of physical barriers (such as clear plastic sneeze guards) to mitigate the spread of the virus; and
- At a minimum, the cleaning and disinfecting of all common spaces (including bathrooms) at the end of each work shift.

Violations of the new standards can result in civil penalties and fines as prescribed in state law (see [§ 40.1-49.4](#) of Code of Virginia). The new standards will become effective upon publication (scheduled for the week of July 27) in a Richmond area newspaper. For more information go to the [Safety and Health Codes Board Electronic Emergency Meeting](#) website.

VACo Contacts: [Joe Lerch, AICP](#) and [Phyllis Errico, Esq., CAE](#)

Governor Releases Preliminary FY 2020 Revenue Figures



Governor Northam announced on July 9 that Virginia's FY 2020 shortfall was smaller than originally anticipated, with a General Fund (GF) deficit of approximately \$236.5 million rather than the \$1 billion that was initially feared earlier in the year. Revenue collections grew by 2 percent relative to FY 2019, but trailed the projections of 3.1 percent growth. While individual income tax nonwithholding collections met the forecast of a 4.3 percent decline, payroll withholding and sales tax collections, which jointly represent the lion's share of state GF revenues, failed to meet expectations, falling 2 percent and 7 percent in the fourth quarter, respectively. In an [article in the Richmond Times-Dispatch](#), Secretary of Finance Aubrey Layne indicated that he expects a revenue shortfall of \$1 billion in FY 2021 and an additional \$1 billion in FY 2022.

The Governor will present a full review of FY 2020 revenue collections during his presentation to the "money committees" on August 18. At this meeting, the Governor is also expected to release a revenue reforecast, which will be informed by the discussions of the Joint Advisory Board of Economists, which is scheduled to meet July 20, and the Governor's Advisory Committee on Revenue Estimates, which will meet August 3. An improvement in the state's finances may allow for the Administration and the legislature to revisit the \$2.4 billion in proposed new spending that was "unallotted," or paused, during the April reconvened session and potentially restore some priority spending items.

Although the pandemic's impact to Virginia's FY 2020 budget may have been cushioned by the strong performance of its major revenue sources earlier in the year, considerable uncertainty remains about the national economic picture. Reopening of businesses has generated job growth; the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) [reported July 2](#) that total nonfarm payroll employment grew by 4.8 million jobs in June, and unemployment fell from 13.3 percent to 11.1 percent. However, 17.8 million Americans were unemployed in June; BLS notes, "the jobless rate and the number of unemployed are up by 7.6 percentage points and 12.0 million, respectively, since February." In a [June report](#), Moody's Analytics argued for \$500 billion in additional aid to state and local governments over the next two fiscal years in order to avoid "major damage" to the national economy. This analysis reflects the expected "drag" on the national economy of state and local revenue loss and Medicaid spending growth, and does not factor in a potential "second wave" of infections, which Moody's predicts could cause a combined state and local budget shock (revenue losses and Medicaid spending increases) of \$750 billion over two years.

JLARC Presents VRS Oversight Report



As part of their July 6 [meeting](#), the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) presented an oversight report of the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) as required by the [Code of Virginia](#). The health and well-being of VRS is important to local governments as it administers retirement programs and other benefit programs for state and local government employees, including teachers. VRS receives funds from employer contributions, employee contributions, and investment income.

As previously [reported](#), investment income is critical to ensuring that employer contributions meant to amortize long-term unfunded liabilities remain low. Increases in employer contributions directly impact the budgets of local governments. Due to recent economic uncertainty, VRS investments generated a negative 2.2 percent return for the one-year period ending on March 31, 2020. This represented a decrease of \$3.5 billion in assets from a year ago. However, the investment performance for the three, five, 10, 20, and 25-year periods met or exceeded all performance benchmarks, demonstrating the long-term health of the System.

VRS staff also [presented](#) to the Commission, providing an overview of the System, investments, and administration. Staff also touched upon the impact of continuing trade tensions between the U.S. and China especially following increased unrest and Chinese government crackdowns in Hong Kong. Staff also discussed the monetary and fiscal policy response to the COVID-19 including the lowering of the Federal Reserve's benchmark interest rate and the passage of the \$483 billion Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and Health Care Enhancement Act and the \$2.3 trillion Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES). VRS staff estimate that the U.S. equity market has discounted a quick economic recovery path as overly optimistic and barring a vaccine, the economy will likely follow a slow recovery path, thereby reducing the ability of corporate earnings to snap back quickly.

VRS serves more than 742,000 total members, retirees, and beneficiaries and has 598 participating local political subdivisions, including 93 counties. The fiduciary net position of the trust fund is \$76.9 billion as of March 31st, 2020 and as based on assets, is the 18th largest among public and private pension systems in the United States. The two largest VRS pension asset areas are the Teachers plans and the Political Subdivision Employees plans, both by assets and number of members.

The full JLARC report and slides from the presentation can be found [here](#) and [here](#) respectively.

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

Treasury Provides Additional Guidance on Coronavirus Relief Fund



The Department of the Treasury issued updated guidance on the timing of expenditure of Coronavirus Relief Fund dollars on June 30 and provided an additional answer to its list of Frequently Asked Questions on July 8.

The new [guidance](#) pertains to the requirement that Coronavirus Relief Fund dollars may only be used to cover costs incurred during the period that begins March 1, 2020, and ends December 30, 2020. Of particular interest to local governments, Treasury writes, "Initial guidance released on April 22, 2020, provided that the cost of an expenditure is incurred when the recipient has expended funds to cover the cost. Upon further consideration and informed by an understanding of State, local, and tribal government practices, Treasury is clarifying that for a cost to be considered to have been incurred, performance or delivery must occur during the covered period but payment of funds need not be made during that time (though it is generally expected that this will take place within 90 days of a cost being incurred)." VACo has requested clarification from the Northam Administration regarding how this additional flexibility will be incorporated into the state's requirements for local governments receiving distributions of Coronavirus Relief Fund dollars from the state.

Treasury's [updated Frequently Asked Questions document](#) was released on July 8. The new information is found on page 9 and answers the question, "May Fund payments be used to cover increased administrative leave costs of public employees who could not telework in the event of a stay at home order or a case of COVID-19 in the workplace?"

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

The new guidance continues to follow the previously released recommendations by dividing K-12 school reopening into three distinct phases linked to a locality's phase as outlined in Governor Northam's [Forward Virginia](#) blueprint, which has guided the process by which localities and businesses across the Commonwealth have operated during the pandemic. The guidance also continues to recommend that schools gradually resume in-person instruction while prioritizing the health and safety of students and staff and the needs of students who have been most impacted by school building closures.

Some updates from the previous guidance in Phase III include:

- A large group gathering limit of 250 individuals;
- Continued limitations on school athletics (Virginia High School League (VHSL) Phase 3 athletic guidance will be forthcoming); and
- Further clarifications about face coverings and physical distancing, including acknowledging World Health Organization (WHO) [guidance](#) and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) [guidance](#) to encourage that schools aim for six feet of physical distance to the greatest extent possible; however, if six feet of distance is not feasible (inclusive of buildings and school buses), schools should implement a combination of face coverings and a minimum of three feet distance between everyone present.

According to VDOE, the phase guidance serves as a recommendation for Virginia schools to mitigate risks associated with COVID-19. Local school divisions are advised to make decisions on implementing such guidance, and assuming additional risk, in consultation with local health departments and school board attorneys. Divisions whose health mitigation strategies vary from the Phase Guidance must notify VDOE of such in their Phase III health plan submission.

Regardless of the new guidelines, many of the obstacles facing local school divisions and local governments in navigating a path forward to allow for safe reopening of K-12 schools remain. Local division leaders need to balance many different aspects in their reopening plans. This includes but is not limited to prioritizing the health and safety of students and staff, taking into account the developmental, instructional, and mental well-being of students, the childcare capacities of their communities to support any potential tiered learning that would see different cohorts of students attending in-person instruction during only part of the normal week, the transportation and physical infrastructure limitations of their school buses and school buildings, the broadband capacity of their community to support distance learning if needed, all while determining the budgetary impact of these mitigation strategies and the ability of local governments to afford them. Given many of the budget hurdles facing local governments as the economic impacts of COVID-19 continue to negatively impact revenues, this last point is likely to pose a significant challenge.

Following the release of the initial VDOE guidance VACo had previously [written](#) Governor Northam to highlight concerns and opportunities posed by the desire to reopen K-12 schools and simultaneously mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on public education and local governments. VACo Board Members and staff continue to engage regularly with policy makers and members of the K-12 education community such as the Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS) to identify the challenges of K-12 reopening and ways in which the Commonwealth can help ease the burdens local school boards and governing bodies face in doing so. We will continue to share updates and information on this issue as they develop.

Additional information regarding the new guidance document and frequently asked questions can be found on VDOE's website [here](#) and [here](#) respectively.

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



— BOOST YOUR —
RETIREMENT READINESS

Health Care webinar

July 30, 2020
12:30 – 1:30 p.m. ET

Nationwide® has created educational webinars on topics of interest to pre-retirees as they look ahead. Our next session is about health care costs in retirement, what Medicare covers and how you can plan for those costs.

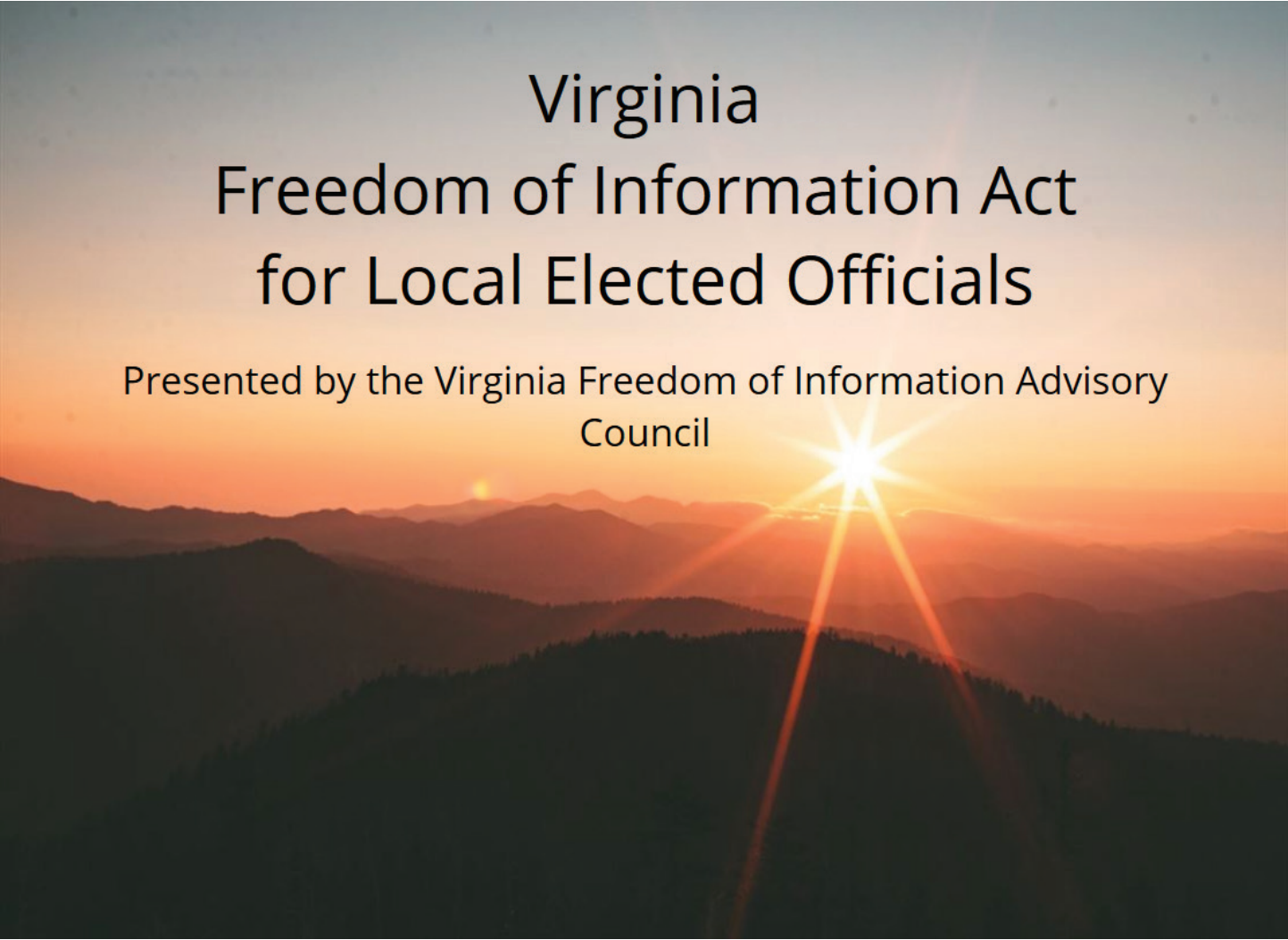
Topics covered:

- The challenge of saving for retirement
- Health care specifics
- The parts of Medicare and supplemental insurance
- Creating a plan

Investing involves market risk, including possible loss of principal. No investment strategy can guarantee to make a profit or avoid loss. Actual results will vary depending on your investment and market experience. Nationwide representatives cannot offer investment, tax or legal advice. You should consult your own counsel before making retirement plan decisions. NFM-19689AO (06/20)

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Virginia Freedom of Information Act for Local Elected Officials

Presented by the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory
Council

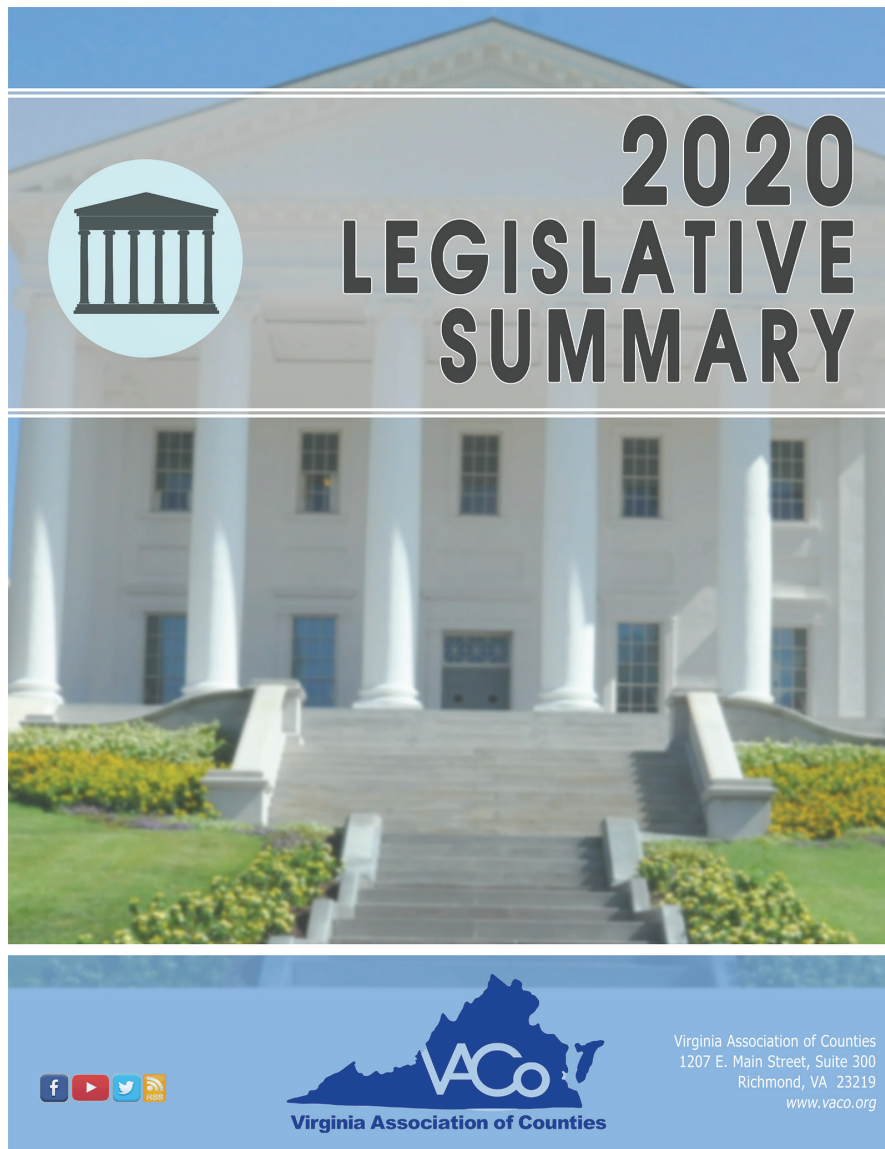
Local elected officials - § 2.2-3704.3

As of July 1, 2020, all local elected officials are required to receive FOIA training “ within two months after assuming the local elected office and thereafter at least once during each consecutive period of two calendar years commencing with the date on which he last completed a training session.” To facilitate this training, we have developed a FOIA training course specifically for local elected officials that should take less than an hour to complete. Note that it covers a broader range of material than the FOIA officers course by including information on public records, public meetings, remedies and penalties, and additional resources for further questions.

Additionally, there is no quiz, but at the end of the course you will be able to generate your own certificate of completion to keep for your records. The law requires that the clerk of a governing body or school board keep such records for five years. For elected officials that have no clerk, we recommend you keep your FOIA training certificates with your other administrative records. Note that there is no requirement to send copies of your certificates to the FOIA Council, and unlike FOIA officers, we do not maintain a list of elected officials who have completed FOIA training.

Click [here](#) to take the FOIA training course for local elected officials.

VACo Releases 2020 Legislative Summary



The [Legislative Summary](#) details the actions of the 2020 General Assembly and information on legislation of interest to counties.

This edition contains links to bills through the General Assembly's Legislative Information System. Also included in the document are studies and statistics of importance to counties.

[Read VACo's 2020 Legislative Summary](#)

VACo Contact: [Legislative Team](#)



Like most other organizations, VAPDC is adjusting to the COVID-19 pandemic and has cancelled its annual Summer Conference for 2020. And like most other organizations, we do not want to lose touch with you! Conferences provide an opportunity to present timely educational and informational content, while providing a forum for connecting with one another to exchange ideas and information. Since we are unable to do that in person, VAPDC is bringing these things to you in a Summer Series, Four Thursday's in July.

These four online meetings will cover a variety of topics and be 1 ½ hours in length. So, mark your calendar for July 9, July 16, July 23, and July 30 (10 am – 11:30 am) to connect and learn with VAPDC!

Meeting Schedule

Week 1—July 9, 2020

The Other Side of COVID-19: A Futurist's View

Speaker: [John Martin, CEO & Managing Partner, Southeastern Institute for Research](#)

Week 2—July 16, 2020

Travel, Tourism and Leisure - Seeking to be Stronger

VAPDC Annual Business Meeting will be held after this session 11:30-12pm

[Business Meeting Agenda](#) | [Slate of Officers and Directors](#) | [Minutes from FY2020 Business Meeting](#) | [Proposed Bylaw Changes](#)

Week 3—July 23, 2020

Transportation and Mobility Reimagined - Making It Future Ready

Week 4—July 30, 2020

Virginia PDCs: Regional Responses and Resources

Registration

Participants can register for each of these sessions individually or the series of four at a discounted rate.

All Four Meetings: \$35 **Best Deal** | **Per Session:** \$10

Participants will receive login information prior to the event(s) they have registered for with instructions for joining the meeting and any applicable details and handouts. More information to come!

[REGISTER FOR SUMMER SERIES](#)



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VACo CONTACT: Karie Walker | kwalker@vaco.orgNACo CONTACT: Paul Guequierre | pguequierre@naco.org

Virginia and National Associations of Counties Partner to Strengthen Public Sector Cybersecurity

With new cyber threats emerging every day, the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) has partnered with the National Association of Counties (NACo) to strengthen local governments' cybersecurity efforts. The NACo Cybersecurity Collaborative will provide Virginia's counties with access to top tier technology security professionals, information, intelligence, best practices and other resources to prepare for, prevent and mitigate cybersecurity threats.

"The best way to address escalating cybersecurity challenges is to collaborate in a peer-to-peer network and share expertise," said Dean Lynch, VACo's executive director. "Through the Cybersecurity Collaborative, counties will be better equipped to protect residents' data and defend against potentially devastating cyberattacks."

Public sector security practices continue to evolve and improve. Once focusing mainly on physical security and natural disaster preparedness, counties now address security of networked and personal devices, mobile applications and cloud-enabled solutions.

"The Cybersecurity Collaborative provides access to world-class expertise and actionable information to prepare for and respond to cyber threats and attacks," said Matthew Chase, NACo's executive director. "This cutting-edge program is designed to help counties mitigate risks and navigate complex security dynamics as new threats emerge every day."

The NACo Cybersecurity Collaborative is a peer-based network that shares proven action plans to drive cyber readiness, implementation guides and comprehensive checklists. Members of the collaborative have access to customizable policies and procedures for governance controls and compliance, and the ability to connect with experts to ask real-time questions for guidance on real-time issues. Learn more at <https://www.naco.org/resources/cost-saving-tools/cybersecurity-collaborative>.

###

The National Association of Counties (NACo) strengthens America's counties, including nearly 40,000 county elected officials and 3.6 million county employees. Founded in 1935, NACo unites county officials to advocate for county government priorities in federal policymaking; promote exemplary county policies and practices; nurture leadership skills and expand knowledge networks; optimize county and taxpayer resources and cost savings; and enrich the public's understanding of county government. www.naco.org

CYBERSECURITY
COLLABORATIVE

A CyberRisk Alliance Company



The Scenic Virginia 2020 Virginia Vistas photo contest is now open. I'm thrilled to share that this year the **Rivers & Waterways category is exclusive to designated Virginia scenic rivers!**

This is a wonderful way to highlight the [50th anniversary](#) of the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program. The annual contest promotes the preservation and protection of our beautiful resources.

I encourage you to submit your photos by the July 31 deadline. Please view the [list of designated scenic rivers](#), and then visit [Scenic Virginia](#) for details and an entry form.

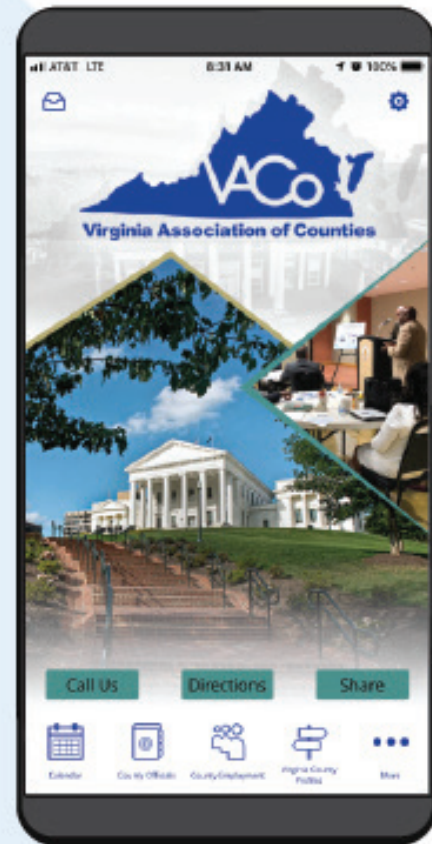
Many thanks to Scenic Virginia for being an excellent partner to the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program!

CONTACT

Lynn Crump, PLA, ASLA
Scenic Resources Coordinator
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
lynn.crump@dcr.virginia.gov

DOWNLOAD

our new app



The Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) mobile application is a valuable tool for County officials and staff to better serve their communities. With the VACo mobile app, users can easily stay informed about issues important to Counties with many features, including:

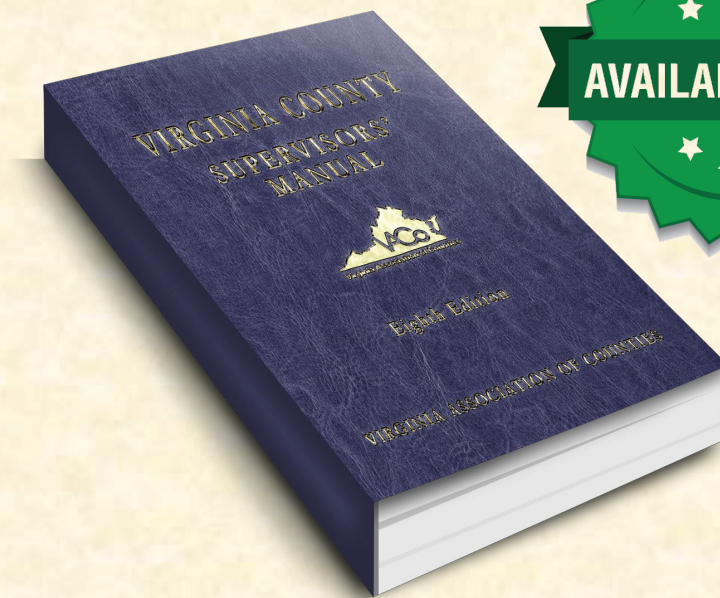
- * VACo Events Registration and Info
- * VACo Member Directory
- * Legislative News and Alerts | Capitol Contact
- * VACo Chat
- * County Pulse Podcast
- * Employment Opportunities

Downloading the app is easy...

- Scan the QR Code or search "Virginia Assn of Counties" from the iTunes or Google Play Store
- Opt-in for VACo Push Notifications to receive important VACo alerts
- For access to the most features, request an account with your email and a password
- Once your account is approved, members will have access to all the features.

VIRGINIA COUNTY SUPERVISORS' MANUAL

EIGHTH EDITION, 2019

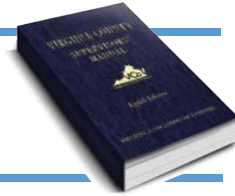


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Virginia County Supervisors' Manual 8th Edition - NEW FOR 2019



The Eighth Edition (2019) of VACo's **Virginia County Supervisors' Manual**, is now in stock. The Supervisors' Manual is the number one resource on the framework of county government and the responsibilities of the county board.

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Questions? Call 804.788.6652.



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).



PURCHASING AGENT | Gloucester County | Posted July 10



ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF UTILITIES | Gloucester County | Posted July 10



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR | Gloucester County | Posted July 10



REVENUE TECHNICIAN OR SPECIALIST | Gloucester County | Posted July 10



ASSISTANT COMMONWEALTH ATTORNEY I | Gloucester County | Posted July 10



ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL SERVICES | New Kent County | Posted July 10



ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SPECIALIST II | Prince George's County | Posted July 9



DEPUTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CODES | Spotsylvania County | Posted July 8



BUILDING DEPARTMENT PERMIT TECHNICIAN | Clarke County | Posted July 8



SITE DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR | City of Harrisonburg | Posted July 8



UTILITY OPERATOR | Hanover County | Posted July 6



BENEFIT PROGRAMS SPECIALIST II | New Kent County | Posted July 6



NETWORK/SYSTEMS ANALYST | City of Harrisonburg | Posted July 6



ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR | Franklin County | Posted July 2



BUS DRIVER | James City County | Posted July 2



WATER DISTRIBUTION APPRENTICE | James City County | Posted July 2



WATER PRODUCTION APPRENTICE/SPECIALIST I/SPECIALIST II | James City County | Posted July 2



PERMIT TECHNICIAN | Isle of Wight County | Posted July 2



ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNER | Isle of Wight County | Posted July 2



REGIONAL YOUTH SERVICES COORDINATOR | Galax-Carroll Regional Library | Posted July 1



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR | Carroll County | Posted July 1



MAIL CARRIER | Hanover County | Posted July 1



RADIO SYSTEMS TECHNICIAN | Alleghany County | Posted June 30



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATOR | Clarke County | Posted June 29



GENERAL SERVICES DIRECTOR | New Kent County | Posted June 29



WWTP OPERATOR I | Town of Bowling Green | Posted June 26



CLINICAL ASSISTANT | James City County | Posted June 26



CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE | James City County | Posted June 26



POLICE OFFICER I/II (CERTIFIED) | James City County | Posted June 26



FACILITIES SPECIALIST | James City County | Posted June 26



FAMILY SERVICES ASSISTANT | James City County | Posted June 26



UTILITY WORKER | Prince George County | Posted June 26



CUSTODIAN | Fauquier County | Posted June 26



SOLID WASTE TEAM MEMBER | Fauquier County | Posted June 26



BUDGET SYSTEMS SPECIALIST (EXCEL SYSTEMS SPECIALIST) | Hanover County | Posted June 26



BUILDING OFFICIAL | Southampton County | Posted June 25



BUILDING PLAN REVIEWER | Southampton County | Posted June 25



ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT I | Southampton County | Posted June 25



METER TECHNICIAN | Prince George County | Posted June 25



ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLANNER | New River Valley Regional Commission | Posted June 25



BUSINESS CONTINUITY TEAM – PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTOR | New River Valley Regional Commission | Posted June 25



BUSINESS CONTINUITY TEAM – PROGRAM MANAGER | New River Valley Regional Commission | Posted June 25



BUILDING INSPECTOR | Pulaski County | Posted June 24



CURRENT PLANNING MANAGER | Hanover County | Posted June 24



BUILDING OFFICIAL | City of Franklin | Posted June 23



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR | City of Franklin | Posted June 23



ENGINEER V – CITY TRAFFIC ENGINEER | City of Chesapeake | Posted June 23



CONSTRUCTION INSPECTOR II – ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY SERVICES | City of Chesapeake | Posted June 23



PURCHASING AGENT | Gloucester County | Posted June 18



TPO DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization | Posted June 18

VALUE OF VACo



ADVOCACY

VACo's lobbying efforts have helped stem the tide of unfunded mandates and have saved Counties millions of dollars every year.



EDUCATION

Our educational programs offer County leaders and staff opportunities to become more effective in their communities.



MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

Some of VACo's best moments are when members convene and work to improve communities all over the Commonwealth.



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Our business development opportunities offer savings and innovative approaches to delivering services at the County level.

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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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