



# Virginia Association of Counties ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2022.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Orange County, Virginia  
Program Title: DOLI COVID-19 Training Implementation  
Program Category: Organizational Development

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Stephanie Straub  
Title: Assistant County Administrator  
Signature:

## **2022 VACO Achievement Award Nomination**

### **Category: Organizational Development**

### **Nominee: DOLI COVID-19 Training Implementation**

#### **Brief Overview**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) required that employers provide training regarding the nature and risk of the virus to help reduce transmission. While all large employers were required to implement this training, not all did so in a timeframe to meet the requirement.

Orange County not only implemented the training as required but did so in an innovative fashion which did not increase exposure risk or require the procurement of new tools. Leveraging our existing KnowBe4 cybersecurity training platform, we disseminated the training virtually, with a mandatory completion date. As a result, employees needing the training were able to complete it on their own without creating additional close contact opportunities.

## **Executive Summary:**

Pandemic conditions in 2020 forced organizations worldwide to address concerns not seen, at least on this scale, in generations. As it became clear that the issue would linger, health and labor agencies took action to attempt to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. In Virginia, this took the form of §16VAC25-220. Enforced by the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI), employers were required to provide training to their staff regarding the nature and risk of the SARS-COV-2 virus, with components of this training commensurate with a particular staff member's risk of exposure.

Orange County was proactive in its implementation of this requirement with the goal of protecting our employees. Making innovative use of our already-established cybersecurity training tools (procured through our vendor, KnowBe4), we adapted the framework to disseminate COVID-19 training. Employees received notification of the mandatory training via email and were given a window within which to complete the session. This approach effectively nullified the logistical difficulties of large-scale training, particularly considering that group meetings in-person would have exacerbated the risk of infection.

The approach taken by Orange County is worthy of an Achievement Award because our implementation assured the completion of the training within the time frame mandated by DOLI, without creating additional risk by hosting in-person gatherings. Additionally, we leveraged an already existing system in an innovative manner, which minimized costs while achieving the necessary results.

## **Main Nomination:**

Pandemic conditions in 2020 forced organizations worldwide to address concerns never experienced by this generation. Initial hopes that the disease would dissipate quickly vanished as the weeks of shutdowns turned into months, and the world settled into the now-cliché “new normal.” In response to the situation, health and labor agencies took action to attempt to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. In Virginia, this took the form of an Emergency Temporary Standard defined by §16VAC25-220. Enforced by the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI), employers were required to provide training to their staff regarding the nature and risk of the SARS-COV-2 virus, with the intent to “control, prevent, and mitigate the spread of... the virus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) to and among employees and employers.”<sup>1</sup> The Emergency Temporary Standard mandated that training be implemented within thirty (30) days of it taking effect.

Given the limited timeframe and its obvious importance, Orange County was proactive in its implementation of this requirement with the goal of protecting our employees. Knowing that the urgency made procuring a new solution impractical, Administration decided to utilize resources that were readily available and already recognized by our employees. Making innovative use of our established cybersecurity training tools (procured through our vendor, KnowBe4), we adapted the framework to disseminate COVID-19 training in August 2020. Employees received notification of the mandatory training via email and were given a window within which to complete the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.doli.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/COVID-19-Emergency-Temporary-Standard-FOR-PUBLIC-DISTRIBUTION-FINAL-7.17.2020.pdf>

session. This window required the employee to complete the training within the timeframe directed by the standard. This approach effectively nullified the logistical difficulties of large-scale training, which was a particularly important consideration given that group meetings in-person would have exacerbated the risk of infection. Therefore, holding such meetings would have been counterproductive to the purpose of the training.

The requirements of the training were itemized in §16VAC25-220-80. Key components included recognition of an employee’s exposure risk level, Centers for Disease Control guidelines, characteristics of the virus itself, signs



and symptoms of infection, risk factors for severe infection, awareness of transmission before and even without symptoms, safe work practices, personal protective equipment, anti-discrimination provisions, and information about the employer’s Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response Plan (the development of which was itself another requirement of the Temporary Emergency Standard). Orange County again took decisive action and produced an approximately nine (9) minute training video in-house. Avoiding the use of vendors to produce the training allowed a quicker turnaround time and reduced expense.

Furthermore, we supported other organizations with this training. Our Administration elected to share the training video with other localities to assist their compliance and disease-prevention efforts. Of particular importance to our residents, employees of the Orange County Broadband Authority (now FiberLync, a distinct but related agency which was tasked with expanding broadband access in our county)

received the same training. As a result, the Authority was able to continue its work toward creating internet access points throughout our community, which would prove to be critically important for many local families as schools transitioned to virtual learning in the 2020-21 school year.

The approach taken by Orange County is worthy of an Achievement Award because our implementation assured the completion of the training within the time frame mandated by DOLI, without creating any additional risk by hosting in-person gatherings. Accomplishing this goal allowed important work to continue uninterrupted. Some of this, such as that of the Orange County Broadband Authority, would prove to be vital in the months that followed the training. Our use of an already existing system in an innovative manner, minimized costs while achieving the necessary results.

The training video is available for viewing at: [https://orangecountyvagov-my.sharepoint.com/:v/g/personal/jwoods\\_orangecountyva\\_gov/ESjpV8xANB5PliTS69I5bGsBLe2lgjmgW1EEziTGQ6kDVg?e=R54TQ1](https://orangecountyvagov-my.sharepoint.com/:v/g/personal/jwoods_orangecountyva_gov/ESjpV8xANB5PliTS69I5bGsBLe2lgjmgW1EEziTGQ6kDVg?e=R54TQ1)