

Enter the 2024 VACo Achievement Awards Deadline is July 1, 2024



Dear **VACo Members** –

It's time for the 2024 Achievement Awards Program. Any county department is eligible to compete so **ENTER NOW!**

[2024 Achievement Awards Submission Form](#)

All entries are required to be submitted in electronic form. No paper copy submissions are necessary. The electronic submissions should be a PDF or WORD file. Email entries to Gage Harter at [**gcharter@vaco.org**](mailto:gcharter@vaco.org). **Electronic submissions must be received by July 1, 2024.**

Last year, [we processed 135 entries](#) and selected 33 winners from 21 Counties. VACo presented awards at Board of Supervisors Meetings, recognized winners at the 89th Annual Conference, and issued a news release to statewide media.

The judges for the 2024 Achievement Awards will be announced soon.

VACo has received more than 1,000 entries over the past decade. Last year's Best Achievement winner was **Alleghany County** for its "**Alleghany/Covington School Consolidation**" program.

VACo encourages all Counties, big and small, to enter the 2024 Achievement Awards Program. Please contact [**gcharter@vaco.org**](mailto:gcharter@vaco.org) with questions or for more information.

[Achievement Awards Submission Form](#) | [Achievement Awards Website](#)
[2023 Achievement Awards Press Release](#) | [Past Achievement Award Winners](#)

ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS
SUBMISSION FORM



PHOTO SPEED ENFORCEMENT

What it means for your community

Photo Speed Enforcement in school zones means safer streets and a safer community.



We are Blue Line Solutions, standing out from other traffic safety firms. Founded by former law enforcement, we combine over 300 years of experience with a commitment to saving lives. Our mission is clear – to enhance safety, reduce vehicle speed, and empower law enforcement agencies with advanced tools to prevent and combat dangerous speed efficiently.



We combine public information and education with photo speed enforcement and advanced technology to effectively decrease speeding by an average of 94% and simplify ticketing and collections. Our seamless, comprehensive services cover everything from equipment and surveillance to citations and collections, providing a hassle-free experience. By enhancing police resources, our solutions enable officers to focus on other priorities. Aligned with the principles of Vision Zero, our ultimate goal is to achieve zero injuries, zero crashes, and zero lives at risk.

Western Virginia RSM Greg Hogston
276-759-8064
ghogston@bluelinesolutions.org

Eastern Virginia RSM Randy Campbell
434-485-4683
rcampbell@bluelinesolutions.org



PREMIER PARTNER

VACo Seeks to Create Mentorship Program for Supervisors



Dear Members/County Administrators...

VACo is blessed to have many smart and experienced Supervisors. This year we welcomed a slew of newly elected Supervisors, some of whom have expressed interest in being mentored. VACo thrives when Supervisors connect and share experiences and challenges. Therefore, we would like to establish an informal, voluntary mentoring program to offer opportunities for personalized connections among Supervisors.

If you are interested in being a mentor or being connected with a mentor, please contact Karie Walker, kwalker@vaco.org or 804-343-2504.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Karie Walker

Director of Programs and Development
Virginia Association of Counties



Equipment Lease-Purchase Financing

Equipment Lease-Purchase Financing is a great tool to make your locality's and school division's budget go further!

Contact us for details.

VML/VACo Equipment Lease-Purchase Financing offers:

- Competitive rates and low closing costs.
- Predictable and level payments.
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- Streamlined process – we handle the details for you.

Budget less in the current year by spreading payments out over the useful life of the equipment – perfect for school buses, fire engines, and police cars.

CONTACT US TODAY

Questions?

Contact Steve Mulroy
804-648-0635

smulroy@valocalfinance.org





Visit Loudoun County and the Loudoun County Historic Courthouse

Location: 18 East Market Street / Church Street

Built: 1894 – 1895

Style: Greek Revival

Architect: William C West

Contractor: Norris Brothers

Description: The building faces west and is a two story red colored brick structure. The building is located on landscaped grounds in the center of Leesburg. The west front of the rectangular shaped building has a large portico with four white colored columns rising to a wide pediment at the roof line. The entrance is arched with fanlight at the top. The vertical windows are arched. On the hipped roof is a high white colored octagonal belfry.

SOURCE: courthouses.co

Supervisors - this event is made for you!

Learn and network with colleagues from all over the Commonwealth.





You are VAcorp

You are not merely a customer of VAcorp; you **are** VAcorp! We are both owned and governed by you – our members! VAcorp is created under 15.2-2700 of the local government code where all assets and surplus belong to the members. In addition, VAcorp is controlled by a Supervisory Board that is elected from and by our members. The Board determines and approves all major risk pool decisions, and as a voting member, you have a voice in the decisions that matter most.

Know Who You Are

Because you are VAcorp itself, we think it is critical that you understand exactly what VAcorp is and why it exists. Many simply think of us as their “insurance carrier” – writing customized coverages and handling claims when they occur – but we are so much more!

Our History

The Birth of Risk Pools

VAcorp is not an insurance company, but rather a Risk Pool.

Unstable economic conditions in the mid-1980s led to a commercial insurance crisis with ballooning premiums and widespread policy cancellations. As a result, Risk Pools began to form as an alternative to volatile traditional carriers, allowing Pool members to exert more control over their coverages and costs. Today, almost all public sector entities throughout the country get their coverage from Risk Pools rather than from commercial insurance companies.

VAcorp's Origin

VAcorp was founded by a handful of Virginia counties in 1993. The ultimate goals of the program were to provide **cost stability**, the most **comprehensive coverages** possible, and **custom services** tailored specifically to the unique needs of our members. While we are pleased by how well our prices compare against the competition, our goal was never to guarantee the lowest cost. Instead, we promised to avoid the wild price swings that we've seen in other providers and provide stable pricing year after year, and that is exactly what we have delivered. VAcorp rates are actually **lower today in 2024 than they were in 1993!**

VAcorp's Growth

Today, VAcorp is the **largest self-insurance risk pool** for public sector entities in the Commonwealth with a membership retention rate of better than 98%. Over the years, we have expanded beyond counties to include municipalities, school divisions, authorities, volunteer fire & rescue companies, state agencies, and non-profits funded by taxpayer dollars. **Over 560 members** have joined VAcorp, including 8 of the 10 largest counties, 8 of the 10 largest cities, and 8 of the 10 largest school divisions. We believe that the extraordinary success of the program can be attributed to our unwavering commitment to our founding principles.

VAcorp Exists to Serve You

VAcorp was created solely to serve Virginia's public sector entities, and from day one until now, we have never lost sight of that purpose. Because we answer only to our members, every decision is designed to benefit the group over the long haul.

VAcorp advocates for local government through a myriad of partnerships with affiliated associations including: VACo, VSBA, VLGMA, VASS, VFGOA, VASBO, LGA, Regional Jail Association, PDC, etc. While there is a cost associated with these partnerships, they add value to the group by aiding in our ability to lobby the General Assembly on behalf of our members.

You may not always see the immediate payoff, but every VAcorp decision is made in alignment with our vision to serve our members and promote the health and longevity of your program.

Take a look at a few of VAcorp's milestones over the years:

- **1993** - VAcorp is established with 12 founding members and less than \$700,000 in annual contribution.
- **1998** - VAcorp terminates service contract with claims administration vendor and hires staff to promote more control and efficiency.
- **1999** - VAcorp offers coverage to K-12 Public Schools across the Commonwealth.
- **2001** - VAcorp begins offering Public Officials Liability coverage in response to VARisk offering limited coverage.
- **2004** - VAcorp begins providing Environmental Liability coverage to all members at no additional cost. Even in 2024, VAcorp is the only provider offering this coverage with a low \$25,000 deductible. Other providers offer this coverage with a \$250,000 deductible.
- **2008** - VAcorp responded to the great recession by freezing rates and providing financial relief with over \$8,000,000 in dividends to members.
- **2011** - VAcorp introduces Line of Duty Act (LODA) coverage, creates the only LODA trust in the state, and absorbs existing LODA losses in response to the state pushing this cost to the local level. VAcorp paid all of its members 2010 past liability for over \$1,000,000.
- **2013** - VAcorp merges with the VSBA Self-Insurance Group and assumes their liabilities to prevent School Boards from being assessed. This action saves Local Governments in excess of \$5,000,000.
- **2013** - VAcorp becomes the first to offer Cyber Risk coverage in Virginia offering the broadest coverage available to local governments anywhere in the US.
- **2016** - VAcorp offers Student Accident and Catastrophic Accident coverage in order to fill VHSL coverage gaps.
- **2020** - VAcorp provides over \$5,000,000 in rate credits during the COVID pandemic to assist members.
- **2023** - VAcorp includes security risk management coverage (active shooter) for all members (coverage has been included for Schools since 2013).





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Berkley Group is the go-to consultant for local governments and other public agencies. 100% of our services are dedicated to serving public agencies. We understand local government because we have worked in local government and continue to serve them proudly.

Contact us today at 540-208-5188 or info@bgllc.net for any of your community's needs.



On March 3 - Administrators from Southside Virginia attended a Retirement Party for longtime Mecklenburg County Administrator **Wayne Carter**, who served as CAO from July 2004 through February 2024. Seven Administrators representing the counties of Appomattox, Brunswick, Charlotte, Dinwiddie, Halifax, Lunenburg, and Prince Edward County celebrated Wayne's 20-year tenure at the helm of Mecklenburg County. His peers presented him with a rocking chair engraved with the Mecklenburg County seal, his name, and years of service. Congratulations Wayne on your retirement!

Group Photo (from left to right) - Susan Adams (Appomattox County), **Leslie Weddington** (Brunswick County), **Kevin Massengill** (Dinwiddie County), **Tracy Gee** (Lunenburg County), **Dan Witt** (Charlotte County), **Doug Stanley** (Prince Edward County), and **Scott Simpson** (Halifax County).





It's great to see our friend Dan Lee (sitting second from right) back with his fellow Dinwiddie County Board members!

Here's what the Dinwiddie County shared on its social media...

He's baaaack! The Board of Supervisors convened its monthly workshop this afternoon with all seats filled!!! We are all so thankful for the return of Supervisor and Vice-Chairman, Dan Lee. As you all know, Mr. Lee received a heart and liver transplant in December. Recovery is a long process, but he is healthy, happy, and so glad to be back at the table with his fellow Board members.

Capitol Contact

Virginia General Assembly

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MARCH 2024

- March 5, 2024: [Bill Impacting Local Authority to Regulate Short-Term Rentals Amended to Address VACo Concerns; Another Bill Opposed by VACo Awaiting Governor's Approval](#)

FEBRUARY 2024

- February 29, 2024: [Bill to Preempt Local Authority to Regulate Short-Term Rentals Passes](#)
- February 27, 2024: [Bill Preempting Local Authority on Siting Solar and Battery Storage Facilities Fails](#)
- February 26, 2024: **Capitol Contact ALERT!** [Call Now to Oppose Bill to Preempt Local Authority to Regulate Short-Term Rentals](#)
- February 22, 2024: [School Construction Financing Bills Advance Through Committees, Headed Back to Senate and House Floors!](#)
- February 20, 2024: ["Money Committees" Report Budgets](#)
- February 15, 2024: [JLARC Recommendation Legislation Consolidated and Clears Crossover](#)
- February 13, 2024: [School Construction Financing Bill Passes House of Delegates](#)
- February 8, 2024: [School Construction Financing Bills Head to House Floor – Contact Your Delegates Now!](#)
- February 7, 2024: **Capitol Contact ALERT!** [Oppose SB 697: Mandates Approval of Solar and Battery Storage](#)
- February 6, 2024: [School Construction Financing Bills Advance in House](#)
- February 1, 2024: [VACo Legislative Day Capitol Contact](#)

JANUARY 2024

- January 30, 2024: [Support Priority Budget Amendments](#)
- January 25, 2024: [VACo Opposes Bill to Make Residential a "By-Right" Use in Commercial and Industrial Districts](#)
- January 23, 2024: [School Construction Financing Bills Headed to the Senate Floor](#)
- January 22, 2024: **Capitol Contact ALERT!** [School Construction Financing Bill to be Heard Tomorrow – Call Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee Members to Support](#)
- January 18, 2024: [House Version of Line of Duty Act \(LODA\) Benefits for Campus and Private Police Bill Falters](#)
- January 16, 2024: [VACo Opposes Problematic FOIA Bill](#)
- January 11, 2024: [2024 General Assembly Convenes](#)
- January 10, 2024: [VACo Opposes Legislation Giving Local Land Use Authority to SCC for the Siting of Utility-Scale Solar, Wind, and Energy Storage Projects](#)

Bill Impacting Local Authority to Regulate Short-Term Rentals Amended to Address VACo Concerns



As introduced, [HB 1461 \(Mundon King\)](#) would have prohibited a locality from barring an operator, as defined in existing law, who is a lessee or sublessee of property from offering such property as a short-term rental provided the property owner has granted permission for its use as a short-term rental.

At the request of VACo the bill was amended to state that *“No local ordinance shall prohibit an operator from offering a property as a short-term rental solely on the basis that such operator is a lessee or sublessee, provided that the property owner has granted permission for such property’s use as a short-term rental. Localities may enact an ordinance that limits a lessee or sublessee to one short-term rental within the applicable locality.”*

The purpose of the amended language is to (1) clarify that a renter must still comply with all other provisions of a local ordinance; and (2) allow localities to limit the number of properties an individual renter can operate as a short-term rental within a locality. These changes to the legislation address VACo concerns regarding the potential negative impacts to housing supply posed by a proliferation of short-term rentals, and the ability for counties to limit such. HB 1461, as amended, passed the Senate General Laws and Technology Committee and is on the Senate floor for consideration. **VACo thanks Delegate Mundon King for agreeing to the amended language.**

It is important to note that HB 1461 is not the same as [SB 544 \(Bagby\)](#), that also deals with local authority to regulate short-term rentals. SB 544 passed the legislature and is now before the Governor for consideration – see VACo writeup titled, [“Bill to Preempt Local Authority to Regulate Short-Term Rentals Passes - Virginia Association of Counties.”](#) VACo opposes SB 544.

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

Bill Preempting Local Authority on Siting Solar and Battery Storage Facilities Fails

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In light of strong opposition from Virginia counties, a subcommittee of House Counties, Cities and Towns voted to carry over to the 2025 legislation session, [SB 697 \(VanValkenburg\)](#). At the request of the chair of the full committee, the [Commission on Electric Utility Regulation](#) will review the bill.

The legislation mandates that any local ordinance adopted pursuant [§ 15.2-2288.7](#) of the Code of Virginia (local regulation of solar facilities) shall not “... include limits on the total amount, density, or size of any ground mounted solar facility or energy facility unless the total panel area exceeds 4% of the total area within the county.”

[VACo also notes HB 636 \(Sullivan\)](#) and [SB 567 \(Deeds\)](#) were carried over to the 2025 legislative session. These bills proposed to give the Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC) the authority to override local comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances for the siting of utility-scale solar, wind and battery storage facilities.

VACo Members – Thank you for your advocacy.

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

Problematic Water Withdrawal Permitting Bill Goes Down the Drain

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SB 673 (Stuart), as amended, would direct the Department of Environmental Quality and the State Water Control Board to prioritize the preservation of water for human consumption and food production in all permitting and regulatory processes related to groundwater and surface water resources.

VACo **sought member input** on how SB 673 would impact member counties and relayed many concerns to the patron. During the bill's hearing in the House Chesapeake Subcommittee, SB 673 was amended back to its **original form**, which would prioritize the preservation of drinking water in all permitting and regulatory processes related to water withdrawals. The bill would ultimately fail in the Subcommittee by a vote of 8-2.

Thank you to all who responded to our inquiry as this member feedback helps us in our advocacy.

VACo Contact: **James Hutzler**

Concerning Revenue Sharing Program Budget Amendment Not Included in General Assembly Budgets

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[Item 438 #1h \(McQuinn\)](#) and [Item 438 #2s \(Marsden\)](#) are budget amendments that seek to rewrite the current Revenue Sharing Program prioritization process that would adversely affect county governments. VACo [sought member feedback](#) on how the proposed budget amendments may affect your locality and the impacts this could have on county-wide infrastructure.

VACo is happy to report that these budget amendments were not included in the floor approved budgets from the House or Senate. Thank you to our county leaders for providing insight into how these budget amendments would impact your locality.

VACo Contact: [James Hutzler](#)

School Construction Financing Bills Fly Through Senate and House

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[SB 14 \(McPike\)](#) and [HB 805 \(Rasoul\)](#) have passed their respective houses after crossover, and will soon advance to Governor Youngkin. On February 26, the House passed [SB 14 \(McPike\)](#) on a [68-28](#) vote, and on February 23, the Senate passed with a substitute, [HB 805 \(Rasoul\)](#), on a vote of [27-12](#).

As previously [reported](#), this legislation would permit any county or city to impose an additional local sales and use tax of up to 1 percent, if initiated by a resolution of the local governing body and approved by voters at a local referendum. The revenues of such a local tax would be used solely for capital projects for the construction or renovation of schools. Any tax imposed shall expire when the costs for capital projects are to be repaid and shall not be more than 20 years after the date of the resolution passed. Currently, this authority is limited to the qualifying localities of Charlotte, Gloucester, Halifax, Henry, Mecklenburg, Northampton, Patrick, and Pittsylvania Counties and the City of Danville.

VACo and numerous other local government and K-12 advocates have testified in favor of the bills. VACo thanks its members and those who advocated for this important legislation.

Please contact your delegates and senators to thank them for their positive support. Also, please urge Governor Youngkin to sign this legislation into law.

More on Next Page

Review this [video](#) and [one-pager](#) for information on the desperate need for more school construction financing options.

KEY POINTS

- Funding for school construction and renovation is one of the biggest concerns and responsibilities of local governments in the Commonwealth and has been almost solely a local responsibility for decades. The condition of the facilities in which children are educated has a direct impact on their ability to learn.
- Many localities face significant challenges in raising sufficient funds to undertake these projects. These challenges include over-reliance on real property taxes to generate revenue, which can have vastly different yields depending on the locality and disproportionately burden a subset of taxpayers within a jurisdiction. This raises concerns over equity and diversity of revenues.

According to the [Commission on School Construction and Modernization](#), more than half of K-12 school buildings in Virginia are more than 50 years old. The amount of funding needed to replace these buildings is estimated to cost \$24.8 billion.

This legislation was a unanimous recommendation by the Commission on School Construction and Modernization.

This bill is about parity for local governments, giving all counties the same authority currently given to nine localities.

This bill is **NOT** a tax increase. It would merely create a local option and another tool in the toolbox of local government, which would only be enacted by local referendum.

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

Bills of Note Dealing with Transparency, Freedom of Information, and Public Notice Advance through Process



Transparency and Public Notice

HB 69 (Bulova) requires the local governing body or elected school board making an interim appointment to fill a vacancy in the membership of such body or board to hold a public meeting at least seven days prior to making such appointment. The bill specifies that at such meeting, the body or board shall announce the names of all persons being proposed for the interim appointment and shall make available for inspection each person's resume and any other materials required by the body or board. HB 69 has passed both chambers.

HB 710 (Webert) and **SB 549 (Russet Perry)** are gone for this session. **VACo opposed these bills**, which provided that any travel expense of a local official, as defined in the bill, to be paid from public funds, that is anticipated to exceed \$2,500 shall be subject to approval in advance by a vote of the local governing body in an open meeting. The bill was amended to raise the rate to \$5,000. The House and Senate versions were killed in the Counties, Cities and Towns Committee's Subcommittee 3.

HB 1488 (Henson) and **SB 413 (Head)** – **VACo supports these bills** that standardize the frequency with which and length of time in which notices of certain meetings, hearings, and other intended actions of localities must be published. The bills also standardize descriptive information in such notices related to (a) proposing, amending, or repealing ordinances; (b) local budget adoption; and (c) zoning ordinances and planning-related actions. The bills have sailed through both chambers and are headed to the Governor's desk.

Freedom of Information Act

[HB 894 \(Bennett-Parker\)](#) and [SB 734 \(Marsden\)](#) – VACo supports these bills, which provide that (except for local governing bodies, local school boards, planning commissions, architectural review boards, and zoning appeals boards) any public body may hold all-virtual public meetings 2 times per year or no more than 50% of the meeting, whichever is greater, provided that they have an electronic meeting policy in place. Previously the limit was 25%. The bills have passed both chambers.

[SB 324 \(Roem\)](#) – VACo opposed this unfunded mandate bill as introduced, as it provided every citizen of the Commonwealth, and representative of newspapers and magazines, to make four free two-hour FOIA requests per 31 consecutive days. The bill as originally filed also provided that after the 8 free hours per person, per month, the highest rate that a locality could charge is \$33/hour unless they successfully petition the court for a higher fee.

After meeting with stakeholders, the patron offered a substitute at the January 24 Senate Local Government Committee meeting, which passed unanimously. The substitute included provisions for one free hour per calendar year for each person, a cap of \$40 per hour and some language providing an exception for legal review by public bodies and requires the collection of data by public bodies for any request that takes over 30 minutes.

The current version of the bill, which passed both chambers, has a reenactment clause for the fee portion of the bill, meaning that it must be reenacted in the 2025 session. However, the bill passed by both chambers does provide for a study of FOIA fees to be completed by November 30, 2024.

[SB 244 \(McPike\)](#) and [HB 816 \(Cherry\)](#) – VACo supports these bills that seek to validate otherwise lawful actions taken by a public body using electronic communication means occurring from March 20, 2020, until July 1, 2021. The bills sailed through both chambers and are headed to the Governor's desk.

[SB 36 \(Locke\)](#) and [HB 818 \(Cherry\)](#), which are worded slightly differently, amend the definition of “meeting” under the Freedom of Information act. **VACo supports these bills**, which amend the definition of “meeting” as it relates to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to clarify that a gathering of two or more members of a public body is not a meeting if there is no discussion or transaction of any public business as defined in the bill. The bills are in response to the decision of the Supreme Court of Virginia in *Gloss v. Wheeler* (2023) . VACo is working with a group of stakeholders as these bills head to conference.

Procurement Bills

[SB 18 \(Locke\)](#) and [HB 1108 \(Carr\)](#) limit the use of construction management or design-build contracts by state and local public bodies and covered institutions for complex projects. They require state public bodies, covered institutions, and local public bodies to provide documentation of the processes used for the final selection of a contract to all the unsuccessful applicants upon request. The bills require a local public body to adopt a resolution or motion to use construction management or design-build, if required by its local governing body, prior to issuing a Request for Qualifications and to publish notice of such resolution or motion on its

website or eVA. Finally, the bills require the Department, with the assistance of staff of the House Committee on Appropriations and the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations, assess implementation of construction management and design-build projects and report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly by November 1, 2029. The two bills are slightly different and are working through the process in both chambers.

HB 151 (Helmer) amends a statute passed 2 years ago that required state and local public bodies to design energy efficient buildings. The bill requires the Department of Energy, upon request, to provide technical assistance to localities, subject to available budgetary resources, as localities implement mandates related to onsite renewable energy generation, energy storage, and resilience standards for construction or renovation of certain public buildings. The bill also makes several technical and clarifying changes to the existing statute, in part by defining or redefining existing terms found in the statute. HB 151 is working through the process on a close vote.

HB 311 (Hope) mandates that all local public bodies provide an option to submit bids or proposals for procurement contracts through the Commonwealth's statewide electronic procurement system, known as eVA or other electronic means. Current law only encourages local public bodies to use eVA for such submissions. HB 311 passed both chambers.

HB 1113 (Carr) raises the limits on Job Order Contracting annual threshold from \$6 million to \$10 million and the individual job order limit from \$500,000 to \$1 million. It also raises the number of annual renewals from 2 to 3. HB 1113 has passed both chambers.

HB 1116 (Carr) raises the small purchase limit in the Virginia Public Procurement act for non-transportation related construction from \$200,000 to \$300,000. This bill is working through the process.

HB 1273 (Krizek) would have required that for any capital outlay project, a public body shall require the contractor and subcontractors to complete specified safety training programs and participate in apprenticeship programs. At least 8% of the labor hours on the project shall be completed by apprentices. A local governing body or the Governor or his designee may waive this section for a specific project if there are not enough apprenticeship programs in the area or a disproportionately high ratio of material costs to labor hours makes the requirement not feasible. **This bill was continued to 2025.**

VACo Contact: **Phyllis Errico, Esq., CAE**

Health and Human Services Roundup

Capitol Contact

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Behavioral Health

Several bills under consideration this session resulted from a 2023 JLARC study of the state psychiatric hospital system, several recommendations of which were also endorsed by the Behavioral Health Commission:

- **[HB 314 \(Hope\)](#)/**[SB 179 \(Favola\)](#)**, as introduced, would have required state hospitals (rather than CSBs) to conduct discharge planning for individuals who are discharged within 30 days of admission; CSBs would continue to be responsible for discharge planning for individuals with longer stays. The bills were amended to apply only to discharges from Central State Hospital, Southern Virginia Mental Health Institute, or Southwestern Virginia Mental Health Institute. SB 179 has passed both chambers; HB 314 is on the Senate floor.**
- **[HB 888 \(Watts\)](#)/**[SB 176 \(Favola\)](#)** provide that for the purpose of civil commitments and temporary detention orders (TDOs), behaviors or symptoms that manifest from a neurocognitive disorder or a neurodevelopmental disability are not sufficient, in themselves, to justify a finding of mental illness. The bills stem from a JLARC finding that state hospitals are inappropriate placements for individuals with these conditions. To address concerns about the limited availability of placement options other than state hospitals, the bills direct the convening of a workgroup and include reenactment clauses. HB 888 has passed both chambers; SB 176 awaits final action by the Senate to approve amendments made in the House.**
- **[HB 313 \(Hope\)](#)/**[SB 178 \(Favola\)](#)** direct the Office of the State Inspector General to develop a plan to fulfill its statutory obligation to fully investigate all complaints it receives alleging abuse, neglect, or inadequate care at a state psychiatric hospital.**

More on Next Page

- Two companion bills ([HB 808 \(Rasoul\)](#)/[SB 653 \(Durant\)](#)) that sought to address concerns about patients being dropped off at state hospitals that are unable to meet their medical needs failed to advance this session over concerns about their effects on law enforcement. The bills would have authorized a state hospital to delay admission of an individual who is under a TDO until the state facility has determined that the individual does not have potentially life-threatening medical needs requiring immediate evaluation and treatment that the state facility is incapable of providing. HB 808 reached the House floor but was not passed before the crossover deadline; SB 653 was stricken at the request of the patron.

Several bills that are advancing address other aspects of the behavioral health system:

- [HB 515 \(Hope\)](#) directs the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to implement a pilot program at one state hospital to allow the hospital director to discharge certain patients over the objection of the CSB if the patient has not been discharged within 15 days of a determination that the individual is ready for discharge, provided certain requirements have been met. The discharge plan would be developed by the state hospital and implemented by the CSB serving the area where the individual resided prior to admission or where the individual (or his/her representative) chose to reside post-discharge. Expenses for a trial or home visit would be covered by a person's relative, conservator, caregiver, or appropriate local department of social services. Language in the House budget provides for DBHDS to cover an individual's expenses if the individual is placed in an assisted living facility, nursing home, group home, or similar placements as part of the pilot program and there is no other public or private assistance available. HB 515 has passed both chambers.
- [HB 823 \(Cherry\)](#)/[SB 497 \(Carroll Foy\)](#) provide that when a magistrate is issuing a temporary detention order, an alternative transportation provider shall be deemed to be available if the provider is available to take custody of the individual subject to the TDO within six hours of the TDO's issuance. Under current law, if no alternative transportation provider is willing, available, and able to provide transportation in a safe manner, the magistrate must designate the primary law enforcement agency and jurisdiction designated to provide transportation; the bills add language requiring the same designation if the law enforcement agency elects to provide transportation. Both bills have passed the legislature and are headed to the Governor's desk.
- [HB 1242 \(Willett\)](#)/[SB 546 \(Bagby\)](#) are intended to allow family members or legal guardians to be present with an individual being evaluated for a temporary detention order. The bills require the evaluator or the physician or health care provider providing services to an individual who is being evaluated to allow the individual's family member or legal guardian to be present, unless the individual objects or the evaluator or the treating physician determines that the family member or legal guardian's presence would create a risk to the patient or health care provider or interfere with patient care.
- [HB 1336 \(Sickles\)](#)/[SB 568 \(Deeds\)](#) are intended to assist with regulatory issues encountered in the development of facilities licensed by DBHDS that provide crisis stabilization services. The bills allow these facilities to maintain a stock of certain controlled substances necessary for treatment, and allow facilities to use remote drug dispensing systems, based on regulations to be adopted by the Board of Pharmacy. A remote dispensing system

is a machine that performs certain packaging, labeling, and dispensing functions and allows pharmacist communication with a patient or a person licensed to administer drugs when a pharmacist is not on-site. DBHDS is currently funding two projects using remote dispensing systems approved as a pilot by the Board of Pharmacy; the legislation would allow the pilot to become permanent, as well as the expansion of operations to other sites. These bills have passed the General Assembly.

- [**SB 34 \(Locke\)**](#), in its current form, authorizes certain employees of hospitals with a psychiatric emergency department located in Senate District 23 to perform evaluations to determine whether a person meets the criteria for temporary detention. Under current law, these evaluations are conducted by an employee or designee of the CSB. The bill has a July 1, 2026, sunset date. The bill is on the House floor.
- [**SB 574 \(Deeds\)**](#) directs the Behavioral Health Commission to study how to align current civil admissions laws and processes (to include processes related to licensing, regulations, training, and reimbursement) with new behavioral health and crisis response services and resources. A report is due by July 1, 2025.
- [**HB 292 \(Ballard\)**](#)/[**SB 725 \(Pillion\)**](#) rename drug treatment courts as recovery courts.

Health

- Under current law, churches, fraternal or school organizations, certain tax-exempt organizations, and volunteer fire and EMS agencies are exempt from restaurant regulations when these organizations offer food for sale to the public as part of occasional fundraisers held by the organization. [**HB 57 \(Wright\)**](#) extends this exemption to fundraising events in which the organization participates; the bill is awaiting action by the Governor.
- [**HB 150 \(Helmer\)**](#) provides that the Department of Social Services may not require individuals applying for or renewing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to appear in person except as provided in federal law or regulation. The bill also codifies the Virginia Department of Health's authority to implement the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (the WIC Program), which currently exists in regulation, and requires all localities to participate (according to the Virginia Department of Health, all local health departments currently offer the program). This bill is on the Senate floor.
- [**HB 354 \(Hope\)**](#) directs the Board of Health to promulgate regulations governing swimming pools, including requirements for water treatment and disinfection, daily posting of water quality data, safety equipment and features, maintenance and safety of equipment and premises, operational requirements, facility staffing, incident response, and other provisions necessary to protect public health and safety. The regulations would not apply to the design, construction, or maintenance of pool structures and equipment governed by the Uniform Statewide Building Code. The bill provides that localities would not be prohibited from adopting more stringent regulations. HB 345 has passed the General Assembly.

- [**HB 570 \(Delaney\)**](#)/[**SB 274 \(Deeds\)**](#) establish the Prescription Drug Affordability Board and empower the Board to conduct affordability reviews of certain high-cost drugs and impose upper payment limits on up to 12 drugs annually between January 1, 2025 (when the bills take effect), and January 1, 2028. SB 274 has passed both chambers; HB 570 is on the Senate floor.

Social Services

- [**HB 27 \(Callsen\)**](#)/[**SB 39 \(Favola\)**](#) create the Parental Child Safety Placement Program. The bills require local boards of social services to first consider placement with a kinship foster parent in placing a child who has been removed from the home, and require an exception report if a local board does not place a child with an approved kinship foster parent. Under the Parental Child Safety Placement Program, a local department may facilitate a temporary out-of-home placement of a child with a caregiver that is arranged by the parent, guardian, or legal custodian in accordance with a written agreement that ensures the child's safety and is approved by the local department. Such a placement may be facilitated if a family assessment or investigation has been initiated in response to a valid complaint of abuse or neglect, the child cannot remain safely in the home, and the parent, guardian, or legal custodian agrees to the arrangement. The bills set out the provisions that must be included in the parental child safety placement agreement, require the local department to assess the proposed caregiver's qualifications to care for the child, and set out a process for the safe return of the child to the home at the conclusion of the parental child safety placement agreement (if the child can be safely returned home), or for removal of the child (if the child cannot safely return). HB 27 is on the Senate floor; SB 39 has passed both chambers.
- [**HB 855 \(Hernandez\)**](#), as passed by the House, directs the State Board of Social Services to promulgate regulations to allow applications for the Home Energy Assistance Program to be submitted year-round, provided adequate funding is available. The Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee amended the bill on Monday to direct that the regulations allow applications to be submitted over an application period that provides adequate time for individuals to apply and is extended beyond the current application period, provided adequate funding is available. The bill is now on the Senate floor.
- [**HB 992 \(Tran\)**](#) requires each local department of social services to enter into a written agreement with the local workforce development board to provide for the coordinated provision of workforce development services to participants in the Virginia Initiative for Education and Work (VIEW) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) programs. This bill is a recommendation of a 2023 JLARC study of self-sufficiency programs and is on the Senate floor.
- [**SB 70 \(McPike\)**](#) was a policy option in the 2023 JLARC study of self-sufficiency programs and would have required all local departments of social services to offer a voluntary SNAP E&T program, from such funds as were appropriated for that purpose. Currently, only 37 of the 120 local departments offer the program. This bill was tabled in the House Appropriations Committee over concerns about its fiscal impact.

Department of Environmental Quality - Sustainability Partners Webinar



The Virginia Environmental Excellence Program (VEEP) is a voluntary program, administered by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). VEEP encourages both the public and private sector in Virginia to go beyond regulatory compliance and embrace pollution prevention. The VEEP Sustainability Partners track is designed to encourage large organizations, with multiple facilities, to make environmental sustainability part of their culture through leadership, innovation, and continual improvement.

Applications and participation are on a calendar year basis. Data and narrative information on sustainability efforts is required. The application deadline is May 15, 2024. **For questions about the application refer to the VEEP Sustainability Partners [Application Instructions](#).**

Key characteristics of VEEP Sustainability Partners:

- Aimed at organizations with a culture of sustainability and community involvement (one application per organization).
- Encourages continual, measurable reductions.
- Provides public recognition.
- Allows access to DEQ/ VEEP Resources and Networking.

If you are interested in more information on the VEEP Sustainability Partners Track, DEQ will be hosting an informational webinar on March 19 from 1:30-2pm. Speakers will include longtime program member Jenny Boeder, Senior Environmental, Health and Safety Manager with Prince William County.

VEEP Sustainability Track 2024 webinar registration: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3852353830328611673>



VIRGINIA OPIOID ABATEMENT AUTHORITY NEWS UPDATE

701 East Franklin Street, Suite 803, Richmond, Virginia 23219 | 804-500-1810 | info@voaa.us | www.voaa.us

Free Online Video Recording Now Available From Day One of the Three-Day Webinar

“Implementing Effective SUD Treatment in Regional and County Correctional Facilities”

Sponsored by Bay Rivers Telehealth Alliance in Coordination with the OAA

In a first of its kind training topic for Virginia, [Bay Rivers Telehealth Alliance](#) and the [Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority](#) (OAA) are jointly sponsoring a **3-part webinar series** focusing on treating substance use disorders in local and regional jails.

A video recording of the first day’s webinar can be found [here](#). Topics and speakers on this recording include:

- Legal Requirements for Medication Assisted Treatment in Correctional Institutions
 - Presented by: Asst. U.S. Attorney Steven Gordon, Civil Rights Enforcement Coordinator, Eastern District of Virginia, U.S. Department of Justice
- Effective Treatment for Substance Use Disorder in Correctional Institutions
 - Presented by: Kerri Rhodes, LPC, LMFT, Chesterfield County Sheriff’s Office

Two more days are planned for this **FREE** webinar series:

- March 27, 2024, from 9am – 12pm
- April 24, 2024, from 9am – 12pm

For more information or to register please click [HERE](#).



Join the Regional Elected Leaders Initiative Policy and Governance Orientation Program

Want to deepen your understanding of existing region-wide policies shaping NOVA's future? Enhance your governance skills? Effectively communicate with and serve your constituents?

This course is designed especially for YOU - one of NOVA's elected leaders. RELI wants you and our region to thrive!

[REGISTER NOW](#)

When: Seven consecutive Mondays **IN-PERSON**, 6-9pm, April 8 – May 20, 2024. Dinner and parking provided

Where: Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) Office, 3040 Williams Dr., Suite 200, Fairfax, VA

Registration Deadline: April 1, 2024

Tuition/Fees: \$100 per single session or \$475 for all seven sessions

Attendees should check with their locality or caucus to explore access to tuition funding

The 7-week Agenda:

April 8: NOVA Demographics; Roles & Authorities; Campaigning vs Governing

April 15: Policy: Environment; Energy; Water; Parks; Land Use

April 22: Policy: Transportation; Economic Development

April 29: Community Engagement; Constituent Communication; Public Comment; Working with Colleagues/ Staff

May 6: Policy: Housing; Education

May 13: Policy: Public Safety; Emergency Preparedness; Public Health; Human Services

May 20: Legislative Process; Executive Evaluation



Pure, Accurate, and Impartial - three+one is enhancing financial decision-making for public officials across the nation.

This important message from Bill Cherry, former County Treasurer and three+one's Director of Public Partnerships, continues to resonate with our partners.

[Watch](#) as he shares how three+one is enhancing financial decision-making for public officials across the nation.



Aetna® Statewide Wellness Campaign Brings Comprehensive Master Planning and Wellness Programming to Your County

Accessible world-class outdoor wellness infrastructure for communities and schools across Virginia is now being made possible thanks to the new sponsorship [announced last month](#) between [National Fitness Campaign](#) and [Aetna®](#). Here's what this means for your County:

- Ability to work with experts on comprehensive wellness master-planning services in alignment with County goals;
- Support with community consensus, to engage people to spend more time outdoors to improve physical and mental well-being;
- Invitation to qualify for grants from a pool of \$350,000 in funding that is now available for municipalities and schools across Virginia to build a wellness culture as part of the Aetna® campaign.



Most recently, the Town of Dumfries and Mayor Derrick Wood [celebrated the first Fitness Court® Studio in the state this past fall](#) after responding to community voices who were asking for enhanced outdoor recreation options in their community. Residents can now walk, jog or cycle to their free Fitness Court® Studio at Ginn Memorial Park. Dumfries joins Loudoun County, Pulaski County and a number of other municipalities as the campaign continues to grow across Virginia.

Grant funding and comprehensive planning services will be allocated to support municipalities, schools, and organizations across the state in joining the growing NFC wellness campaign, an award-winning initiative now celebrating its 500th Healthy Community in America.

VACo is pleased to share this opportunity with our members who may be interested in qualifying for funding and sponsorship. If you would like to learn more about the Aetna® wellness campaign in Virginia and how to qualify, please fill out the short contact form at nationalfitnesscampaign.com/virginia.

Briefings with NFC require attendance from the Park Director, Public Health Director and/or County Manager/Administrator to qualify for funding and participation in Virginia.

Let's build a healthier Virginia, together.

[Learn More About the Campaign in Virginia](#)



Take Your Leadership Skills to the Next Level Through the NACo Leadership Academy

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

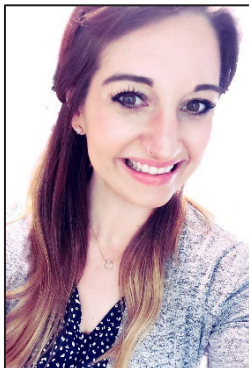
Empowering county government professionals with fundamental, practical leadership skills to deliver results for counties and residents.

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

NACo now offers several comprehensive leadership programs, providing a diverse range of fundamental skills and insights for aspiring leaders:

- NACo High Performance Leadership | 12-week online course
- NACo Cybersecurity Leadership | 12-week online course
- NACo Leading On Purpose Leadership | 8-week online course
- NACo Leading In Analytics Leadership | 8-week online course

Find out more at NACo.org/Skills or reach out to Kelly Shearer to register today!



Kelly Shearer
kshearer@pdaleadership.com
D: 971-353-4428

Kelly joined the Professional Development Academy in 2022 as a Director of Enrollment. She collaborates closely with the National Association of Counties (NACo) to support leadership training resources for local government teams as they work to better serve their communities. Her background is specifically in organizational leadership, and as a Virginia native, she's familiar with the unique challenges and opportunities faced by the region's leaders today. In her free time, Kelly loves spending time with her husband and three boys in their Fredericksburg home, traveling when possible--especially to Virginia's beautiful wineries, and winding down with a good book.



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



04:14



True Blue Photo Speed Enforcement – 5 Things You Should Know

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 | 276-759-8064



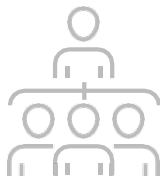
Counties affect the lives of residents every day. When our frontline staff are empowered as leaders, we deliver services more effectively. **The NACo High Performance Leadership Academy is a resource that connects your staff with practical leadership training.** HPLA uses an innovative, interactive online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



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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





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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Sarah Anne Struckmann
Business Development Executive
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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.

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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](#).

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[**SENIOR ENGINEER/FULL-TIME \(ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING\)**](#) | Chesterfield County | Posted March 4

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[**SUBSTITUTE LIBRARY ASSISTANT**](#) | Chesterfield County | Posted March 4

[**COLLECTION MANAGEMENT ASSISTANT**](#) | Chesterfield County | Posted March 4

[**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**](#) | Albemarle County Service Authority | Posted March 4

[**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**](#) | Spotsylvania County | Posted March 4
[**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**](#) | Commonwealth Regional Council | Posted February 29

[**DIRECTOR OF PLANNING**](#) | Fluvanna County | Posted February 29

[**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**](#) | Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission | Posted February 29

[**ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY OR DEPUTY CITY ATTORNEY**](#) | City of Charlottesville | Posted February 29

[**ELECTRICAL PLANS REVIEWER**](#) | Loudoun County | Posted February 29

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[**CITY ASSESSOR**](#) | City of Staunton | Posted February 29

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[**ASSISTANT TO THE CITY MANAGER**](#) | City of Harrisonburg | Posted February 27

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[**STORMWATER COMPLIANCE TECHNICIAN**](#) | Chesterfield County | Posted February 26

[**FINANCE MANAGER**](#) | Chesterfield County | Posted February 26

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[**FINANCE DIRECTOR**](#) | Amelia County | Posted February 26

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[**WASTEWATER COLLECTION CREW LEADER**](#) | James City County | Posted February 23

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[**EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT – PUBLIC UTILITIES**](#) | Shenandoah County | Posted February 22

[**UTILITY PLANT OPERATOR/SENIOR UTILITY PLANT OPERATOR**](#) | Shenandoah County | Posted February 22

[**UTILITY PLANT CHIEF OPERATOR**](#) | Shenandoah County | Posted February 22

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[HUMAN RESOURCES SPECIALIST](#) | Chesterfield County | Posted February 20

[VAN DRIVER \(PART-TIME\)](#) | Chesterfield County | Posted February 20

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[EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES](#) | Spotsylvania County | Posted February 20

[PURCHASING AGENT /ACCOUNTS PAYABLE MANAGER](#) | Campbell County | Posted February 19

[PLANNER](#) | City of Harrisonburg | Posted February 19

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[TOWN MANAGER](#) | Town of South Boston | Posted February 16

[CHIEF INFORMATION SECURITY OFFICER](#) | City of Fredericksburg | Posted February 16

[DEPUTY CITY MANAGER OF OPERATIONS](#) | City of Charlottesville | Posted February 15

[CITY ENGINEER](#) | City of Charlottesville | Posted February 15

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[CODE INSPECTOR I, II OR III \(PLUMBING\)](#) | City of Alexandria | Posted February 9

[LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE PT \(RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM\)](#) | Chesterfield County | Posted February 9

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[COMMUNITY RESOURCE PARAMEDIC – FLYER](#) | City of Winchester | Posted February 7

VALUE OF VACo



ADVOCACY

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.



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

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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