

## State EMS Advisory Board Holds Meeting with Updates Regarding Budget Shortfall and Ongoing Investigation



On November 17, the Virginia State EMS Advisory [Board](#) met in Richmond and among regular business, discussed several updates regarding reported financial irregularities and budget shortfalls in the Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS). Updates provided by Acting Director of OEMS Cam Crittenden, State Health Commissioner Dr. Karen Shelton, and others indicated that OEMS programs are facing a multimillion-dollar deficit and that several years' worth of past OEMS budgets were created not in-line with available funding. This has the potential to significantly impact OEMS aid to localities and first responders.

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH), which is the parent agency for OEMS, is working to understand the state of financial affairs at OEMS. This past Spring, VDH initiated budget reviews and learned in May of financial irregularities at OEMS,

including significant portions of the Four-for-Life pass throughs not being available. An internal audit is currently ongoing. Also, as was reported in several media outlets, an ongoing investigation into potential financial irregularities by the Office of the State Inspector General, Virginia State Police, and the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia is also underway.

OEMS is funded almost solely by special revenues, primarily tied to vehicle registration through the DMV. OEMS oversees [programs](#) such as Four-for Life Fund, the Return to Locality Fund, and the Rescue Squad Assistance Fund ([RSAF](#)), which support vital programs and activities in the field of Emergency Medical Services. This also includes support to the [EMS Regional Councils](#), which are charged with the development and implementation of an efficient and effective regional emergency medical services delivery system. Regional EMS Councils collaborate with the office of EMS, local government officials, physicians, hospitals, and EMS agencies to plan and coordinate EMS activities at the regional level to promote quality of care. A slide from Friday's meeting showing the various funding streams and their uses can be viewed [here](#).

VDH and OEMS staffs indicated that the current FY 2024 OEMS budget does not align with projected revenues, thus triggering a need for a restructuring of OEMS funding. Kevin Dillard, Chair of the State EMS Advisory Board, will create a workgroup to make recommendations to the Board on restructuring of funding streams due to the deficits. VACo communicated to the Chair and to OEMS the need for local government representation on any such workgroup. Current Return to Locality payments are pending and RSAF grants have already been awarded, but OEMS is unable to make new grant awards at this time. According to OEMS, previous commitments will be honored, and OEMS is working to resume delayed payments, but could not give a specific date when this will occur.

A Board Member remarked that in his nearly 50 years of service, that this was an unprecedented event and that the full extent of what has happened still remains unknown. A representative of the Regional EMS Council Executive Directors warned that the EMS Councils are in crisis due to the freezing of funds and are depleting cash reserves while payments from OEMS remain frozen. This threatens financial collapse for the councils. The State EMS Advisory Board unanimously passed a motion that VDH should prioritize the release of payments to regional councils that have been contractually made.

This issue first came to VACo's attention in August. After inquiries to OEMS about alleged budget shortfalls, available information was [communicated](#) by VACo staff to the VACo Board of Directors and to County Administrators concerning a deficit of funding. Since then, Gary Brown, former Director of OEMS, retired. As mentioned, several media pieces about the situation also indicated an ongoing investigation by various state and federal authorities. VACo will continue to monitor and report on this situation.

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

# Ann H. Mallek Elected VACo President for 2023-2024



**RICHMOND (November 15, 2023)** — Albemarle County Supervisor Ann H. Mallek has been elected President of the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) for the 2023-2024 term. This announcement was made during VACo's 89th Annual Conference held in Bath County with new officers beginning their terms at VACo's Annual Business Meeting on November 14.

Mallek, succeeding Lancaster County Supervisor Jason D. Bellows, becomes the fourth President from Albemarle County since VACo's establishment in 1934, following in the footsteps of John W. Williams (1960), Edgar N. Garnett (1968), and Gerald E. Fisher (1980).

"I am excited and humbled to be selected as the next VACo President, and I'm honored to represent Albemarle County and the central Virginia region," Mallek said. "I've learned so much from VACo programs and gatherings over the years. I want to ensure we continue our strong programs of education for Virginia's local leaders about the many topics with which we must all contend. I'm also looking forward to working with state and federal leaders to protect important governing tools such as local authority. I can't wait to get to work."

Mallek, who raises beef and vegetables on a family farm in Earlysville, brings valuable experience to her role. She was first elected in 2007 to represent the White Hall District, serving as Board Chair from

[More on Next Page](#)

2010-2013 and in 2018. Her core beliefs in civility, communication, and a sense of place guide her as a supervisor.

VACo Executive Director Dean Lynch expressed enthusiasm about Mallek's presidency, saying, "Ann is an experienced educator, public servant, and local leader who believes that local service has a powerful influence on the quality of everyday life for all of us. Her background in farming, agriculture, and environmental protection will serve our association well. We're excited that Ann is our next President."

In addition to Mallek's election, new members of the VACo 2023-2024 Executive Committee and Board Directors have also been named:

### VACo 2023-24 Executive Committee

**President:** [Ann H. Mallek](#) | Albemarle County  
**President-Elect:** [Ruth Larson](#) | James City County  
**First Vice President:** [William M. McCarty, Sr.](#) | Isle of Wight County  
**Second Vice President:** [Victor S. Angry](#) | Prince William County  
**Secretary-Treasurer:** [Donald L. Hart, Jr.](#) | Accomack County  
**Immediate Past President:** [Jason D. Bellows](#) | Lancaster County

### VACo 2023-24 Board Directors

In addition to the VACo Executive Committee and Past Presidents, the Board of Directors consists of supervisors representing 13 regions of the state, and a NACo Delegate. The terms are on a two-year cycle and the number of directors, per region, is based on the population.

This year, representatives were selected in regions 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13

#### VACo 2023-24 new board members

##### **Region 2**

[Sidney N. Johnson](#) | Essex County

##### **Region 3**

[Sean Davis](#) | Hanover County  
[Mark S. Miller, Ph.D](#) | Chesterfield County  
[Daniel J. Schmitt](#) | Henrico County

##### **Region 4**

[Daniel D. Lee](#) | Dinwiddie County

##### **Region 7**

[Jeffrey S. Black](#) | Caroline County  
[Lori Hayes](#) | Spotsylvania County

##### **Region 8**

[Dalia A. Palchik](#) | Fairfax County  
[Kathy L. Smith](#) | Fairfax County  
[James R. Walkinshaw](#) | Fairfax County

##### **Region 9**

[James M. Griffith](#) | Alleghany County

##### **Region 10**

[Jerry W. Boothe](#) | Floyd County

##### **Region 11**

[Phil C. North](#) | Roanoke County

##### **Region 13**

[John T. Schoolcraft](#) | Wise County

##### **Past President**

[Jeffrey C. McKay](#) | Fairfax County  
[Meg Boehmke](#) | Stafford County

##### **NACo Delegate**

[Jason D. Bellows](#) | Lancaster County





## Visit Highland County and the Highland County Historic Courthouse

**Location:** 165 Main Street / Water Street

**Built:** 1847 – 1848 / 1947 – 1948

**Style:** Greek Revival

**Architect:** Robert Johnson / Daley Craig

**Contractor:** Robert Johnson / CW Barger

**Description:** The building faces north and is a two story red colored brick and concrete structure. The building is located on landscaped grounds in the center of Monterey. The north front has a large porch with four white colored columns rising to a pediment at the roof line. On the center of the roof is a white colored cupola with steep roof. On the northwest and northeast are one story wings with hipped roofs. In the interior, the courtroom is located on the second story. The building houses the County Circuit Court, County General District Court and County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court of the 25th Judicial Circuit. The architect and the contractor was Robert Johnson. In 1947, the building was rebuilt. The architect was Daley Craig and the contractor was CW Barger.

**History:** The county was created in 1847 and Monterey was selected as the county seat. The first courthouse was erected in Monterey in 1847 to 1848 at a cost of \$4,935. The courthouse was destroyed by fire in 1947. The courthouse was rebuilt as the second and present courthouse in 1947 to 1948.

**SOURCE:** [courthouses.co](http://courthouses.co)

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# SAVE THE DATES!

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## **VACo/VML/VAPDC Local Government Day**

**Thursday, February 1, 2024  
Richmond Marriott**

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## **VACo/VML Legislative Reception**

**Thursday, February 1, 2024  
Richmond Marriott**

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## **VACo Chairpersons' Institute**

**Friday, February 2, 2024 and  
Saturday, February 3, 2024  
VACo Headquarters**

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Join us for these important events.

Call VACo at 804.788.6652 for more information





# Harold “Hal” Martin Gross

OCTOBER 14, 1935 – NOVEMBER 1, 2023

Dear VACo Members,

It is with deep sadness that I inform you of the passing of Harold “Hal” Martin Gross, the husband of our esteemed colleague, Penny Gross. Hal Gross passed away on November 1, 2023, after a lengthy illness. His obituary, provided below, highlights the remarkable life he led and the significant contributions he made to his community.

## OBITUARY

Harold “Hal” Martin Gross

OCTOBER 14, 1935 – NOVEMBER 1, 2023

Hal Gross was born in Manhattan Hospital in New York City in 1935. His defining labels are husband to Penny; father to David, Sabra, and Pamela; grandfather to Elizabeth and Matthew; Philatelist; and life-long Democrat (not necessarily in that order).

Hal’s life was characterized by his unwavering commitment to civil rights and advocacy. He dedicated himself to causes that mattered, serving as Chair of the American Civil Liberties Union, Vice President of the Palo Alto-Stanford branch of the NAACP, and President of the Mountain View California Jaycees. His contributions extended to his time as Counsel to the National Congress of American Indians and his work with U.S. Senators such as Wayne Morse, Ted Kennedy, and Alan Cranston.

Hal’s deep sense of social justice and his dedication to the Democratic Party also led him to become actively involved with the Fairfax County Democratic Committee for over three decades, leaving an indelible mark on our community.

In addition to his many accomplishments, Hal celebrated 53 years of marriage with Penny Gross, who has served Fairfax County as Mason District Supervisor for the past 28 years. Together, they raised a loving family and created cherished memories at their vacation cottage, “Saucy Lido,” on the Outer Banks, NC.

After retiring, Hal found joy in collecting stamps, becoming an esteemed Octogenarian Philatelist and a devoted member of the Springfield Stamp Club.

In light of Hal’s lifelong passion for stamp collecting, memorial contributions may be made to the Springfield Stamp Club, P.O. Box 544, Springfield, Virginia 22150, or the Mason District Democratic Committee via <https://masondems.org/> by clicking on the “Donate to the Mason Democrats” gift box.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Penny and her family during this difficult time. We extend our heartfelt condolences and offer our support in any way needed. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers as well.

If you wish to send personal condolences or share your memories of Hal Gross, you can do so on the Demaine Funeral Home website at [www.demainefunerals.com](http://www.demainefunerals.com).

Thank you for joining us in remembering and honoring the life of Harold “Hal” Martin Gross.

Sincerely,  
Dean A. Lynch, CAE, CM



# VACo Recognizes the Class of 2023 of the Virginia Certified County Supervisors' Program



**RICHMOND (November 14, 2023)**—The Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) recognized the Class of 2023 – the inaugural graduating class of the revamped Virginia Certified County Supervisors' Program – during VACo's 89<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference.

The Virginia Certified County Supervisors' Program consists of three core courses – budgeting; planning, land use, and infrastructure; and leadership. The program provides fundamental skills training as well as deep dive examinations and discussions of real scenarios that impact counties. Supervisors enrich the educational experience by sharing their journeys – the challenges and successes as an elected official serving a rural, or urban, or suburban community.

The 8 graduates ([group photo](#)) of the 12-month certification program are:

**Byron Adkins** | Charles City County | [Photo](#)

**Zeke Anderson** | Grayson County | [Photo](#)

**Victor Angry** | Prince William County | [Photo](#)

**Andrea Bailey** | Prince William County | [Photo](#)

**Llew Gilliam** | Prince Edward County | [Photo](#)

**Lori Hayes** | Spotsylvania County | [Photo](#)





**E. Harrison Jones** | Prince Edward County | [Photo](#)

**Mike Sheridan** | Fluvanna County | [Photo](#)

“Congratulations to our first graduates of the new Supervisors’ Certification Program – the Class of 2023,” VACo Executive Director **Dean Lynch** said. “When we planned the revamped program, we knew we had to include the engagement of supervisors as much as possible. We were amazed by how much each student helped each other by sharing their experiences and offering possible solutions to real-time issues. Thank you, Class of 2023. You’ve paved the way for future classes.”

The program was enhanced by the stewardship of each course instructor.

- Budgeting – **Suzette Denslow**
- Planning, Land Use, and Infrastructure – **Earl Anderson**, AICP; **Will Cockrell**, AICP, **Andrew Hopewell**, AICP, CZA; **Nick Rogers**, AICP, CZA
- Leadership – **Jane Dittmar**

Each course instructor led two in-person, all-day educational sessions as well as multiple virtual meetings. Students engaged with various leaders and experts in the three course areas.

“The instructors are owed a tremendous amount of gratitude for their work in leading each course,” Lynch said. “It’s not easy to balance the teaching of all the different components like fundamental skills training. Our instructors not only taught theory but also shared real skills, fundamental ways of tackling challenges, that the students can take back home and apply immediately to their role as supervisor.”

For more information about the Virginia Certified County Supervisors’ Program, contact Karie Walker at [kwalker@vaco.org](mailto:kwalker@vaco.org) or 804.343.2504.

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# VACo 2024 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

*For the 2024 General Assembly Session*



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ADOPTED BY VACO  
MEMBERSHIP ON  
NOVEMBER 14, 2023

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**VACo  
Membership  
Adopts  
Legislative  
Program**

Thank you for your participation in the development and adoption of the [VACo 2024 Legislative Program](#).

Please take a moment to review the adopted program.

**[VACo 2024 Legislative Program](#)**

# **“Money Committees” Hold Annual Retreats**



The General Assembly’s “money committees” held their annual pre-session retreats last week, with the House Appropriations and House Finance Committees convening in Richmond on November 14 and the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee meeting in Tysons from November 15-17. The Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee extended its usual meeting schedule to provide additional orientation briefings on the state budget process, Virginia’s major revenue sources, transportation funding mechanisms, and debt capacity, among other topics, for the benefit of newly-elected Senators. Traditionally, these events feature staff’s revenue projections and briefings on topics of interest in advance of the upcoming legislative session, and often signal members’ priorities for budget deliberations.

Both House Appropriations Committee (HAC) and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee (SFAC) staff underscored the importance of structural balance, noting that the 2022-2024 biennium budget relied on balances, but also focused largely on one-time spending and tax policy items. Although balances are expected to be available in the upcoming biennium to supplement underlying revenue growth, the large balances experienced in the last two biennia are not expected to play the same role in future years. SFAC staff summarized the situation in this fashion: “Mandatory budget pressures will consume most or all ongoing revenue in this biennium; however, carry-forward balances from FY 2024 will be available for some one-time spending. Going forward, to achieve structural balance, revenue and spending will need to be closer aligned as economic uncertainty makes forecasting revenues difficult.” HAC staff director Anne Oman stated, “The concern about structural imbalance expressed the past few years is finally here.”

## **October General Fund revenue report**

Secretary of Finance Stephen E. Cummings reported to the House Appropriations Committee that FY 2024 General Fund (GF) revenues are ahead of projections included in the forecast adopted in the budget passed in September 2023 (Chapter 1). On an unadjusted basis, GF revenue collections are up 12.1 percent year-to-date (ahead of the expected 5.5 percent decline); withholding collections are up 1 percent (ahead of the forecasted decline of 0.7 percent), and sales tax collections are up 0.3 percent (outpacing the forecasted 6.7 percent decline), although sales tax revenues have slowed each month after a better-than-expected July, in line with a slowdown expected in the Chapter 1 forecast. Secretary Cummings characterized the October revenue report as “reasonably good news,” with revenues largely aligned with expectations, although the timing of payments and refunds associated with the new Pass-

Through Entity Tax makes it challenging to interpret non-withholding income tax collections. However, Secretary Cummings highlighted a series of macroeconomic risks, including geopolitical tensions, weakening in the Chinese economy, and the effects of persistently high interest rates, and signaled that a conservative budget outlook can be expected as the Governor develops the budget forecast that will be included with his biennium budget proposal in December.

### House Appropriations Committee outlook

House Appropriations Committee staff expect revenue growth to slow in the near future, but to outpace the Chapter 1 forecast, which was intentionally conservative, to allow a “cushion” for uncertainties in forecasting. Staff predict 0.8 percent growth in FY 2024, 0.9 percent growth in FY 2025, and more robust growth of 3.3 percent in FY 2026. In addition to growth in the Commonwealth’s key revenue sources of \$3.3 billion over the biennium, staff suggest several potential sources of budget savings or balances that could be used to supplement the revenue growth, including the repurposing of certain balances and a return to the standard practice of limiting combined deposits to the Revenue Stabilization Fund and the Revenue Reserve Fund to 15 percent of the average of the prior three years’ General Fund revenues, in accordance with statutory language. Currently, budget language overrides this restriction, and balances are expected to reach almost 19 percent of the three-year average of GF revenues by the end of FY 2024. If that budget language were removed, staff expect approximately \$738 million from reserves would be available for use.

House Appropriations Committee staff calculate that the upcoming biennium budget will require approximately \$944.5 million in FY 2025 and \$1.36 billion in FY 2026 in additional mandatory spending over the base budget, including \$714 million for the Medicaid forecast (an amount that is expected to grow, as Virginia Health Care Fund revenue, which is used as part of the state’s Medicaid match, is projected to decline significantly in FY 2024 and over the next biennium), and a preliminary estimate of \$1.3 billion for rebenchmarking of the Standards of Quality.

As illustrated in the HAC summary slide below, after factoring in the estimated revenue increase, potential budget savings that could be used in FY 2024 or FY 2025, base budget needs, and mandatory spending, House Appropriations Committee staff estimate a net of \$878.1 million over the biennium remaining to meet other spending needs. High priority spending items are estimated at \$1.5 billion over the biennium; these needs include items such as higher education tuition moderation; behavioral health requests; and additional Medicaid developmental disability waiver slots.

COMPARISON OF RESOURCES TO BUDGET DRIVERS			
\$ in millions	FY 2025	FY 2026	Biennium
HAC Estimate – Revenue Increase	\$1,164.5	\$2,107.1	\$3,271.6
Budget Savings/Carryforward (could be FY 24 or 25 depending on Caboose)	3,173.6		3,173.6
<b>Total Additional Resources</b>	<b>4,338.1</b>	<b>2,107.1</b>	<b>6,445.2</b>
<b>Revenues Remaining After Base</b>	<b>2,708.1</b>	<b>477.1</b>	<b>3,185.2</b>
Mandatory Spending	944.5	1,362.6	2,307.1
<b>Resources Remaining</b>	<b>1,763.6</b>	<b>-885.5</b>	<b>878.1</b>
High Priority Spending	701.8	775.6	1,477.4



### Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee outlook

Similar to their House Appropriations counterparts, Senate Finance and Appropriations staff forecast a slowdown in revenue growth, but expect revenues to outperform the Chapter 1 forecast. The SFAC forecast projects a decline of 0.5 percent in General Fund revenues in FY 2024, rather than the official forecast (adopted in September 2023 as part of Chapter 1) of a 5.5 percent drop. Staff project 3 percent growth in FY 2025 and 3.8 percent growth in FY 2026, generating a projected \$678.8 million in resources above the base budget over the biennium. As outlined in the slides below, mandatory new spending identified by SFAC staff includes the Medicaid forecast and shortfall in the Virginia Health Care Fund discussed above and a preliminary estimate of \$416.3 million over the biennium for SOQ rebenchmarking, as well as the Children's Services Act and child welfare forecast, and \$44 million in other mandatory pressures or commitments identified by SFAC staff. These mandatory items would outstrip the additional resources generated by economic growth by an estimated \$1.1 billion; however, with the addition of \$2 billion in projected FY 2024 unappropriated balances, a net of \$904.6 million would be available over the biennium for other potential commitments.

## Budget Outlook 2024 Session

### Comparing projected resources to spending needs

- Available resources from the economic forecast are not sufficient to cover major budget pressures. However, there are many other spending items that would typically be considered.

2024-2026 Budget Outlook

(\$ in millions)	FY 2025	FY 2026	2024-2026
SFAC Staff Projected GF Resources	\$29,444.4	\$30,547.6	\$59,992.0
GF Base Budget	(29,656.6)	(29,656.6)	(59,313.2)
<b>Resources Above/Below Base</b>	<b>(\$212.2)</b>	<b>\$891.0</b>	<b>\$678.8</b>
Less: Medicaid Forecast	(175.1)	(538.9)	(714.0)
Less: Shortfall in Health Care Fund	(235.2)	(239.8)	(475.0)
Less: CSA/Children's Health Insurance & Child Welfare Forecast	(44.5)	(78.9)	(123.4)
Less: K-12 Rebenchmarking (other updates to come, could increase or decrease)	(171.8)	(244.5)	(416.3)
Less: SFAC Identified Other Mandatory Pressures or Commitments	(4.6)	(39.4)	(44.0)
<b>Net Available Resources*</b>	<b>(\$843.4)</b>	<b>(\$250.5)</b>	<b>(\$1,093.9)</b>

[Click to enlarge](#)

SENATE FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

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## Budget Outlook 2024 Session

One-time balances from FY 2024 will be carried forward and available for one-time uses

(\$ in millions)	FY 2025	FY 2026	2024-2026
Unreserved Beginning Balance (FY 2024 Unappropriated Balance)	\$1,998.5	-	\$1,998.5
<b>Net Available Resources</b>	<b>(843.4)</b>	<b>(250.5)</b>	<b>(1,093.9)</b>
<b>Unappropriated Balance</b>	<b>\$1,155.1</b>	<b>(\$250.5)</b>	<b>\$904.6</b>
<b>Other Potential Commitments:</b>			
Less: Increased Debt Service Costs	(\$24.4)	(\$59.3)	(\$83.7)
Less: Fund Reading Specialists (2023 Session Legislation)	(30.8)	(30.8)	(61.6)
Less: Lower K-12 Enrollment (subject to final DOE/DPB estimates)	96.5	153.8	250.3
<b>Adjusted Unappropriated Balance (with additional options)</b>	<b>\$1,196.4</b>	<b>(\$186.8)</b>	<b>\$1,009.6</b>

[Click to enlarge](#)

SENATE FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

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The HAC budget outlook is available at [this link](#), and the SFAC outlook is available at [this link](#). Other presentations to the House Appropriations Committee retreat may be found at [this link](#) and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee presentations may be found at [this link](#).

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

# Join VDSS for Webinars on November 28 and December 11 on Proposed Alternative Allocation Method for Administrative Funding to Local Departments

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Virginia Department of Social Services

# WEBiNAR



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF  
SOCIAL SERVICES



At the direction of the State Board of Social Services, the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) has been developing a proposed alternative allocation method for state administrative funding to local departments of social services for staff and operations costs that would reflect local department caseloads, poverty, and local ability to pay. VDSS has conducted several focus groups with local DSS directors and has developed a proposal for potential consideration by the 2025 General Assembly. VACo and VML members are invited to join Ryan Kelly, Assistant Deputy of Policy and Administration at VDSS, for two webinars to discuss the proposal and provide initial feedback on the Department's recommendations.

The first webinar will be held on **Tuesday, November 28, from 1-2 p.m.** and will feature an overview of the recent work done on this effort and the DRAFT formula, its factors and their calculation.

- To register for this webinar, click [here](#).

A follow-up webinar will be held on **Monday, December 11, from 1-2 p.m.** and will include a deeper, more detailed discussion of the proposed alternative formula and its calculation.

- To register for this webinar, click [here](#).

**If you do not receive a confirmation email with the meeting link shortly after submitting your registration for each webinar, please check your spam filter or email Katie Boyle ([kboyle@vaco.org](mailto:kboyle@vaco.org)).** This webinar will be recorded if you are unable to participate on the scheduled dates.

**VACo Contact:** [Katie Boyle](#)

## Large Bridge Project Grants – Rolling Application



On September 27, 2023, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) opened the FY 2023 through FY 2026 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Bridge Investment Program (BIP) – Large Bridge Project Grant opportunity. The NOFO was published on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and can be accessed through the following link: [BIP Large Bridge Project NOFO](#). Additional information on the program can be found on the [BIP Webpage](#).

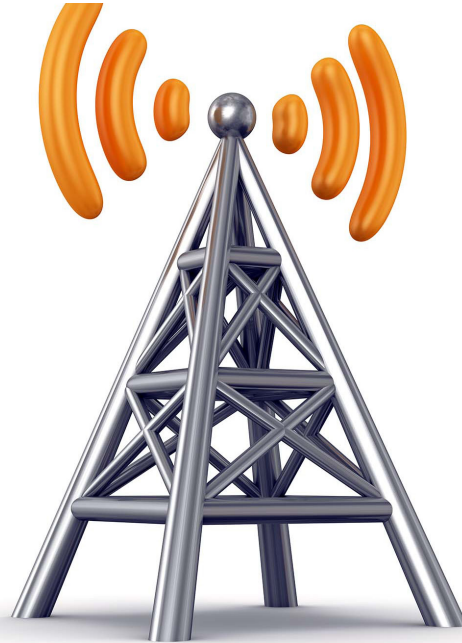
The [Bridge Investment Program](#) (BIP) provides funding for bridge replacement, rehabilitation, preservation, and protection projects that reduce the number of bridges in poor condition, or in fair condition at risk of declining into poor condition. Large Bridge Project Grants under the BIP are available for bridges with total eligible project costs over \$100 million, with minimum grant awards of \$50 million, and maximum grant awards of 50 percent of the total eligible project costs. This notice establishes a “rolling application” process for Large Bridge Project applications by providing the schedule, requirements, and selection process for such projects for the remaining available amounts of BIP funding provided by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (also known as the “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law” or BIL) for FY 2023 through FY 2026, which total up to \$9.62 billion.

In response to several questions received through the official BIP Mailbox ([bridgeinvestmentprogram@dot.gov](mailto:bridgeinvestmentprogram@dot.gov)), updated [Questions and Answers](#) have been posted on the [BIP Webpage](#), as well as a pre-recorded overview of the FY 2023 through FY 2026 NOFO for BIP – Large Bridge Project Grants ([BIP Large Bridge Recording - Zoom \(zoomgov.com\)](#)).

If stakeholders have questions or want to request additional information, please email the BIP Mailbox using the address above.

**VACo Contact:** [James Hutzler](#)

## November 30 deadline for Virginia counties to challenge broadband coverage maps: eligibility for \$1.48 billion in infrastructure grants at stake



The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) released the [Virginia Broadband Challenge Portal](#), as well as the [speed test and reporting dashboard](#) for the upcoming Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD) Challenge Process. Under BEAD, more than \$42 billion in federal funds will be disbursed to get more Americans fast and reliable internet access. Virginia's allocation under BEAD is \$1.48 billion and will build upon the work of the Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) to reach the remaining unserved, and underserved, regions of the Commonwealth. The portal was developed to challenge the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) coverage map in order for locations that may be incorrectly listed as "served" to be eligible for funding.

The portal only allows challenges from an "Eligible Entity" to include local and tribal governments, nonprofit organizations, internet service providers, and Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs). CAIs are defined as *"schools, libraries, medical and health care providers, public safety entities, community colleges and other institutions of higher education, and other community support organizations and agencies that provide outreach, access, equipment, and support services to facilitate greater use of broadband service by vulnerable populations, including low income, unemployed, and the aged."* Residents can submit challenges through their local government or other eligible entity. The local government or nonprofit will then upload the challenges to the state challenge portal, which in turn notifies the broadband provider of the challenge.

The challenge portal will close at midnight on November 30, 2023. For more information go to <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/vati>.

Additional materials include a [how-to-webinar on the challenge process](#) (w/[slides](#)).

**VACo Contact:** [Joe Lerch, AICP](#)





## REGIONAL ELECTED LEADERS INITIATIVE

*Celebrating Leadership in Northern Virginia since 2018*



# Annual Regional Leadership Awards Luncheon

Friday, December 8, 2023, 11:30AM - 2PM  
Mason Square - Arlington, 3351 Fairfax Drive

*This is a free event, with costs covered by program sponsors*

## 2023 LEADERSHIP HONOREES



**Meagan Alderton**  
Alexandria City  
School Board Member



**Dick Saslaw**  
Majority Leader  
Senate of Virginia



**Penny Gross**  
Fairfax County  
Board of Supervisors

You are invited to join leaders from our region's public, private and non-profit sectors at the Schar School of Policy and Government's Regional Elected Leaders Initiative (RELI) Annual Regional Leadership Awards Luncheon. Dr. Stephen Fuller, George Mason University professor emeritus and past director of the Center for Regional Analysis, will provide a stark picture of the region's economy and a call for regional leadership moving forward.

**REGISTER NOW!**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
November 8, 2023

**Information Contact:**  
Thomas P. Nolan, Director  
3880 Old Buckingham Road, Suite F  
Powhatan, VA 23139  
804-598-5630

## Powhatan Public Safety Communications Is the First in Virginia to Upgrade to RapidSOS Premium to Better Serve 9-1-1 Callers and Advance Safety

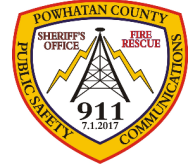
**Powhatan** - Powhatan Public Safety Communications (PSC) recently became the first in the state to enable RapidSOS Premium, to better connect the community to safety. RapidSOS is the intelligent safety platform that securely links life-saving data from over 500 million connected devices, apps and sensors directly to RapidSOS Safety Agents, 911 Communications Officers and other first responders.



Today, 9-1-1 Communications Officers are forced to rely on the limited information a phone call can provide. The data shared by RapidSOS helps Powhatan's Communication Officers to see location, health, crash, and alarm data to accelerate response times and provide first responders with incident-specific information prior to arriving on-scene. With RapidSOS Premium Powhatan Public Safety Communications can access all this information on one unified screen with our jurisdiction's locally authoritative GIS data, which is a customized map featuring landmarks, fire hydrants, and much more. 9-1-1 Communications Officers can save valuable seconds locating a caller or emergency, and seconds save lives.

"With RapidSOS Premium, Powhatan's Emergency Responders gain real-time access to critical data, precise location information, and enhanced communication capabilities during emergencies. This platform empowers responders to make informed decisions swiftly, ensuring the safety and well-being of the community we serve," said PSC Operations Manager Kimberly Schmitt "We are thrilled to provide our community with the peace of mind that we are RapidSOS Ready."

"The implementation of RapidSOS Premium marks a significant milestone for Powhatan Public Safety Communications, reinforcing our commitment to staying at the forefront of technology and setting a high standard for emergency response across the state" said PSC Director Thomas Nolan. "The agency's dedication to enhancing public safety continues to drive innovation, making Powhatan a model for modern and efficient emergency communication systems."



“Powhatan Public Safety Communications is leading the way in 9-1-1 technology to improve emergency response,” said Karin Marquez, RapidSOS Chief Public Safety Brand Officer. “We are thrilled to provide Powhatan’s Emergency Communications Officers with the information they need to get citizens help quickly in an emergency and save lives.”

For more information about RapidSOS, visit [www.rapidsos.com](http://www.rapidsos.com).

#### **About Powhatan Public Safety Communications**

Powhatan County Department of Public Safety Communications is committed to answering all 9-1-1 and non-emergency calls with professionalism, integrity, and empathy.

Our goal is to provide quality service to our visitors and citizens by being the vital link to Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services. We are the First of the First Responders and the lifeline between our community and emergency services personnel.

#### **About RapidSOS, Inc.**

In partnership with public safety, RapidSOS has created the world’s first intelligent safety platform that securely links life-saving data from over 500 million connected devices, apps, and sensors directly to safety agents, 911 and first responders. To learn more about our technology that’s creating life-saving connections, visit [www.rapidsos.com](http://www.rapidsos.com).

####



### National Association of Counties Leadership Development: Learn from the best!

**We would like to acknowledge and congratulate the August NACo Leadership Academy graduates from Virginia.** They join over 10,000 graduates and current participants from across the country benefitting from the 12-week online program enabling existing and emerging county leaders to achieve their highest potential.

Christopher Edwards, Director of Utilities, Stafford County  
Donna Eaton-Jones, Bonds and Permits Administrator, Prince William County  
Ethan Gardner, Acting Chief of Staff, Loudoun County  
Jaime Aguilar, Pretrial Program Manager, Prince William County  
Jennifer Harris, Public Information Director, Montgomery County  
Kristina (Kris) Spoon, Business Systems Manager, Prince William County  
Lance Stewart, Director of Facilities and Environmental Services, Albemarle County  
Olivia Sweetnam, Therapist III, Prince William County  
Scott Woodrum, Director of General Services, Montgomery County

### Invest in your team with Leadership Training!

Celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the High Performance Leadership Academy with us - each County can enroll 10 leaders for \$15,000 in 2024. Our next cohort starts January 8th.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE AND ENROLL](#)

*Developed by General Colin Powell, the Professional Development Academy and NACo, the High Performance Leadership Academy is an online 12-week program that helps your workforce develop fundamental, practical leadership skills to deliver results for counties and residents.*



# Virginia Water and Wastewater Rate 2023 Report is Now Available



## Virginia Water and Wastewater Rate Report

Since 1989, TRC Companies has prepared and distributed an annual Virginia Water and Wastewater Rate Report. This report asks municipalities to provide information concerning monthly residential water bills as well as all wastewater-related charges included on their customers' bills. Experts at TRC analyze the data and compare it to former years in order to track fluctuations in water and wastewater use and rates in Virginia.

[Download our FREE Rate Reports →](#)

## 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Water & Wastewater Rate Report Highlights Key Industry Trends for Virginia Utilities

With over 250 water and wastewater providers in Virginia dedicated to serving diverse communities, navigating the benchmarking process is critical but complex. Leveraging a deep understanding of the industry and the challenges public utilities face, [TRC Companies](#) continues to spearhead the production the Virginia Water & Wastewater Rate Report to shed light on crucial industry trends and provide utilities with indispensable insights for effective decision-making.

In 2023, the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Report found significant impacts for utilities related to rate changes. The average water rate across the Commonwealth increased by 7.2 percent in 2023 and the average sewer rate increased by 6.5 percent. Both increases were significantly higher than the previous year. Since 2012, the average water rate has increased by 3.4 percent per year and the average wastewater rate has risen by 3.6 percent per year. These increases occurred across a control group of representative utilities that allows the report to extrapolate trends across the state.

Amidst these insights, the 2023 Virginia Water & Wastewater Rate Report also provides an in-depth analysis of connection fees and capital recovery charges, giving utilities a comprehensive understanding of the broader financial landscape in which they operate.

For those seeking to delve into the comprehensive details of the 2023 Virginia Water and Wastewater Rate Report or to access previous editions, the complete reports are readily [available for download online](#). For any inquiries or further information, please reach out to us at [water@trccompanies.com](mailto:water@trccompanies.com).



## Get to know one of VACo's Premier Partners – Aetna

VACo Premier Partner Aetna believes healthier happens together. Aetna is a leading health care company that takes a holistic approach in partnering with public sector employees and their families to achieve their best health.

Dean Lynch, VACo Executive Director, and Marcus Duckworth, VP, Client Management of Aetna, explore key health benefits in areas important to the public sector.

Part 1 | [Retiree Savings Through Medicare Advantage](#)

Part 2 | [Mental Health Support](#)

Part 3 | [Custom Benefits Solutions for Government Employers](#)

Part 4 | [Community Health](#)



TRUEBLUE PHOTO SPEED ENFORCEMENT

5 THINGS

YOU SHOULD KNOW



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Answers to Frequent Questions About Blue Line Solutions' Photo Speed Enforcement Program

<https://vimeo.com/860454886>

For more information, contact Greg Hogston | Sales Manager – Virginia  
[ghogston@bluelinesolutions.org](mailto:ghogston@bluelinesolutions.org) | 276-759-8064

# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT & PUBLIC SAFETY



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# 2023 Catalog of State and Federal Mandates on Local Governments Now Available



The Commission on Local Government has officially approved and published the much-anticipated 2023 edition of the Catalog of State and Federal Mandates on Local Governments. This resource is a result of collaborative efforts among various agencies.

The Commission's approval of the 2023 version took place on September 8, 2023, in accordance with the Code of Virginia, §15.2-2903(7), which mandates the Commission to prepare and regularly update this comprehensive catalog.

The catalog is readily accessible online, and you can explore it by visiting the following link: <https://dmz1.dhcd.virginia.gov/MandatesSearch/MandatesSearch.aspx>

The Commission values local government input and encourages you to share your comments, suggestions, and questions with the dedicated staff of the Commission on Local Government. Your feedback is crucial in ensuring that this resource remains relevant and useful for all stakeholders.

Should you have any questions or require further information about this document or any related matters, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Commission or VACo.



## The Most Ever

Remember the adage “Make hay while the sun shines, so you have it to survive on during the rainy days.” Cash shouldn’t be considered one of your priorities, but rather your #1 priority.

Today, most public entities are holding the greatest amount of cash they ever had. A stronger- than-expected economy, internet sales tax, unprecedented federal dollars, and coupled with greater fund balances, have put public entities in their strongest position ever with their cash balances.

As a result, generating cash is not necessarily a top priority for public finance officials. Personally, as a public treasurer myself, I’ve heard those very comments all too often. The main priorities that make their top list right now are public safety, education, job retention, hiring skilled personnel, migrant management, housing...the list goes on. At this point, cash is likely at the bottom of the list.

With such a list of priorities, the top concern for public finance officials is how to manage them all.

A first step in planning is to budget and fund the programs. That’s where we come back to cash as the priority. We’ve all heard the phrase “cash makes cash.” In today’s interest-rate environment, the value of cash is at least 5.5%, which can make all the difference between funding a program or not. And, once you do, how you can keep the program financially viable going forward.

Today may be sunny days for cash. But remember the adage “Make hay while the sun shines, so you have it to survive on during the rainy days.” Cash shouldn’t be considered one of your priorities, but rather your #1 priority.



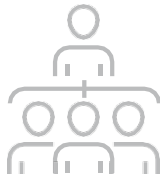
Counties affect the lives of residents every day. When our frontline staff are empowered as leaders, we deliver services more effectively. **The NACo High Performance Leadership Academy is a resource that connects your staff with practical leadership training.** HPLA uses an innovative, interactive online 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.

#### THE ACADEMY FOCUSES ON FIVE ESSENTIAL SKILLS:



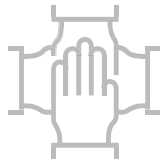
##### LEAD:

Engage teams and stakeholders to foster positive climates and exceed common expectations



##### ORGANIZE:

Plan, lead and execute organizational change more effectively and consistently



##### COLLABORATE:

Establish alignment and strong partnerships through building stronger relationships



##### DELIVER:

Measure projects and processes to deliver results aligned with county and community priorities



##### COMMUNICATE:

Create clarity, confidence, and community

**The NACo High Performance Leadership Academy empowers frontline county government professionals with fundamental, practical leadership skills to deliver results for counties and residents.**

**NACo Member County cost per enrollee begins at \$1,995.**

Additional discounts may apply. Contact us for more details.

With a curriculum developed by the late *General Colin Powell* and public and private sector leaders, NACo High Performance Leadership Academy gives students the opportunity to learn from world-class faculty. All content is guided by an expert facilitator.

**Find out more at [NACo.org/Skills](https://NACo.org/Skills)**





## OneDigital is thrilled to be one of VACo's newest Premier Partners.

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.

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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### PROTECT

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Workplace Safety  
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Cyber Security



**Sarah Anne Struckmann**  
**Business Development Executive**  
sarah.struckmann@onedigital.com  
434-987-2240



At OneDigital, we harness the power of one to solve complex challenges for businesses and people. Scan the code to the left to watch the video and learn more.





SCAN ME

# SCHOOL ZONE SAFETY

## PHOTO SPEED ENFORCEMENT

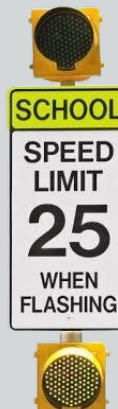


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The Virginia Association of Counties accepts employment ads in a PDF file or a link to a job site. Please include information for applying, and a link to other important information. Please do not fax your employment ad. VACo members are not charged 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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## VALUE OF VACo



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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.



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



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



### BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

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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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