

General Assembly Considers Vetoes and Amendments at Reconvened Session, Sets the Stage for May 13 Special Session



Legislators met in Richmond on Wednesday to act on the Governor's vetoes and amendments to legislation from the 2024 regular session. In advance of the reconvened session, speculation ran rampant as to whether the legislature would reject the Governor's amendments to the FY 2024 "caboose" and 2024-2026 biennium budgets, potentially courting a rare veto of the budget bills, or if the legislature might accept some amendments and reject others. On Wednesday afternoon, the Governor and legislative leadership provided some answers by announcing a path forward to avert an impasse on budget revisions. Legislators will convene in a special session beginning on Monday, May 13, with a planned vote on a budget compromise on May 15. As part of this process, legislators took several procedural votes during the reconvened session to allow budget negotiations to continue, first by ruling the Governor's 242 amendments to the budget bills "not specific and severable," (thus barring any further consideration of the amendments during the reconvened session) and then by voting to take no further action on the underlying budget bills (allowing new bills to be proposed in the special session). Both chambers subsequently adopted a resolution applying to the Governor to call a special session and instructing budget negotiators to use the budget passed by the General Assembly in March as the basis for deliberations.

Governor's vetoes

The Governor issued vetoes for 153 bills, all of which were sustained by the legislature, so these bills will not become law at this time. VACo reported in last week's *Capitol Contact* on bills of interest to local governments that were vetoed by the Governor; that report may be found at [this link](#). The veto for [HB 805 \(Rasoul\)](#), which would have authorized all localities to impose up to a 1 percent sales and use tax for school capital needs, after approval in a referendum, was sustained by the House of Delegates without a recorded vote, as were all other vetoed bills in the House. The vote in the Senate to override the Governor's veto of the companion bill, [SB 14 \(McPike\)](#), failed on a vote of **25-15**, as this fell two votes short of the 2/3 majority required in the Senate to override and advance to the House for consideration. VACo thanks all its members and those who advocated for these bills and the override effort.

Governor's amendments

The legislature agreed to the Governor's amendments for 60 bills and rejected amendments, in whole or in part, to 55 others. Bills for which the General Assembly rejected the Governor's amendments are now returned to the Governor for final action within 30 days; the Governor may sign or veto these bills, or take no action, in which case the bills would become law without his signature.

Following is an update on the General Assembly's actions on bills with gubernatorial amendments of interest to local governments.

Teacher salaries: [HB 187 \(Clark\)](#)/[SB 104 \(Lucas\)](#), as passed by the General Assembly, require the state to provide its share of salary increases over the next three legislative sessions sufficient to raise the average teacher salary in Virginia to at least the national average teacher salary by the end of the next biennium, with the increases phased in at increments specified in the bill.

The Governor's amendments instead would require an annual review of teacher compensation (rather than the current biennial review), and require the budget bills introduced in the next two sessions to propose funding for compensation incentives for Standards of Quality-funded instructional and support position salaries to remain competitive (at or above the national average).

General Assembly action: Rejected the Governor's amendments for both bills.

K-12 funding for At-Risk Program and English language learners: [HB 624 \(Rasoul\)](#)/[SB 105 \(Lucas\)](#) revise the At-Risk Add-On program to create a new At-Risk program and funding formula and require staffing for English language learners to be based on student proficiency levels, as well as revising the National Teacher Certification Incentive Program. The bills also direct the Department of Education to collect data on English language learner expenditures and student proficiency levels, and to develop a plan for revised special education staffing requirements that would address needs in each school division.

The Governor's amendments propose to add a reenactment clause and direct the Department of Education to collaborate with the Joint Subcommittee on Elementary and Secondary Education Funding to determine the impact of modifying the proxy used to estimate the number of at-risk students, as

well as the impact of eliminating the Standards of Quality Prevention, Intervention, and Remediation program.

General Assembly action: Rejected the Governor’s amendments for both bills.

Community schools: [HB 625 \(Rasoul\)](#)/[SB 608 \(Aird\)](#) establish the Office of Community Schools within the Department of Education and direct the new Office to administer the Community School Development and Implementation Planning Grant in accordance with funding priorities set out in the bill.

The Governor’s amendments propose to remove the provisions related to the grant program.

General Assembly action: Agreed to the Governor’s amendments.

Building code enforcement for bus shelters: [HB 285 \(McQuinn\)](#) allows the local building official to enforce the Uniform Statewide Building Code for certain bus shelters and absolves the state from liability for any bus shelters built on state property in this situation. As passed by the General Assembly, the bill has a July 1, 2025, sunset date.

The Governor’s amendment proposes to extend this sunset until July 1, 2027.

General Assembly action: Agreed to the Governor’s amendments.

Local authority to reduce speed limits: [HB 1071 \(Carr\)](#) allows any locality to reduce the speed limit to less than 25 miles per hour (but not less than 15 miles per hour) on highways within its boundary that are located within a business or residence district, provided that signage and notice requirements are met.

The Governor’s amendments propose to add a reenactment clause to the bill and require the Department of Transportation to study the issue.

General Assembly action: Rejected the Governor’s amendments.

Skill games: [SB 212 \(Rouse\)](#) establishes a regulatory and tax framework for skill games, as defined in the bill.

The Governor’s amendments make significant changes to the legislation, including the following revisions:

- Under the bill as passed by the General Assembly (the enrolled bill), up to four skill games machines would be allowed at any ABC retail licensee and up to ten would be allowed at a truck stop. The Governor’s amendments would allow up to three “electronic gaming devices,” as defined in the bill, at host locations that are licensed to sell lottery tickets (but are not truck stops) and up to seven of the machines at truck stops that are licensed to sell lottery tickets. The Governor also proposes a statewide cap of 20,000 electronic gaming devices statewide.

- SB 212 as enrolled would impose a monthly tax of 25 percent of gross receipts for each skill game machine. The Governor appears to propose a 35 percent tax on gross profits generated from the play of electronic gaming devices, with frequency of remittance to be determined by Lottery Board regulations.
- SB 212 as enrolled would distribute skill game tax revenue as follows: 2 percent to the Problem Gambling Treatment and Support Fund; 6 percent to the Department of Taxation or Virginia Lottery Board for administrative costs; 15 percent to the host localities; 1 percent to the local law enforcement agency in the host locality; 1 percent to the Department of State Police, and 75 percent to the PreK-12 Priority Fund to be used for public education purposes. The Governor's amendments would distribute revenue as follows: 5 percent of gross profits to the Gaming Regulatory Fund and 5 percent to the College Partnership Laboratory School Fund; from the remaining funding, 15 percent to the host locality; 2.5 percent to the Problem Gambling Treatment and Support Fund; 75 percent to the Elementary and Secondary Education Fund (which would be appropriated to local governments and school divisions for public education purposes); 2.5 percent to the Department of State Police, and 5 percent to the Interstate 81 Corridor Improvement Fund.
- The Governor's amendments would authorize the governing body of a county or city to hold a referendum or adopt a local ordinance on the question of whether electronic gaming devices should be prohibited in the locality.
- The Governor's amendments would bar electronic gaming devices within 35 miles of any casino gaming establishment or horse racetrack or satellite facility, or within 2,500 feet of any school, child day center, or place of worship.

General Assembly action: Rejected the Governor's amendments.

Recordation and property tax exemptions: [HB 568 \(Askew\)](#)/[SB 517 \(Williams Graves\)](#) eliminate the recordation tax exemption for the Virginia Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and eliminate the real and personal property tax exemption for this group and several other entities.

The Governor's amendments propose to add reenactment clauses to the bills and direct the Department of Taxation to study the effect of recordation tax exemptions and property tax exemptions granted prior to 1971 on state and local government revenues.

General Assembly action: Rejected the Governor's amendments.

Pole attachments and telecommunications services: Among other provisions, [HB 800 \(Herring\)](#)/[SB 713 \(Marsden\)](#) direct the State Corporation Commission to resolve disputes involving pole access within 90 days, and all other related matters within 120 days.

The Governor's amendments propose to allow either period to be extended by up to 60 days by Commission order.

General Assembly action: Agreed to the Governor's amendments.



Visit Madison County and the Madison County Historic Courthouse

Location: 1 South Main Street / Church Street

Built: 1828 – 1830

Style: Colonial

Architect: Malcom F Crawford

Contractor: Malcolm F Crawford, Richard S Boulware and William B Phillips

Description: The building faces southeast and is a two-story red colored brick and wood structure. The building is located on landscaped grounds in the center of Madison. The walls are laid in even colored Flemish bond. The southeast front has an arcade on the first story with four arch and an arch at each end. There are green colored shutters. The building rises to a pediment with a Tuscan entablature at either end. At the front of the roof is an octagonal white colored cupola with green colored dome above. The roof is hipped. The courtroom is located on the first story with two sets of stairs at the rear ascending to a gallery. There is a Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court courtroom on the lower story. The building houses the County Circuit Court, County General District Court and Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court of the 16th Judicial Circuit. On the northeast side is the Clerk's Office with glass entrance between the building and the new one story addition extending northwest. Across Main Street is the red colored brick Courthouse Annex which houses the General District Court

SOURCE: courthouses.co

VACo 2024 REGIONAL MEETINGS

IN-PERSON MEETINGS

REGIONS 1&4 - MAY 1 | PRINCE GEORGE

REGION 2 - MAY 22 | JAMES CITY

REGION 13 - JUNE 11 | SCOTT

REGION 3 - JUNE | HANOVER

REGIONS 10&12 - JULY | FLOYD

VIRTUAL MEETINGS

REGIONS 6&7 - JULY

REGION 8 - AUGUST

REGIONS 5&9&11 - AUGUST



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

VACo Premier Partner Aetna believes healthier happens together. That's why Aetna has teamed up with [National Fitness Campaign](#) to address health disparities by increasing access to health and wellness solutions for Virginia Counties.

In Part 1 of this video series, you'll hear from **Dean Lynch**, VACo Executive Director, **Trent Matthias**, National Fitness Campaign Director, **Bill Deal**, Head of Sales, Public Sector and Labor, Keystone and Capital Markets of Aetna on the exciting new statewide sponsorship and what it can deliver for your county.

In Part 2, learn more about the feasibility study process available for your county and hear from leaders in Virginia like [Pulaski County](#) and the [Town of Dumfries](#) who have successfully launched and integrated the comprehensive wellness campaign in their communities.

Additional Resources

- [Virginia Campaign](#) – Funding Outdoor Fitness Courts across the state
- [Campaign Video](#) – How the fitness court campaign got started, how it works, and how it involves and impacts communities.
- [Outdoor Fitness Court in Pulaski County](#)
- [Outdoor Fitness Court in the Town of Dumfries](#)
- Please click [here](#) to learn more about getting started!

Aetna Contact

Marcus Duckworth, VP, Client Management | DuckworthM@aetna.com



Part 1

[Discover how Aetna's exciting new statewide wellness program can help your county](#)



Part 2

[Hear from Pulaski County and the Town of Dumfries, which have successfully launched and integrated Aetna's comprehensive wellness campaign](#)

King George County Welcomes New County Administrator

Matthew Smolnik is expected to start his new role on June 1



The King George County Board of Supervisors is pleased to announce the appointment of Matthew Smolnik as county administrator, effective June 1.

Mr. Smolnik brings over 20 years of experience in local government to King George County. Most recently, he served as assistant county administrator in New Kent County. In this role, he was responsible for various administrative duties, such as leadership management and budget review, as well as implementation of economic development projects.

After receiving dual bachelor's degrees from the University of Pittsburgh, Mr. Smolnik worked for two years as a Virginia State Park Ranger before pursuing a master's degree at West Virginia University. In 2005, he began his career as a public servant in southeast Virginia and has since held numerous titles for localities in that region, including senior planner with James City County Planning Division, assistant director of planning and zoning with Isle of Wight County, as well as director of community development and director of economic development with New Kent County.

Mr. Smolnik's proven track record of success in managing community development and economic development projects in the communities he has served makes him a strong fit for the role of county administrator. "King George County Government is honored to welcome Mr. Smolnik to his new home between the rivers. He will be a wonderful asset to the county's team of dedicated public servants," says Amy Southall, county spokesperson.

"I am excited to join the community of King George and to listen and learn from residents, so I can serve them to the best of my ability," says Matthew Smolnik.

Mr. Smolnik is passionate about community service. An Eagle Scout himself, he currently volunteers as a Boy Scout troop leader and plans to carry on that service in King George, as well. Mr. Smolnik enjoys activities in the community he can share with his family, especially cheering on his two children at their various sporting events with his wife. Mr. Smolnik looks forward to getting involved in new activities and organizations in King George that will allow him to better serve the community.

2024 Stormwater Local Assistance Fund Needs Survey



In 2019, the Stormwater Management Act (Code of Virginia § 62.1-44.15:24 *et seq.*) was amended to require the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to annually determine an estimate of the amount of Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF) matching grants expected to be requested by local governments for eligible projects related to planning, designing, and implementing stormwater best management practices.

As of April 16, the DEQ seeks local input to identify the future funding needs for SLAF eligible nutrient reduction projects in the Commonwealth. The DEQ has prepared a survey to solicit this input. [Linked here](#) is the survey document to facilitate the gathering of project details prior to survey completion. **Please open the survey [link](#) only when you are prepared to enter the information requested.**

This survey intends to capture an estimate of the SLAF funding needed for local governments conducting stormwater projects in the near future. [Linked here](#) you will find a letter from DEQ Director, Mike Rolband, with additional details regarding the importance of this survey.

More information on the Stormwater Local Assistance Fund can be found in the procedural guidelines through the following link - [Stormwater Local Assistance Fund Program Guidelines \(virginia.gov\)](#).

The deadline for this survey to be completed is **May 24, 2024**.

VACo Contact: [James Hutzler](#)

2024 Water Quality Improvement Fund Needs Survey



The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) seeks your input to identify future funding needs for point source WQIF eligible projects in the Commonwealth. The DEQ has prepared a survey to solicit your input. To aid in completion of the survey, attached is the [WQIF guidance memo #06-2012 amendment #1, #06-2012 amendment #1 addendum #1](#), as well as [the survey](#) text so that you may gather the necessary project information prior to survey completion. Please open the [survey link](#) only once you are prepared with the project information.

This survey intends to capture an estimate of the WQIF funding needed for significant and eligible non-significant dischargers to meet their existing discharge permit limits or waste load allocation. Here's is [a letter](#) from DEQ Director, Mike Rolband, with additional details regarding the importance of this survey.

The deadline for this survey to be completed is **May 24, 2024**.

VACo Contact: [James Hutzler](#)

Virginia Receives Over \$100 Million in Opioid Settlement Funds

~ The approximate total of \$108.4 million stems from seven different opioid settlements ~

RICHMOND, Va. – Attorney General Jason Miyares today announced that Virginia has received another round of payments from settlements with opioid manufacturers, major pharmaceutical distributors, and retail pharmacy chains totaling approximately \$108.4 million. This includes all of the shares in this round of payments that will be allocated to the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Opioid Abatement Authority, and localities.

“Thanks to the unwavering dedication of my Consumer Protection team, Virginia just received over \$100 million in opioid settlement funds that will enable us to more effectively prevent, reduce, and treat addiction at a localized level,” said Attorney General Miyares.

The approximate amounts received from each settlement in this round of disbursements:

- Teva: \$6.346 million
- Allergan: \$7.033 million
- CVS: \$7.831 million
- Walgreens: \$15.155 million
- Walmart: \$61.621 million
- Cencora (formerly AmerisourceBergen): \$5.219 million
- Cardinal Health: \$5.243 million

Cencora and Cardinal Health, two major pharmaceutical distributors, began sending opioid settlement payments to Virginia in 2022. Additionally, Cencora and Cardinal Health elected to exercise an option in the Distributors settlement that allows them to prepay their settlement installments that are scheduled for 2027 at a discount in 2024.

Drug manufacturers Teva and Allergan, as well as retail pharmacy chains CVS, Walgreens, and Walmart, settled with Virginia in 2023. These are the first payments received from those settlements.

The approximate allocation of funds received:

- Commonwealth of Virginia: \$16.992 million
- Opioid Abatement Authority: \$59.178 million
- Localities: \$32.279 million

The Opioid Abatement Authority is the entity responsible for distributing opioid settlement funds to localities and state agencies on a grant-application basis.

To date, Virginia has secured over \$1.1 billion in opioid settlement funds.

The above article was released by the Virginia Attorney General's Office on April 17.

Local government billing on behalf of volunteer fire departments: [HB 852 \(Williams\)](#) allows a local governing body to enact an ordinance regarding billing on behalf of volunteer fire departments for the provision of emergency medical services.

The Governor's amendments propose to revise the bill to allow billing on behalf of volunteer fire departments for the support of a licensed emergency medical services agency.

General Assembly action: Agreed to the Governor's amendments.

Utility disconnections: [HB 906 \(Shin\)](#)/[SB 480 \(Aird\)](#) limit utility disconnections for nonpayment under certain circumstances and require certain notices prior to disconnection.

The Governor's amendments propose to require notice to be provided via at least one method listed in the bill (as passed by the General Assembly, notice must be provided through at least two methods), and bar disconnection for residential customers until an account is 45 days in arrears (rather than 60 days, as in the enrolled bills).

General Assembly action: Agreed to the Governor's amendments.

Regulation of liquid nicotine and nicotine vapor products: [HB 1069 \(Willett\)](#)/[SB 550 \(Deeds\)](#) ban the sale of liquid nicotine and nicotine vapor products that are not certified to the Attorney General as authorized for marketing by the Food and Drug Administration (or meeting certain other requirements as spelled out in the bill). Under the bills, the Attorney General may bring a court action to enjoin a violation and a Commonwealth's Attorney, or a county, city, or town attorney would have the same authority with the concurrence of the Attorney General.

The Governor's amendments propose to remove the Attorney General's authority to bring the court action or to concur with such an action by a Commonwealth's Attorney or local government attorney. The amendments also propose to allow the Commonwealth's Attorney or local government attorney to recoup costs of investigation and attorney fees and would provide that civil penalties in an action brought in the name of a locality would be paid into the local general fund.

General Assembly action: Agreed to the Governor's amendments.

Penalty for demolition of historic structures: [HB 1415 \(McQuinn\)](#) authorizes any locality to establish a civil penalty for the razing, demolition, or moving of a building or structure located in a historic district or designated as a historic structure or landmark in violation of local ordinance; the civil penalty would be limited to the market value of the property (to include the value of the building or structure and the value of the underlying real property).

The Governor's amendments would revise the limitation on the civil penalty to provide that the penalty would be limited to twice the market value of the razed, demolished, or moved building or structure.

General Assembly action: Agreed to the Governor's amendments.

Procurement: [SB 260 \(DeSteph\)](#) provides that in case of a tie bid, preference would first be given to goods produced in Virginia, and then to goods produced in the United States.

The Governor's amendments propose to add a process for a preference for Virginia-produced goods in the procurement of goods by manufacturers, and add language exempting a project or procurement from the bill's requirements in the case of a conflict with federal law or regulation. The Governor also proposes to add a July 1, 2027, sunset date, and to require a report from the Department of General Services.

General Assembly action: Agreed to the Governor's amendments.

Resilient Virginia Revolving Fund: [HB 673 \(Feggans\)](#) directs the Department of Conservation and Recreation to weight projects in low-income geographic areas and projects incorporating nature-based solutions when making loans and grants to local governments from the Fund.

The Governor's amendments would revise the bill to weight projects in low-income geographic areas and projects in a locality designated as having a very low community resilience rating, as determined by the Department.

General Assembly action: Agreed to the Governor's amendments.

Crisis receiving center/crisis stabilization unit regulations: [SB 569 \(Deeds\)](#) directs the State Board of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services to revise its regulations to authorize the appropriate and safe use of seclusion in crisis receiving centers and crisis stabilization units, and directs a workgroup to propose additional regulations allowing for evidence-based and recovery-oriented seclusion and restraint practices and alternative behavior management practices to limit the use of seclusion and restraint.

The Governor's amendment would add an emergency clause to the bill.

General Assembly action: Agreed to the Governor's amendments.

VACo Contact: [VACo Legislative Team](#)

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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. **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 with questions or for more information.

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

**[ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS
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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

Learn more about advocacy at the VACo Supervisors' Forum



May 18, 2024

VACo Headquarters and Virtual

AGENDA

Through the Supervisors' Forum, VACo offers county leaders and other officials the chance to examine common issues.

Participants are given an overview of local government and the duties of a County Supervisor by local officials who relish in sharing their knowledge and experience.

Contact [Valerie Russell](#) to register today!

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2024 Virginia EMS Symposium Update



As the Virginia Office of EMS (OEMS) continues to face financial challenges and works towards a more sound fiscal strategy, it has been determined there will be no statewide EMS Symposium held in 2024. OEMS understands the importance of in-person training and has collaborated with Virginia's Regional EMS Councils and other EMS partners to continue offering additional educational opportunities and resources.

Check out these upcoming EMS training events that include a variety of hands-on and lecture style classes to help fulfill your CE requirements.

In-person EMS Training Opportunities:

Inova Health System and Northern Virginia EMS Council EMS Symposium

April 29, 2024, 7:30 a.m. – 5:15 p.m. | Falls Church, Va.

Learn more and register online: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2024_EMS_SYMPOSIUM_APRIL

Tidewater EMS Expo

May 14-19, 2024 | Chesapeake, Va.

Learn more and register online: <https://tidewaterems.org/expo/>

Virginia Association of Volunteer Rescue Squads (VAVRS) 2024 Rescue College

June 7-16, 2024 | Blacksburg, Va.

Learn more and register online: https://www.vavrs.com/site_page.cfm?pk_association_webpage_menu=10100&pk_association_webpage=22468

First Responder Virginia 5 Conference/Expo

September 18-22, 2024 | Virginia Beach, Va.

Learn more: <https://www.vsfa.org/2024-conference-expo/>

EMS Training Course Locator

Find in-person EMS training in your region. Search by region, county, level and/or course title. Learn more: <https://vdhems.vdh.virginia.gov/emsapps/f?p=200:4>

Virtual EMS Training Opportunities:

- [Online CE training](#)
- [Vector Solutions](#)

For additional questions about continuing education course offerings, please contact the OEMS Accreditation, Certification and Education Division at: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/emergency-medical-services/education-certification/meet-our-staff/>.

[Click here for more information.](#)



2024 Investing in Rural America Conference

May 21 - 22, 2024 | \$50 registration fee
The Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center | Roanoke, Virginia

[Learn More & Register](#)

Registration is now open for the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond's [2024 Investing in Rural America Conference](#), themed *Building and Sustaining Momentum*, a two-day event featuring national experts and local leaders on the forefront of rural development initiatives. This year's conference features **keynote speaker Liz Weaver**, co-CEO of the [Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement](#).

Join us in Roanoke on May 21-22 to hear from speakers on topics including:

- Community Development Financing
- Turning Challenges into Community Assets
- Developing the Next Generation of Rural Leaders
- Measuring the Success of Community Colleges in Developing Our Workforce
- Innovative Strategies to Increase Housing Availability
- Storytelling for Economic Growth
- Collaborative Leadership Tools

The [conference registration site](#) will be updated regularly with the full conference agenda, speaker list, and information on hotel accommodations. A [discounted room block](#) at the Hotel Roanoke is available through April 24 or until the block fills. Can't attend both days of the conference? Simply indicate the sessions you'll be able to attend at registration and join us as you're able.

[Visit the Conference Site](#)



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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).





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.

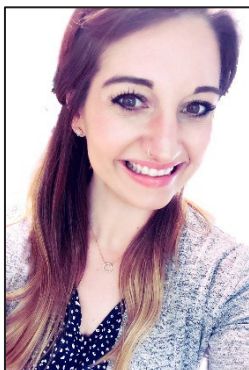
Empowering county government professionals with fundamental, practical leadership skills to deliver results for counties and residents.

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](https://www.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.



TRUEBLUE PHOTO SPEED ENFORCEMENT

5 THINGS
YOU SHOULD KNOW



04:14

True Blue Photo Speed Enforcement – 5 Things You Should Know

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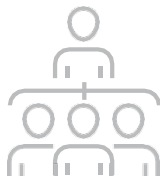
Counties affect the lives of residents every day. When our frontline staff are empowered as leaders, we deliver services more effectively. **The NACo High Performance Leadership Academy is a resource that connects your staff with practical leadership training.** HPLA uses an innovative, interactive online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



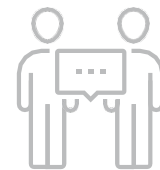
COLLABORATE:

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://www.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.



OUR SOLUTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

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- Development & Training

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- Productivity
- Retirement Readiness

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- Education & Fiduciary
- Literacy
- Communications

PROTECT

- Compliance
- Workplace Safety
- Operational Continuity
- Cyber Security



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Business Development Executive
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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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[BUILDING INSPECTOR](#) | Westmoreland County | Posted April 16

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[DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC UTILITIES](#) | City of Portsmouth | Posted April 16

[DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM](#) | New Kent County | Posted April 15

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[QUALITY ASSURANCE COORDINATOR](#) | Chesterfield County | Posted April 8

[MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY SERVICES SUPERVISOR](#) | Chesterfield County | Posted April 8

[SCHOOL BUS TECHNICIAN](#) | Chesterfield County | Posted April 8

[IT DIRECTOR](#) | Northampton County | Posted April 8

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[REAL ESTATE ASSESSOR](#) | Shenandoah County | Posted April 5

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[ASSISTANT COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY](#) | Louisa County | Posted April 4

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[DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION](#) | Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission | Posted April 4

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[PERMIT PROFFER MANAGER](#) | Loudoun County | Posted April 2

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[LEAD CASHIER](#) | Chesterfield County | Posted April 2

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[DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR](#) | Louisa County | Posted March 27

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[CHIEF INFORMATION SECURITY OFFICER](#) | City of Fredericksburg | Posted March 26

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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.



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

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

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