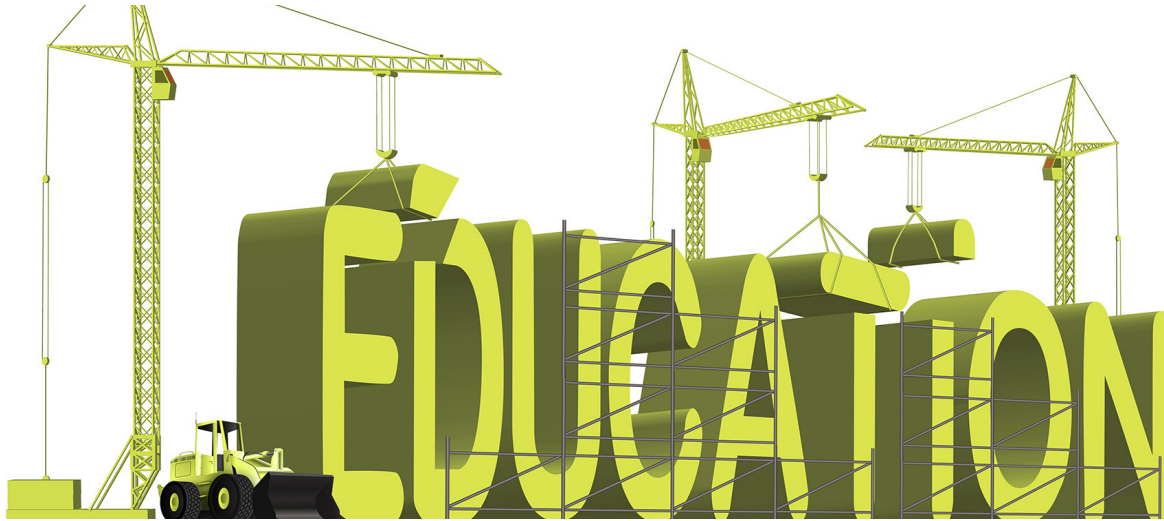


School Construction Assistance Program Awards Announced



On May 11th, the Virginia Board of Education reviewed and approved \$365 million in state funding for 40 school construction projects in 28 school divisions through the [School Construction Assistance Program](#) (SCAP). This is the first award of funding through SCAP, which was created through the 2022 Special Session I of the General Assembly. \$400 million in General Funds was appropriated for the program in addition to \$50 million from the [Literary Fund](#) for a total of \$450 million in funding. VACo [supported](#) the enacting legislation and budget language.

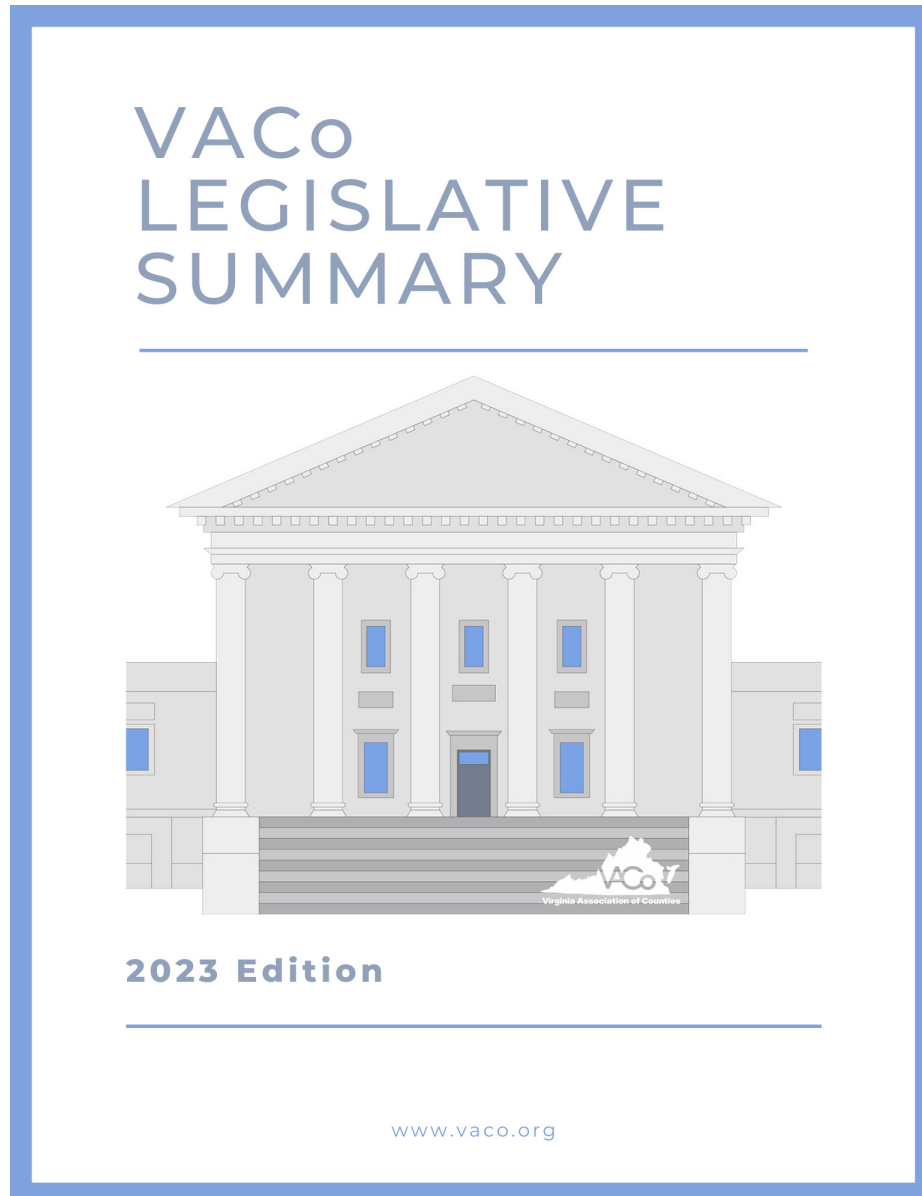
The Virginia Board of Education (VBOE) was directed by the General Assembly to award grants on a competitive basis to local school boards that demonstrate poor building conditions, commitment, and need in order for such local school boards to be able to fund the construction, expansion, or modernization of public-school buildings. Any unobligated appropriation balance for this program on June 30, 2023, must be reappropriated for expenditure in fiscal year 2024 for the same purpose.

In addition to the infusion of General Funds and Literary Fund for FY 2023, additional and ongoing funding for SCAP will be achieved through a portion of casino gaming revenues collected by the Commonwealth through the [Gaming Proceed Fund](#). Given that the cost of renovating and replacing all schools in Virginia that are 50 years old or older has been estimated to cost \$25 billion, this is a welcome infusion of funding.

VBOE also set a thirty-day review period for school divisions to ensure their calculations are correct and additional review criteria for technical matters. Once this review period is concluded, VBOE will reopen the application process to distribute the remaining \$86 million in funding for FY 2023. A list of projects that were awarded funding can be found [here](#).

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

VACo Releases 2023 Legislative Summary



The [Legislative Summary](#) details the actions of the 2023 General Assembly. It also includes information on legislation of interest to counties.

This edition contains links to bills through the General Assembly's Legislative Information System and includes studies and statistics of importance to counties.

[Read VACo's 2023 Legislative Summary](#)

VACo Contact: [Legislative Team](#)

Region 12 Meeting features discussions on broadband, EMS staffing, housing, and much more



VACo held its second of eight regional meetings for 2023 on May 3, and the first done in person. VACo staff had the honor of traveling to Pulaski County to meet with Region 12 county leaders at the Pulaski County Innovation Center. Region 12 encompasses the counties of Bland, Carroll, Grayson, Pulaski, Smyth, Washington and Wythe. These regional meetings allow us to hear directly from county staff and elected officials on the important issues facing localities across Virginia. They also help VACo staff craft the legislative program for the upcoming 2024 legislative session.

The meeting began with representatives from each county outlining top issues or legislative priorities in their localities. Throughout the meeting, the region identified common areas of concern, which include broadband availability, EMS funding and staffing, housing and local funding flexibility.

Broadband availability and the desire to achieve universal broadband was discussed often as leaders in the area pointed to the broad educational attainment, jobs and overall growth that come with increasing connectivity. EMS funding and staffing was highlighted as a common concern because of the limited workforce and funding issue as well as the absolute necessity these services are for localities to provide.

While all regions of the state continue to face issues with housing, region 12 is no different. Specifically, with jobs coming to the area, workforce housing is a must. Housing in the region is further complicated with the various topographical constraints in southwest Virginia that make development hard. Because of this, housing is just harder to build and get approved. The last major common area of concern is one that VACo has consistently fought for in the General Assembly for quite some time. County leaders discussed that one of the largest issues facing the region is the ability for localities to raise funds to solve problems at the local level. While stating that some of their tax bases are just too small, county leaders called for and support legislation, as does VACo, to give localities more flexibility to enact more local funding options. A positive example of this is the recent enactment of the cigarette tax, which county leaders in the area said generates funding that helps local governments solve or pursue solutions to local problems, such as EMS training and funding. County leaders would end discussion on the topic outlining that while the economy of the area has shifted in past decades, the future is bright, as different forms of economic activities, such as tourism and a heavier emphasis on agriculture, continue to support the area. VACo was pleased to be joined by Virginia State Senator Travis Hackworth and a representative from Congressman Morgan Griffith's office, Cody Mumpower. Senator Hackworth addressed the room and spoke on a few issues important to him and gave updates on the General Assembly. Senator Hackworth agreed with county leaders that the aforementioned EMS issues are something he has been hearing about all throughout the region. He would also agree that housing is a big issue as the topic is never as easy to fix as it sounds. With housing comes finding land, building on said land and having the appropriate infrastructure to support these housing developments, which is a hard task. He emphasizes that while local governments acquiring funding flexibility is something he is sympathetic to, local leaders must be efficient with the revenues they do have. He ended on an optimistic note, emphatically stating that, "Southwest Virginia is not dead," and that jobs are coming to the area, so the future is bright. Mr. Mumpower with Congressman Griffith's office said he enjoyed the discussion and that learning what is really impacting the citizens of congressional district 9 is important to the Congressman. He said he will take back information learned, such as broadband funding and EMS issues, to the Congressman.

The meeting wrapped up with a [presentation](#) from the Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Joseph Guthrie. Commissioner Guthrie gave an overview of the history and structure of the Department, then would highlight initiatives, programs, and goals of the Department as well as some things to look for in the future surrounding agriculture in VA. Commissioner Guthrie was once an elected official of Pulaski County, serving as a school board member and County Supervisor, so it was great to see the Commissioner on home turf.

The meeting served as a great chance to connect with VACo members counties and really try to understand the issues at heart in the region. VACo staff wants to first thank the culinary students who crafted a delicious lunch for us all to enjoy and of course thank Pulaski County for hosting us. We would like to give a special thanks to Pulaski County Chair and newly sworn in VACo Regional Director Laura Walters for coordinating this meeting with us as well as county leaders, staff, Senator Hackworth, Mr. Mumpower, Commissioner Guthrie, sponsors, and others who attended and participated in the discussion.

VACo Contact: [James Hutzler](#)



PHOTO CREDIT: [Skye Marthaler](#)

Visit Fluvanna County and the Fluvanna County Historic Courthouse

Location: 132 Main Street / Courthouse Square

Built: 1830 – 1831

Style: Greek Revival

Architect: General John Hartwell Cocke, the owner of nearby Bremo plantation

Contractor: Walker Timberlake

Description: The building faces south and is a two story red colored brick and stone structure. The building is located on landscaped grounds in the center of Palmyra to the north of the courthouse. The south front has a large Greek Doric portico supported by four large columns rising to a pediment at the roof line. The building is distinguished by the extensive use of stone for the column and pilaster capitals, steps, water table, window sills, and lintels. Two levels of windows on the sides as well as the three arched windows at the rear are separated by pilasters. Conspicuously inscribed on the stone lintel above the entrance is: "THE MAXIM HELD SACRED BY EVERY FREE PEOPLE – OBEY THE LAWS." In the interior, is the courtroom with original balustrade around the judge's bench. The two staircases are unusual in that both break for a landing about one third of the way up and are outfitted with lanterns. On the second story is a gallery in the courtroom. To the south is the old stone jail constructed in 1829 and to the northeast is the Clerk's Office.

SOURCE: [American Courthouses](#) | [Courthouses.co](#)

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INSTRUCTOR - SUZETTE DENSLOW

OPENING SESSION - JANUARY 25 | HENRICO COUNTY

CLOSING SESSION - MARCH 22 | HENRICO COUNTY

MODULE 2 - PLANNING AND LAND USE

INSTRUCTORS - VIRGINIA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

OPENING SESSION - April 14 | VACo TRAINING CENTER

CLOSING SESSION - June 16 | VACo TRAINING CENTER

MODULE 3 - LEADERSHIP

INSTRUCTOR - JANE DITTMAR

OPENING SESSION - August 11 | VACo TRAINING CENTER

CLOSING SESSION - October 6 | VACo TRAINING CENTER

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Please contact Karie Walker at
kwalker@vaco.org for more information.
Or visit the [VACo website](https://www.vaco.org).





Historic State Park Cabin Renovations Span Three Virginia Counties

PMA Architecture is excited to announce the completion of the first phase of renovations to the camping cabins at Douthat State Park (located in Bath County and Alleghany County) and Fairy Stone State Park (located in Patrick County) for the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). At 4,545 acres, Douthat State Park is Virginia's second largest state park. Fairy Stone State Park was established in 1936 and is the largest of Virginia's six original state parks. PMA partnered with Stemann | Pease Architecture and a team of supporting engineers to renovate over 50 historic Civilian Conservation Corps-era log and concrete masonry cabins across the two parks.

The cabins being renovated are associated with development of the Virginia State and National Parks during the Works Progress Admin-

istration era of the 1930s. The project completely renovated the cabin exteriors and interiors and improved the functional arrangements of the kitchens and baths. In a recent message to Fairy Stone State Park guests, Virginia State Parks Visitor Services Director Nancy Helman announced, "We are excited that the first phase of cabin renovations has been completed. The results are beautiful! We have worked hard to keep the character of the original facilities but make sure they will last at least another 85 years."



Renovations also include the historic log cabins at each park which were built in 1936-37, where great care in design and construction was taken to appropriately strip away much of the later 20th century floor and wall coverings and design new kitchens and baths that revealed the log walls. The renovations provide 21st century campers with modern accommodations while carefully integrating new baths and kitchens appropriately into the historical context. At each park, two cabins have been designed to be under the Americans with Disabilities Act.



"Great care in design and construction was taken to appropriately strip away much of the later 20th century floor and wall coverings and design new kitchens and baths that reveal the log walls," says lead architect Jeff Stodghill.

With work wrapping up on the first phase of construction at [Douthat State Park and Fairy Stone State Park](#), PMA Architecture is now embarking on a similar project with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation to upgrade the guest lodging offered at First Landing State Park and Westmoreland State Park. PMA's design and marketing team recently traveled to Douthat State Park and Fairy Stone State Parks to stage and photograph how a newly renovated historic log cabin could look for campers visiting those parks

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McLellan Appointed Deputy Loudoun County Administrator

Erin McLellan has been promoted to Deputy County Administrator, Loudoun County Administrator Tim Hemstreet announced Tuesday. McLellan previously served as one of four Assistant County Administrators.

McLellan will fill the role that will soon be vacated by Deputy County Administrator Charles Yudd, who will be retiring from service this summer after a 26-year career with the county. McLellan's appointment now provides a transition period during which Yudd's duties will be transferred.

"Erin has demonstrated great leadership throughout her 18-year career with Loudoun County, which has prepared her for this new role," said Hemstreet. "Her broad range of experience in public management and knowledge of this organization and our community will serve her and Loudoun well as the county moves forward in the coming years."

Among McLellan's duties are overseeing the operation of the Office of the County Administrator, serving in the absence of the County Administrator, and serving as a liaison to the county's public safety agencies and Constitutional Officers. McLellan will also oversee the county's federal and state legislative programs as well as its public/private partnerships.

McLellan began her career with Loudoun County government in 2005 as a management fellow and later as a human resources policy and research analyst. McLellan has been steadily promoted, becoming Budget Officer in 2013 and later head of the department. She later served as director of the Department of Finance and Budget and the county's chief financial officer. McLellan was appointed as an assistant county administrator in 2020 and most recently supervised the Office of Emergency Management and Departments of Fire and Rescue, Transportation and Capital Infrastructure, General Services and Information Technology.

McLellan is a graduate of the University of Alabama and holds a bachelor's degree in history and a master's degree in public administration.

The Office of the County Administrator is Loudoun County government's highest level management office under the direction of the Board of Supervisors. The office supports the Board and serves as its official liaison to the Constitutional Officers, the judiciary, and state and regional entities. Under the direction of the County Administrator, who is appointed by the Board, the office's senior management team directs and supervises the day-to-day operations of all Loudoun County departments and agencies within its purview.



Chesterfield Announces Creation of New Constituent and Media Services Department



Dave Goode | Director of Constituent and Media Services | Chesterfield County

Chesterfield is pleased to announce the creation of its new Department of Constituent and Media Services, a merger of two existing departments – Constituent Services and Communications and Media – to form the Chesterfield Constituent and Media Services Department.

Dave Goode, a 22-year Chesterfield employee who previously served as the county's constituent services administrator, has been selected as director of Constituent and Media Services.

In his new role, Goode will continue to oversee a Constituent Services office that functions as intermediary for constituent concerns, assists members of the Board of Supervisors with speechwriting, presentations and preparation for special events, develops messaging on critical issues facing the board and other county leaders, and maintains the local government's compliance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

Along with Assistant Director Teresa Bonifas, Goode also assumes leadership of the county's Communications and Media team, which keeps residents, businesses and visitors engaged via social media, a weekly e-newsletter, podcast, blog, videos, television broadcasts and by disseminating information through media partners, while also collaborating with other county departments on internal and external communications and crafting strategic messaging for county leaders.

"I'm honored to have this opportunity to bring together two groups whose tremendous talents complement one another so well," Goode said. "I could not be prouder of what the entire team has accomplished in a relatively short period, and I'm looking forward to working with this outstanding team to continue evolving how we tell Chesterfield's story and support the county leaders who help write each chapter."

Nominations sought for VACo Jefferson Cup

VACo seeks nominations for this year's Jefferson Cup Award to be presented at the November 12-14 Annual Conference. Please submit nominations to Dean Lynch at dlynch@vaco.org.

[Click here for a list of Jefferson Cup recipients](#). Below is a brief history of the Jefferson Cup as well as criteria for award recipients.

On October 25, 1964 at The League of Virginia Counties Executive Board Meeting - The Committee that had been appointed by President Stuart T. DeBell of Fairfax County to study methods and procedures for recognizing outstanding programs, contributions and achievements in local government, reported. The Committee recommended the establishment of an award for outstanding contributions and achievements in local government to be made at the discretion of an Awards Committee in a presentation at the Annual Meeting. The Committee further recommended that the Jefferson Cup suitably engraved to set on a wooden base be adopted as the award. The award was to be called THE JEFFERSON CUP AWARD.

Criteria established for award recipients

1. Any individual who has made an outstanding contribution to local government may be a recipient of the Award.
2. Any local government which has participated in an outstanding local government activity may be a recipient.
3. The Award is to be made at the Annual Meeting of VACo but may not necessarily be made each year.
4. Nominations are to be made to the Awards Committee by August 15 of each year prior to the Annual Meeting.
5. Any additional rules, regulations, standards can be adopted by the Awards Committee.



The Jefferson Cup was last awarded in 2019 when longtime House of Delegates Speaker William J. Howell was honored.

State Revenues on Target in April Amid Signs of Economic Cooling



Secretary of Finance Stephen E. Cummings [presented an update](#) on the “better than expected” performance of state revenues in April to the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee on May 16. Although Secretary Cummings expressed confidence that overall state General Fund revenues will meet the December 2022 forecast, he pointed to several areas of softening, notably withholding and sales tax collections. A contraction in the national economy is still widely expected, but possibly later than anticipated in the December forecast; this delay into the third quarter of the calendar year may bolster FY 2023 revenues at the expense of FY 2024. Budget negotiators have cited uncertainty regarding a potential slowdown, magnified by concern about the progress of negotiations at the federal level regarding the nation’s debt ceiling, in their decision to pause negotiations on a full rewrite of the biennium budget. (Committee staff provided an [overview of potential impacts on Virginia](#) of a debt ceiling breach, stressing that such scenarios are theoretical at this time.)

As reported by Secretary Cummings, total General Fund revenues declined by 8.2 percent in April relative to last year, and are down 0.9 percent on a fiscal year-to-date basis. However, collections are \$497.4 million ahead of the December forecast (which assumes an 8.8 percent decline). Nonwithholding collections outperformed expectations, but this revenue source historically has been volatile, and the effect of the new pass-through entity tax on FY 2024 revenues is unclear (this tax allows certain business entities to pay Virginia income taxes in a way that allows for potential federal income tax savings, in response to the cap placed on the federal income tax deduction for state and local taxes).

Withholding collections are trailing projections by \$71.3 million through April, representing 4.3 percent growth on a fiscal year-to-date basis and lagging the December projection of 4.8 percent growth,

[More on Next Page](#)

although the Secretary's [memorandum](#) points out that "the higher than anticipated decline is still within a margin of error to meet the year-end Forecast." Sales tax collections have underperformed more consistently, and now trail projections by \$116.9 million. The Secretary's memorandum notes, "The continuing shift in consumption from taxable goods to non-taxable services is likely dampening sales tax revenue growth more than anticipated," and the Secretary pointed out in his presentation that Virginia is more affected by this national trend than other states with broader sales tax bases.

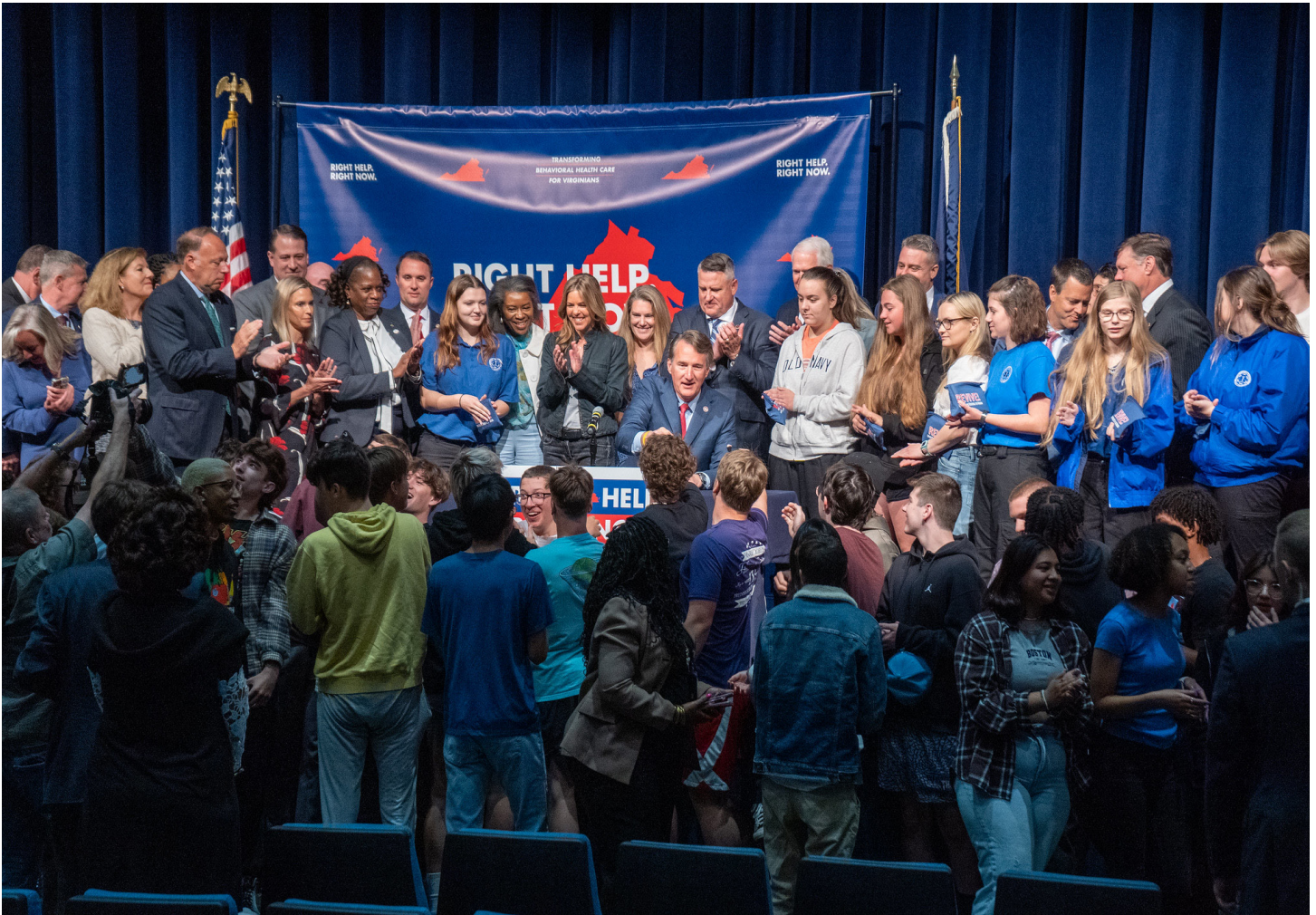
Secretary Cummings explained that the consensus expectation among economists is a mild economic contraction in the third quarter of calendar year 2023, later than the assumption in the December forecast, which expected a contraction beginning in the second quarter of calendar year 2023. The delayed onset of the slowdown may be reflected in the stronger-than-anticipated FY 2023 collections, with implications for FY 2024; the Secretary's presentation notes, "While we anticipate that collections for FY 2023 will be above forecast, much of the higher collections are the result of our assumption of when a recession will begin. The resulting shift of revenues into FY 2023 may largely be reversed in FY 2024."

Predicting the timing of a potential economic slowdown is an ongoing challenge for the Federal Reserve's Federal Open Market Committee, which took action on May 3 to increase the federal funds rate by another one-quarter percentage point, but signaled a potential pause in rate hikes in subsequent meetings, [stating](#), "In determining the extent to which additional policy firming may be appropriate to return inflation to 2 percent over time, the Committee will take into account the cumulative tightening of monetary policy, the lags with which monetary policy affects economic activity and inflation, and economic and financial developments." A key factor may be the effect of tightened lending standards resulting from concerns about the recent failures of several regional banks, which may play a role similar to an interest rate increase in cooling the economy.

Updated Consumer Price Index data [released on May 10](#) suggest that inflation appears to be moderating, but is still considerably higher than the Federal Reserve's 2 percent target. The CPI-U rose 0.4 percent in April, driven by increases in costs for shelter, used cars and trucks, and gasoline, but the increase for the 12 months ending in April (4.9 percent) was the smallest 12-month increase since the period ending in April 2021. The index for food at home fell 0.2 percent in April, following a drop of 0.3 percent in March, suggesting a moderation in grocery prices.

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

Governor Youngkin Visits Stafford County for Fentanyl Awareness Event



Official Photo by Christian Martinez, Office of Governor Glenn Youngkin.

Stafford County High School hosted Governor Glenn Youngkin, Lieutenant Governor Winsome Earle-Sears, Attorney General Jason Miyares, and First Lady Suzanne Youngkin, as well as several legislators and members of the Administration on May 9 for an event marking Fentanyl Awareness Day. Several speakers, including the First Lady, Lieutenant Governor Sears, and Senator Bryce Reeves, testified to the dangers of fentanyl, sharing stories of friends and acquaintances who succumbed to overdoses, including the tragic case of a friend of the Youngkin family who died after unwittingly consuming a fentanyl-laced painkiller.

Stafford County Supervisor and VACo Immediate Past President Meg Bohmke, who attended the event with several members of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors and officials from the County and the school division, said, "I was so pleased that the Governor came to one of our high schools to share this important message in such a direct way. It was clear that the students in attendance were paying careful attention and the fact that state officials could share these personal stories really hit home." As part of the program, staff from the Rappahannock Area Health District trained attendees on the use

of naloxone to respond to a suspected overdose; First Lady Youngkin encouraged the students in the audience to share their knowledge with their peers, and pointed out that they may have the opportunity to use the REVIVE! training to save a life in the community at large, noting that an individual was recently revived from an overdose near the Executive Mansion in Richmond.

Governor Youngkin announced that he had ceremonially signed several bills from the 2023 General Assembly regarding substance use disorder earlier in the day, including legislation allowing any person to possess and administer naloxone nasal spray under certain conditions and directing relevant state agencies to develop a statewide comprehensive plan for the distribution of naloxone statewide. At the event, he signed [Executive Order 26](#), which directs a multi-agency approach toward combating the proliferation of fentanyl-related overdoses and deaths.

Among the directives in the Executive Order are the following:

- Direction to the Department of General Services and the Department of Health to issue an RFP for naloxone nasal spray kits to ensure a steady, affordable supply, with further direction to allow other government entities, such as counties, to use a state contract to benefit from economies of scale in purchasing naloxone.
- Direction to the Department of Health to develop a cost-effective plan to use wastewater surveillance to detect fentanyl use, as well as a response strategy (including increased naloxone distribution and public awareness campaigns) as warranted.
- Direction to the Department of Social Services to develop a plan to offer wrap-around services and treatments to individuals caring for children whose parents have died of a drug overdose to reduce the trauma of the loss of a parent.
- Direction to the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security to establish a workgroup to improve pathways for individuals with substance use disorders to remain drug-free after release from incarceration.
- Direction to the Department of Health to work with local health departments to assist localities in establishing Overdose Fatality Review Teams (these teams are authorized in statute to review local overdose deaths, promote cooperation and coordination among relevant agencies, recommend changes within the local agencies to prevent overdose deaths, and to advise state agencies on changes to law, policy, or practice to prevent overdose deaths).

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

FY 23 Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) Awards Announced

On May 11, Governor Youngkin announced more than \$59.5 million in grants for FY 2023 through the Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) for 14 projects serving 20 localities throughout Virginia. The VATI program provides targeted funding to extend service to areas that are presently underserved by any broadband provider.

The goal of VATI is to create strong, competitive communities throughout the Commonwealth by preparing those communities to build, utilize, and capitalize on telecommunications infrastructure. This year's funding leverages more than \$118.6 million in local and private sector matching funds.

The Department of Housing and Community Development administers the VATI program, which provides targeted financial assistance to extend broadband service to areas that are currently unserved by a provider. Projects were selected through a competitive process that evaluated each project for demonstrated need and benefit for the community, applicant readiness and capacity, and the cost and leverage of the proposed project. The level of funding awarded is based on the infrastructure needs in the project area.

In this application year, VATI received 35 applications requesting more than \$300 million in funding. Since 2017, Virginia has invested more than \$798.7 million to connect over 358,000 homes, businesses and community anchors within 84 localities. Additional information on VATI is available [here](#).

2023 Virginia Telecommunication Initiative Grants:

Locality/Organization	Project Name	Award
Essex County	Essex County VATI 2023	\$8,753,009
Southside Planning District Commission	Regional Fiber Broadband Project Phase 2	\$8,556,028.84
West Piedmont Planning District Commission	2023 WPPDC East Universal Broadband Project	\$8,155,864
Caroline County	VATI 2023 Eastern Caroline	\$6,446,000
Shenandoah County	Shenandoah County VATI Broadband Grant Application 2023	\$4,936,968
West Piedmont Planning District Commission	2023 WPPDC Pittsylvania County Universal Broadband Project	\$3,548,250
Greensville County	Greensville County - Verizon FY23 VATI Project	\$2,956,774.80
Orange County	Orange County FiberLync VATI FY23 Project	\$2,181,000
Caroline County	VATI 2023 Western Caroline	\$2,032,334
Bedford County	Bedford County and Shentel 2023 VATI Grant Application	\$1,373,161.74
Floyd County	Floyd County: Extending Fiber Along Private Roads and Apartments	\$1,339,387
Chesterfield County	Chesterfield VA VATI 2023 Application	\$755,523
Henrico County	Henrico County Universal Broadband Project	\$501,620
West Piedmont Planning District Commission	2023 West Piedmont Planning District Commission West Universal Broadband Project (<i>Letter of Intent</i>)	\$8,013,600
TOTAL:		\$59,549,520.38

Department of Housing and Community Development Hosts Broadband Access and Deployment Program Listening Session



On May 16, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) hosted a listening session for local governments to receive input on the development of the Five-Year Plan and Initial Proposal, which are two critical components of the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD) under the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act. This is broadband program funding for planning, infrastructure deployment, and broadband adoption (non-deployment) programs. The Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act included \$42.5 billion for state broadband deployment programs under the BEAD Program. Specific planning requirements are attached to these funds and the funds will be distributed to the states through a formula allocation. Though the final allocation amount to Virginia will be announced on or before June 30th, each state is guaranteed at least \$100 million in funding.

Based on funding availability, BEAD mandated priorities are as follows:

1. Reach Unserved Areas, lacking 25/3 internet speeds.
2. Reach Underserved Areas, lacking 100/20 internet speeds.
3. Programs that supplement deployment (workforce development).
4. Connecting Community Anchors and support Broadband Adoption Programs.
5. Other Non-Deployment Uses.

BEAD will be used to complement the existing Virginia Telecommunication Initiative ([VATI](#)) funding process. Since 2017, Virginia has allocated over \$935 million in state and federal funding to extend broadband infrastructure to over 388,000 locations in 80 cities and counties across the Commonwealth through VATI.

More information and the PowerPoint presentation from the listening session can be accessed [here](#).

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

Commission on Youth Adopts 2023 Workplan



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
Commission on Youth



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The Virginia Commission on Youth adopted its plan of work for the remainder of 2023 at its May 15 meeting, agreeing on a study of the state's foster care system, a review of legislation referred to the Commission from the 2023 General Assembly regarding the age of consent for minors' admission to a mental health facility, and the development of a new edition of a critical resource document for children and adolescents with mental health treatment needs.

Improving foster care in Virginia: The Commission agreed to a [planned study](#) that would build upon earlier efforts to improve the foster care system in Virginia. Staff recommended the creation of several workgroups that would focus on key areas, including workforce retention, liability insurance for foster care agencies, and recruitment and retention of foster families. Staff also recommended participation in related efforts underway, including work in the Department of Social Services to support foster youth in securing drivers' licenses, the study of legal representation in child dependency cases being conducted by the Office of the Children's Ombudsman, and the implementation of previous initiatives, such as the establishment of points of contact for foster youth at institutions of higher education and the enhancement of workforce programs for foster youth.

Admission of minors to a mental health facility for inpatient treatment: The Commission agreed to a [review](#) of legislation which was referred to the Commission by letter from the House Courts of Justice Committee. The bill would have increased from 14 to 16 the minimum age for a minor to consent to admission to a mental health facility for inpatient treatment and added addiction as a reason for a minor to be admitted to a mental health facility for inpatient treatment. The bill's patron, Delegate Anne Ferrell Tata, who also serves on the Commission on Youth, explained that she sought to address situations in which a minor who is 14 or 15 years of age refuses to consent to inpatient treatment that the parent feels is necessary, and to address issues of substance use disorder among youth. Delegate Tata indicated that her aim is to find a pathway for youth in this scenario to receive treatment, and that she is open to other approaches.

Collection of Evidence-Based Practices for Children and Adolescents with Mental Health Treatment Needs: The Commission is required to revise this document on a biennial basis, and as part of updating the 8th edition (which was published in 2021), staff plans to include a new section on the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth mental health, as well as updating a recently-added section on implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act.

The next meeting of the full Commission is scheduled for September 19.

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission Approves 2023 Workplan



The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) met on May 15 and approved a plan of work for 2023. Several study projects were directed by legislation or by previous Commission action; staff provided updates on the progress of studies currently underway, as well as a timeline for briefing members on study findings. The Auditor of Public Accounts (APA), Staci A. Henshaw, also presented a [workplan](#) for the year, as well as an update on work by her office to monitor localities for potential fiscal distress. Legislators were concerned about information in the APA's presentation regarding delays in local submissions of financial information; Ms. Henshaw explained that workforce shortages in the accounting field, paired with increasingly complex reporting requirements, have presented challenges for many localities in submitting the reports on time, but also expressed concern that delays are more widespread and persistent this year than in the past. Language included in the Governor's budget in December would require certain notifications to be made by the APA if a locality is 18 months late in submitting its financial reports and trigger the existing process for providing technical assistance to fiscally distressed localities if certain conditions are met.

Planned studies include several items of interest to local governments, notably several projects for which VACo has been interviewed by JLARC staff.

K-12 Standards of Quality funding formula: This study was directed by legislation in 2021 which requires JLARC to determine the true cost of public education. As previously [reported](#), JLARC staff's [update](#) on this study found that for FY 2021, Virginia School Divisions received \$20.1 billion in funding, the majority of which (52 percent) came from local governments, while the state contributed 39 percent and the federal government provided 9 percent. This echoes the Virginia Board of Education's 2022 Annual Report on the Condition and Needs of Public Schools in Virginia, which found that despite significant progress by the legislature, state direct aid per-pupil has decreased 3.4 percent, adjusted for inflation, since 2008-2009. For FY 2021, local governments in Virginia invested \$4.2 billion above the required local effort for SOQ programs. VACo staff interviewed with JLARC staff last year to provide a local government perspective on the issue. *(Planned briefing: July 2023)*

Supply of qualified K-12 teachers: This study will examine the “teacher pipeline,” to include evaluating the effectiveness of Virginia’s traditional teacher preparation programs, as well as alternative programs and the teacher licensure process, and will identify opportunities for improvements. *(Planned briefing: September 2023)*

Self-sufficiency and child care: Commission staff will review the extent to which three key programs providing financial assistance to low-income households (TANF, SNAP, and the child care subsidy program) support self-sufficiency, as well as how effectively the programs are designed and administered, and how well they are coordinated with workforce development programs. 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. *(Planned briefing: October 2023)*

Enhanced retirement benefits for public safety occupations: Several [bills](#) that would provide enhanced retirement benefits for certain state or local employees have been referred to JLARC, which last examined the issue in 2008. Staff will assess job-related risks and responsibilities and estimate costs for extending enhanced retirement benefits to certain categories of employees. VACo staff interviewed with JLARC staff earlier this year to provide a local government perspective on the issue. *(Planned briefing: October 2023)*

Public defenders, court-appointed attorneys, and Commonwealth’s Attorneys: Several bills relating to indigent defense were referred to JLARC in 2022. Staff will evaluate the quality of indigent defense, analyze compensation for Commonwealth’s Attorneys, public defenders, and court-appointed attorneys, and consider whether defendants should be provided counsel at their first court appearance and whether a bail hearing should be held on the same day. *(Planned briefing: November 2023)*

State psychiatric hospitals: This study will review staffing at state hospitals; assess whether individuals could be served in other settings; evaluate the care provided at the hospitals, to include whether effective treatment practices are used and whether hospitals conduct effective discharge planning; and assess the oversight provided by hospital leadership and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. *(Planned briefing: December 2023)*

GO Virginia: This study will review the program and determine whether it is effective in promoting regional collaboration in diversifying regional economies, as well as reviewing the program’s structure and administration and whether it duplicates other state economic development or workforce programs. *(Planned briefing: December 2023)*

JLARC staff will also provide periodic reports as part of its required ongoing oversight of economic development incentives, the Virginia Retirement System, the Virginia College Savings Plan, and the Virginia Information Technologies Agency. The full workplan for 2023 is available at [this link](#).

VACo Contacts: [Katie Boyle](#) and [Jeremy R. Bennett](#)

Behavioral Health Commission Adopts Workplan, Discusses Key Metrics for Monitoring Progress



The Behavioral Health Commission set its course for the remainder of 2023 at its meeting on May 16 in Charlottesville, building on a strategic planning session held at the end of April and reflecting referrals from the General Assembly, as well as projects undertaken by consensus of Commission members. Based on the role the Commission expects to play in overall efforts to improve the behavioral health system, priority work for 2023 will involve mapping current initiatives underway among various entities and monitoring the progress of previously-approved initiatives, as well as undertaking two specific projects requested by the legislature.

- **Mapping of current behavioral health initiatives:** Staff plans to report in November on work to document current efforts to improve the system, and expects that this task will be an ongoing element of the Commission's mission. The goal of this project is to gain an understanding of the totality of efforts underway so that the Commission can determine which initiatives most warrant support, as well as to identify gaps which could be filled.
- **Monitoring of program implementation:** Staff also anticipates monitoring of program implementation to be an ongoing task. An initial briefing is scheduled for September, followed by reports on STEP-VA, Project BRAVO (a redesign of the Medicaid-funded behavioral health services system), and permanent supportive housing (which provides behavioral and primary health care services in addition to stable housing for individuals with mental illness) in November.
- **Expedited diversion to court-ordered treatment:** The Commission will receive a briefing in September on staff's analysis of factors that may limit the effectiveness of a new diversion process that was proposed in legislation in 2023. This legislation would have allowed a defendant who is charged with certain misdemeanor violations that appear to be associated with the defendant's mental illness to be considered for transfer from the criminal justice system to a civil process for court-ordered mental health treatment.

- **Maximizing school-based mental health services:** This study was directed by the 2022 Appropriation Act, and staff will report in October on findings. Staff will determine the current reach of services, identify ways to provide services in school settings, and evaluate opportunities to maximize Medicaid funding. Members encouraged staff to prioritize this work, expressing concerns about the increasingly alarming reports of depression and other mental health concerns among youth.
- **Reporting on behavioral health system metrics:** Staff provided updates on several aspects of the behavioral health system, which are proposed to be subjects of ongoing monitoring, and members suggested additional data points to be captured or ways to further refine the data. Staff's initial set of metrics included the number of staffed beds at state hospitals, occupancy rates for state hospitals, numbers of individuals on the wait list for civil admission, the number of Temporary Detention Orders executed year-to-date, and numbers of patients on the state hospitals' Extraordinary Barriers to Discharge List (who are clinically ready for discharge but are delayed in returning to the community, often due to a lack of an appropriate placement), as well as "loss of custody events" in which, for example, an individual was released when no bed could be located before expiration of the TDO. Commission members and staff discussed tracking several data points in additional detail, such as displaying staffed bed numbers for each hospital, to allow a more detailed analysis of regional and other variations in the behavioral health system.

The meeting slides, which contain the proposed workplan and initial set of metrics for tracking, are available at [this link](#). The Commission's next meeting is scheduled for July 18.

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

Joint Commission on Health Care Plans 2023 Work, Discusses Medicaid “Unwinding”



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
Joint Commission on Health Care

The Joint Commission on Health Care held its first meeting of the year on May 17. In addition to mapping out its work for the remainder of 2023, Commission members received a briefing from the Department of Medical Assistance Services and the Department of Social Services on the required “unwinding” of the continuous Medicaid coverage that was in place during the pandemic as a condition of Virginia’s receipt of an enhanced federal match rate for the program.

The Commission will move forward with three previously-planned studies and also address two additional issues as part of its workplan. The following studies are planned for the 2023 interim:

- **Obesity and eating disorders:** This study was directed by legislation in 2022 and will examine the prevalence of obesity and eating disorders; identify evidence-based strategies for prevention, early identification, and treatment; determine the extent to which Medicaid and state-regulated health plans cover these services; and identify barriers for patients and families seeking treatment.
- **Vertically-integrated carriers and providers:** This study is intended to evaluate the scope of vertically-integrated carriers and providers in Virginia and nationwide and determine the effect of vertical integration on access to services, health care costs, and quality of care. The study will focus on vertical integration (a joint ownership interest) between payers and acute care hospitals.
- **Team-based care:** This study directs staff to review evidence-based models of team-based care (the provision of health services by at least two professionals who work collaboratively with patients and caregivers to accomplish shared goals) and their effectiveness at improving outcomes; determine the extent to which team-based care is being used in Virginia and any obstacles to its implementation; and consider policy options for the state to promote effective models of team-based care.

Additionally, in response to Commission discussions in past years regarding health care workforce pressures, members requested that workforce issues be an area of ongoing focus. Staff will begin by cataloging existing efforts, to include consultation with the Virginia Health Workforce Development

Authority, and will recommend next steps for the Commission. Staff will also respond to members' request for information on issues regarding prescription drug affordability by arranging a briefing on the potential impact of federal legislation, as well as federal court rulings on the issue.

Sarah Hatton, Deputy Director for Administration at the Department of Medical Assistance Services, and Carl Ayers, Deputy Commissioner for Human Services at the Department of Social Services, briefed the Commission on the status of Medicaid "unwinding" -- the end of the continuous coverage requirement that was implemented at the beginning of the pandemic and the return to normal enrollment procedures. In accordance with the December 2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act, the continuous coverage requirement ended March 31, 2023, and the enhanced federal match that had accompanied this requirement will phase out by December 31. While the continuous coverage requirement was in place, Virginia experienced an increase of more than 630,000 Medicaid enrollees (a 41 percent increase in enrollment growth), with Medicaid rolls now approaching 2.2 million members; with the end of the continuous coverage requirement, all Medicaid members will need to have their eligibility redetermined over the next 12 months. This task will be particularly challenging given the volume of redeterminations that must be conducted by local departments of social services that in many cases are already experiencing staff shortages. The state has contracted for support through the Cover Virginia program, which is planned to process approximately one-third of cases, and funding was recently approved in the "skinny budget" to assist local departments with their workload. DMAS and VDSS have also conducted training for local departments, and worked with the managed care plans serving Medicaid members to assist with outreach to members and with the transition of individuals who no longer qualify for Medicaid to the state health insurance exchange. The DMAS and VDSS briefing may be found at [this link](#).

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)



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What truly distinguishes OneDigital as a leading **insurance, financial services, and HR consulting advisory firm** is our holistic approach to creating environments that enable people to do their best work and live their best lives. OneDigital understands that counties face rising insurance costs while still struggling to attract/retain talent. This is why we use proprietary software to provide accurate and predictable insurance consulting projections for those core benefits that impact your bottom line and incorporate solutions to improve retention. While voluntary benefits may be the focus of other providers, OneDigital has the expertise in alternative funding strategies, best-in-class analytics, and an in-house actuarial team.

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sarah.struckmann@onedigital.com
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James City County Deputy Clerk Teresa Saeed was recently elected as the President of the Virginia Municipal Clerks Association (VMCA). VMCA's mission is to promote education and certification of Municipal Clerks, increase efficiency of municipal clerk operations, and to be alert and responsive to federal, state, and local legislation which impacts the clerk's office.

The Executive Committee was elected during the 46th Annual VMCA Conference held in Harrisonburg, VA, April 19-21, 2023. Saeed will be representing the VMCA at the International Institute of Municipal Clerks Annual Conference in May 2023.

The Executive Committee of the VMCA for 2023-2024:

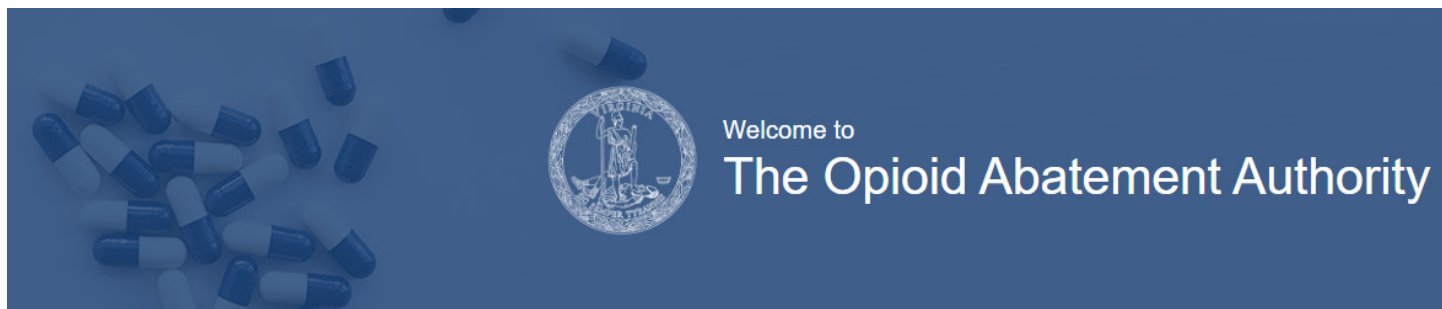
- **Teresa Saeed**, President, Deputy Clerk, County of James City
- **Katherine Glass**, 1st Vice President, City Clerk, City of Hampton
- **Kimberly Ellis**, 2nd Vice President, Deputy Clerk, County of Culpeper
- **Jennifer Green**, Treasurer, Assistant to the City Manager, City of Hampton
- **Kaylyn McCluster**, Secretary, Deputy Clerk, County of Pittsylvania
- **Keia Waters, Historian**, Senior Deputy Clerk, City of Alexandria
- **Travis Morris**, Parliamentarian, Senior Deputy Clerk, County of Albemarle
- **Tanya Brackett**, Immediate Past President, Clerk to the Board, County of Henrico

For more information on VMCA, visit www.vmca.com

Media Contact:

Teresa Saeed, VMCA President

757-253-6609; teresa.saeed@jamescitycountyva.gov



Welcome to the Abatement Academy

The Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) and the Virginia Institute of Government (VIG) are pleased to announce the launch of the new **“Abatement Academy”** for 2023. The Academy is composed of a series of FREE, bi-weekly webinars to highlight examples programs that align with nationally recognized principles for the use of funds from opioid litigation. The intended audience includes local government representatives, state agency professionals, and groups or individuals who provide services or support to people suffering from opioid use disorders.

The Abatement Academy will also include one-day in-person workshops on September 7 (Abingdon) and October 19 (Charlottesville).

The first webinar in the series will be held on Thursday, April 27 and will feature Ms. Ginny Lovitt from the Chris Atwood Foundation (CAF). Ginny will tell the story of how her brother’s death from an overdose led her to create one of the leading harm-reduction programs in Virginia. The CAF is a peer-driven community organization in Northern Virginia providing free harm reduction and recovery support services and advocacy for people impacted by substance use.

Registration is now open for the first three sessions.

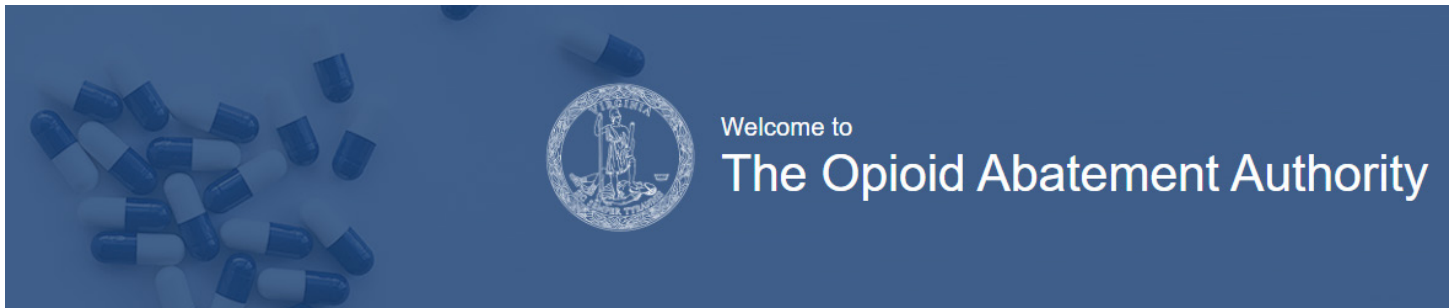
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Future webinars will be held on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month starting on May 25 and ending on December 14.



[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION AND
A LIST OF WEBINARS](#)

Register now for FREE Abatement Academy sessions.



Best Practices for Local Governments in the Allocation of Opioid Settlement Funding

Tony McDowell, Executive Director | Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority

Virginia has already received settlements worth more than \$500 million from prescription opioid manufacturers and distributors, and that number could double. Most of these funds will flow to Virginia's cities and counties for efforts to abate the opioid crisis. As Virginia's cities and counties develop local and regional plans for the use of these funds, some best practices are beginning to emerge.

The first of these is **establishing a local abatement committee** comprised of various stakeholders including prevention and treatment specialists, public health, behavioral health, law enforcement, and people with lived experience.

Some communities are holding **town hall style public meetings** or listening sessions so that local leaders can hear from residents who have been directly affected by the prescription opioid epidemic, as well as from service providers and community-based organizations. The OAA's Board of Directors has been following this approach, and has already conducted six public listening sessions around the state. The feedback from these sessions has been instrumental in informing the Board's strategy for allocating grants.

Local governments are encouraged to **engage with community partners**, especially those that have already been fighting the opioid epidemic for years. This certainly includes the local Community Services Board, but in addition there are many non-profits, grassroot organizations, treatment providers, and recovery support organizations that want to be involved. During its listening sessions the OAA Board has heard numerous examples of such organizations that have been barely surviving financially, working off of donations and volunteer effort. These organizations often know exactly how to reach the people who are sick and suffering, and have a track record of stretching dollars for maximum impact. The OAA is only able to provide funding to cities, counties and state agencies. This means the opioid settlement funds will not reach these non-government organizations unless there is a partnership with the local government.

The OAA is committed to providing assistance to cities and counties in developing their abatement plans. We offer **planning grants** and are in the process of launching a series of best-practice webinars and workshops. For more information please visit us at www.voaa.us.

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[Achievement Awards Submission Form](#)

All entries are required to be submitted in electronic form. No paper copy submissions are necessary. The electronic copy should be a PDF or WORD file. Email entries to Gage Harter at gharter@vaco.org. **Submissions must be received by July 1, 2023.**

Last year, [we processed 100 entries](#) and selected 29 winners from 22 Counties. VACo presented awards at 22 Board of Supervisors Meetings, recognized winners at the 88th Annual Conference, and issued a news release to statewide media.

The judges for the 2023 Achievement Awards will be announced soon.

VACo has received close to 1,000 entries over the past decade. Last year's Best Achievement winner was Chesterfield County for its "Connecting All Community Residents to Public Schools" program.

VACo encourages all Counties, big and small, to enter the 2023 Achievement Awards Program. Please contact gharter@vaco.org with questions or for more information.

[Achievement Awards Submission Form](#) | [Achievement Awards Website](#)
[2022 Achievement Awards Press Release](#) | [Past Achievement Award Winners](#)



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Because of the pandemic and economic crisis we are facing, NACo is offering a \$1995 scholarship for the first enrollee from your county. That means, when you or another leader at the county enrolls, the cost is not \$2,995; it is now \$1000.

If you have more than one person to enroll, we will extend significant discounts to them, too. We believe in you, your leadership and the leadership of your county employees. This High Performance Leadership Academy will make existing leaders better and your emerging (next generation) leaders ready to address the growing complexity of county business.

We are inviting you to enroll at least one leader into the course that begins in April 2023. Please help us invest in county frontline leaders who are making great sacrifices to serve our communities.

If you have any questions or to enroll someone in the program, please contact Treina Smith-Slatt at 503-878-7184 or treinas@pdaleadership.com.

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VACo 2023 REGIONAL MEETINGS

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REGION 12 - MAY 3 | PULASKI

REGION 13 - MAY 4 | WISE

REGIONS 10&11 - JUNE 14 | FRANKLIN

REGIONS 1&4 - JUNE 28 | PRINCE EDWARD

REGION 2 - AUGUST 23 | LANCASTER

REGIONS 3&5 - SEPTEMBER | CHESTERFIELD

VIRTUAL MEETINGS

REGIONS 6&9 - APRIL 13

REGIONS 7&8 - MAY 11

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JULY 21-24 | TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

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SCHOOL ZONE SAFETY

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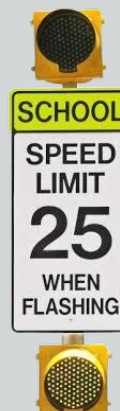


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Virginia Association of Counties

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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 \$100 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).

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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.



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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.

1207 East Main Street | Suite 300
 Richmond, VA 23219-3627
 Phone: 804.788.6652 | www.vaco.org

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