



JLARC Publishes Report Critical of State K-12 Education Funding

On July 10th, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission ([JLARC](#)) met to present several reports, one of which was a long-anticipated review of Virginia's K-12 Funding Formula [directed](#) by the General Assembly. The report's [findings](#) confirm what many in local government already know to be true: the State Standards of Quality (SOQ) formula yields substantially less funding than actual local school division spending and benchmarks, total statewide staffing needs calculated by SOQ formula are less than actual employment levels, the SOQ formula systematically underestimates division compensation costs, the Formula still uses Great Recession-era cost reduction measures, the Formula does not adequately account for higher needs students, and the Formula does not adequately account for local labor costs, among other findings. The report offers 20 recommendations and five policy options, some for short-term adoption and others for long-term, to reform the way in which the Commonwealth funds public K-12 education.

The importance of education funding cannot be overstated. K-12 public education is the largest single financial commitment for the state and local governments. Decades of research concludes

funding has a critical role in quality of K–12 education. For instance, on average, increasing spending by \$1,000 per student has been shown to improve the graduation rate by 2.3%. Also, sufficient funding increases the likelihood of having high quality teachers, which has been repeatedly shown to increase student performance more than any other factor.

According to the report, K–12 public education funding is by far the largest category of state general fund spending, representing 30 percent of the general fund budget and 13 percent of the total state budget. Education funding is an even larger financial commitment for localities, representing 52 percent, on average, of local government budgets in Virginia. In aggregate across all divisions, local funding represents slightly more than half of total funding. State funding represents about 40 percent, including funds from both SOQ and non-SOQ programs. The remaining percentage of funds are from federal sources. Several large Northern Virginia school divisions account for a substantial portion of total aggregate local funding provided. However, most individual school divisions rely heavily on state funds, as about two-thirds of school divisions rely on the state for most of their education funding.

For FY 21, the SOQ formula calculated divisions needed \$10.7 billion in funding, but local school divisions actually spent \$17.3 billion. The formula's calculations represent \$6.6 billion less than what was spent (a 38 percent difference). Funding differences in recent years have been about the same. The vast majority of the additional funding for school divisions comes from local governments.

Virginia is currently lagging other states and benchmarks for education funding. Virginia school divisions receive less K–12 funding per student than the 50-state average, the regional average, and three of Virginia's five bordering states. School divisions in other states receive 14 percent more per student than school divisions in Virginia, on average, after normalizing for differences in cost of labor among states. This equates to about \$1,900 more per student than Virginia. Depending on the benchmark, Virginia school divisions were estimated to need six percent to over 30 percent more funding.

Much of this failure can be attributed to the way in which Virginia funds public education as well as policy decisions made during the Great Recession which have not yet been fully addressed by the state. These include: the imposition of the "Support cap," which reduced funding for divisions below prevailing costs and affected instructional funding, the removal of certain "non-personal" costs from the prevailing SOQ cost calculations, though they are still incurred by divisions (such as travel, leases, etc.), and a change to the calculation used to account for federal funds to use less accurate assumptions. Although some progress has been made in recent years on the support cap issue, completely fixing these Great Recession era policy decisions is estimated to cost \$515 million.

Furthermore, according to the report, Virginia is one of only nine states that use a staffing-based formula, and some academic experts now view it as an outdated approach. The majority of states (34) use a student-based funding formula that allocates divisions a specified amount of funding per student. Seven states use hybrids of the staffing- and student-based approaches or another approach. A well-designed student-based funding model would be more accurate, more transparent, and easier to maintain over time than Virginia's current staffing-based formula. Implementing a student-based funding formula is estimated to cost an additional \$520 million to \$1.2 billion above FY23 funding, depending on how the new formula is implemented.

The report also recommends replacing the use of linear weighted average (LWA) to calculate costs with the actual division averages. The use of LWA grossly undervalues the costs of some of the largest school divisions in the state and gives them a similar scoring weight to some of the smallest. This obscures the actual local prevailing costs. Fixing this system is estimated to cost \$190 million.

The report also found that the Cost of competing adjustment (COCA) provided in the SOQ formula to address higher regional labor costs uses old data and excludes several divisions. Cost of competing adjustment percentages were developed in 1995 and based on data from 1991. The report recommends replacing the cost of competing adjustment with a more accurate adjustment based on a Virginia cost of labor index applied to all divisions with above average costs. This is estimated to cost \$595 million.

According to JLARC, the way in which Virginia chooses to fund K-12 education is in need of major reform. Without additional support from the state, local governments will continue to struggle to carry the burden of funding the “true cost” of K-12 education. In short, this passage from the report is perhaps the best summary of the current funding model:

“...Many school division administrators characterized the state’s staffing standards as unrealistic, often citing the difference between SOQ staffing calculations and the number of staff they actually needed to employ. Administrators said: “It’s a misnomer to call it the [Standards of Quality] SOQ; it’s not quality at all;” and “If we just funded at SOQ level, it would be a catastrophe.””

VACo supports action that must be taken by the General Assembly to provide additional state funding that supports local governments in the constitutional responsibility to maintain public schools of high quality and the legal responsibility to enable each student to develop the skills that are necessary for success in school, preparation for life, and reaching their full potential.

VACo is grateful to the staff at JLARC who compiled the research that led to this report and its findings, including taking the time to interview VACo staff on the role of local governments in the funding formula. VACo is also appreciative that JLARC staff will be available to brief the [Education Steering Committee](#) on the report when the Committee convenes at the August County Officials Summit.

In conclusion, Senator Janet Howell, chair of JLARC, reiterated the importance of the report by saying,

“I would advise all candidates, not just for the General Assembly but also for school boards and county boards, to read this study and be informed about it and grapple with the implications.”

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

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



Save the Date - VACo Summit on August 17

AUGUST 17, 2023 | [REGISTRATION FORM](#) | [REGISTER ONLINE](#)
[OMNI RICHMOND HOTEL ROOM RESERVATION](#) | [DRAFT AGENDA](#)

The VACo County Officials' Summit is VACo's summer meeting that previews the upcoming November elections and begins the legislative process of the association for 2024.

This November is a critical election cycle with many projected new faces in local and state elected offices. Join us on Thursday, August 17, 2023, and hear state leaders share their thoughts on the upcoming election and how it will impact politics and government in the future. A political analyst will also share thoughts on the imminent changes to the state legislature and how that may affect localities.

[Register today](#) to join your peers on Thursday, August 17, 2023, for the VACo County Officials' Summit. Breakfast and lunch are provided with event registration.

Two time blocks of VACo Steering Committee Meetings will follow lunch on August 17. VACo's Board of Directors Meeting will take place at 9am on Friday, August 18.

[Registration Form](#) | [Register Online](#) | [Book Your Hotel Room](#) | [Draft Agenda](#)

Visit Giles County and the Giles County Historic Courthouse



Location: 120 North Main Street / Wenonah Avenue

Built: 1834 – 1836

Style: Colonial Revival

Architect: Thomas Mercer

Contractor: Thomas Mercer

Description: The building faces south and is a two story dark red colored brick and wood structure. The building is located on the landscaped grounds of the Courthouse Square in the center of Pearisburg. The south front has a portico supported by four thin columns rising to a pediment at the second story. The entrance is arched. There are lower east and west wings. On the center of the roof is an octagonal cupola with green colored dome. The building has a hip roof. In the interior, the stairs are located in the east wing. The courtroom is located on the second story. The building houses the County General District Court and County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court of the 27th Judicial Circuit. The front portico was constructed in 1900. The building was renovated in 1998 to 2005. The architect was HDH Associates of Christiansburg and John P Cone, Jr. and the contractor was Thor, Inc. of Roanoke. The project manager was Mason B Montgomery. On the north side is a three story red colored brick annex built in 1900 and the Timberlake Courts Building constructed in 1979 and on the east side is the Sheriff's Residence built in 1937 to 1938.

SOURCE: [American Courthouses](http://AmericanCourthouses.com) | Courthouses.co

SUPERVISORS TRAINING FOR COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS



VIRGINIA CERTIFIED COUNTY SUPERVISORS' PROGRAM

NOW ENROLLING
THE CLASS OF 2023!

MODULE 1 - BUDGETING

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

REGISTER TODAY!

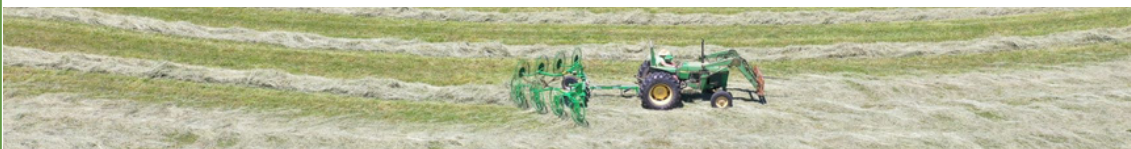
Please contact Karie Walker at
kwalker@vaco.org for more information.
Or visit the [VACo website](http://vaco.org).





American Farmland Trust

is a national conservation organization devoted to “saving the land that sustains us.” To achieve our mission, we work across the policy, research, education, and direct support fields to protect farmland from haphazard development, promote sound farming practices, and enhance economic viability for farmers and agricultural communities.



Regenerate Virginia

In addition to AFT’s national work, we also engage at the regional, state, and local levels. In the Commonwealth, we are working closely with on-the-ground partners to advance a better and brighter future for farming through the **Regenerate Virginia** initiative. One project that we’re especially excited about—and that is particularly relevant for Virginia Association of Counties members—revolves around “planning for agriculture.” This work both encompasses and transcends traditional land use planning to help communities *holistically envision a sound, productive, and viable future for agriculture.*



“Planning for Agriculture in Virginia”

Grounded in both quantitative and qualitative data—with direct input from dozens of on-the-ground leaders—AFT’s “**Planning for Agriculture in Virginia**” project is helping communities develop and sharpen proven tools to **protect agricultural land, serve and support local farmers, advance rural economic development** in ways that support rather than displace agriculture, and **increase public appreciation of land and water stewardship**. As part of this project, we will develop a toolkit filled with case studies, suggestions, and strategies that counties across the Commonwealth can use to plan for agriculture—and then prepare to bring those plans to life. We will also convene local leaders and partners through workshops and other events to advance this work.

Are you interested in learning more about this project? Could it help your community achieve its goals and visions?

If so, let us know! We welcome your thoughts and questions, and we’re grateful to VACo members who have already provided input. For more information, please contact

Brooks Lamb (AFT’s Land Protection and Access Specialist) at:

blamb@farmland.org or 502.795.0330.



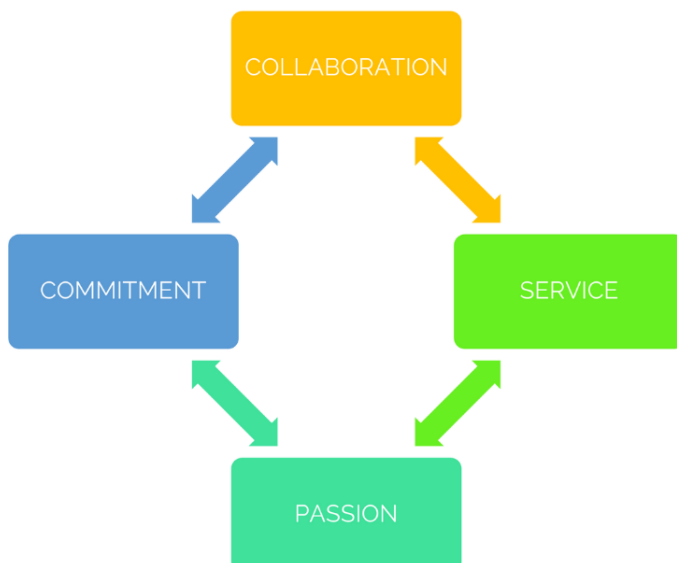
Our services are customized to meet your needs.

Our team of education professionals have a wealth of experience to address the challenges facing school divisions and governing bodies today.



ABOUT US

The Berkley Group offers a range of services to meet the diverse needs of students, educators, and communities. We understand the challenges facing school divisions, because we have worked in them and continue to serve them proudly. As your trusted partner, we are committed to you and your school division's success!



SERVICES



EXECUTIVE COACHING

Building leadership capacity and supporting staff at all levels.



STRATEGIC PLANNING

"One Community" strategic plans for school divisions and governing bodies.



PROGRAM EVALUATION

Maximize student success and optimize resource allocation for continuous improvement and accountability.

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www.bgllc.net



**We're excited to unveil our 89th Annual Conference logo!
See you on November 12-14 in beautiful Bath County!**

**VACo 89th Annual Conference
November 12 – 14, 2023
The Omni Homestead | Bath County
[VACo Annual Conference Website](#)**

COUNTY OF PRINCE GEORGE, VIRGINIA

Jeffrey D. Stoke
County Administrator
Phone: (804) 722-8600
Facsimile: (804) 732-3604



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Donald R. Hunter – Chairman
T.J. Webb – Vice Chairman
Floyd M. Brown, Jr.
Alan R. Carmichael
Marlene J. Waymack

For Immediate Release:
July 11, 2023

For additional information, contact:
Jackie Lipford, Public Information Officer
(804) 722-8607
jinlipford@princegeorgecountyva.gov

Board of Supervisors Appoints New County Attorney

Prince George, VA – During tonight’s Board of Supervisors meeting, Interim County Attorney Andrea Erard was appointed Prince George County Attorney. Ms. Erard has over thirty years of experience in local government law and has served as the Assistant County Attorney for Prince George County for the last seven years in a part-time capacity.

Donald Hunter, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, stated, “Ms. Erard has proven herself to be a valuable asset. I am confident in her ability to advise and provide legal support to the Board and Prince George County. I am pleased to welcome her as our first female County Attorney.”

Erard holds a bachelor’s degree from Mary Washington College and earned her Juris Doctor at the University of Richmond. For many years she taught local government law at the University of Richmond Law School, and she previously served on the Board of Directors for the Local Government Attorneys of Virginia Association. She is a frequent conference speaker and writer on topics related to local government law and regularly participates in pro bono work.

When asked about the appointment, Erard said, “I am honored to have been offered this opportunity, and I look forward to continuing to serve Prince George County as County Attorney.”

When she is not working, Erard enjoys spending time with her grown daughter, who lives in Richmond. In 2020, she achieved her dream of owning a giant schnauzer, after having had miniature and standard schnauzers her whole life. She also enjoys cooking and a good book.

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Amherst County Promotes Stacey McBride to Deputy County Administrator/ Finance Director

Amherst County Administration is pleased to announce that Finance Director Stacey McBride has been promoted to Deputy County Administrator. The previous Deputy County Administrator, David Proffitt, also served as Purchasing Agent and retired on June 30, 2023.

As Deputy County Administrator, Stacey will assist the County Administrator in coordinating budget, personnel, and administrative policy matters to ensure compliance and maintain operational standards. She will also assist the County Administrator with preparing and presenting the annual budget to the County Board of Supervisors and serve as County Administrator when required. Like her predecessor, Ms. McBride will hold dual titles and continue her duties as Director of Finance.

Stacey joined Amherst County Staff as Director of Finance in 2016 and has worked in government finance jobs in Lynchburg City and the Town of Appomattox since 2006. She has been a Virginia Certified Public Accountant since 1996. She holds a Master's in Public Administration from Virginia Tech and a Bachelor of Arts in Accounting from Lynchburg College.

New Director of Planning Hired in Powhatan County



Please join us in welcoming our new Director of Planning Mike Ciriello.

Mike has undergraduate degrees in International Relations and Public Affairs from George Washington University in Washington, DC. Mike grew up in Connecticut, but moved to North Carolina in 1989. He has a Master's Degree in Landscape Architecture from NC State University with a focus on regional, environmental, transportation planning, and urban design. Mike worked in the private sector for a large developer in Charlotte and Raleigh-Durham and in the public sector. He's a photographer likes kayaking, hiking, and travel to unusual places. He's an NCSU / ACC fan and loves the NHL Carolina Hurricanes hockey and NFL Charlotte Panthers.

County Administrator Bret Schardein commented, "We were really impressed by Mike's experience and personality and felt like he is a great fit for this position. In the short time he's been here, he's been equally impressed by Powhatan. I look forward to him settling into the role and really getting to know the community."

Welcome, Mike, happy to have you as part of the Powhatan Team!

COUNTY OF PRINCE GEORGE, VIRGINIA

Jeffrey D. Stoke
County Administrator
Phone: (804) 722-8600
Facsimile: (804) 732-3604

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Donald R. Hunter – Chairman
T.J. Webb – Vice Chairman
Floyd M. Brown, Jr.
Alan R. Carmichael
Marlene J. Waymack

For Immediate Release:
July 7, 2023

For additional information, contact:
Jackie Lipford, Public Information Officer
(804) 722-8607
jlipford@princegeorgecountyva.gov

**New Planning Director in Prince George County**

Prince George, VA – Prince George County named Robert Baldwin as the County’s new Planning Director, beginning July 17. The Planning Director is responsible for organizing and directing planning and zoning activities, services, programs, and staff. The Director will work closely with the County Administrator and department directors and serve as staff support to various boards and commissions.

Mr. Baldwin has over 30 years of experience in municipal and federal planning, including his most recent role as the Planning Director and Deputy City Manager of the City of Portsmouth. He led several award-winning comprehensive plan projects, including the “Destination 2025” plan in Portsmouth and the “Build One Portsmouth,” which received the Resilient Virginia Community of the Year award in 2019.

Robert served as the Regional Community Planning and Liaison Officer for the Department of the Navy, Naval Facilities Engineering Command Mid-Atlantic region. Additionally, he served as the Chief Planner for the County of York during which he was responsible for current and comprehensive planning, as well as transportation planning.

“I am pleased to welcome Robert Baldwin to our County,” said Donald Hunter, Chairman of the Prince George County Board of Supervisors. “Mr. Baldwin’s experience will be an asset to the Planning and Zoning Department, and he will play an integral role in shaping our community.”

Mr. Baldwin is a member of the American Planning Association and the American Institute of Certified Planners. Robert holds a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Master’s degree in Urban and Environmental Planning from the University of Virginia.

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**VIRGINIA SMART
COMMUNITY TESTBED
STAFFORD, VA**

VIRGINIA SMART COMMUNITY TESTBED PILOT REVIEW AND SHOWCASE

The Virginia Smart Community Testbed serves as Virginia's "living laboratory" to test new smart technologies and generate practical solutions that can be used as the "Model Smart Community" by cities, counties, and communities across the Commonwealth, country, and world.

The Testbed achieves this mission through working with entrepreneurs, startups, and established companies who are developing these smart technology solutions to pilot their technologies in real world environments and meet "first-customers" through introductions to local, state, and federal government partners.

Join us to hear from and meet current and past Virginia Smart Community Testbed pilots on how their solutions can help solve local challenges, learn how smart technology solutions are piloted and deployed across the Commonwealth, and gain a better understanding of the resources within the Virginia Smart Community Testbed and how to further engage and grow.

The purpose of this event is to convene local, state, and federal government officials and other entrepreneurs, startups, and established companies working in the smart communities environment to highlight completed and current pilot projects and facilitate opportunities for questions and knowledge sharing.



July 20

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Location:

The University of Mary
Washington Stafford Campus

121 University Boulevard
Fredericksburg, VA 22406

To register (by July 5),
please scan code provided.



Amherst County names Tyler Creasy as new Director of Community Development

Amherst County Administration would like to welcome Stewart (Tyler) Creasy to his new Director of Community Development position. Tyler started with Amherst County in October 2018 as the Public Information Officer. In 2019, he moved into the Assistant Zoning Administrator position and has served as Interim Co-Director of Community Development since October 2022.

As Director of Community Development, Mr. Creasy will oversee the Division of Planning and Zoning and the Division of Building Safety and Inspections. He will direct and supervise the short and long-range planning activities, service, and programs and coordinates and oversees zoning enforcement. Additionally, the roles included setting policies, preparing reports, and supporting associated Boards and Commissions.

An Amherst native, Tyler graduated from Amherst County High School before attending James Madison University (JMU). While there, he received his Bachelor's Degree in Justice Studies with a minor in Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Soon after he completed undergraduate work, Tyler enrolled in JMU's Masters of Public Administration program and graduated in May 2017.



Amelia County is happy to announce the official launch of the new county website.

Check us out at:

www.ameliacova.com

WESTMORELAND COUNTY RFP

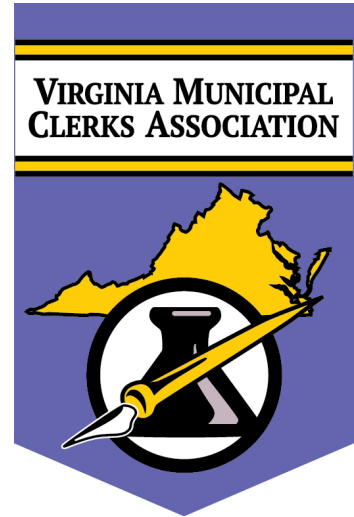


REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL UPDATE JOB DESCRIPTIONS, COMPENSATION PAY, CLASSIFICATION PLANS

Westmoreland County's goal is to attract and retain a highly skilled workforce. We are requesting sealed proposals from experienced firms to update our job descriptions and develop a complete compensation strategy and pay plan structure for the County. Our objective is to ensure a compensation system based upon accurate job descriptions that fairly represent the regional marketplace in which we compete.

[READ THE RFP](#)

Virginia Municipal Clerks Association Elects Officers and Recognizes Clerk of the Year



The Virginia Municipal Clerks Association (VMCA) is proud to announce their newly elected Executive Board Members:

Teresa Saeed, CMC - President, Deputy Clerk, County of James City
Saeed's appointment began April 20, 2023 at the VMCA Annual Conference, held in Harrisonburg, VA. Saeed will be representing the VMCA at the International Institute of Municipal Clerks Annual Conference in May 2023. Saeed has worked as the Deputy Clerk for James City County since September 2012.



Others elected were:

Katherine Glass, CMC - 1st Vice President, City Clerk, City of Hampton
Kimberly Ellis, MMC - 2nd Vice President, Deputy Clerk, County of Culpeper
Jennifer Green, Treasurer, Assistant to the City Manager, City of Hampton
Kaylyn McCluster, CMC - Secretary, Deputy Clerk, County of Pittsylvania
Keia Waters, CMC - Historian, Senior Deputy Clerk, City of Alexandria
Travis Morris, CMC - Parliamentarian, Senior Deputy Clerk, County of Albemarle

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 that impact the clerk's office. [Visit the VMCA website.](#)

CLERK OF THE YEAR

Kimberly Ellis, MMC, Culpeper County's Deputy Clerk for the Board of Supervisors, received the honor of being selected as the Clerk of the Year during the 46th Annual Virginia Municipal Clerks Association (VMCA) Conference, in Harrisonburg on April 19, 2023. Ellis has served as the Deputy Clerk for Culpeper County for nine years and was recently appointed the 2nd Vice President for the Association. She completed her CMC in 2019 and earned her MMC in 2022. Ms. Ellis served as the Region VII Director for VMCA from 2017 to 2023 and currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Cosmetology School and served as an Election Officer since 2017.

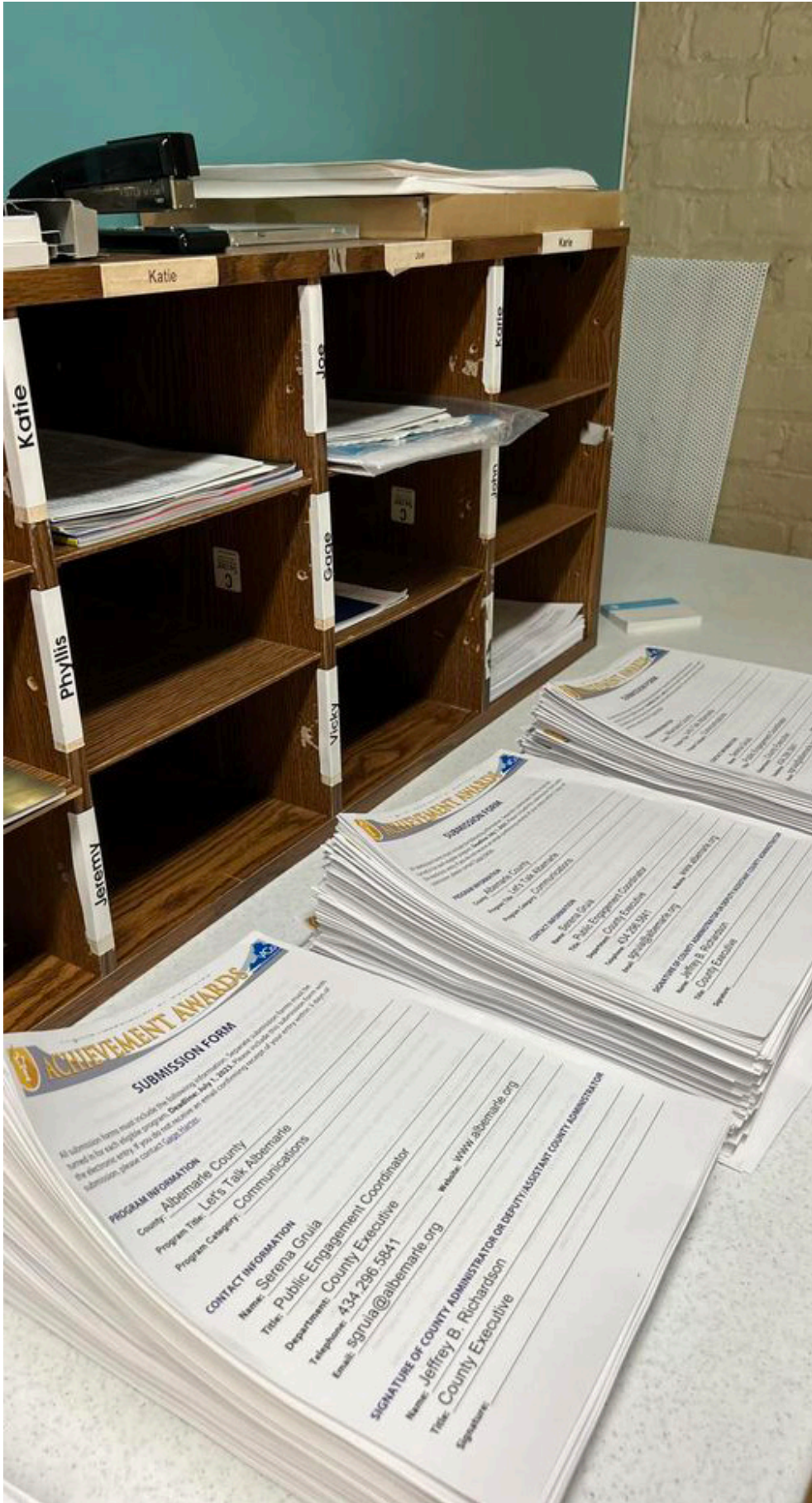




Dean Lynch speaks at Virginia Rural Center leadership event

Great hearing from Dean Lynch, Virginia Association of Counties Executive Director, on ways to grow #RuralVA through engaging local and state leaders, building alliances, and how to effectively share with elected officials what needs to happen in our localities so that talent stays there. (Virginia Rural Leadership Institute) #VRLI





Three stacks of 134 submissions waiting for the judges of the 2023 Achievement Awards program! Winners will be announced in early August. Good luck to all counties who participated!

Thank you Franklin County for hosting the VACo Regions 10 & 11 Meeting and Conflict Resolution Workshop!



VACo Executive Director Dean Lynch leads a Conflict Resolution Workshop prior to the Regions 10 & 11 Meeting.

VACo held its fifth of eight regional meetings for 2023 on June 14, at the Franklin Center for Advanced Learning & Enterprise in Franklin County. VACo staff had the honor of traveling to Franklin County, who graciously hosted the event, to meet with local elected officials and staff from Region 10 and Region 11. Region 10 encompasses the counties of Appomattox, Campbell, Floyd, Franklin, Halifax, Henry, Patrick, and Pittsylvania while Region 11 contains the counties of Bedford, Botetourt, Craig, Giles, Montgomery and Roanoke. 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 Senator Frank Ruff discussing the ongoing budget talks and providing an overview of the 2023 General Assembly session. Senator Ruff firmly believes the House and Senate will not allow the \$3.6 billion surplus to be left on the table and expects a revised budget to be approved with more funding for education, law enforcement and mental health programs along with tax relief. He spoke on the 2023 Session, describing it as a “reasonable year,” given that the legislature is divided, and highlighted the [workforce consolidation bill](#) that he sponsored, which allows all workforce programs to be monitored and evaluated under one roof. Elaina Corfield, Chief

of Staff to Delegate Sam Rasoul, attended the meeting on behalf of the Delegate as well. She stated that for Delegate Rasoul the priority right now is the budget and that she will take information from the discussion back to the Delegate.

The meeting continued with representatives from each county outlining top issues or legislative priorities in their localities. Several issues emerged as common areas of concern including issues within transportation, school capital and education funding, and unfunded mandates, as well as various emergency services, and behavioral health issues.

Transportation was a large part of the discussion for counties in these two regions and they feel the current funding structure the Commonwealth employs does not benefit areas like those found in Regions 10 and 11. Specifically, counties feel that secondary road funding is not at all adequate and more resources should be directed towards helping localities fulfill their Secondary Six Year Plans. School capital and broader education funding were further topics that were discussed at length. Some localities in this region have recently gained the ability to impose a 1% local sales and use tax, the revenue from which is dedicated to school capital needs. At the meeting, localities within these regions discussed broadening this ability to all localities across the state, a proposal which [VACo supports](#). Unfunded mandates, which VACo has long opposed, were featured in conversation numerous times. Costs associated with early voting, Constitutional offices, emergency services, Community Services Boards and temporary detention orders were brought up by leaders in these counties, who urged the Commonwealth to direct more resources to help offset the burden taken on by localities to provide these necessary services.

The meeting ended with VACo's own Joe Lerch leading a discussion revolving around solar energy and utility scale solar. Topics discussed were the lifecycle of utility scale solar and a [wind and battery storage study](#) that just came out and that VACo staff is looking at.

The meeting served as a great chance to connect with VACo member counties and get a grasp of the issues at heart in Regions 10 and 11. VACo staff wants to first thank Franklin County and the Franklin Center for Advanced Learning & Enterprise staff for hosting us for a great meeting. We would like to give a special thanks to the county leaders and staff, Senator Ruff, Chief of Staff Elaina Corfield, sponsors and others who attended and participated in the discussion.

Prior to the regional meeting, VACo Executive Director Dean Lynch led a conflict resolution workshop that was attended by county elected officials and staff. The workshop provided attendees with real life lessons as well as practical skills.

VACo Contact: [James Hutzler](#)

Update on 2023 BPOL Legislation Regarding Cancer Drugs and VACo Request for Information



Legislation was considered during the 2023 General Assembly session that would have required a deduction from BPOL taxes for anti-cancer drugs that were purchased by a medical practice and administered within a physician-patient relationship to patients whose costs for treatment are paid for by Medicare, Medicaid, or TRICARE. VACo opposed this legislation, pointing out that local governments have existing authority under state regulations to provide tax relief to subclassifications of businesses via ordinance. This authority is set out in [23VAC10-500-20](#) and allows localities to establish subclassifications within the existing BPOL business categories and provide for different rates or exemptions for businesses within such subclassifications. The regulations allow these differentiations to be made based on “reasonable distinctions in municipal policy,” recognizing that localities may use these classifications as a tool to incentivize certain industries or to achieve other policy goals.

The 2023 legislation was ultimately revised into a study of current reimbursement and operational challenges for medical practices administering anti-cancer drugs in office settings to patients covered by Medicare, Medicaid, and TRICARE, which will be led by the Secretary of Health and Human Resources.

Representatives of the oncology practices that requested the 2023 legislation are interested in further discussions with localities about possible tax relief under the existing regulatory authority. If your county is interested in additional discussions, please contact Katie Boyle (kboyle@vaco.org).

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

JLARC Presents VRS Oversight Report



As part of their July 10th [meeting](#), the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) presented an oversight report of the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) as required by the [Code of Virginia](#). The health and well-being of VRS is important to local governments as it administers retirement programs and other benefit programs for state and local government employees, including teachers. VRS receives funds from employer contributions, employee contributions, and investment income.

While information on returns is still being finalized, VRS reported good news that as of March 31, 2022, the fiscal year-to-date annual return was 3.5 percent, and total fund performance exceeded all benchmarks. The one-year VRS return was still -1.8 percent and the total VRS Trust fund now maintains approximately \$102.6 billion in assets. This matches [reporting](#) from July of last year which indicated that total returns were all above long-term return assumptions, though fiscal year returns were expected to be lower. Investment returns are a key source of income for VRS, and meeting or exceeding VRS investment benchmarks is critical to ensuring that employer contributions meant to amortize long-term unfunded liabilities remain low.

Cash infusions by the General Assembly (\$750 million in FY22 and \$250 million in FY 23) have resulted in an estimated \$2 billion in savings over the next 20 years. Additionally, maintaining employer contribution rates has yielded \$548 million in savings. Both investments will ultimately benefit state and local government employers by expediting the amortization of the Fund. Thus, while funded status improved, legacy unfunded liabilities still remain, including a funded status of 78.9% for the Teachers Plan and 88.8% for political subdivisions. As this is a rate setting year, VACo will report on proposed changes to the employer contribution rates when the VRS Board meets to discuss those items in the Fall.

JLARC staff also provided updates on recent legislation from the 2023 General Assembly session which reduces the break in service for return to work (after retirement) from 12 to 6 months for some K-12 positions such as school security officers, critical shortage positions, student support personnel, school bus drivers.

VRS serves more than 799,000 active and retired members. Based on assets, VRS is the 14th largest public and private pension systems in the United States, and 42nd largest in the world. The full report and slides from the meeting can be found [here](#) and [here](#) respectively.

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

VDOT Seeks Input Regarding Electric Vehicle Charging Station Deployment

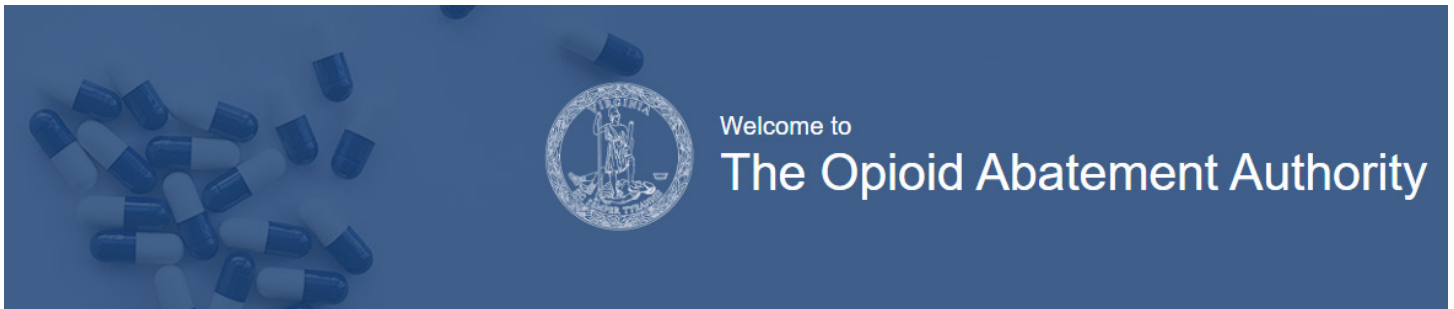


The Commonwealth of Virginia is investing a projected \$100 million in federal funding over the next five years to install public electric vehicle (EV) charging stations across Virginia. The federal funding for these EV charging stations is allocated from the Federal Highway Administration's National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program. At this time, NEVI funds are reserved for direct current fast charging (DCFC) stations along [alternative fuel corridors](#).

VDOT is seeking widespread public input for the [2023 Virginia NEVI Deployment Plan](#) update. This survey is focused on your concerns about electric vehicles (EVs) and EV charging stations, priority station locations and amenities in Virginia, as well as EV charging habits and EV charging station hosting interest. We're also interested in whether you travel to or through Virginia in your EV travels!

Please consider providing input by Monday, July 24. Here is a link to the survey: <https://publicinput.com/2023nevisurvey>

VACo Contact: [James Hutzler](#)



Opioid Abatement Authority Updates

OAA Board of Directors Finalizes \$23 Million in Grants to 76 Cities & Counties

On Friday June 23, 2023, the Board of Directors for the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) voted to award more than \$23 million in grants to 76 Virginia cities and counties for opioid abatement and remediation efforts. The vote confirmed the full Board's approval of recommendations made by the OAA's grants committee, which earlier recommended the slate of awards. [Read the Press Release.](#)

New Application Period for Planning Grants for Individual Cities and Counties Open

The Grants Committee of the Opioid Abatement Authority has voted to open a 2nd application period this year for Planning Grants for Individual Cities and/or Counties. The application period opens July 1, 2023 and closed September 30, 2023. This will be the last opportunity for planning grants from the OAA.

Planning Grants must result in a plan that can be executed into an application for funds from the OAA. The performance period will be 12 months. The Grants Committee will consider awards at their December 4, 2023 meeting. Click on the link below to review requirements and additional information.

GRANTS PORTAL

Virginia Housing Impact Sessions

Session registration is now open: <https://conta.cc/3Xn7ejQ!>



Virginia Housing

Virginia Housing's Community Outreach team is introducing our "Community Impact Sessions" this summer. We're offering six interactive sessions across the Commonwealth that are geared to educate and support you in your efforts to provide affordable and workforce housing in your communities. Anyone interested in the production and preservation of affordable housing and wants to learn more about our programs is encouraged to attend.

Regional partners will be part of the conversation – discussing their experiences with accessing Virginia Housing resources to support local housing initiatives. Bring your questions and learn how we can work together to help your community thrive.

Detailed session information for each event can be found in the registration links provided below. Register soon! Seating is limited; however, you may attend more than one session. Session registration is now open: <https://conta.cc/3Xn7ejQ!>

- [Weyers Cave](#) - July 13
- [Norfolk](#) - July 25
- [Woodbridge](#) - July 27
- [Richmond](#) - August 22

Request for Assistance with Virginia's Digital Opportunity Survey



As you may be aware, the Office of Broadband at **the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)** is in the process of developing the **Virginia Digital Opportunity Plan**, which will assess the state of the digital divide in Virginia, and enable the Commonwealth to apply for Federal broadband funding from the Digital Equity Act Capacity Grant program.

To help inform the development of the Commonwealth's Plan, **DHCD has launched a digital opportunity survey** that aims to understand where residents are within the Commonwealth regarding their current levels of broadband access, the affordability of the broadband services, and their level of comfort navigating the internet and digital devices. All Virginians are welcome and encouraged to take the survey.

The results and findings from this survey will play an essential role in enabling the Commonwealth to secure federal funding from the Digital Equity Act Capacity Grant program that can be used to fund or sustain digital opportunity programs (e.g., Digital Navigators, Digital Literacy, Device Rentals, etc.)

Programs that address broadband adoption, affordability, and digital literacy are also eligible uses of funds from the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program, once funds have been allocated to reach universal connectivity. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) recently announced Virginia's \$1.48 billion allocation from the BEAD program. Responses from the Virginia Digital Opportunity Survey will play a critical role in identifying digital barriers and areas of need across Virginia's localities, and will be used by DHCD to develop non-deployment programs to address identified barriers. DHCD will soon offer every locality in the Commonwealth the opportunity to receive planning funds to develop a broadband affordability and adoption plan - ensuring that the survey is widely distributed will pay dividends for localities by providing them the data necessary to understand what the digital divide looks like for their residents. Below is a link to the survey page – the survey is currently offered in English and Spanish, with additional languages to be added in the coming weeks.

Links

Digital Opportunity Home Page: <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/digital-opportunity>

English Survey: https://sirresearch.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dnbl91P25EoreBM

Spanish Survey: https://sirresearch.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bkCdQQtfqcs5qjl

FY24 PSAP Grant Program for Staffing Recognition open July 1 to August 15, 2023



Virginia Department of Emergency Management

The FY24 PSAP Grant Program for Staffing Recognition application period is now open from **July 1 to August 15, 2023**. This new program was created to help address the staffing crisis experienced by Virginia PSAPs, by providing funding to enable PSAPs to recognize and retain their telecommunicators.

Any Virginia primary PSAP is eligible to apply for and receive funding for FY24. Virginia State Police (VSP) dispatch positions and local law enforcement dispatch positions that receive Wireless E-911 funding are also eligible.

PSAPs may request \$2,500 for each full-time grant eligible position and \$1,250 for each part-time grant eligible position. These grant eligible positions are defined in the FY24 PSAP Grant Program for Staffing Recognition guidelines can be located on our website under the NG9-1-1 Funding and PSAP Grant Guidelines and Applications section: <https://psc.vdem.virginia.gov/pages/9-1-1-psap-grant-program>

The application is required to include a staffing recognition project plan that lists number of agency authorized employees for each category, funding amount requested for each category, total funding amount requested, and anticipated timeline for recognition project. The award period for this grant is September 14 to June 30, 2024. When requesting reimbursement, an invoice will be required itemizing total payment amounts and number of employees for each category that received staffing recognition payments. Additional details on this opportunity can be found in the FY24 PSAP Grant Program for Staffing Recognition guidelines.

We will also be hosting an informational webinar on these funding and grant programs on July 20, 2023 @1300.

FY24/FY25 PSAP Grants Webinar: Hosted by NGS Bureau

<https://covaconf.webex.com/covaconf/j.php?MTID=medfc3975086b3ca74e8089795b7e3b92>

Thursday, July 20, 2023 1:00 PM | 2 hours | (UTC-04:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)

Meeting number: 2435 779 6013

Join by phone: +1-517-466-2023 US Toll or, +1-866-692-4530 US Toll Free

Access code: 243 577 96013



VIRGINIA OUTDOORS FOUNDATION

VOF opens \$1.875 million grant round for open-space projects

The Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) is making \$1.7 million available from its Preservation Trust Fund program and \$175,000 from its Get Outdoors Fund for grants that protect open space for public use and other public benefits.

Preservation Trust Fund grants for the fall 2023 grant round will prioritize projects that result in significant public access, but funds may also be used for projects that protect exceptional conservation values such as water quality, historic and cultural resources, wildlife habitat, and high-quality farmland and forestland. A real estate interest must either be acquired by a local government or conveyed to VOF to be eligible for funding, and protection must meet the requirements of Virginia's Open-Space Land Act.

Get Outdoors Fund grants may be used to fund projects that create, protect, expand, or enhance access to open space in underserved communities. Proposals up to \$25,000 may be considered.

The Get Outdoors Fund requires pre-applications to be submitted through VOF's online grants portal by 5 p.m. on July 17, 2023. Invitations to submit a full application will be issued within one week of pre-application receipt.

Full applications for both programs must be submitted online by 5 p.m. on August 7, 2023. Eligibility requirements, sample applications, a timeline, and other materials may be found online at <https://vof.org/ptf> and <https://vof.org/go>.

VOF encourages potential applicants to contact staff prior to applying to discuss eligibility and seek guidance on producing a successful application. Contact grants@vof.org with questions or for information on how to apply. To schedule a short meeting with grant program staff to discuss project ideas, use <https://doodle.com/bp/emilynelson/time-to-talk>.

Expanding AskRail Access to ECCs



AskRail®

U.S. freight railroads came together in 2014 to launch [AskRail](#), an innovative mobile app that enables first responders to view the contents of a train or see if a railcar is carrying hazmat. Since then, nearly 50,000 emergency personnel in 49 states have downloaded the tool.

Now railroads are trying to expand access by encouraging Emergency Communications Centers (ECCs) to integrate AskRail data into their operations. A new training module specifically for ECCs as well as instructions on how to gain access and install AskRail on internet-ready devices is available at www.askrail.us.

“We wanted to be able to provide first responders real-time information, not just printed out copies and some of the old ways of doing things,” [says](#) Andy Elkins, director of hazmat compliance at the Association of American Railroads.

“Many firefighters and first responders across the country may never see a rail-related incident, but if it does occur, we want to make sure they have the best training—that they have successfully planned, trained for, and are able to mitigate these incidents.”

Virginia’s 10 freight railroads operate 3,050 miles of track, safely and efficiently connecting the U.S. economy. Rigorous operating standards alongside investment into the rail network has led to consistent safety gains—the last decade was the safest ever for railroads according to the Federal Railroad Administration. But incidents do still occur, and railroads have prioritized first responder training and coordination.

AskRail helps emergency personnel identify railcars carrying hazardous material such as petrochemicals as well as the location of key community assets—like schools, rivers, and heavily populated neighborhoods—that are more vulnerable to contamination. It also offers tailored guidance and connects to emergency services for all major Class I railroads and Amtrak.

For more information contact GoRail’s Virginia state director, Christy Sammon at csammon@gorail.org

GoRail is a national non-profit promoting the benefits of freight railroads.



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We're excited to see you in Travis County this July representing your county at the NACo Annual Conference. As you review the conference schedule and plan your time in Austin, I hope you'll explore the five content themes this year -- one of which is LEADERSHIP.

As a benefit to your county and a thank-you from NACo for traveling to the conference, you have access to a one-time promotion for the **NACo Leadership Academy**. Instead of \$1,995 per participant as the everyday rate, your county can register **5 participants for \$5,000** -- *that's half off!* Please share this offer with your teams, so you can take advantage of the opportunity to invest in your county's leadership skills this year.

NACo Leadership Academy

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What: 12 week virtual course with independent study, peer-group networking, and facilitated discussion

Where: 100% online with approximately 5 hours of flexible weekly time commitment

When: choose from July 31st, September 18th, or future program starts in 2024

Offer: 5 participants for \$5,000 for a limited time - one per county

More information: www.naco.org/skills

We hope you and your county team will join the 7000+ graduates of the NACo Leadership Academy from across the nation. If you've already taken the course, please share this opportunity with others in your county, and don't forget to join the **Graduate Reception** happening on **Friday, July 21, from 5:30pm - 6:30pm on Level 3, Room 9A**.

If you'd like to reserve the offer now, please contact our Academy representative, **Luke Afeman**, at lukea@pdaleadership.com or stop by the Academy table to learn more next month.



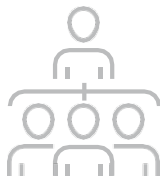
Counties affect the lives of residents every day. When our frontline staff are empowered as leaders, we deliver services more effectively. **The NACo High Performance Leadership Academy is a resource that connects your staff with practical leadership training.** HPLA uses an innovative, interactive online learning platform that combines real-time webinars, recorded sessions and small group discussions to deliver effective training without traveling away from the county – saving money and maximizing time.

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Between 2017 and 2021, annual losses from billion-dollar disasters totaled \$765 billion in losses and more than 4500 deaths. This is almost 8 times higher than in the 1980s.

Not only are the events increasing in both occurrence and intensity, they are disproportionately impacting our communities. Fortunately, new funding opportunities and innovative financing options are emerging for comprehensive resilience initiatives.

Register today for the [2023 Resilient Virginia Conference](#), where you will learn about new federal resiliency programs funded through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act (IIJA), as well as state agency funding and financing initiatives. You will also see examples of resilience measures taken at the state, local and regional levels directly from the program managers.

The future well-being of our communities depends on the actions we take now. Come learn from the experts at the [Conference](#)!

Plan to participate in our fifth statewide conference on resiliency!

August 1-2 | Hybrid Event

Welcome to the **2023 Resilient Virginia Conference** website. We are pleased to announce that the conference, focused on **Economic Opportunities for Community Resilience**, will take place on **August 1-2 at University of Virginia's Darden School of Business in Charlottesville**.

Given the success of our [2021 virtual conference](#), we are organizing the 2023 conference as a **hybrid event** — registrations for both online and in-person attendance will be available.

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OneDigital has a track record of providing cost-saving solutions to counties. This has been achieved through creative funding strategies, rate holds, and exclusive partnerships with various carriers. One of these exclusive partnerships is through VACORP and Anthem Life. OneDigital is responsible for the inception of the Virginia Local Disability Program (VLDP) which is through the Virginia Retirement System (VRS). Our team of fierce advocates negotiated a 5-year locked rate, including short-term and long-term disability benefits. Your division may already work with us in this capacity, as we currently serve over 270 public sector entities in the VLDP program.



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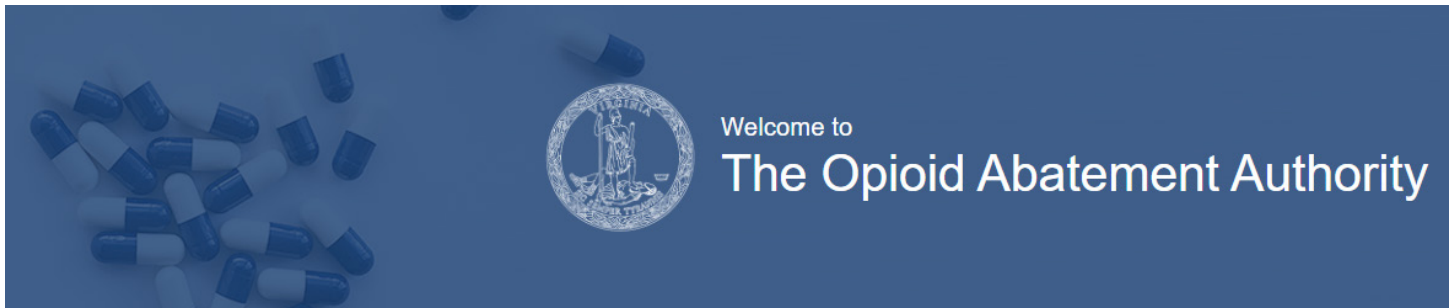
Nationwide Retirement offers free webinars on targeted subjects on an ongoing basis.

Here are just a few topics coming up that may interest you.

**Managing the Taxes on your Retirement Income – July 27
from 1-2 PM**

**Planning for Health Care Costs in Retirement – August 24
from 1-2 PM**

To register for one of these or other webinars, please visit <https://www.nrsforu.com/rsc-web-preauth/resource-center/webinars>. We also have on-demand videos available at this link so you can get the info you need when you have time. Follow up with an individual consultation with your local Sr. Retirement Specialist or reach out to our Retirement Resource Group at 888-401-5272.



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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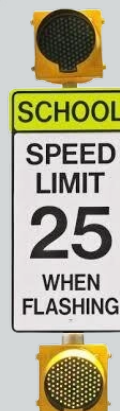


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[FINANCIAL PROFESSIONAL](#) | Virginia Association of Counties | Posted July 11

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[LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE WORKER \(PART-TIME\)](#) | James City County | Posted June 30

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[ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT – TOURISM](#) | Montgomery County | Posted June 27

[UTILITY LOCATOR I/II/III](#) | James City Service Authority | Posted June 27

[FIRE RESCUE TECHNICIAN](#) | Fauquier County | Posted June 26

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[PERMIT TECHNICIAN I/II](#) | James City County | Posted June 23

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[ENGINEERING TECHNICIAN](#) | Loudoun County | Posted June 21

[FAMILY SERVICES SPECIALIST](#) | Montgomery County | Posted June 21

[ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER](#) | Montgomery County | Posted June 21

[EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES](#) | Spotsylvania County | Posted June 21

[BENEFIT PROGRAM ASSISTANT](#) | James City County | Posted June 9

[POLICE OFFICER I/II](#) | James City County | Posted June 21

[FAMILY FIRST PROGRAM COORDINATOR](#) | James City County | Posted June 21

[ASSISTANT PARKS & RECREATION DIRECTOR](#) | Town of Chapel Hill, NC | Posted June 21

[OFFICE TECHNICIAN](#) | Montgomery County | Posted June 21

[DEPUTY ZONING ADMINISTRATOR](#) | Rockingham County | Posted June 20

[DEPUTY BUILDING OFFICIAL](#) | Rockingham County | Posted June 20

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[DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT](#) | Hanover County | Posted June 16

[PLANNER II](#) | Powhatan County | Posted June 16

[SENIOR PERMIT TECHNICIAN](#) | Gloucester County | Posted June 15

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[COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR – PART TIME](#) | Gloucester County | Posted June 15

[WATER TREATMENT PLANT TRAINEE](#) | Gloucester County | Posted June 15

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



EDUCATION

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



MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

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



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

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VACo exists to support county officials and to effectively represent, promote and protect the interests of counties to better serve the people of Virginia.

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