



VACo 2021 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

For the 2021 General Assembly Session



ADOPTED BY VACO
MEMBERSHIP ON
NOVEMBER 11, 2020

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44

2021 Legislative Program Virginia Association of Counties

Table of Contents

Economic Development and Planning	p. 2
Education	p. 4
Energy Subcommittee	p.7
Environment and Agriculture	p. 8
Finance	p. 12
General Government	p. 14
Health and Human Services	p. 16
Transportation	p. 20

45 **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND**
46 **PLANNING**

47
48 **Priority**

49
50 **Broadband**

51 VACo urges the Commonwealth to provide adequate financial assistance to
52 counties to build the necessary telecommunications infrastructure to deploy
53 universal affordable access to the internet for all areas, particularly in
54 underserved and rural areas. Additionally, VACo supports legislation that
55 provides additional tools for counties to finance, build and operate open access
56 networks in partnership with commercial internet service providers. VACo also
57 supports efforts to streamline the permitting of broadband infrastructure in the
58 VDOT right-of-way.
59

60 **Positions**

61
62 **Economic Development**

63 VACo supports economic development policies and programs that bolster local
64 and regional development efforts by maintaining and expanding state funding,
65 streamlining state and federal processes, and granting additional funding and
66 authority to promote local and regional initiatives. VACo also supports state
67 funding for Virginia’s planning district commissions and local cooperative
68 extension offices, which play key roles in addressing regional challenges.
69

70 **Land Use**

71 VACo supports maintaining local and expanding authority to plan and regulate
72 land use and opposes any legislation that weakens these key local responsibilities.
73 VACo also supports legislation that grants localities additional tools to adequately
74 meet increasing needs for public services driven by new development without
75 burdening current residents with the cost of new growth through increased real
76 estate taxes. Such additional tools may include broad impact fee authority for all
77 counties, and adequate public facilities provisions.
78

79 **Affordable and Workforce Housing**

80 VACo supports maintaining federal and state funding and appropriate incentives
81 to assist localities in fostering affordable housing, as well as workforce housing
82 for employees such as teachers and first responders.
83

84 **Regulation of Home-based Businesses**

85 VACo opposes any legislation that limits or restricts local authority to regulate
86 home-based businesses, including short-term rentals regardless of whether
87 services or goods are purchased through an online hosting platform.
88
89

90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
100
101
102
103
104
105
106
107
108
109
110
111
112
113
114
115
116
117
118
119
120
121
122
123
124
125
126
127
128
129
130
131
132
133
134
135
136

Impacts of Federal and Military Facilities

VACo supports maintaining federal and state funding and technical assistance to mitigate the impacts on counties affected by federal budget cuts and to sustain current and future federal facilities in Virginia. VACo supports state and local partnerships that work to prevent encroachment and non-compatible land uses next to military installations. VACo also supports workforce training and retraining for programs that support defense activities in Virginia.

Maintain Public Sector Role in Onsite Sewer Program

VACo supports an onsite sewage program at the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) that protects public health and the environment in all regions of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth should give special focus to addressing the challenge of failing septic systems and allow localities authority to develop and implement policies that support the state’s program. VACo supports the private sector providing onsite sewage system design, installation, and repair services, as long as the services can be provided at affordable rates and in a timely manner, and as long as VDH continues to provide these direct services as well.

Siting of Transmission Lines

VACo supports requiring utilities to seek input from localities and property owners before any actions to construct, modify or enlarge transmission facilities.

EDUCATION

137
138
139
140
141
142
143
144
145
146
147
148
149
150
151
152
153
154
155
156
157
158
159
160
161
162
163
164
165
166
167
168
169
170
171
172
173
174
175
176
177
178
179
180
181
182

Priority

Education Funding

VACo urges the General Assembly to provide full state funding for public education, including the Standards of Quality (SOQ) as recommended by the Board of Education, where these recommendations coincide with prevailing local practice, targeted incentive programs, capital, and maintenance support, and teacher salaries.

Full state funding should be achieved without reduction to other parts of state public education budgets or to other core services. Changes to school security and high school graduation standards will require additional resources to implement and those costs must be adequately funded by the state. VACo supports additional state resources and additional funding options for localities for capital and school construction costs, including expanding dedicated local sales and use tax authority first given to select counties by the General Assembly in 2019.

VACo urges the General Assembly to provide hold-harmless funding for Sales Tax distributions to local school divisions and Direct Aid payment amounts based on average daily membership until the main impacts of COVID-19 on both sources of funding cease. VACo also supports additional resources to provide distance learning and COVID-19 mitigation for in-person instruction.

Positions

Charter Schools

VACo opposes legislation that removes authority from local school boards and divisions to establish charter schools.

Childhood Development and School Readiness

VACo supports efforts to increase at-risk children’s access to high-quality, enriching learning environments, including more resources and flexibility for localities participating in programs like the Virginia Preschool Initiative and Head Start.

Childcare

VACo supports additional federal and state funding for programs such as the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) to support increased demand for childcare services in communities with school divisions that have opted to provide virtual or hybrid instruction plans to preK-12 students for the 2020-2021 school year as a result of COVID-19 mitigation efforts. Access to safe and affordable childcare is an essential component to allowing local businesses to resume operations and county economies to recover. VACo supports local flexibility to administer or expand support services for childcare.

183
184
185
186
187
188
189
190
191
192
193
194
195
196
197
198
199
200
201
202
203
204
205
206
207
208
209
210
211
212
213
214
215
216
217
218
219
220
221
222
223
224
225
226
227
228
229

Critical Thinking Skills

VACo supports changes to educational programs and standards that rely less on standardized testing and more on critical thinking skills such as performance-based assessments.

Funding Support Personnel

VACo supports full restoration of budget cuts, including the elimination of the funding cap on support positions, and full reinstatement of the Cost of Competing Adjustment “COCA” for support staff. In addition to meeting its obligations to fully fund instructional staff, the Commonwealth should meet its obligation to fully fund K-12 support staff.

Library System

VACo supports additional state resources for the funding of financial aid to the local library system.

Reversion of Funds

VACo supports the current practice whereby all year-end funds appropriated to the school divisions by the locality revert to the locality, retaining discretion with the governing body to evaluate and approve the reallocation of year-end fund balances.

School Consolidation and Regionalism

VACo supports additional state resources and incentives that allow counties to voluntarily consolidate or regionalize K-12 services to increase operational efficiencies.

School Safety and Security

VACo supports efforts to improve school safety and preparedness including establishing a Statewide School Safety Drill, for students, teachers, administrators, law enforcement, and other staff to engage in active shooter drills. VACo supports the development of model policies to provide guidance on active shooter drills and updates to school safety plans and drills. VACo supports dedicated state funding to improve school security for both capital and operational costs including funding that would serve as an incentive for local school divisions to make investments in security and health. VACo supports continued local authority to implement appropriate security measures.

Special Education Regional Tuition Reimbursement Program

VACo supports enhancing local capacity to serve children with high-level support needs in the least restrictive environment, including regional special education programs. VACo supports local flexibility in the structure of such programs. If a new model for the distribution of funding for special education students with intense support needs is implemented, such a model should be phased in gradually, with state dollars provided to enable school divisions that would otherwise experience reductions in funding to continue to meet federal maintenance of effort requirements.

230
231
232
233
234
235
236
237
238
239
240
241
242
243
244
245
246
247
248
249
250
251
252
253
254
255
256
257
258
259
260
261
262
263
264
265
266
267
268
269
270
271
272
273
274
275

Teacher Shortage and Retention

VACo urges the General Assembly to approve and fund strategies addressing the teacher shortage in the Commonwealth. VACo supports a targeted approach to teacher shortage by prioritizing areas in critical need, as recommended by the Virginia Department of Education. VACo supports using district-level data to determine how to best fill shortage gaps, especially in hard-to-staff divisions. VACo supports reducing burdens on the teacher workforce in the Commonwealth. VACo supports programs aimed at reducing student debt for teaching in public schools. VACo also supports programs that encourage teachers to stay in the profession including measures that provide mentorship, guidance and other forms of support for teachers in their first five years in the profession.

Workforce-Ready Students

VACo supports changes in curriculum and funding that will increase the number of students leaving the K-14 system with workforce-ready credentials. VACo supports incorporating career and technical education curriculum at the elementary school level. VACo supports high school students earning academic credit for participating in an internship, apprenticeship, credential, and other work programs. VACo supports innovative models for schools to give academic credit for students that earn industry workforce skills through certifications, or licensure from an approved education or training provider. VACo supports establishing partnerships to strengthen the school-to-workforce pipeline in a variety of ways including guaranteed employment opportunities with local businesses and learning opportunities shared between local community colleges and high schools.

VACo supports the expansion and funding of workforce training programs such as the Virginia Talent Accelerator Program and the Virginia Jobs Investment Program.

ENERGY SUBCOMMITTEE

276
277
278
279
280
281
282
283
284
285
286
287
288
289
290
291
292
293
294
295
296
297
298
299
300
301
302
303
304
305
306
307
308
309
310
311
312
313
314
315
316
317
318
319

Positions

Energy Policy

VACo supports renewable energy policies and goals that reduce greenhouse gas emissions without compromising reliable and affordable access to electricity. Such policies should allow for responsible coal and natural gas extraction, processing, and transport while protecting agricultural interests and natural resources.

Renewable Energy Production and Energy Efficiency

VACo supports legislation allowing counties to implement renewable energy and energy efficiency goals. This includes the allowance of third-party power purchase agreements (PPAs) to serve municipal electric accounts, as well as other creative financing mechanisms that enable the development of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency programs and measures.

Utility-Scale Solar

VACo supports maintaining local authority to address all impacts and all choices associated with utility-scale projects. Additionally, VACo opposes any expansion or extension of the state-mandated tax exemption on local property taxes for solar equipment.

ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE

320
321
322
323
324
325
326
327
328
329
330
331
332
333
334
335
336
337
338
339
340
341
342
343
344
345
346
347
348
349
350
351
352
353
354
355
356
357
358
359
360
361
362
363
364
365

Priority

Water Quality Improvement Funding

VACo supports effective partnerships across all levels of government as well as adequate financial and technical assistance from the federal and state governments to improve water quality. VACo supports improved water quality but opposes strategies that penalize local governments by withdrawing current forms of financial assistance or imposing monitoring, management, or similar requirements on localities without providing sufficient resources to accomplish those processes. VACo supports efforts to continue to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay but opposes additional nutrient regulations on wastewater treatment facilities that are scientifically unsound, economically infeasible, or unnecessary for meeting the Commonwealth's goals. VACo opposes the imposition of a state fee, tax or surcharge, on water, sewer, solid waste, or any service provided by a local government or authority.

Positions

Aquifer Protection

VACo supports initiatives by the state to assure adoption of actions to reduce high chloride concentrations and loss of artesian head pressure in Virginia's aquifers. VACo also supports a review of regulations and supports education initiatives that promote reclamation of water on a local level for industrial and irrigation uses to offset future demands on all ground and surface water used for human consumption.

Biosolids

VACo supports an effective statewide regulatory program governing land application of biosolids. Such a program should not infringe upon the authority of local governments to monitor compliance. VACo supports the ability of local governments to propose amendments to biosolids permits as they are considered by DEQ.

Conservation

VACo encourages targeted initiatives to facilitate the protection of land for conservation purposes. VACo supports the creation a Purchase of Development Rights program that provides state funding for the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation and participation incentives for landowners. Such programs preserve prime soils for food production and protect important forest land and environmentally sensitive areas in the Commonwealth.

VACo supports voluntary state and federal conservation programs, including the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Conservation Stewardship Program, to assist producers with the implementation of best management practices.

366 **Dam Safety**
367 VACo supports programs that keep downstream owners and developers aware of
368 potential inundation zones. VACo also supports sufficient state and federal
369 funding for the repair and maintenance of dams.

370
371 **Energy**
372 *See Energy Subcommittee Platform.*

373
374 **Hydraulic Fracturing**
375 VACo supports a stringent state regulatory program for hydraulic fracturing
376 (“fracking”) that addresses the potential to tap into natural gas reserves in ways
377 that protect public and private groundwater supplies and preserve local
378 government authority to regulate and/or ban this type of mining activity through
379 their land use ordinances. VACo supports transparency efforts that require the
380 disclosure of all chemicals and chemical mixes used in the fracking process prior
381 to their use.

382
383 **Invasive Species and Noxious Weeds**
384 VACo supports funding for, and the complete implementation of, the Virginia
385 Invasive Species Management Plan. VACo supports an amendment to the term,
386 “noxious weeds,” enabling additional invasive plants to be considered for
387 regulation. All programs and proposals should be evaluated for their commercial
388 impact, allowing no more than a negligible impact on Virginia’s agricultural
389 industry. Finally, VACo supports requiring better state prevention and
390 mitigation practices.

391
392 **Large Utility Projects**
393 VACo supports the provision of adequate direction and resources for the state to
394 improve monitoring and enforcement of Erosion and Sediment Control and
395 Stormwater requirements by entities constructing large-scale utility projects. The
396 state should conduct a review of the annual standards, specifications, and
397 construction general permit requirements to determine adequate protection of
398 water quality and natural resources.

399
400 **Non-Point Source Pollution**
401 VACo supports a well-financed state program to address non-point source runoff
402 from agricultural operations. The program should encourage implementation of
403 priority best management practices (BMPs) such as nutrient management
404 planning, use of cover crops, continuous no-till farming and development of
405 forested riparian buffers and livestock stream exclusion.

406
407 **Predator Control**
408 VACo urges state and federal agencies to support the agricultural industry by
409 allowing farmers and producers sufficient flexibility when protecting livestock
410 against predatory animals. VACo encourages the USDA Wildlife Services Division
411 and the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to allow
412 producers access to the predator control tools required for the continuation of

413 effective livestock production. VACo also supports USDA’s Livestock Indemnity
414 Program and the financial relief it provides to producers who have lost livestock
415 to the attacks of federally protected predators.

416

417 **Southern Rivers Watershed**

418 VACo supports continued funding for the Southern Rivers Watershed
419 Enhancement Program to improve water quality in non-Chesapeake Bay
420 watersheds.

421

422 **Stormwater Programs**

423 VACo supports state funding that enables local governments to fully satisfy the
424 resource and funding needs associated with local stormwater management
425 programs. VACo supports legislation that proposes creative and cost-effective
426 stormwater management practices. VACo supports initiatives that clarify and
427 modernize stormwater regulations and permitting processes, including measures
428 that makes permitting more efficient, reevaluates the fee structure system, and
429 allows for considerations of factors such as long-term maintenance costs. VACo
430 supports legislation that proposes innovative solutions to facilitate compliance
431 with stormwater standards in ways that promote economic development while
432 achieving water quality goals.

433

434 **Tree Conservation and Replacement**

435 VACo supports strengthening and expanding tree replacement and tree
436 conservation statutes to include all localities in Virginia.

437

438 **Onsite Wastewater Systems**

439 VACo supports legislation ensuring that potential buyers of real property are told
440 about the type, size and maintenance requirements and associated costs of the
441 wastewater systems on the property prior to the signing of the initial sales
442 contract and the recordation of engineered systems plat and deed at the time of
443 sale.

444

445 **Uranium Mining**

446 VACo supports continuation of a moratorium on uranium mining and milling
447 within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

448

449 **Technical Assistance**

450 VACo supports robust state funding for entities that provide critical resources
451 and technical assistance to localities in their efforts to comply with
452 environmental policies and regulations. This includes, but is not limited to,
453 organizations such as Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs),
454 the Virginia Cooperative Extension and Planning District Commissions (PDCs).

455

456 **Water Supply Planning**

457 VACo supports appropriations adequate to ensure full funding by the state for the
458 ongoing development and implementation of state-mandated water supply plans.

459
460
461
462
463
464
465
466
467
468
469
470
471
472
473
474
475
476
477
478
479
480
481
482
483
484
485
486
487
488
489
490
491
492
493
494
495
496
497
498
499
500
501
502
503
504

VACo does not support overly burdensome permitting processes or applications for water usage.

FINANCE

505
506
507
508
509
510
511
512
513
514
515
516
517
518
519
520
521
522
523
524
525
526
527
528
529
530
531
532
533
534
535
536
537
538
539
540
541
542
543
544
545
546
547
548
549

Priority

Local Finance

VACo supports preserving the authority of county governments to levy and collect revenue from local business taxes.

Positions

Appeals of Tax Assessments

VACo opposes proposals to make major changes to the current appeals processes for real or tangible personal property assessments, such as changes to the assessor’s presumption of correctness or the role of the state Tax Commissioner with respect to valuation of property.

Funding for State Mandated Positions and Jails

The Commonwealth must meet its obligations to fund appropriate staffing for the state’s system of justice, to include clerks, magistrates, Commonwealth’s Attorneys, public defenders, district court employees, and probation office employees. In the absence of adequate state support for this critical function of government, localities are frequently placed in the untenable position of supplementing the justice system with local dollars in order to ensure its continued functioning.

VACo urges the Commonwealth to meet its full funding obligations and provide flexibility in the use of state funds for compensation of constitutional officers and state-supported local employees.

VACo requests that jail per diem funding in the 2020-2022 biennial state budget be increased to levels that better represent the costs of housing inmates and be adjusted for inflation in the future so that payments keep pace with rising costs. The current rates of \$4 per day for local-responsible inmates and \$12 per day for state-responsible inmates are inadequate and represent an underfunded mandate on counties. The Compensation Board estimated a total average daily cost of operating local and regional jails at \$87.20 per inmate in FY 2018, of which \$48.05 was contributed by localities.

VACo supports payment of the medical costs of inmates using a cost-effective program jointly funded at the federal and state levels VACo supports the provision of clinically appropriate health care for individuals incarcerated in local and regional jails; if the state establishes standards for the provision of health care, including behavioral health care, in local and regional jails, these standards should be adopted through the regulatory process with ample opportunity for stakeholder involvement, and the state must provide sufficient funding to allow these standards to be met.

550 **Mitigation of the Effects of Tax-Exempt Property on the Local Tax**
551 **Base**

552 VACo supports reinstating state payments (PILT) to counties that mitigate the
553 impacts of state correctional and behavioral healthcare facilities on county
554 revenue. VACo supports measures to ameliorate the effects of large amounts of
555 other tax-exempt property on the local tax base, including state assistance with
556 the costs of state-mandated property tax exemptions.

557
558 **Legislation with Local Fiscal Impact**

559 VACo supports legislation or other measures providing additional time for
560 localities to review legislation that may have an impact on local revenues or
561 expenditures.

562
563 **Modernization of Communications Sales and Use Tax Structure**

564 VACo supports updating the Communications Sales and Use Tax (CSUT) to
565 ensure that it reflects the modern telecommunications landscape, which has
566 evolved since the CSUT took effect in January 2007.

567
568 VACo opposes any further diversion of Communications Sales and Use Tax Trust
569 Fund dollars beyond the uses already specified in statute. These revenues should
570 be held in trust for localities and not diverted for general state purposes.

571 Currently, funds from the Communications Sales and Use Tax Trust Fund are
572 taken “off the top” for the Department of Taxation’s costs to administer the tax,
573 the telephone relay center operated by the Department for the Deaf and Hard of
574 Hearing, and any franchise fees owed to localities. Language adopted in the
575 2018-2020 biennium budget and continued in the 2020 Appropriations Act
576 provides for an additional diversion of funds to the state General Fund from
577 assumed savings in the telephone relay contract; these funds would otherwise
578 flow to localities.

579
580 **Real and Personal Property Tax Exemptions Enacted Prior to 2003**

581 VACo supports providing localities the ability to decide whether to maintain
582 property tax exemptions granted by the General Assembly prior to passage of the
583 Constitutional amendment vesting the authority to grant such exemptions with
584 localities. The Constitutional amendment which was passed by the voters in
585 2002 and took effect in January 2003 placed decision-making authority about
586 local tax exemptions with local governing bodies, within certain limits, and this
587 authority should apply to exemptions granted before 2003 as well.

588
589
590
591
592
593
594
595

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

596
597
598
599
600
601
602
603
604
605
606
607
608
609
610
611
612
613
614
615
616
617
618
619
620
621
622
623
624
625
626
627
628
629
630
631
632
633
634
635
636
637
638
639
640
641

Priorities

Local Authority

VACo supports relaxation of the Dillon Rule and legislation maintaining and enhancing local authority and autonomy in matters including land use, revenue measures, procurement and other issues of local concern. VACo supports extending powers currently granted to some local governments to all local governments. VACo opposes legislation that erodes local authority.

Unfunded Mandates

VACo opposes unfunded mandates and shifting fiscal responsibility for existing programs by the Commonwealth from the state to localities. When funding for a mandated program is altered, the mandate should be suspended until full funding is restored. When legislation with a cost to localities is passed by the General Assembly, the cost should be borne by the Commonwealth, and the legislation should contain a sunset clause providing that the mandate is not binding on localities until funding by the Commonwealth is provided. VACo opposes changes to state-mandated funding formulas that decrease state funding and require increased local funding.

Positions

Collective Bargaining for Public Employees

VACo opposes any effort to mandate collective bargaining for public employees.

Election Costs and Districts

VACo supports legislation that would increase state investments in elections. This includes funding and support for primaries, voting equipment, personnel and voting places. Cost reduction solutions include requiring parties to pay for primary elections, having one date for primary elections, using printed ballots, establishing countywide voting places and other similar measures. The state should provide adequate funding to localities for optical scan and other voting equipment and registrar costs. VACo also supports legislation to minimize or eliminate Split Voting Precincts. Additionally, VACo supports a streamlined process to address situations in which census boundaries do not align with locally drawn or commonly adhered to boundaries.

Ethics Reform

VACo supports common sense efforts to strengthen Virginia's public ethics and conflicts of interest laws that are applicable and practical at the local level.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

VACo opposes changes to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act that would impose additional burdens on localities.

642 **Grievance Hearings**
643 VACo supports legislation authorizing localities to use an administrative hearing
644 officer and existing grievance panels and procedures, and opposes the mandate of
645 a three-member panel. VACo also supports providing immunity to local
646 government employees, officers, volunteers, administrative hearing officers and
647 panel members for claims arising out of participation in personnel grievance
648 procedures.
649

650 **Interoperability**
651 VACo supports the state’s goal that agencies and their representatives at the local,
652 regional, state and federal levels be able to communicate using compatible
653 systems to respond more effectively during day-to-day operations and major
654 emergencies. Local governments require dedicated federal and state funding
655 sources to achieve this goal.
656

657 **Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1)**
658 VACo supports the Commonwealth’s transition to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-
659 1) in a way that does not unfairly burden localities, financially or otherwise.
660

661 **Pretrial Services**
662 VACo supports increased funding for and expansion of pretrial services.
663

664 **Public Notice, Public Hearing and Public Procurement**
665 VACo supports legislation to streamline required newspaper advertising for
666 public notices, public hearings and public procurement including legislation to
667 give localities the option to use electronic or other forms of notification as an
668 alternative to newspaper advertising.
669

670 **Public Safety – Body Worn Cameras**
671 VACo supports maintaining the ability of local governments to adopt policies and
672 practices regarding body worn cameras that reflect local needs and fiscal realities.
673

674 **Sovereign Immunity**
675 VACo opposes any substantive change in local governments’ present defenses of
676 qualified immunity and sovereign immunity. VACo opposes bringing counties
677 under the Virginia Tort Claims Act.
678

679 **State Assistance for Police Departments**
680 VACo supports increasing state assistance for police departments through “599”
681 Aid to Localities. This funding is designed to equalize state funding between
682 counties in which the sheriff department provides law enforcement and those
683 cities, counties and towns with a police department.
684

685 **Workers’ Compensation Presumptions**
686 VACo opposes any effort to expand workers’ compensation presumptive illnesses
687 eligibilities for public employees that is not done in concert with additional state
688 funding assistance to local governments to offset additional insurance liabilities.

HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES

689
690
691
692
693
694
695
696
697
698
699
700
701
702
703
704
705
706
707
708
709
710
711
712
713
714
715
716
717
718
719
720
721
722
723
724
725
726
727
728
729
730
731
732

Priority

Health and Human Resources Funding

VACo supports transparent state policies and funding to ensure the Commonwealth’s at-risk families have access to high quality and appropriate services. The Commonwealth should provide full funding to localities and their state administrative entities for state-mandated human services and provide the necessary program flexibility to enable localities to provide comprehensive and case-tailored services.

Positions

Aging/Long-Term Care

VACo supports efforts that allow seniors to remain at home in a safe and secure environment. VACo urges the General Assembly to provide sufficient funding for companion services, in-home services, and home-delivered meals. Due to the increasing number of older adults in Virginia and the rise of Adult Protective Services (APS) cases, VACo supports additional state resources to ensure adequate training for APS workers on topics such as financial exploitation.

Behavioral Healthcare

VACo supports continued funding by the Commonwealth sufficient to allow Community Services Boards (CSBs) to meet adequately the charge of providing services through a community-based system of care. State support must adequately enable CSBs to provide the additional services mandated by the General Assembly to be phased in over the next several years, as well as any additional requirements that may be added.

VACo supports the provision of additional resources to meet the behavioral health needs of justice-involved individuals, such as mobile crisis services and other diversion programs that may be appropriate substitutes for, or supplements to, law enforcement responses. Such work should be coordinated with existing local and state efforts.

Any changes to CSB funding should involve meaningful consultation with localities as key funding partners in the behavioral health system. In addition to local contributions to CSBs, localities make significant commitments to behavioral health through support for services funded through the Children’s Services Act and local spending on behavioral health care in local and regional jails, among other funding commitments.

Proposed changes to the funding structure, such as the creation of new funding formulae, should apply only to new funding. As an alternative, hold-harmless funds must be provided to those CSBs that would stand to lose state funding under any new funding structure.

733 VACo supports the ability of the Department of Behavioral Health and
734 Developmental Services to waive local matching requirements for CSB funding
735 for localities experiencing financial hardships.

736 Realignment of the behavioral health funding structure to incentivize
737 community-based treatment rather than use of state hospitals will require
738 additional state dollars and must not rely on local funding to backfill
739 unanticipated costs for hospitalization.

740 VACo supports the creation of additional Medicaid waiver slots to serve
741 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the community,
742 approximately 13,600 of whom were on a wait-list as of August 2020.

743 **Children’s Services Act**

744 VACo supports equitable cost-sharing between the state and localities for the
745 costs involved in the placements of children in residential treatment facilities for
746 non-educational reasons. VACo opposes proposals to limit state participation in
747 funding services for children and youth who are mandated to be provided with
748 special education and foster care services.

749 VACo supports enhancing the ability of local school divisions to serve
750 children with disabilities, to include flexibility in use of state pool funds to serve
751 children with high-level needs in local or regional programs tailored to meet
752 those needs, and additional support for special education wraparound services to
753 help support children in their communities.

754 VACo supports state assistance to localities with contracting for CSA
755 services to improve localities’ ability to negotiate with providers of these services,
756 such as private day placements. VACo supports rate setting by the state for
757 private day placements, with appropriate recognition of cost variations by region.

758 **Early Intervention**

759 VACo supports sustainable funding for Part C Early Intervention, which is an
760 entitlement program that provides services for Virginia’s infants and toddlers.
761 VACo requests that the General Assembly continue to increase state general
762 funding to address growth in caseloads and fund rates that address the costs of
763 providing the services. Underfunding this entitlement program puts pressure on
764 local revenues to fill funding gaps for this mandated service.

765 **Emergency Medical Transportation**

766 VACo supports policies to protect consumers who require air ambulance services.
767 VACo opposes proposals that would add additional legal and administrative
768 burdens on local first responders regarding decisions about methods of
769 transportation in emergency situations.

770 **Foster Care**

771 VACo supports efforts to ensure that the state is prepared to meet the
772 requirements of the recently-enacted federal legislation governing federal
773 funding for children placed in foster care, to include preparing providers to meet
774 new standards required in the law. This legislation will allow federal
775 participation in prevention services that previously have been funded by state

780 and local dollars, but services must meet certain standards in order to qualify for
781 federal funding. VACo supports state assistance in recruiting appropriate foster
782 families to care for children who must be removed from their homes. VACo
783 supports state assistance in recruiting and retaining child welfare workers to
784 address high rates of turnover in local departments of social services, such as by
785 increasing the number of partnerships with universities in Virginia, improving
786 training for child welfare workers by implementing an academy model, and
787 expanding the Child Welfare Stipend program.

788

789 **Group Homes**

790 VACo supports resources necessary for the state to enforce appropriate
791 regulation of group homes, such as staff qualifications and the condition of the
792 homes, to ensure the protection of residents' health and safety.

793

794 **Healthcare**

795 VACo supports continued state funding for dental care, school nurses and
796 preventive services and maternal and child health programs offered through local
797 health departments and local school systems. VACo encourages the state to
798 prepare for emergency health services access to care and to develop and fund
799 incentives that would alleviate the nursing shortages felt in many communities.

800

801 **Human Trafficking**

802 VACo supports treating survivors of human trafficking as victims, not criminals,
803 and supports their access to services available to other trauma victims, such as
804 job placement services, housing assistance, access to education, legal services,
805 and mental health services.

806

807 **Implementation of Medicaid Expansion**

808 VACo supports continued state funding for the local costs associated with
809 Medicaid expansion, such as local eligibility workers.

810

811 **Local EMS Involvement**

812 VACo supports increased local involvement in state EMS planning to ensure
813 statewide needs are met and to avoid imposing unnecessary barriers to
814 volunteerism.

815

816 **Prevention Services**

817 VACo supports increased state general funding for community-based service
818 programs. VACo recognizes programs such as Healthy Families, Comprehensive
819 Health Investment Project (CHIP) of Virginia, Smart Beginnings, and Resource
820 Mothers as important models and requests that the General Assembly provide
821 additional funding for these home- and community-based activities. Investments
822 in programs that ensure a strong start for children can help reduce the need for
823 costlier interventions later in life.

824

825

826

827
828
829
830
831
832
833
834
835
836
837
838
839
840
841
842
843
844
845
846
847
848
849
850
851
852
853
854
855
856
857
858
859
860
861
862
863
864
865
866
867
868
869
870
871
872

Substance Abuse

Efforts to address substance dependency must be comprehensive and coordinated with localities. The state should develop and support evidence-based prevention initiatives and should continue to improve access to treatment.

Telehealth

VACo supports the use of electronic information and telecommunications technologies to support long-distance clinical health care, patient and professional health-related education, public health and health administration. Flexibility in the delivery of these services is essential in meeting the needs of residents.

TRANSPORTATION

873
874
875
876
877
878
879
880
881
882
883
884
885
886
887
888
889
890
891
892
893
894
895
896
897
898
899
900
901
902
903
904
905
906
907
908
909
910
911
912
913
914
915
916
917
918

Priority

Transportation Funding

VACo supports continued study and action to address the causes for declining growth in transportation revenues and to develop recommendations to grow revenue over time to meet increasing demands for new construction and maintenance for existing transportation infrastructure. Such action must address the secondary road needs of counties throughout the Commonwealth, as such funding has been vastly reduced over the past 10 years.

VACo supports changes to simplify the Smart Scale process for allocating transportation funds to reduce time and costs to prepare and review applications. VACo supports adequate funding levels to maintain existing transit capital state match rates which are projected to decline starting in 2021 due to the depletion of transportation bonds.

In 2018 the legislature enacted a dedicated funding solution for Metro that came largely through reallocation of existing revenues, at the expense of other significant transportation projects throughout Northern Virginia. Though significant progress was in the 2020 legislature, VACo supports continuing efforts to replace the regional funding that was redirected from the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority.

Positions

Autonomous Vehicles

VACo supports continued collaboration with local governments on the development, deployment, and restrictions of use for autonomous vehicles, aerial systems, and related support infrastructure.

Local-State Cooperation

VACo is committed to the protection of local government authority to regulate land use. This authority must be recognized by Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) when evaluations are conducted to determine the consistency between local transportation plans and the Commonwealth's transportation priorities. VACo also opposes the reduction of local control that is associated with the CTB's process of designating Corridors of Statewide Significance and the implementation of Arterial Preservation. Additionally, VACo supports additional flexibility within the VDOT project approval process and standards to be responsive to localities' individual needs. VACo supports the expansion of authority and discretion of Resident Administrators of VDOT to approve modifications to design standards where appropriate with local needs, including reduction of speed limits. VACo also supports local control over applications submitted to the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI).

919 **Devolution of Secondary Roads**
920 VACo opposes legislative or administrative initiatives that would transfer to
921 counties the responsibility for the construction, maintenance or operation of new
922 and existing roads.

923
924 **Highway Tolls**
925 VACo opposes the installation of toll facilities on Virginia’s interstate highways
926 until the Commonwealth Transportation Board has thoroughly reviewed and
927 assessed the components of a long-term capital improvement program, has
928 identified and compared all available funding alternatives and has adopted a
929 proposal that matches capital improvements with realistically available funding
930 sources.

931
932 **Maintenance Priorities**
933 VACo supports a requirement imposed upon VDOT to implement a notification
934 plan with the local governing body to establish maintenance priorities.

935
936 **Orphaned Drainage Outfalls**
937 VACo supports dedicated funding assistance to counties to mitigate the impacts
938 of drainage outfalls with no assigned maintaining entity across the
939 Commonwealth.

940
941 **Parking**
942 VACo supports general authority for counties to adopt ordinances regulating,
943 including prohibiting, the parking of boats, RVs, utility trailers, campers, etc. on
944 subdivision streets. In addition, VACo supports additional authority that would
945 allow localities with parking ordinances the ability to enforce such ordinances
946 using law enforcement, uniformed local employees, or uniformed personnel
947 under contract with the locality.

948
949 **Rail Enhancement Fund**
950 VACo supports authority for counties to approve Rail Enhancement Fund
951 projects funded by the state and constructed within their jurisdictions.

952
953 **Railway Crossings**
954 VACo supports efforts to safely improve mobility issues on roads that cross
955 railway lines.

956
957 **Recordation Tax Distribution to Localities**
958 VACo supports the restoration of state recordation tax revenues distributed to
959 counties and cities for use of transportation or public education purposes.

960
961 **Regional Transportation Funding**
962 VACo opposes any efforts to divert existing dedicated regional transportation
963 revenues to areas and purposes outside of that region unless additional dedicated
964 funding sources are provided to hold such funding harmless.

965

966
967
968
969
970

Truck Size and Weight

VACo opposes any legislation that seeks to increase truck size or weight beyond the current federal standards, thereby stressing the capacity of the Commonwealth's road systems and putting highways, roads and bridges at risk of increased damage or deterioration.