

State Review of the Making Efficient and Responsible Investments in Transit (MERIT) Operating Formula – Public Comment Period



Making Efficient + Responsible Investments In Transit

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) announced a 45-day public comment period for proposed program changes to the Making Efficient and Responsible Investments in Transit (MERIT) operating and capital assistance on October 7, 2025.

Here is a link to the [MERIT Operating and Capital Assistance Proposed Program Changes](#)

Comments will be accepted through 5:00pm on November 21, 2025, and can be sent to drptpr@drpt.virginia.gov or 600 East Main Street, Suite 2102, Richmond, VA 23219.

As part of this process, a **2025 MERIT Review – Proposed Changes webinar** will be held on **November 12, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. (virtual only)**. The session will review the proposed program changes, revisit information from previous meetings, and provide an opportunity for attendees to ask questions. Participation is encouraged to ensure all partners understand the updates and can provide feedback during the public comment period.

To attend the MERIT review webinar – Please [Register Here](#)

Background

The MERIT Program provides funding for operating expenses for eligible public transportation services by using a performance-based methodology to determine the specific allocation of operating assistance funds to each transit agency. MERIT is currently undergoing its [Code required](#) evaluation by DRPT with input from the [Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee \(TSDAC\)](#). TSDAC consists of transit leaders, local government leaders (one of which is appointed by VACo) and a member of the Commonwealth Transportation Board and advises DRPT in the development and review of the MERIT program. The current TSDAC Chair is VACo appointee and James City County Supervisor, John McGlennon. While there is a capital assistance component to MERIT, this article will focus solely on the operating changes and recommendations that county leaders should know.

Virginia Retirement System Certifies FY 2027–2028 Employer Contribution Rates for Teacher Plan Following Strong Investment Performance

At its October 16, 2025 [meeting](#), the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) [Board of Trustees](#) certified new employer contribution rates for the five statewide retirement plans, including the teacher plan, based on the June 30, 2025 actuarial valuations prepared by Gabriel, Roeder, Smith & Company (GRS). Most relevant for county governments, employer contribution rates for the teacher plan were recommended to be reduced during the coming biennium from the current rate of 14.21% to 12.20%. If approved by the Governor and General Assembly during the 2026 legislative session, the new rates will take effect July 1, 2026, for fiscal years 2027 and 2028.

The VRS portfolio posted a 9.9% return for FY 2025, far exceeding the system's 6.75% assumed rate of return. That performance generated approximately \$820 million in deferred asset gains to be recognized between 2026 and 2029, contributing to improved funded ratios and reduced employer contribution rates across most plans.

Higher-than-expected salary growth and cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) modestly increased actuarial liabilities; however, these were more than offset by the investment gains. The teacher plan's funded status improved from 81% to 83% as of June 30, 2025, with remaining unfunded liabilities of roughly \$11.2 billion, according to GRS's presentation.

Associated Other Post-Employment Benefit (OPEB) plan rates were also approved:

- Group Life Insurance: 1.06%
- Health Insurance Credit – Teachers: 0.88%
- Health Insurance Credit – State Employees: 0.70%
- Virginia Sickness and Disability Program (VSDP): 0.42%

While the funded status also improved for these plans, the state and teacher health insurance credit plans are still well below funding levels of pensions, at 41 percent and 27 percent, respectively, which is below the healthy level as determined by plan actuaries.

The new rates will save the state an estimated \$171.4 million in general tax funds in the coming biennial budget compared with the current budget. It also will save an estimated \$264.8 million in nongeneral funds, which includes the local government share of teacher retirement contributions. The presentation to the Board underscored the impact of strong returns on the teacher plan, which covers over 160,000 active members and 114,000 retirees.

With markets performing above expectations and deferred gains still to be recognized, VRS projects continued strength across its plans. The system's total assets now exceed \$123 billion, and all major plans improved or maintained their funded ratios.

As previously [reported](#), VRS uses the actuarial valuations for [employer contribution rate](#) setting on odd years in advance of the next biennium. The rates for the teacher and other statewide plans are presented in October, while the other most important plans to local governments (Political Subdivisions plans, the Virginia Local Disability Program, and Line of Duty Act) are presented in November. The VRS staff actuary will present summary information for local governments at the Board's next meeting on November 13th, with rates mailed to localities after January 1, 2026. Final contribution rates will be available at the conclusion of the 2026 General Assembly and will take effect on July 1, 2026 for FY 2027 and FY 2028. VACo will report on these events as they develop.

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

Chesterfield County Five-Term Dale District Supervisor Jim Holland Passes Following Hard-Fought Battle with Cancer



Five-term Dale District Supervisor James M. "Jim" Holland has passed away following a courageous battle with cancer. Mr. Holland passed on October 14 at his home surrounded by family.

Despite declining health in recent months, Mr. Holland, 73, the longest tenured current member of the Chesterfield County Board of Supervisors, remained focused on the needs of his district and the county. Shortly before passing, Mr. Holland penned a letter intended for his constituents stating, "it has been one of the greatest honors and privileges of my life to serve you."

Holland's first term began in 2008. He would serve as board chair in 2014, 2021 and 2024, and as vice chair in 2010 and 2022. Holland's public service extended far beyond his beloved Dale District and county, having accepted appointments by every Virginia governor during his nearly 18-year tenure, the most recent being a reappointment to the Virginia Opioid Abatement

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Authority Board. He also represented Chesterfield regionally on the Richmond Region Tourism Board, Capitol Region Airport Commission, Greater Richmond Partnership, PlanRVA, and the Capital Region Workforce Partnership.

“We will greatly miss Jim’s calm, deliberate and gentlemanly approach to navigating the work of the board,” said Bermuda District Supervisor and current Board Chair Jim Ingle. “Anyone who has ever had the pleasure of serving alongside him has learned from him. Jim’s approach was always to do what he thought was best for his district and Chesterfield.

“We will appoint someone to take his seat until a special election can be held,” Ingle added, “but we will never replace Jim Holland.”

Mr. Holland, a U.S. Army veteran and CPA who taught at Virginia Commonwealth University, helped guide Chesterfield through times of great prosperity and change. During his time on the board, Chesterfield has experienced significant economic growth and enhanced quality of life. His steady approach also helped Chesterfield weather two of the most significant challenges the county has faced, the Great Recession and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Holland was still new to the board in 2008 when the housing crisis struck. Holland relied on his expertise as a CPA to help successfully steer Chesterfield through the ensuing financial emergency that would later become known as the Great Recession. By the time the pandemic hit years later, Holland was a seasoned county leader whom others turned to for guidance and wisdom to navigate unprecedented challenges. Chesterfield weathered the recession and pandemic better than many other localities to remain among the top performing local governments in Virginia and the nation.

This past May, Chesterfield renamed the Beulah Recreation Center as the James M. Holland Recreation Complex at Beulah, recognizing Holland’s key role in envisioning the previous Beulah Elementary School a community gathering place. During his tenure, the Dale District saw new schools built, including replacements for Beulah Elementary and Falling Creek Middle, and the renovation of Central Library. The Chesterfield County Airport has also grown its presence to attract business in the heart of the Dale District.

Holland also helped lead Chesterfield to unprecedented economic development. Projects by companies including Sabra, Maruchan, Niagara, Plenty, LEGO, Commonwealth Fusion and others are shaping the county, growing the commercial tax base, and providing thousands of jobs.

Holland is survived by his wife of 52 years, Judith, and two adult children including a daughter, Jessica Holland Tamba, and a son, James Matthew Holland. Funeral arrangements will be announced.



Visit Wise County and the Wise County Historic Courthouse

Location: 206 East Main Street / Spring Avenue SE

Built: 1895 – 1896

Style: Renaissance Revival and Italianate

Architect: Frank Pierce Milburn of Washington, DC

Contractor: Milbourne Gilliam & Creed Flanary

Description: The building faces north east and is a two story buff colored brick structure. The building is located on landscaped grounds in the center of Wise. The north front has a small porch at the central entrance with two columns rising to a balcony on the second story. The northeast corner has a high square clock tower and the northwest corner has a high square tower with openings at the top. The second story windows are arched. The base of the building is rough cut limestone. In the interior, the central entrance hall has an open well stair executed in cast iron with classicized newel in the form of a fluted column with an Ionic capital, an iron railing with fanciful scrolled decoration and applied anthemion ornamentation, and open-work treads also executed in cast iron. A wooden matchboard wainscot runs the perimeter of the hall. The hall retains its original pressed-tin ceiling. The second story has the courtrooms. The building houses the County Circuit Court, County General District Court and County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court of the 30th Judicial Circuit. The architect was Frank Pierce Milburn and the contractor was Milbourne Gilliam & Creed Flanary. On the west side is a light brown colored brick two story addition constructed in 1920. The addition has a balustrade along the flat roof line. On the south side is the modern courthouse constructed from 1979 to 1980. The architect was Charles B McElroy and the contractor was Armstrong Construction Company, Inc.

SOURCE: [American Courthouses](#)

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VACo Contact: [Karie Walker](#)

Northampton County Announces Appointment for New County Administrator



Northampton County is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Matt Spuck as County Administrator, effective January 1, 2026.

Mr. Spuck brings more than 20 years of experience in public and nonprofit administration, including the past five years as Town Manager of Onancock, Virginia. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Quinnipiac University and a Master's Advanced Certificate in Public Administration from Old Dominion University.

During his tenure in Onancock, Mr. Spuck led initiatives in infrastructure improvement, economic development, and community engagement that strengthened the town's fiscal health and quality of life.

In a statement, Board of Supervisors Chairman John Coker said, "We welcome Matt and his family to Northampton County. His skills and management experience will be valuable as we move Northampton forward."

In his free time, Mr. Spuck enjoys boating on the Chesapeake Bay, exploring Virginia's small towns, and spending time with his family and German Shepherd.

Mr. Spuck will succeed Charles Kolakowski in the position of County Administrator. Mr. Kolakowski has served the County since 2017, and is looking forward to continued residency in Northampton County in retirement. The Board is grateful to Mr. Kolakowski for his excellent service over the past eight years, wishes him the best, and looks forward to his future involvement in County matters as a County citizen.

Roanoke County Announces Deputy County Administrator Retirement and Appointment



Roanoke County Administrator Richard L. Caywood, P.E., today announced two personnel changes, both effective December 1, 2025.

Deputy County Administrator Rebecca E. Owens will retire after more than 33 years of public service. Owens joined Roanoke County in 2000 as a Finance Manager, was later promoted to Director of Finance, appointed Assistant County Administrator in 2019, and became Deputy County Administrator in 2022. Prior to joining the County, she worked for the City of Salem.

"Rebecca is widely recognized as a strong leader, especially in local government finance," said Caywood. "She has represented Roanoke County and the wider region through many committees, boards, and initiatives that have helped shape our community. Her dedication, expertise, and thoughtful leadership have had a lasting impact on our organization. All of us at Roanoke County are grateful for her more than 25 years of service and wish her the very best in a well-deserved retirement."

Caywood also announced the appointment of **Doug Blount as Deputy County Administrator** to fill the vacancy created by Owens' retirement. Blount has served Roanoke County since 2011, initially as Director of Parks, Recreation & Tourism, and as

[More ROANOKE on Next Page](#)

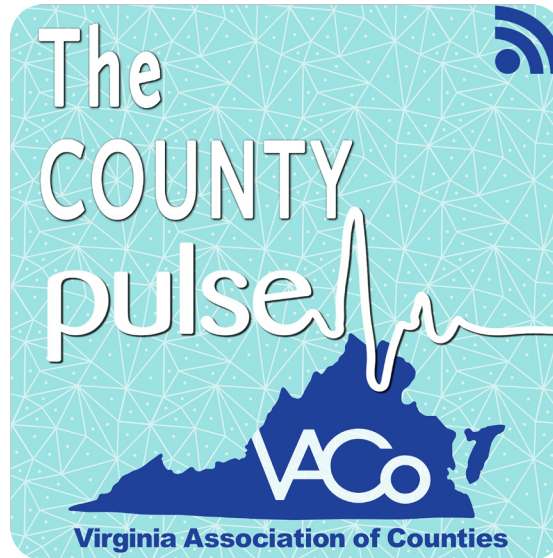
Assistant County Administrator since 2022. Blount will begin his new role on December 1, coinciding with Owens' retirement.

"Doug brings a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to our community," said Caywood. "His leadership, expertise, and vision will play a key role in shaping the future of our organization, and I'm excited to see the impact he will continue to make. Doug's leadership has been instrumental in many of our recent economic development successes, including Wells Fargo, Mack Trucks, Publix, and many other important projects."

Blount, a Roanoke County native, has nearly 30 years of local government experience, including 15 years with the Prince William County Park Authority in various leadership roles. In his time with Roanoke County, he has overseen the County's capital program delivery and departments including Economic Development, Parks, Recreation & Tourism, General Services, Development Services, Libraries, and Planning.

"I am honored to have the opportunity to continue serving Roanoke County," said Blount. "By collaborating with our talented and experienced team, we will build on the progress already made for our citizens. I am passionate about enhancing the region's livability and look forward to advancing initiatives that benefit our residents, visitors, and businesses."

Blount holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from East Tennessee State University. He and his wife, Melissa, have been married for 30 years and reside in Roanoke County. They have two adult children.



Energy Landscape of Virginia Series with Joe Lerch

Episode 22 | Logging and Biomass Energy Production



[Listen to the Podcast.](#)

Energy Landscape of Virginia Episode 22 | Logging and Biomass Energy Production. Joe Lerch visits the Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative (NOVEC) Halifax County Biomass plant to learn how biomass energy production contributes to the health of Virginia's forests and the environment. The episode begins with a conversation with plant manager Mike Davis and Palmer Dugger of L.P. Dugger Logging followed up with a tour of the facility.

Where to find out more about topics covered in this episode.

- [NOVEC Halifax County Biomass Electric Generating Facility](#)
- [L P Dugger Logging, L.L.C](#)
- [Forest Sustainability Fund for Local Government: Virginia Department of Forestry](#)
- [Photo 1](#) and [Photo 2](#)

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

Money Committees Receive Updates on State Revenues, SNAP Error Rate Efforts



The Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee met on October 14 in Portsmouth for an [update](#) on state revenues, a [briefing](#) on the health of the state economy, an [update](#) from the Virginia Retirement System, and a [report](#) from the Virginia Department of Social Services on efforts to improve Virginia's administration of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The House Appropriations Committee was also [briefed](#) on state revenues a few days later, meeting on October 20 for a presentation from Secretary of Finance Stephen E. Cummings, as well as an [update](#) on discussions regarding transit funding for Northern Virginia, and a [report](#) on capital projects administered by the state's Department of General Services.

Secretary Cummings reported another month of strong revenue growth in September, with revenues exceeding the forecast by 9.8 percent. On a fiscal year-to-date basis, revenues are outpacing the forecast by 7.9 percent, or \$561 million. Individual income tax withholding collections continue to perform particularly well, outpacing projections by 7.6 percent, or \$315.5 million, year-to-date, although this level of growth is not expected to persist. Sales and use tax collections are slightly outperforming projections, and are 1.4 percent, or \$17.5 million, above projections on a fiscal year-to-date basis. The most up-to-date official government employment

statistics are not available due to the federal government shutdown, but private sector data suggest that employment declined nationally and in Virginia in September; however, Secretary Cummings reminded both committees that unemployment in Virginia, although rising, remains at a low 3.6 percent, below the national rate of 4.3 percent. (The Secretary provided updated figures in his October 20 presentation indicating that initial unemployment claims spiked in the week ending October 11, likely partially related to “federally-adjacent” claims; initial unemployment claims by federal employees also increased substantially, although Virginia’s numbers are far below those of Maryland and the District of Columbia.) The shutdown is not anticipated to have a significant effect on state General Fund revenues, based on past experiences in which federal employees received back pay when the government reopened, although some state employees whose positions are federally funded were to be furloughed October 15, with the potential for more furloughs if the shutdown continues, and funding for certain programs, including SNAP, will run out at the end of the month.

Professor Robert McNab, Chair of the Department of Economics at Old Dominion University, took a more guarded view of the state’s economy, cautioning that reductions in federal employment and persistent tariffs affecting business at the Port of Virginia will hamper growth, and expressing a view that “[t]he growth prospects for the Commonwealth are markedly diminished from January 2025.”

Principal Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Social Services Carl Ayers reported on the Administration’s SNAP Forward initiative to reduce the SNAP payment error rate. Provisions in the federal reconciliation legislation require the state to contribute a portion of the cost of SNAP benefits, beginning October 1, 2027, if the state’s error rate exceeds 6 percent. The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) has been investigating the root cause of Virginia’s error rate, with the assistance of a consultant, and determining how other states have successfully improved their performance; local staff have been required to complete additional training, and the state has been providing targeted technical assistance and training to the departments with the largest SNAP caseloads. VDSS is also exploring some near-term technology enhancements to improve accuracy.

Senate Finance and Appropriations Chair Louise Lucas concluded the October 14 meeting with a reiteration of the concerns she expressed at the Committee’s last meeting about the substantial budget pressures that are expected in the coming session, including rebenchmarking of the Standards of Quality, growth in the Medicaid program, and the additional costs required as part of changes to SNAP. House Appropriations Committee Chairman Luke Torian made similar remarks at the end of the last meeting of the House Appropriations Committee, signaling that both Committees are likely to be cautious in undertaking new ongoing discretionary spending in the months ahead.

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

VDOT Sets Public Meetings Oct. 27-30 for Interstate 81 Corridor Improvement Plan - Online Survey will Accompany In-Person Meetings



The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will host a series of public meetings October 27-30 to gather feedback regarding potential improvements along Interstate 81 in Virginia. The in-person meetings are part of Round 3 (Refined Solutions), the final round of public engagement for the I-81 Corridor Improvement Plan (CIP) 2025 study. An online survey will also be available.

Round 1 (Issue Identification) of the I-81 CIP combined traffic data with online public input to identify safety and congestion issues along the entire 325-mile corridor. Round 2 (Potential Solutions) developed improvements for interstate segments with the highest rate and severity of crashes, or the most significant traffic delays. Round 3 focuses on refining those solutions and presenting a prioritized list of projects.

This study excludes portions of the interstate where widenings or truck-climbing lanes were recently completed or are under development.

[More I-81 on Next Page](#)

The public meetings will begin with a brief presentation followed by an open-house period, allowing participants to view large display boards and ask questions of the I-81 CIP study team.

The meeting schedule is shown below:

Monday, Oct. 27, from 5-7 p.m.

Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center
One Partnership Circle
Abingdon, VA 24212

Tuesday, Oct. 28, from 5-7 p.m.

Salem Civic Center
1001 Roanoke Boulevard
Salem, VA 24153

Wednesday, Oct. 29, from 5-7 p.m.

Blue Ridge Community College
Robert E. Plecker Workforce Center
One College Lane
Weyers Cave, VA 24486

Thursday, Oct. 30, from 5-7 p.m.

Shenandoah University
Brandt Student Center
1460 University Drive
Winchester, VA 22601

The accompanying Round 3 online survey will be available from Oct. 27 to Nov. 9 on the [Improve81 Study Page](#).

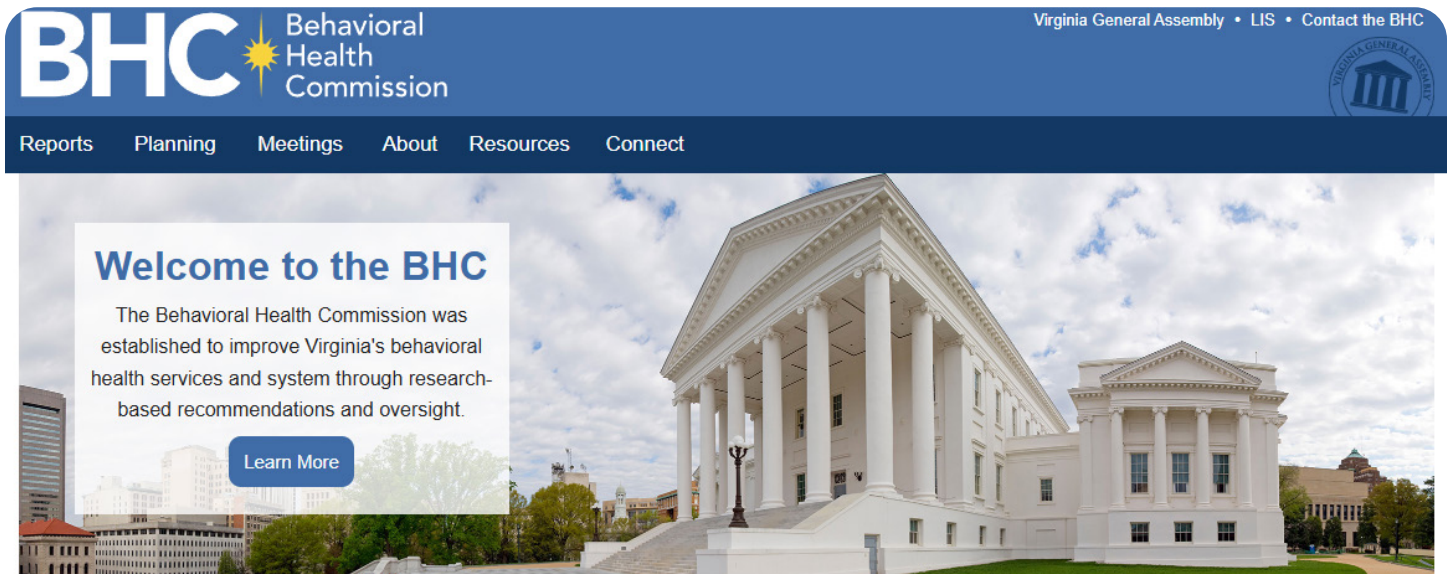
Comments can also be sent to va81corridorplan@vdot.virginia.gov or by postal mail to Robert J. Williams, Virginia Department of Transportation, 1221 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219.

The full I-81 CIP study is expected to be completed by the end of 2025. VACo will continue to provide updates as they become available.

VDOT completed a similar study on I-81 in 2018, which resulted in the advancement of 65 construction projects currently valued at approximately \$4 billion. Information on those projects can be found at Improve81.org.

VACo Contact: [James Hutzler](#)

Behavioral Health Commission Checks in on STEP-VA and Crisis System Investments



The Behavioral Health Commission's October 7 meeting featured presentations reviewing the progress of major initiatives aimed at improving access to community-based services and providing alternatives to involuntary hospitalization.

STEP-VA performance monitoring and evaluation: Commission staff reviewed the implementation of the STEP-VA system as part of the Commission's responsibility for ongoing monitoring of major behavioral health initiatives. STEP-VA, first enacted in 2017 and phased in from FY 2018 through FY 2023, aims to establish a standard array of nine services at each Community Services Board (CSB). Virginia's approach was patterned after the national Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) model, although Virginia opted not to structure Medicaid funding for STEP-VA through the prospective payment system that is traditionally used for CCBHCs. Under the prospective payment system, the state would develop a daily or monthly rate that would cover the full cost of providing a set of required services; instead, STEP-VA's Medicaid funding is provided through per-service rates, and CSBs have continued to struggle with Medicaid billing and reimbursement. Virginia considered the prospective payment structure in the past, but decided against it due to the significant changes that would be required to existing system structures and contracts; in addition to recommending state assistance to CSBs with improving processes for billing and collecting Medicaid revenue under the current system, Commission staff recommended revisiting the prospective payment system option and determining which process changes would be required to implement the alternative approach.

STEP-VA is now fully implemented, with all required services available at each CSB; however, there is some variation among CSBs, such as the specific services offered in each locality, hours

of service, office locations, and the length of wait lists. Staff recommended that the Secretary of Health and Human Resources be directed to convene a task force to develop a strategic vision for STEP-VA, which could then be codified, noting that the legislature's current vision for STEP-VA appears to be limited to the deployment of services. Staff also found that current performance measures largely focus on compliance with program requirements and processes, and do not capture program quality or outcomes; current limitations on data availability hamper the evaluation of STEP-VA service quality.

Staff also encouraged revisiting the funding structure of STEP-VA, which currently allocates funding for each service separately, without the ability for CSBs to transfer funding between services based on community needs. Although substantial funding has been appropriated for the initiative overall, some CSBs need more funding for some services and less for others, and staff suggested that the Appropriation Act and CSB performance contracts should be amended to allow more flexibility in the distribution of funding.

Staff's presentation is available at [this link](#).

Aligning crisis services and civil commitment process: Legislation passed in 2024 directed this two-year study, which required staff to examine the interaction between the civil commitment process and the state's crisis services and to make recommendations for changes needed to maximize crisis services and minimize civil commitments. Staff reported that the state's crisis system is generally oriented to serve voluntary patients and not individuals who are at risk of civil commitment. In particular, staff noted that although the state has developed mobile crisis teams, which are dispatched through the 988 call centers, those teams rarely respond to calls with higher levels of urgency (as stratified by the state's multilevel triage framework); most Level 3 calls (which are considered urgent, but could receive a behavioral health response) are made to 911 rather than 988, and generally receive a response from law enforcement. Staff suggested several options to improve the response to Level 3 calls in order to improve the likelihood that these callers may be diverted from the civil commitment process, including funding a pilot program to enable regional mobile crisis teams to be dispatched to Level 3 calls and investigating what changes may be necessary in order to enable mobile crisis dispatch based on third party referrals. Staff also found that crisis facilities generally serve voluntary patients, and recommended identifying strategies to incentivize these facilities to serve individuals subject to an Emergency Custody Order or Temporary Detention Order. Staff's briefing may be found at [this link](#).

The Commission's next meeting is scheduled for November 12.

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

2025 VACo Regional Meetings – Year in Review



Every year, VACo staff travels across the Commonwealth to visit the various VACo regions and collaborates with counties within these regions to hold our Regional Meetings. Regional Meetings are held annually to give local elected officials, county administrators and staff, and legislators an opportunity to discuss challenges and offer solutions. Discussions are always vibrant and productive. Regional Meetings help steer VACo in the development of its legislative program.

The following is a breakdown of county priorities and key themes raised throughout the Commonwealth broken down into geographical regions:

Northern Virginia (VACo Region 8)

Prince William County hosted the Region 8 meeting. Legislative priorities among the counties in VACo region 8 include:

- Establishing sustainable and dedicated funding for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).
- Advocating for the General Assembly to incentivize and encourage local land use decisions regarding affordable housing development while counties retain local land use authority.
- Continuing support for local land use authority as it pertains to data centers, utility scale solar, affordable housing, etc. development as well.
- Monitoring the impacts of the federal reconciliation bill and other spending cuts at the federal level and how these may impact the northern Virginia workforce or put a burden on counties to administer or fund federal programs.



Shenandoah Valley (VACo Regions 6 and 9)

Shenandoah County hosted Regions 6 and 9 in September. Legislative priorities among the counties in VACo Regions 6 and 9 include:

- Retaining local land use authority as this area of the Commonwealth faces pressures from various industries and uses.
- Increasing the level of state support given to fire and EMS services as training and equipment mandates are a burden on localities; coupled with declining rates of volunteerism seen throughout the regions.
- Supporting the 1% local option for school capital and additional rural road funding as well as water, sewer and broadband infrastructure funding.

Southwest Virginia (VACo Regions 11, 12 and 13)

Bland County hosted Regions 11 and 12 and Dickenson County hosted Region 13. Legislative priorities among the counties in VACo regions 11, 12 and 13 include:

- Retaining local land use authority.
- More support for a wide array of public safety services such as Fire, EMS, mental health and Temporary Detention Orders.
- Help with economic development projects, including energy infrastructure, housing, transportation and other infrastructure support.
- Education and K-12 support, including support for the 1% local option for school construction.

Central Virginia (VACo Regions 3, 5 and 7)

Henrico County hosted Regions 3 and 5 and King George County hosted Region 7. Legislative priorities among the counties in VACo Regions 3, 5 and 7 include:

- Continuing the practice of land use decisions being made at the local level

- Support for affordable housing and recovery residence oversight
- Transportation and infrastructure funding including water and sewer infrastructure
- Supporting the optional 1% local sales and use tax for school capital.
- Additional support for fire, EMS and mental health services.

Southside Virginia (VACo Regions 4 and 10)

Brunswick County hosted Region 4 and Pittsylvania County hosted Region 10. Legislative priorities among the counties in VACo Regions 4 and 10 include:

- Supporting the optional 1% local sales and use tax for school capital as well as requesting further education support and funding.
- Supporting the preservation of local land use authority over the siting of large-scale solar projects, housing, etc.
- Additional transportation and infrastructure funding.
- Addressing the challenges involved in providing fire and emergency medical services in an era of declining volunteerism and rising costs for equipment.
- Help with economic development opportunities, including broadband connectivity and further support from the state for this purpose.

Tidewater (VACo Regions 1 and 2)

Sussex County hosted Region 1 and Gloucester County hosted Region 2. Legislative priorities among the counties in VACo region 1 and 2 include:

- Support for local land use decisions being made locally, especially as it pertains to utility scale solar development.
- Education funding is a priority for both regions, as is support for the 1% optional sales tax for school construction.
- Support for rural economic development initiatives
- Opposition to unfunded mandates and close monitoring of how the federal reconciliation bill may impact benefit programs.

Issues and common legislative priorities listed above serve as a summary of all the meetings that took place this summer and into early fall 2025. For a more in-depth breakdown of each Regional Meeting, please [click here](#). Regional Meetings serve a vital purpose and VACo would like to thank all county leaders, staff, legislators and sponsors who contributed to these wonderful events. See you on the road in 2026!

VACo Contact: [James Hutzler](#)

Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond District Dialogues Event



On November 12 we're hosting the latest installment in our District Dialogues community discussion series titled, **Small Business, Big Insights: What Local Business Can Tell Us About the Economy.**

The event will feature Richmond Fed economists as well as industry leaders sharing insights about how small business data reflects larger economic patterns. We'll be discussing key surveys and indicators, including new business formation rates and what they tell us about economic performance. We'll also hear real-world experiences from the small business community and how they align with current economic data and signals.

Event Details

Date: Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Time: 2:30 – 5:00 PM

Location: Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, 701 E. Byrd Street, Richmond, VA 23219 or via Zoom webinar.

In-person attendees will enjoy a welcome reception—excellent networking opportunity!

No cost to attend, open to all community members.

[Full details and registration info is here!](#)

ODGA Demo for VACo: Substance Use Data Analytics (SUDA) Platform



The Virginia Office of Data Governance and Analytics in partnership with the Virginia Information Technologies agency and the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority is happy to announce the [Substance Use Disorder Analytics \(SUDA\)](#) platform! The SUDA platform is strategic initiative aimed at providing secure access to an analytics platform with data from the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), Virginia Department of Forensic Science (DFS), the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) and others. SUDA provides reports on drug cases, drug usage, EMS incidents, overdose deaths and more with the ability to drill down to locality information to help you make data-driven decisions.

Having access to the data provided through SUDA can help localities with the following:

- Immediate Response & Resource Allocation for Substance Use
- Strategic Planning & Prevention
- Grant Writing & Funding Justification
- Coordination & Collaboration
- Program Evaluation & Accountability

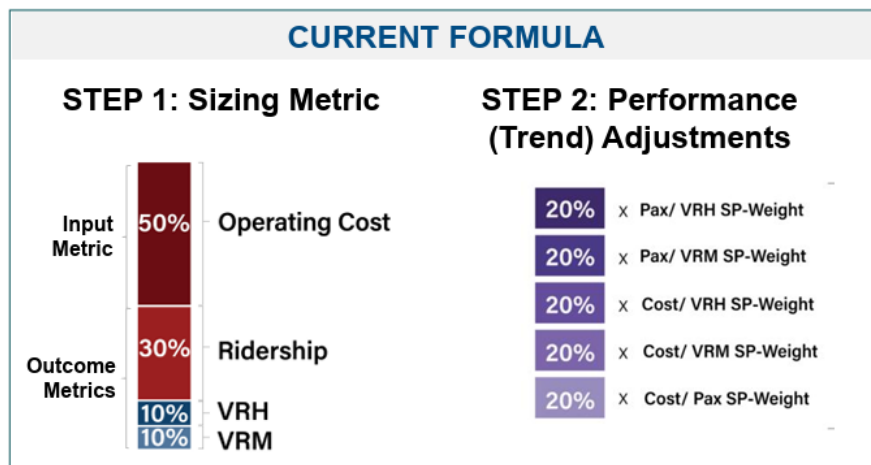
If you are interested in a demo of the platform, please [contact ODGA](#).

DRPT has stated that the goals of this review are:

1. Emphasis on outcome focused metrics (ridership/service) over input focused metrics (operating costs)
2. Emphasis on performance-based allocation
3. Formula simplification
4. Year over year predictability

Currently, the MERIT operating formula allocates 100% of the available funds for the program and looks like this:

Current MERIT Operating Allocation Approach



Redistribution - Return to Step 1

MERIT funding for each agency capped at 30% of prior year Operating Cost

Pax = Passengers

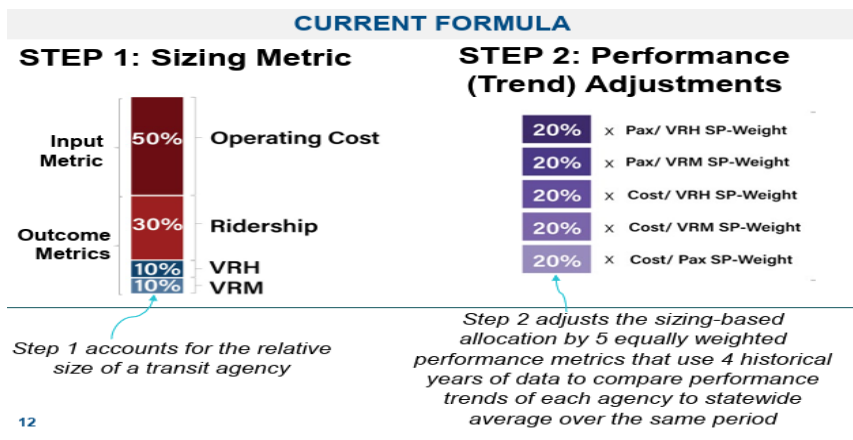
VRH = Vehicle Revenue Hour*

VRM = Vehicle Revenue Mile*

* Includes deadhead for Commuter Bus services

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

DRPT believes the recommendation that best satisfies the stated goals is being called the “Sizing + Performance Adjustment Scenario.” Here is what this recommended scenario would look like:



Sizing Metric

Starting with the Sizing Metric, in the current formula, the relative “size” of a transit agency is treated as being:

- 50% operating cost
- 30% ridership
- 10% vehicle revenue hours
- 10% vehicle revenue miles

The recommended scenario changes the Sizing Metric to encompass:

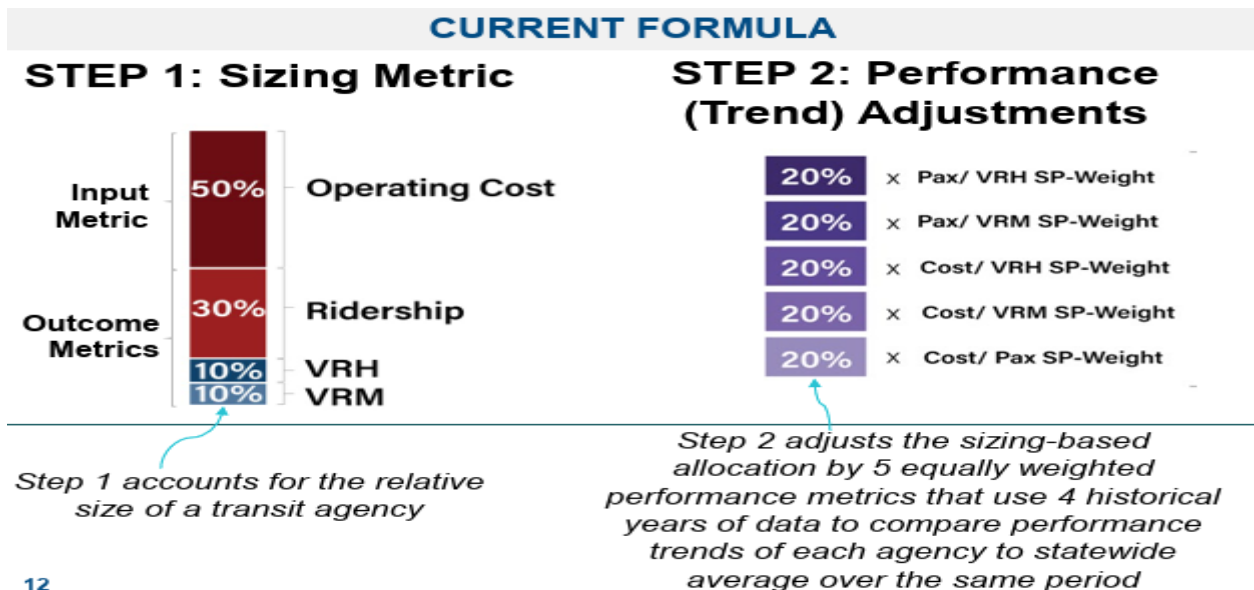
- 35% operating cost
- 35% ridership
- 15% vehicle revenue hours
- 15% vehicle revenue miles

DRPT states that the recommended formula prioritizes service (outcome measures) over cost (input measure) by increasing outcome focused weights such as ridership, vehicle revenue miles and hours. As with the current formula, the recommended scenario will not allow any transit agency to receive more than 30% of its operating assistance from the MERIT program.

It is important to note that available MERIT operating funds in the recommended scenario are divided into two distinct “pots.” 95% of available operating revenues would be distributed based on the relative Sizing Metric for each agency. The remaining 5% will come from the performance-based allocation.

Performance Based Allocation

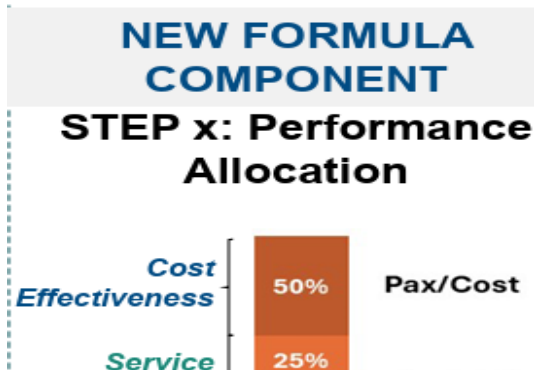
Currently, MERIT operating scoring goes through a complex formula that looks like this:



12

Currently, all available funds are first allocated via the STEP 1 sizing formula. After that step is completed, the allocated funds are put through the STEP 2 Performance Adjustment, using five equally weighted metrics, until all available funds are allocated. Step 2 can move the amount of funding up or down based on an agency’s performance compared to the three-year statewide average.

The recommended scenario would replace the current performance adjustment with one that looks like this:



The recommended scenario would replace the current Step 2 Performance Adjustment with this Performance Allocation. This step would allocate a portion of funding based on an agency's recent single-year performance data measured using three efficiency and effectiveness measures:

- Cost per passenger
- Vehicle revenue hour per passenger
- Vehicle revenue mile per passenger

DRPT states that the recommended changes simplify the formula by removing the trend adjustment and further emphasize performance-based allocation.

Alternative A

There is another proposal up for consideration which is called Alternative A. The only thing Alternative A would do differently than the previously discussed recommended scenario is that instead of a single year of performance data used to calculate the Performance Allocation, Alternative A would use a three-year average.

Recommended Scenario Funding Adjustment Estimates:

DRPT and their consultant team have estimated how the proposed changes would affect the funding transit agencies would receive through the MERIT system.

This is an estimate of the funding results by VDOT construction district for FY24-26:

Sizing + Performance Adjustment Scenario Results

Average FY24-26 Allocations by District

Construction District	Average Allocation According to Current Approach	Average Allocation According to Revised Approach	Difference	% Difference
BY DISTRICT				
Bristol	\$ 2,257,448	\$ 2,302,545	45,097	2%
Culpeper	\$ 2,971,812	\$ 2,955,606	(16,206)	-1%
Fredericksburg	\$ 1,071,485	\$ 991,728	(79,757)	-7%
Hampton Roads	\$ 28,662,231	\$ 29,276,880	584,649	2%
Lynchburg	\$ 2,772,386	\$ 3,028,554	256,168	9%
Northern Va	\$ 56,728,252	\$ 54,932,328	(1,795,924)	-3%
Richmond	\$ 20,052,091	\$ 20,781,994	729,903	4%
Salem	\$ 7,455,197	\$ 7,767,251	312,054	4%
Staunton	\$ 3,142,870	\$ 3,232,912	90,041	3%
XMulti	\$ 4,404,644	\$ 4,278,619	(126,024)	-3%
	\$ 129,548,416	\$ 129,548,416		

Key shifts:

- Reduced allocations for Fredericksburg (-7%) and Northern Virginia (-3%)
- Increased allocations for Lynchburg (+9%) Richmond (+4%), Salem (+4%) Hampton Roads (+2%)
- Results for most agencies negate effects of the 3-year trend factor

Here are the same estimates broken down by individual transit agencies:

SIZING+PERFORMANCE RESULTS <i>Average FY24-26 Allocations by Agency</i>			
Recipient (Eligible Agency)	Average Allocation According to Current Approach	Average Allocation According to Revised Approach	Difference
AASC / Four County Transit	\$ 625,123	\$ 653,355	28,233
City of Bristol Virginia	\$ 121,344	\$ 122,090	746
District Three Public Transit	\$ 742,893	\$ 742,472	(422)
Mountain Empire Older Citizens, Inc.	\$ 642,600	\$ 647,500	4,900
Town of Bluefield-Graham Transit	\$ 125,489	\$ 137,128	11,640
Charlottesville Area Transit	\$ 2,971,812	\$ 2,955,606	(16,206)
FRED / Fredericksburg Regional Transit	\$ 1,071,485	\$ 991,728	(79,757)
City of Suffolk	\$ 430,651	\$ 468,027	37,376
Greensville County	\$ 54,768	\$ 53,339	(1,430)
Hampton Roads Transit	\$ 25,537,379	\$ 26,045,102	507,722
STAR Transit	\$ 371,187	\$ 379,554	8,367
Town of Chincoteague	\$ 17,019	\$ 16,376	(643)
Williamsburg Area Transit Authority	\$ 2,281,227	\$ 2,314,484	33,256
Danville Transit System	\$ 832,019	\$ 860,800	28,781
Farmville Area Bus	\$ 196,264	\$ 200,739	4,475
Greater Lynchburg Transit Company	\$ 1,703,062	\$ 1,921,935	218,873
Town of Altavista	\$ 41,042	\$ 45,080	4,038
Loudoun County	\$ 3,666,512	\$ 3,580,872	(85,640)
NVTC - Arlington County	\$ 6,007,985	\$ 6,308,168	300,183
NVTC - City of Alexandria	\$ 9,299,604	\$ 9,245,879	(53,725)
NVTC - City of Fairfax	\$ 1,591,498	\$ 1,620,218	28,720
NVTC - Fairfax County	\$ 25,729,693	\$ 24,112,896	(1,616,798)
PRTC	\$ 8,187,110	\$ 7,438,451	(748,658)
City of Petersburg	\$ 1,198,959	\$ 1,180,832	(18,127)
Greater Richmond Transit Company	\$ 18,853,132	\$ 19,601,162	748,030
Blacksburg Transit	\$ 3,483,121	\$ 3,483,121	(0)
City of Radford	\$ 501,124	\$ 556,824	55,701
Greater Roanoke Transit Company	\$ 3,271,540	\$ 3,502,448	230,908
Pulaski Area Transit	\$ 199,411	\$ 224,857	25,445
Central Shenandoah PDC	\$ 657,710	\$ 745,223	87,513
City of Harrisonburg Dept. of Public Transportation	\$ 1,997,493	\$ 1,997,493	0
City of Winchester	\$ 487,667	\$ 490,196	2,528
Bay Aging	\$ 1,190,937	\$ 1,186,282	(4,655)
Blackstone Area Bus	\$ 189,468	\$ 189,468	0

As you can see, no matter how the funding metrics are changed or amended, unless the overall total MERIT funding allocation is increased to support transit agencies across Virginia, some regions / localities will gain funding while others see a reduction in funds.

VACo is grateful to staff at DRPT and the consultant team for hosting many meetings with TSDAC, as well as VACo staff directly, to go over the proposed changes and impacts of these changes.

DRPT is aiming to present final recommendations to the Commonwealth Transportation Board in December 2025 with adoption of changes in January 2026. If adopted, these changes would not be implemented until FY 2028. VACo urges county leaders to discuss the proposed MERIT changes with your local transit agencies to discuss any impacts on your local transit system as well as county budgets. Lastly, VACo would like to thank TSDAC Chair, Supervisor John McGlennon, for his leadership thus far in the process.

As always, feel free to reach out to VACo staff to discuss how these proposed changes may or may not affect your locality.

VACo Staff: [James Hutzler](#)

VACo Releases Its 2026 Preliminary Legislative Program



VACo has released its [2026 Preliminary Legislative Program](#), which was drafted through VACo's steering committee process. The document includes a host of important and timely proposed policy statements including language pertaining to K-12 education funding, local taxing authority, stormwater regulations, land use planning, transportation, broadband, health and human resources and other local budget and legislative issues.

Click on the link to read the [2026 Preliminary Legislative Program](#).

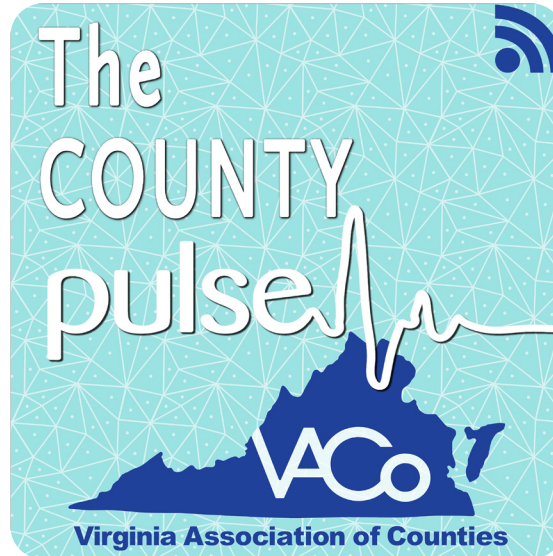
The 2026 Legislative Program will be adopted on November 11 during the Annual Business Meeting at the [VACo Annual Conference](#).

VACo's eight steering committees will finalize and adopt their policy sections on November 9. The Resolutions Committee will ratify the Legislative Program on November 10. VACo's membership will vote to adopt the Final Legislative Program on November 11.

VACo members are encouraged to continue to add their input to this document by working through their county's legislative process and the VACo steering committee process to put forward suggested changes to VACo's 2026 Legislative Program.

For questions regarding VACo's legislative process, contact Dean Lynch at dlynch@vaco.org or 804.343.2511.

VACo Contact: [Dean Lynch, CAE](#)



Uplifting Our Children Through Education Series with Jeremy R. Bennett

Episode 2 | Gloucester County and School Construction; When A Community Comes Together



[Listen to the Podcast.](#)

Uplifting Our Children Through Education Episode 2 | Gloucester County and School Construction; When a Community Comes Together. In the second installment of the **Uplifting Our Children Through Education** podcast series, VACo's Jeremy R. Bennett sits down with Gloucester County Administrator **Carol Steele** and Deputy County Administrator **Maria Calloway** to explore the county's school construction journey. This episode highlights how Gloucester County successfully aligned vision, funding, and partnerships to deliver modern learning spaces for its students. From securing a local sales tax referendum to navigating planning and community engagement, Steele and Calloway share how collaboration and persistence turned a long-term challenge into a community-wide success story. Listeners will gain insight into how county leadership, strong advocacy, and public support can drive transformative projects that enhance educational opportunities and strengthen long-term community growth. Tune in to hear how Gloucester County's story underscores the importance of education investment, teamwork, and the role of counties in uplifting children through meaningful local action.

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



Take Your Leadership Skills to the Next Level Through the NACo Leadership Academy. Now Enrolling for 2026

Counties affect the lives of residents every day. When frontline staff are empowered as leaders, services are delivered more effectively and efficiently. The NACo Leadership Academy provides county teams with practical leadership training tailored to the realities of local government. Using an innovative, interactive online platform, the Academy blends real-time webinars, on-demand learning, and small group discussions—making high-impact training accessible without the need to travel, saving both money and time.

Empowering county government professionals with fundamental, practical leadership skills to deliver results for counties and residents. More than 400 Virginia leaders have now graduated, joining the 15,000+ participants nationwide.

With a curriculum co-developed by the late General Colin Powell and public/private sector leaders, the NACo Leadership Academy gives participants the opportunity to learn from world-class faculty while being supported by expert facilitators.

NACo now offers a suite of leadership programs, equipping local government professionals with diverse skills and insights:

- **High Performance Leadership Academy (HPL)** | 10-week online flagship program – next session, **January 2026 and April 2026**
- **AI Leadership for Government** | 6-week program on navigating AI and digital transformation – next session, **November 2025 and February 2026**

Find out more at [NACo.org/Skills](https://naco.org/Skills) or reach out to Mark Speck to register today!



Mark Speck

mspeck@pdaleadership.com

D: 971-255-5586

Mark joined the Professional Development Academy in 2023 as an Enrollment Director, partnering with the National Association of Counties (NACo) to expand leadership development opportunities for Virginia's local governments. With a background in education, leadership training, and program development, he helps cities and counties maximize growth while navigating budget constraints. He understands the unique challenges facing local leaders and is passionate about equipping teams with the confidence and skills to succeed. Outside of work, Mark enjoys coaching, spending time with his wife and two young daughters, and staying active through sports and the outdoors.



CYBER AWARENESS MONTH

Empower yourself. Protect your county. Lead with confidence.

Ready to take the lead in protecting your county from cyber threats? The NACo Cybersecurity Leadership Academy is your chance to build critical cyber leadership skills — and, during Cybersecurity Awareness Month scholarships from NACo make your enrollment just \$1000!

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naco.org/cyberskills

VIRGINIA ENERGY SENSE

VALUE YOUR POWER



No tricks, just energy savings! Unplug your unused electronic devices to avoid inflating your energy bills with **phantom power**.

Nothing is spookier than receiving a mysteriously high energy bill. The scary suspect may be phantom, or “vampire” energy: electricity consumed by devices that are plugged in but not in use.

Energy usage from idle electronics may cost the average U.S. household as much as \$100 a year. You can save money by unplugging devices you’re not using such as computers, printers, TVs, gaming consoles and speakers.

If your county is looking to further your sustainability goals and support your residents, Virginia Energy Sense is here to help.

Virginia Energy Sense operates under the guidance of the State Corporation Commission as Virginia’s only statewide energy-efficiency education program. Our mission is to empower Virginians with the knowledge and tools they need to:



Drain monthly utility costs



Fend off excessive energy usage



Decrease carbon footprint

We know local government plays a powerful role in charging energy-conscious communities. If your department is involved in sustainability, public outreach or utility services, we’d love to discuss how VES can support your mission.

Visit www.virginiaenergysense.org to view our full library of resources. Connect with us directly via email at EnergySense@scc.virginia.gov. Or, call 804-371-9141 to learn more about collaboration opportunities.

Together, we can help Virginians save energy and money. Scan the QR code with your phone’s camera to get started.



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As a Premier Partner of the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo), Schneider Electric has proudly served as a trusted energy and infrastructure partner across the Commonwealth since 2001. We specialize in supporting school districts, municipalities, higher education institutions, and state agencies in overcoming budget constraints through strategic capital funding solutions.

Recognized as the #1 ranked Energy Services Company (ESCO) since 2017, Schneider Electric delivers comprehensive infrastructure upgrades through performance contracting. Our approach helps clients tackle deferred maintenance by shifting from reactive fixes to proactive, long-term solutions—building resiliency, modernizing facilities, and generating guaranteed energy savings to fund critical improvements.

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Abby Weigel | Account Executive | 804.248.0523 | abby.weigel@se.com

Kevin DeLeon | Account Executive | 804.517.2819 | kevin.deleon@se.com

Website: www.se.com/ww/en/about-us/sustainability/



Let's Make an Impact, Together.

Our projects create best-in-class public sector infrastructure that delivers a healthy, safe, and sustainable future for all.

Why Schneider Electric?

Schneider Electric is a global leader in energy management, public infrastructure, and sustainability. We offer a comprehensive range of services and solutions tailored for state and local governments, school districts, and institutions of higher education.

We help our clients reduce costs, optimize operations, access funding, and build resilient communities. We're dedicated to delivering innovative, sustainable solutions that deliver impact in the public sector.



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We deliver more than projects; we develop strategic, long-term infrastructure and sustainability plans that leave a lasting impact on your community.



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Transform outdated infrastructure into modern, efficient spaces designed to meet today's demands and tomorrow's challenges. Our projects can address your deferred maintenance, critical infrastructure, and capital improvement needs with one comprehensive plan. Our master planning approach means we're your one point of contact to design and implement your facility projects and ensure they're done right.

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Make your infrastructure work for you. Our projects make your facilities and critical infrastructure more energy efficient, sustainable, and resilient. Our solutions are engineered with the latest software and technology to give you confidence in your facilities' performance for years to come.

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Our projects help overcome your most difficult financial constraints by unlocking unique funding streams like energy and operational savings, grants and incentives, generated revenue and economic impact. We are experts at finding innovative ways to fund infrastructure improvements so you can accomplish more in every project.

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“

This project is one that has been years in the making and the BRWA started seeing cost savings before the project was even completed. Rarely is it possible to have a major treatment plant upgrade project that pays for itself with operational savings, let alone a construction project that helps to protect the environment. This project has all that and more.

Brian Key, BRWA Executive Director

”



Abby Weigel
804-248-0523
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Kevin DeLeon
804.517.2819
Kevin.DeLeon@se.com





Thank you Wythe County Chief Deputy [Anthony Cline](#) for sharing your experience with Blue Line Solutions!



Thank you Sussex County Sheriff [Ernest Giles](#) for sharing your experience with Blue Line Solutions!

Premier Partner Spotlight

Blue Line Solutions Testimonials

Blue Line Solutions is making a positive impact on communities all over Virginia. In Smyth County - **Blue Line Solutions** recorded during a five-day period that there were 3,530 vehicles traveling through school speed zones at 10mph or higher above the speed limit. That's over 12,000 speeding vehicles a month during school days.

Blue Line Solutions uses information and communications rather than focus on enforcement to reduce speeds in school zones.

During **Blue Line Solutions** Public Information Phase of its program in Smyth County - the number dropped to 213 over a five-day period. That's without writing one ticket. The community heard the problem and reacted to it. During the warning phase - the number dropped to 175. Then during the enforcement phase - it dropped to 72. That's a 98 percent reduction of speeders compared to before the **Blue Line Solutions** program.

"That's absolutely fantastic that we can make a difference in a community," Blue Line Solutions CEO/Founder Mark Hutchinson said.



Performance Contracting 101 with Schneider Electric

What if upgrading your aging infrastructure didn't mean draining your budget—or your patience? Meet *Performance Contracting (PC)*: the superhero of budget-friendly, energy-efficient solutions.

Here's the scoop: PC allows you to address infrastructure challenges strategically by leveraging future energy savings and significant cost reductions to fund your projects with minimal upfront capital investment.

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STEP 1

We start with a deep-dive energy audit.

STEP 2

We identify inefficiencies and craft a plan to fix them with guaranteed savings.

STEP 3

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Fix your facilities without tapping into reserves.



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Modernize your systems and save big.



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Boost sustainability while creating healthier communities.



As the **#1 Energy Services Company (ESCO)** since 2017 (by Guidehouse Insights), we bring decades of experience and a proven track record partnering with counties nationwide to deliver results.

Curious how PC can work for your county?
Let's discuss your project



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VACo long-standing partner Nationwide Retirement Solutions, provides these valuable services:

- 457 and 401(a) Plans
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- Social Security

VACo Executive Director, Dean Lynch, recently sat down with Debbie Turner, Charlie Brennan, Lynn Robinette, and David Bazzell to discuss their expertise in assisting counties with comprehensive savings and retirement programs and what sets Nationwide apart.



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).





Equipment Lease-Purchase Financing

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

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VML/VACo Equipment Lease-Purchase Financing offers:

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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





OneDigital is thrilled to be one of VACo's 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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Ritter Jonas
Senior Business Development Executive
804.393.2122 | rjonas@onedigital.com



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.



The VA250 Mobile Museum: A Classroom on Wheels

Get ready to bring Virginia's history to life! The VA250 Mobile Museum Experience, a hands-on, interactive, and immersive museum on wheels, is coming early 2025. This unique experience will transport students back in time, exploring key stories from every region of the state.

Perfect for:

- **Schools:** Enhance your curriculum with a memorable field trip.
- **Community organizations:** Host a unique event for all ages.
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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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