



## Governor Youngkin Presents Budget Proposal to “Money Committees”

Governor Youngkin presented his final budget proposal to the members of the “money committees” on Wednesday, December 17. The Governor reflected on successes in meeting goals he outlined when he took office in January 2022; thanked the legislature for its support of shared priorities, such as behavioral health reforms; and encouraged members to maintain a business-friendly approach in policymaking. He also welcomed Governor-Elect Spanberger, who was in attendance at the presentation, and wished her success in her Administration.

The introduced budget assumes General Fund revenue growth of 3 percent in the current fiscal year (an upward revision from the current forecast of 0.4 percent growth, due to strong collections year-to-date), and growth of 3 percent in FY 2027 and 3.2 percent in FY 2028. These assumptions are based on the forecasts proposed by the Governor’s Advisory Council on Revenue Estimates, with adjustments for a set of tax policy changes that are also proposed in the introduced budget. Governor Youngkin expressed confidence that this forecast will be attainable, and that revenues are likely to overperform the estimates, which would provide the new Administration and the legislature with more resources over the biennium.

Without the tax policy changes, General Fund revenue growth would be forecasted at 3.3 percent in FY 2026, 3.5 percent in FY 2027, and 3.6 percent in FY 2028. Proposed tax policy actions incorporated in the introduced budget include substantially conforming Virginia's tax code to changes to the federal tax code in HR 1, the federal reconciliation bill that was enacted this summer, as well as making several provisions of Virginia's tax code permanent, such as the increased standard deduction amount and the increase to the refundability of the Earned Income Tax Credit, both of which are slated to expire on January 1, 2027. The budget also proposes to allow Virginia taxpayers to deduct a portion of the amounts deducted on their federal taxes for car loan interest, tips, and overtime payments.

VACo staff are reviewing the introduced budget and will provide a detailed analysis soon. Following is a preliminary, high-level overview of major items of interest:

### **Compensation**

- Proposes a bonus payment for state employees and state-supported local employees of 2 percent of base pay on June 16, 2026 (for state employees) and on June 1, 2026 (for state-supported local employees).
- Also provides the state share of a bonus payment equal to 2 percent of base pay on June 1, 2026, for funded SOQ instructional and support positions. These funds are required to be matched based on the Local Composite Index.
- Provides the state share of a 2 percent salary increase in each year of the biennium for funded SOQ instructional and support positions; the state share would be prorated for school divisions that provide less than an average 2 percent salary increase. School divisions providing an average increase in excess of 2 percent in the first year of the biennium would be allowed to credit the excess portion of the increase toward the second year. The state funds must be matched based on the Local Composite Index.
- Funds a 2 percent salary increase for state employees and state-supported local employees in each year of the biennium. The salary increases for state employees would take effect July 10, 2026, and June 10, 2027, and the increases for state-supported local employees would take effect July 1, 2026, and July 1, 2027.

### **K-12**

- Provides \$543.8 million over the biennium to fund rebenchmarking of the Standards of Quality and other routine updates to school funding.
- Appropriates an additional \$127 million over the biennium from the School Construction Fund, as well as \$172 million in FY 2027 from the Literary Fund, for the School Construction Assistance Program, under which the Board of Education makes competitive grants to school divisions for construction, expansion, or modernization of public school buildings.

### **Children's Services Act (CSA)**

- Funds the state share of forecasted growth in the program (\$20.7 million General Funds in FY 2026, \$49.6 million in FY 2027, and \$86.5 million in FY 2028).
- Revises language included in the 2025 Appropriation Act, which capped state reimbursement to localities for private day special education services by stipulating that state reimbursement to localities for private day education services would not increase more than 5 percent over the rates for such services provided the previous year. VACo strongly opposed this provision. The introduced budget tightens this cap to 2.5 percent, which would require localities to assume the costs that would otherwise be shared with the state if rates increased more than 2.5 percent beyond the previous year.
- Directs the state match for community-based services to be reduced to reflect an average state match rate of 71 percent; the state Department of Planning and Budget calculates that this change would reduce state

costs for CSA by \$10.8 million in FY 2027 and \$11.8 million in FY 2028. Currently, CSA uses a three-tiered model to incentivize use of community-based services; the local match rate for residential services is 25 percent higher than each locality's base match rate, and the local match rate for community-based services is 50 percent less than the locality's base match rate. Community-based services include services that are provided to youth (or youth and their families) while living at home, in the home of extended family, in a foster family home, or in an independent living situation; examples include individual and family counseling or intensive care coordination for youth at risk of entering residential care.

## **Constitutional Officers**

- Funds 71 additional sheriffs' deputy positions; information provided by the Compensation Board explains that this funding is intended to ensure that every sheriffs' office with primary law enforcement responsibility has a minimum of ten law enforcement deputy positions.
- Funds 18 additional administrative positions in sheriffs' offices; information provided by the Compensation Board indicates that this funding is intended for positions in sheriffs' offices where allocated positions are not funded due to previous budget reductions and the sheriff's office has no Compensation Board-funded administrative positions.

## **Economic Development**

- Deposits an additional \$10 million in FY 2027 for the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program (for a total of \$30 million in FY 2027 and \$20 million in FY 2028).

## **Medicaid**

- Includes \$410.3 million in FY 2026, \$1.1 billion in FY 2027, and \$1.7 billion in FY 2028 for the state General Fund (GF) share of forecasted growth in the program.
- Proposes several cost-containment measures, such as imposing a four-hour coverage limit for mobile crisis services and eliminating community stabilization as a covered service.
- Includes \$28 million GF in FY 2027 and \$31.2 million GF in FY 2028 for the state share of increased rates for certain services provided through Developmental Disability waivers.

## **Child Welfare**

- Proposes to fund several initiatives as part of the Administration's "Safe Kids, Strong Families" initiative, including:
  - Providing \$212,046 per year for overtime costs associated with extending the existing 24-hour response timeline for valid reports of abuse or neglect for children younger than two to include children up to age three.
  - Providing \$3.5 million per year in state GF and \$1.5 million per year in federal funding to increase the minimum salary for family services employees in local departments of social services to \$55,000. These staff provide a continuum of services designed to assist families in safely caring for children and vulnerable adults.
  - Providing \$14.6 million in FY 2027 and \$18.1 million in FY 2028 to create a centralized child protective services intake system to collect and triage child abuse and neglect reports and transmit valid reports and complaints to the appropriate local department of social services.
  - Including \$656,842 in FY 2027 and \$2.7 million in FY 2028 in state GF (as well as \$218,946 in FY

2027 and \$898,744 in FY 2028 in federal funds) to enhance state oversight of local departments by enabling the Commissioner of Social Services to issue corrective action plans and proceed with state takeover of local departments of social services.

### **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**

- Includes \$43 million in FY 2027 and \$57.4 million in FY 2028 to absorb the additional administrative costs being shifted to the state as a result of changes included in HR 1. As explained by the Governor, the introduced budget proposes to assume both the state and local portion of these additional costs; localities would be responsible for additional costs associated with federal funds that flow directly to localities without a state contribution (an arrangement known as “pass-through” funding).
- Provides \$1.1 million in FY 2027 and \$1.3 million in FY 2028 (as well as \$520,865 in FY 2027 and \$416,692 in FY 2028 in federal funding) for a SNAP quality assurance team (which would be charged with finding and correcting SNAP payment errors before they can affect the state’s error rate) and provides \$555,096 in FY 2027 and \$605,559 in FY 2028 (and \$252,316 in FY 2027 and \$201,853 in FY 2028 from federal funds) to increase salaries for SNAP quality control reviewers.

### **Water Quality**

- Provides a total of \$286 million in GF and nongeneral funds in FY 2027 to support the Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share program. This amount includes the mandatory allocation from surplus revenues of \$107.9 million GF, an additional \$36.2 million GF, and the remaining appropriation from nongeneral fund sources of interest in the Virginia Natural Resources Commitment Fund and partial balances in the WQIF reserve.
- Provides \$140.5 million GF in first year to the Water Quality Improvement Fund. These funds are directed to support the Hampton Roads Sanitation District Boat Harbor Treatment Plant project through the Enhanced Nutrient Removal Certainty program. Delineates additional application acceptance requirements for the department.
- Provides \$43.5 million in FY 2027 to support stormwater assistance projects in localities with municipal separate storm sewer systems.

VACo Contact: [VACo Legislative Team](#)



# VA250

## Celebrating Virginia's History: A Look at Prince Edward County



Step into Virginia's story through the VA250 exhibit, *Celebrating Virginia's History: A Look at Prince Edward County*. This immersive display brings to life the county's pivotal role in both Virginia's and America's history.

Prince Edward County was an integral part of the nation's journey toward freedom and equality. From the county's citizens fighting in the Revolutionary War, to its agricultural and economic contributions that helped shape Virginia's growth, to its central role in the Civil Rights Movement, PEC's history is deeply woven into the fabric of the Commonwealth and the country. The exhibit highlights milestones such as the student-led strike at Moton High School in 1951, which became a catalyst for *Brown v. Board of Education* and the end of school segregation nationwide.

Located inside the Heartland Visitor Center, the exhibit not only celebrates the past but also helps visitors understand the resilience and impact of Prince Edward County's people across centuries. While visiting, you can also gather maps, travel guides, and personalized recommendations to explore today's attractions in Farmville and beyond.

**SOURCE:** [VA250](#)



## JANUARY 2026

January 23 to March 27 | **Supervisors' Certification Program (Budget Module)** | VACo Headquarters

January 14 | **General Assembly Convenes** | Richmond

## FEBRUARY 2026

February 5 | **VACo Board of Directors Meeting** | Omni Richmond Hotel

February 5 | **VACo County Government Day at the General Assembly** | Omni Richmond Hotel

February 6-7 | **Board Chairpersons' Institute** | Omni Richmond Hotel and VACo Headquarters

February 21-24 | **NACo Legislative Conference** | Washington, D.C.

## APRIL 2026

April to September | **VACo Regional Meetings** | TBA

## MAY 2026

May 1 to June 26 | **Supervisors' Certification Program (Land Use and Planning Module)** | VACo Headquarters

TBA | **VACo Board of Directors Meeting** | Prince William County

## JULY 2026

July 17-20 | **NACo 2025 Annual Conference & Exposition** | Orleans Parrish/New Orleans, LA

## AUGUST 2026

August 13 | **VACo County Officials' Summit** | Omni Richmond Hotel

August 14 | **VACo Board of Directors Meeting** | VACo Headquarters

August to October | **Supervisors' Certification Program (Leadership Module)** | VACo Headquarters

## NOVEMBER 2026

November 7-10 | **VACo 92nd Annual Conference** | The Omni Homestead

November 8 | **VACo Board of Directors Meeting** | The Omni Homestead



## JANUARY 2026 HIGH PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP

This is an online program with content provided by industry leading executives. The curriculum provides best practices in leadership, organizational development and change management, negotiation and collaboration, effective business communication, and how to deliver increased value from high performance county management.

### Course 1: Leadership Mindset & Positive Engagement

This course provides insights from members of the program's National Leadership Board on the ways leaders shift their mindset from being excellent individual contributors to becoming highly effective leaders. The course also focuses on increasing empowerment and engagement to achieve individual, team and enterprise success. The second half of this course demonstrates how leaders enable "positively deviant" performance and engender positive culture and communication.

### Course 2: Leading Effective Change

The emphasis of this course is to prepare participants to engage in change initiated by others and to drive effective change as an active change agent. This course illustrates three facets of organizational change, including planning, executing and sustaining successful change. A balance of theoretical and pragmatic insights allows participants to understand the strategic, financial or market-based reasons for change and drive toward breakthrough results.

### Course 3: Communication and Collaboration

Participants learn and practice the skills needed to improve the quality of interpersonal communication in a variety of contexts. Participants will learn how to effectively speak the language of business and convey information across diverse stakeholder groups, as well as break down silos between business divisions to drive better decision making. Each participant will understand effective communication as it relates to leading others, managing conflict, providing and receiving feedback, and negotiating with the Mutual Gains Approach.

### COURSE 1: January 5<sup>th</sup> – January 30<sup>th</sup>

Module 1: Your Leadership Mindset  
 Module 2: Your Potential as a Positive Leader  
 Module 3: Positive Leadership and Your Team:  
                   Empowerment & Engagement  
 Module 4: Leadership Rules and Your Oath

### COURSE 2: February 2<sup>nd</sup> – February 27<sup>th</sup>

Module 1: The Process of Change: Planning  
 Break Week: February 9<sup>th</sup> – February 13<sup>th</sup>  
 Module 2: The Process of Change: Executing  
 Module 3: The Process of Change: Sustaining

### COURSE 3: March 2<sup>nd</sup> – March 20<sup>th</sup>

Module 1: Speaking the Language of Business  
 Module 2: Mutual Gains Approach  
 Module 3: It's All About People  
 Graduation: March 20<sup>th</sup>



"Many frontline managers are exactly the people we cannot afford to lose. The NACo High Performance County Leadership Academy helps to retain these vital employees and helps enable them to be better leaders."

Matt Chase, Executive Director, NACo





## CULPEPER COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Office of the Board of Supervisors

### PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Culpeper County Announces Selection of Amy F. Wilson

*as County Attorney*

**CULPEPER, VA** — The Culpeper County Board of Supervisors is pleased to announce the appointment of Amy F. Wilson as County Attorney. Ms. Wilson will assume her duties effective February 25, 2026, bringing to Culpeper County a distinguished record of public service spanning local government, military, and state-level legal practice.

Ms. Wilson currently serves as County Attorney for Orange County, Virginia, where she provides comprehensive legal counsel to the Board of Supervisors, County Administrator, and various departments, boards, and commissions. Her portfolio encompasses legislative drafting, procurement, land use, contract review, litigation, and regulatory compliance. Prior to her tenure in Orange County, Ms. Wilson served as Senior Assistant County Attorney for Douglas County, Colorado, where she conducted litigation at all levels of Colorado's state and federal courts.

Ms. Wilson's career is distinguished by fifteen years of service in the United States Army Judge Advocate General's Corps, where she held increasingly responsible positions culminating as Brigade Judge Advocate for the Army's 1st Space Brigade. Her military legal experience includes service as a Special Victim Prosecutor, where she directed legal and investigative operations for an organization of over 36,000 personnel, and as Administrative Law Attorney and Legal Advisor to a Commanding General overseeing more than 40,000 military and civilian employees.

"After a thorough and competitive search process, we are confident that Amy Wilson is the right choice to serve as Culpeper County's next County Attorney," said David E. Durr, Chairman of the Culpeper County Board of Supervisors. "Her combination of Virginia local government experience, distinguished military service, and proven leadership in complex legal environments will serve our county well. We look forward to welcoming her to Culpeper County."

County Administrator Sam McLearen echoed the Board's confidence in the selection. "Ms. Wilson brings exactly the caliber of legal expertise and professionalism that Culpeper County needs," said McLearen. "Her experience advising elected officials and senior leadership on the full spectrum of local government legal matters, combined with her demonstrated commitment to public service, positions her to make an immediate and lasting contribution to our organization."

Ms. Wilson earned her Juris Doctorate from Michigan State University College of Law and holds an Honors Bachelor of Science in Cell and Molecular Biology from Oxford Brookes University in the United Kingdom. She is admitted to practice law in both Virginia and Colorado and maintains active memberships in the Virginia Bar Association, the Local Government Attorneys Association, and the International Municipal Lawyers Association.

The Board of Supervisors extends its sincere appreciation to Interim County Attorney John Bennett for his dedicated service since June 2025, ensuring continuity of legal operations during this transition period.

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#### Media Contact:

David E. Durr, Chairman

Culpeper County Board of Supervisors, Cedar Mountain District

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## Prince William County Hires Susan Washington as Director for Office of Human Resources



Prince William County is pleased to announce the appointment of Susan Washington as the Director of the Office of Human Resources, following a comprehensive national search. Her first day was December 20, 2025.

Washington brings more than 28 years of human resources experience, including over 14 years with Prince William County. She has served as Acting Director of the Office of Human Resources since March 2025. Prior to that role, she was the Assistant Director, overseeing critical service areas including benefits, shared services, training, and administration and budget. Her earlier career includes human resources leadership roles with the governments of the District of Columbia and Arlington, as well as experience in consulting and private-sector organizations.

In her role as director, Washington will lead a team of 39 human resources professionals who support the county's recruitment, policy development, performance management and organizational development functions. Her responsibilities will include overseeing hiring processes; developing and implementing HR policies; leading training initiatives; managing employee benefits; ensuring compliance with federal, state and local labor laws; fostering a positive and inclusive workplace culture; and advising managers and employees on HR-related matters.

"Susan's deep knowledge of the organization, her extensive HR expertise and her commitment to public service made her the clear choice for this role," said County Executive Chris Shorter. "We are confident that under her leadership, the Office of Human Resources will continue to innovate and provide exceptional support to county employees and departments."

"I am honored to continue serving Prince William County and to lead such a dedicated team of human resources professionals," said Washington. "I look forward to building on our strong foundation and advancing efforts that support our employees, strengthen our workplace culture and enhance service to our community."

Washington holds an Associate Degree in Business Administration and a Bachelor of Business Administration in Human Resource Management. She also earned a Master's Degree in Human Resources Management from Villanova University. She is a Senior Certified Professional (SHRM-SCP), a Certified Public Manager and a Senior Certified Professional through the International Public Management Association.

For more information about the Office of Human Resources, visit [pwcva.gov/hr](https://pwcva.gov/hr).

## Nora Amos Named Director of Economic Development for Goochland County



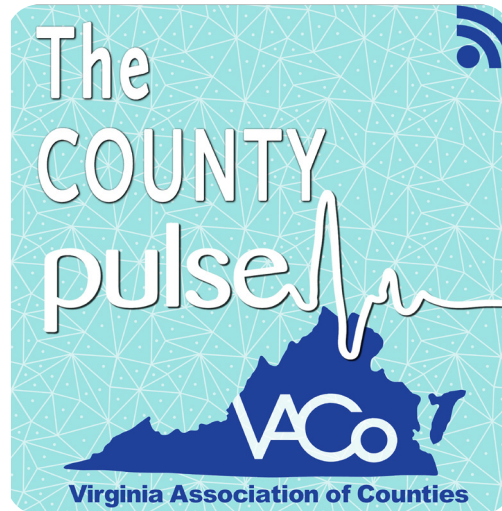
Goochland County is pleased to announce Nora Amos as the new Director of Economic Development. Amos succeeds Sara Worley, who accepted the role of Deputy County Administrator of Community & Economic Development in Goochland earlier this year.

“I am honored to have been selected as the next Director of Economic Development,” said Amos. “I look forward to working with local leaders, businesses, residents and regional partners as we continue to strengthen our local economy while preserving the unique character that makes Goochland County so special.”

Amos comes to Goochland from the Town of Ashland, where she most recently served as the Director of Planning and Community Development. Ms. Amos earned her Bachelor’s of International Economics from Radford University and a Public Administration Graduate Certificate from Shenandoah University. She is also a graduate from Leadership Metro Richmond, the Virginia Women’s Municipal Leadership Institute, and the Oklahoma University Economic Development Institute. Ms. Amos brings over twenty years of local government experience including economic development, transportation, planning and zoning.

“We are excited to have Nora join our team in Goochland County. She brings a wealth of experience to help guide future economic development initiatives in Goochland County,” said Worley.

Amos will officially begin her role with Goochland County on January 2, 2026.



## Uplifting Our Children Through Education Series with Jeremy R. Bennett

### Episode 5 | Virginia's K-12 Funding Formula: What the JLARC Report Means for Counties — and What Comes Next



[Listen to the Podcast.](#)

In the latest episode of VACo's Uplifting Our Children Through Education podcast series, host Jeremy R. Bennett is joined by Justin Brown, Associate Director of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC), and Mark Gribbin, Chief Legislative Analyst (JLARC) and project leader for JLARC's landmark 2023 [report](#) on Virginia's K-12 funding formula.

The JLARC study, directed by the General Assembly, found that Virginia's current Standards of Quality (SOQ) funding formula significantly underestimates the true cost of providing a high-quality public education. While the SOQ formula calculated that school divisions needed roughly \$10.7 billion in combined state and local funding in FY21, actual division spending exceeded \$17 billion—leaving counties to absorb much of the gap.

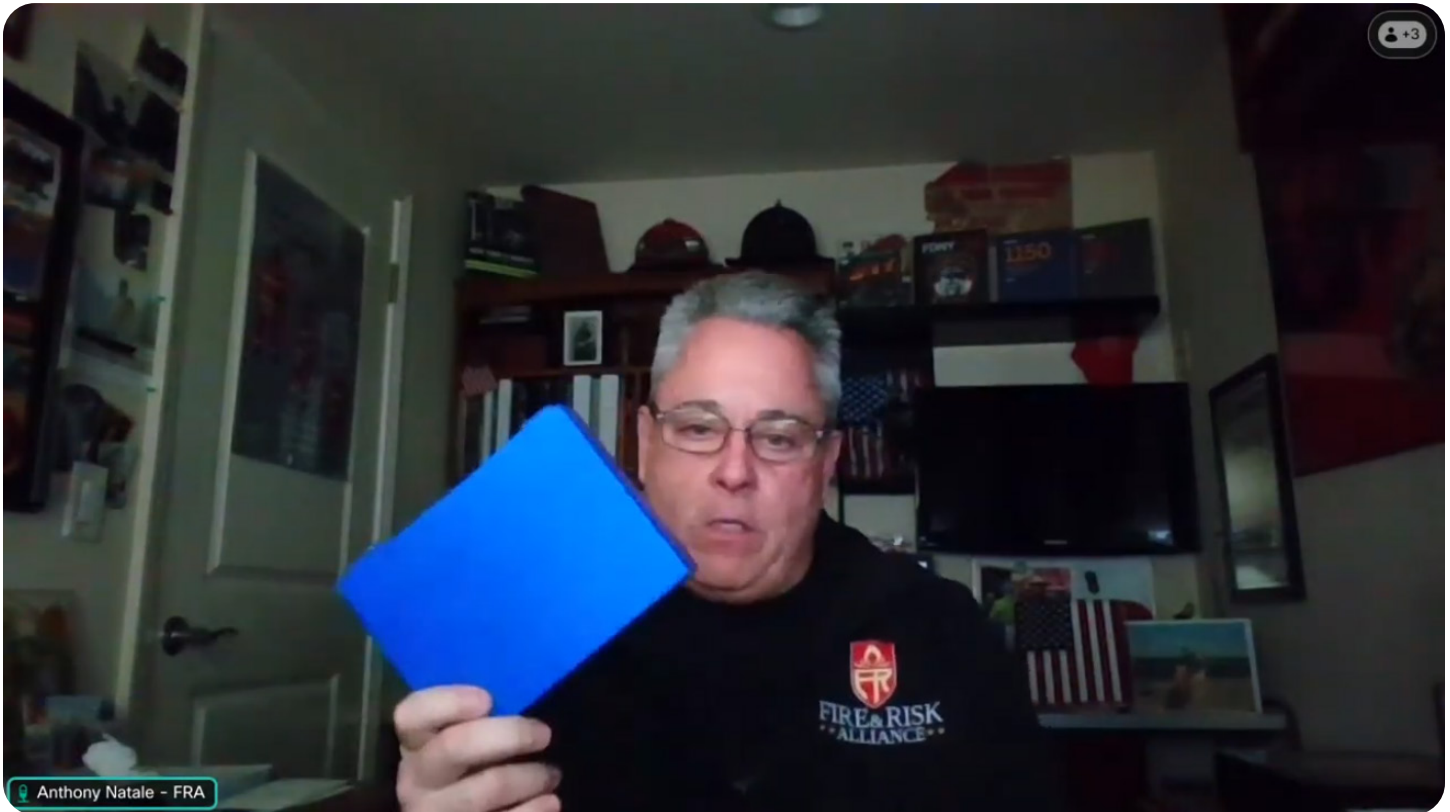
During the conversation, Brown and Gribbin walk listeners through why JLARC undertook the study, how the formula has evolved over time, and which structural issues—such as outdated staffing assumptions, labor cost adjustments, and the treatment of higher-needs students—continue to place pressure on local government budgets.

The episode also explores the report's near-term and long-term recommendations, progress made by the General Assembly since the report's release, and what counties should watch for in upcoming legislative sessions. Listeners will gain valuable insight into how the JLARC findings are shaping state policy discussions and why continued county engagement is essential to achieving a more transparent, predictable, and equitable funding system for Virginia's public schools. Tune in to hear how this landmark report is influencing K-12 education funding debates and what it means for county leaders working to uplift children through education.

Link to JLARC Report and Supporting Documents can be accessed [here](#).

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





## Learn the Basics of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) – Best Practices for Siting and Safety

In this [taped webinar](#), an expert panel gives an overview of energy storage systems, with a focus on BESS (Battery Energy Storage Systems) and how counties can address their siting, permitting, and safe operation. Presenters include Aaron Berryhill, Solar Program Manager with the Virginia Department of Energy, Chris Meyer, Senior Project Developer with East Point Energy, and Anthony Natale, Director of Risk and Response with Fire & Risk Alliance, LLC.

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

- Virginia DEQ – Small Energy Storage Facilities Permit by Rule (PBR)  
(<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title9/agency15/chapter100/>)
- NFPA 855 - Standard for the Installation of Stationary Energy Storage Systems  
(<https://www.nfpa.org/codes-and-standards/nfpa-855-standard-development/855>)
- Energy Storage Facility Siting Agreement – Chesterfield County Example  
(<https://chesterfieldcova.portal.civicclerk.com/event/1232/files/agenda/3600>)

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



# Congress Passes and President Signs Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization Act of 2025 with support of the Virginia Delegation



On December 9, Congress [passed](#) by bipartisan legislation reauthorizing the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program. The bill provides back pay for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 and FY 2025 and reauthorizes SRS through FY 2026, delivering critical relief to timber-dependent counties that rely on these funds to maintain essential services, including [counties](#) in Virginia. The bill became public law on December 18.

The [SRS program](#) provides funding that supports critical local government services like education, transportation and public safety to counties with National Forest System land administered by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). Federal land is untaxable, but counties still have government services responsibilities on and around federal land, and payments are especially vital for timber counties as they navigate economic transition and work towards long-term stability.

Since 1908, federal law has directed 25 percent of all revenue from timber in national forests to counties, and that funding supported county budgets for decades. After federal land management priorities changed and timber harvests declined, Congress created the SRS program in 2000 to alleviate financial challenges faced by rural counties. Since the program's establishment, it has received broad support in Congress and has been reauthorized several times.

This significant victory for counties comes after sustained advocacy from the National Association of Counties (NACo) and county officials. VACo provided targeted outreach to members of Virginia's Congressional Delegation and thanks the Delegation for their support of this bill as no member voted against the measure. More information from NACo on the effort can be found [here](#).

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



## American Farmland Trust Launches Planning for Agriculture in Virginia Toolkit

The American Farmland Trust has recently launched the [\*Planning for Agriculture in Virginia Toolkit\*](#), a practical resource created to help communities protect farmland, support farm economies, and plan for growth that sustains agriculture and the environment. While agriculture is Virginia's largest private industry, it faces many challenges.

In Virginia, more than 340,000 acres of farmland have been converted to development between 2001 and 2016. Current projections state that as much as 800,000 acres of farmland could be lost by 2040 if trends continue. Despite these challenges, communities can take action to cultivate a sustainable and resilient future for agriculture, one that holistically values all that farming offers to the Commonwealth.

The Toolkit includes a series of fact sheets and success stories from across the commonwealth, supported by checklists, data and resources to help communities envision and plan a future for their farms and farmland. Addressing issues from solar siting to farm-to-school programs, investing in agricultural infrastructure, and conservation adoption.

VACo staff had the honor to help guide this project and believe this resource will be incredibly valuable for planners, elected officials and others across Virginia.

VACo wants to thank the wonderful staff at the American Farmland Trust and other stakeholders who helped put this document together.

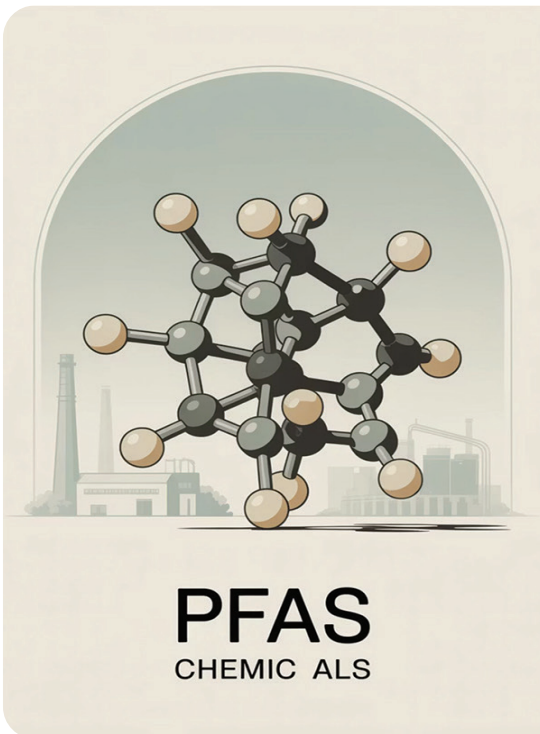
VACo Contact: [James Hutzler](#)



# Virginia PFAS Cost Recovery Program from Napoli Law

## NCCAE PFAS Cost Recovery Program

A nationwide initiative supporting utilities impacted by PFAS contamination through education, proactive participation and cost recovery pathways for treatment and regulatory compliance.



## What is PFAS?

### Definition

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are man-made chemicals used in industry and consumer products since the 1940s, including PFOA, PFOS, and GenX.

### Environmental Impact

PFAS are persistent in the environment and human body; they do not break down easily and can accumulate over time.

There is an opportunity for local governments to recover costs related to PFAS contamination in municipal drinking water systems. Settlement negotiations are currently underway with the companies responsible for pfas contamination in drinking water supplies. All public entities, including counties, towns, cities, villages, airports, authorities and wastewater systems, are eligible to participate. VACo members and other municipal entities with pfas detections, can find details in enrollment information [here](#).

Please view [this slideshow](#) summarizing key details and filing guidance.

VACo Contact: [James Hutzler](#)

## Revised Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement Finalized and Signed

The [Chesapeake Executive Council](#) met on December 2 to formally sign the revised [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#).

The revised *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* contains four interconnected goals with 21 measurable outcomes. The Goals articulate the desired high-level aspects of the partners' vision while the Outcomes lay out benefits and results that directly contribute to the achievement of each Goal. The outcomes are measurable steps the partnership will work toward achieving with hopes of restoring, conserving and protecting the Bay.

The Four Interconnected Goals of Watershed Restoration



The Executive Council heard from the partnership's four advisory committees, which represent agricultural, local government, resident, and scientific and technical interests across the watershed. Notably, this was the first time the Agricultural Advisory Committee participated in an Executive Council meeting, having been [established](#) in December 2024.

The Executive Council also approved recommendations to streamline and simplify the partnership's [structure](#) and [governance](#). The Chesapeake Bay Program will implement these revisions and regularly report progress to the [Principals' Staff Committee](#) for their final approval expected by July 1, 2026.

The Chesapeake Bay is vitally important to the Commonwealth of Virginia and plays a vital role in the economies and character of many of its counties. VACo is a longstanding and proud supporter of efforts that continue to restore and protect the Bay. VACo would like to thank Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources, Stefanie Taillon, staff with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and everyone within the Local Government Advisory Committee for their work regarding the *Revised Agreement* and listening to input from VACo.

In 2040, the partnership will come together to formally assess the progress made and amend this agreement to ensure work reflects the shared Vision.

VACo Contact: [James Hutzler](#)



**February 5, 2026 | Omni Richmond Hotel**

## VACo LOCAL GOVERNMENT DAY

### Thursday, February 5, 2026 Omni Richmond Hotel

Virginia Association of Counties invites all elected officials to the Local Government Day. This is the day when all localities come together and advocate on behalf of our communities. Join us for Local Government Day at the General Assembly!

**Date:** Thursday, February 5, 2026

**Reserve a Room:** [Omni Richmond Hotel Room Link](#)

**Who should attend:** ALL Elected Officials and staff are encouraged to register and attend.

**Registration Fee**

- \$100 | Includes Day Briefing (Noon – 2pm) and Reception (430pm – 630pm)

**Agenda**

- **9am** | VACo Board of Directors Meeting
- **10am** | Registration
- **1130am** | Lunch
- **Noon** | VACo Local Government Day
- **Afternoon** | Visit the Capitol to speak with legislators
- **430pm-630pm** | VACo Legislative Reception | Omni Richmond Hotel

Please email Valerie Russell at [vrussell@vaco.org](mailto:vrussell@vaco.org) with questions.

**REGISTER TODAY!**



## Friday, February 6, 2026 and Saturday, February 7, 2026 [Omni Richmond Hotel](#) and VACo Headquarters

Virginia Association of Counties invites all County Chairs and Vice Chairs for specific training related to leading a County Board of Supervisors. The Chairpersons' Institute is newly designed to focus on duties and skills needed to be effective Chairs and Vice Chairs.

**Dates:** Friday, February 6 and Saturday, February 7

**Reserve a Room:** [Omni Richmond Hotel Room Link](#)

**Who should attend:** ALL County Chairs and Vice Chairs

**Registration Fee**

- \$350 | Includes Meals and Materials
- \$175 for Guest

Full Agenda Coming Soon

**REGISTER TODAY!**

**Friday**

- Early Morning | Breakfast
- 9am | Welcome and Introductions
- 9am-Noon | Collaborative and Peer-to-Peer Training
- Noon | Lunch
- 1pm-430pm | Collaborative and Peer-to-Peer Training
- Evening | Dinner with fellow Chairs and Vice Chairs

**Saturday**

- Early Morning | Breakfast
- 9am-1pm | Collaborative and Peer-to-Peer Training
- 1pm | Adjournment and Box Lunch to Go

Please email Valerie Russell at [vrussell@vaco.org](mailto:vrussell@vaco.org) with questions.

And email Karie Walker at [kwalker@vaco.org](mailto:kwalker@vaco.org) for sponsorship opportunities.

# Join the Class of 2026!



## MODULE 1 – BUDGETING

### January 23 – March 27

**COST – \$450**

**INSTRUCTOR:** [Jay A. Brown](#)

The VACo Virginia Certified County Supervisors' Program begins with the Budgeting module, and we can't wait to share the experience with you. The 3-course program spans one year, so sign up now to be in The Class of 2026!

Open to all county supervisors, this exciting course comprises an opening class session, virtual cohort meetings, and a closing class session. As one of the three courses within VACo's Virginia Certified County Supervisors' Program, this course tackles the tough topic of county budgeting led by Class Manager Jay Brown. Don't miss this opportunity to build relationships with your fellow supervisors, learn from some of Virginia's most experienced local officials, and engage through meaningful discussions and learning materials.

Contact Karie Walker at [kwalker@vaco.org](mailto:kwalker@vaco.org) with questions or for more information.

**REGISTER TODAY!**

# VACo Releases Its 2026 Legislative Program



VACo has released its [2026 Legislative Program](#), which was adopted by membership on November 11 at the Annual Business Meeting. The 2026 Legislative Program was drafted through VACo's steering committee process. The document has 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 Legislative Program](#).

VACo's eight steering committees finalized and adopted their policy sections on November 9. The Resolutions Committee ratified the Legislative Program on November 10. VACo's membership voted to adopt the final Legislative Program on November 11.

For questions regarding VACo's legislative process, contact Dean Lynch at [dlynch@vaco.org](mailto:dlynch@vaco.org) or 804.343.2511.

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



# Congratulations!

We love presenting Achievement Awards  
at Board of Supervisors Meetings



The following photo lineup of Achievement Awards presentations are listed in chronological order starting with the first presentation.

# Congratulations!

We love presenting Achievement Awards  
at Board of Supervisors Meetings



## Congratulations Franklin County!

Congratulations Franklin County for winning its  
seventh Achievement Award!



# Congratulations!

We love presenting Achievement Awards  
at Board of Supervisors Meetings



## Congratulations Spotsylvania County!

Congratulations Spotsylvania County for winning its third Achievement Award!



# Congratulations!

We love presenting Achievement Awards  
at Board of Supervisors Meetings



## Congratulations Wise County!

Congratulations Wise County for winning two  
Achievements Awards in 2025!



# Congratulations!

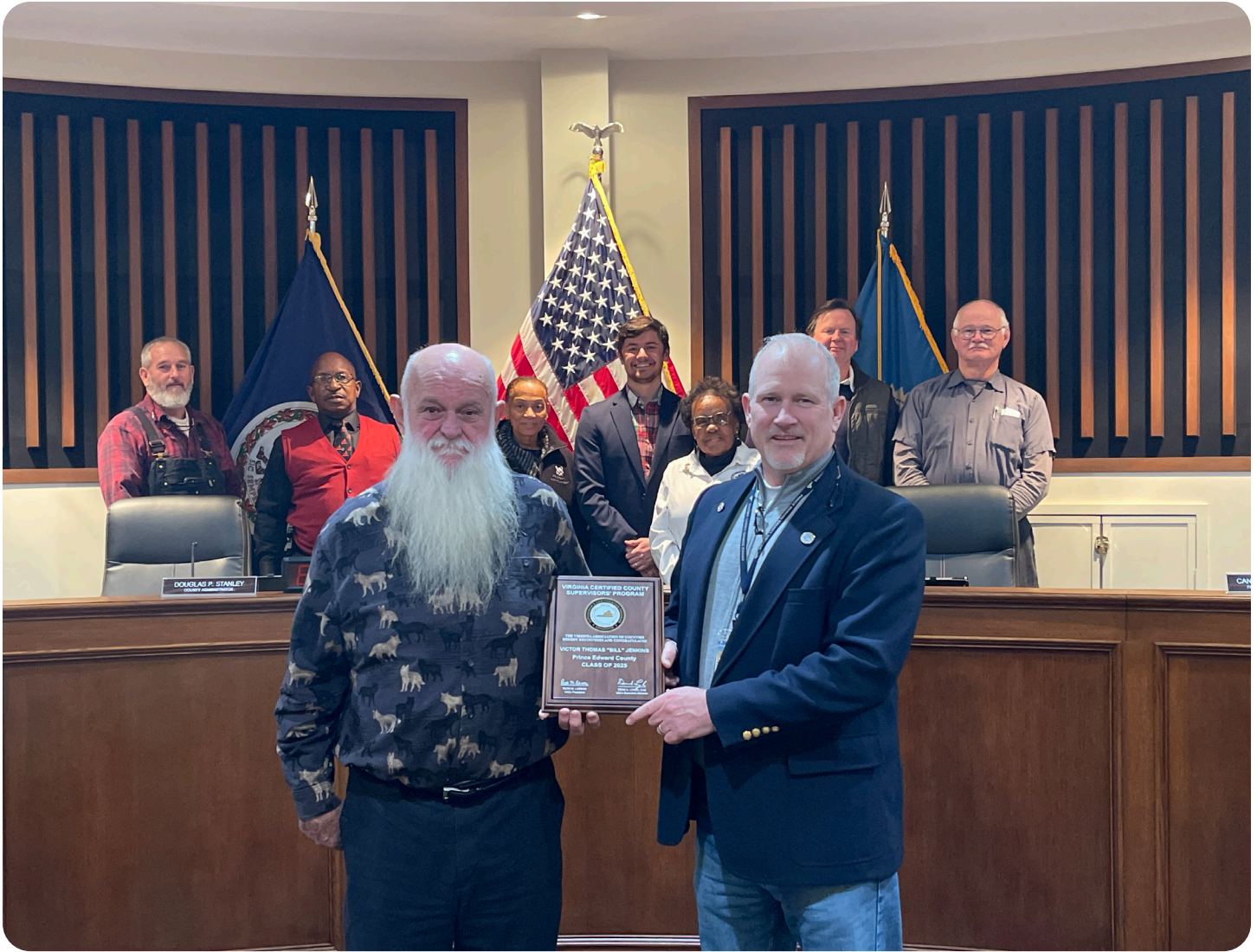
We love presenting Achievement Awards  
at Board of Supervisors Meetings



## Congratulations Powhatan County!

Congratulations Powhatan County for winning its fourth  
Achievement Award!

# Congratulations!



## Congratulations Victor Thomas “Bill” Jenkins!

Congratulations to Bill Jenkins for becoming a certified supervisor! Bill completed the one-year program and graduated with the Class of 2025!



# 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](http://www.virginiaenergysense.org) to view our full library of resources. Connect with us directly via email at [EnergySense@scc.virginia.gov](mailto: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.





## **Equipment Lease-Purchase Financing**

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

**Contact us for details.**

### **VML/VACo Equipment Lease-Purchase Financing offers:**

- Competitive rates and low closing costs.
- Predictable and level payments.
- Lease terms up to the expected life of the equipment.
- Streamlined process – we handle the details for you.

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

**CONTACT US TODAY**

### **Questions?**

Contact Steve Mulroy  
804-648-0635

[\*\*smulroy@valocalfinance.org\*\*](mailto:smulroy@valocalfinance.org)







## INTRODUCING A VACo PREMIER PARTNER

### Schneider Electric



[Click Here](#)  
[to Watch the](#)  
[Video](#)

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.

Join us for our webinar with VACo, where we'll explore the fundamentals of our business model and share real-world examples of how we've helped communities across Virginia achieve impactful renovations.

**Abby Weigel** | Account Executive | 804.248.0523 | [abby.weigel@se.com](mailto:abby.weigel@se.com)

**Kevin DeLeon** | Account Executive | 804.517.2819 | [kevin.deleon@se.com](mailto:kevin.deleon@se.com)

Website: [www.se.com/ww/en/about-us/sustainability/](http://www.se.com/ww/en/about-us/sustainability/)



**Thank you  
Nationwide for  
being a long-time  
VACo Premier  
Partner!**



**Nationwide®**  
is on your side

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

- 457 and 401(a) Plans
- Roth 457 Account
- Protected Retirement Solutions
- Nationwide Retirement Institute
- 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).







## 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.



## OUR SOLUTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

### MANAGE

Talent Planning  
Recruiting  
Development & Training

### SUPPORT

Benefits & Compensation  
Total Wellbeing  
Productivity  
Retirement Readiness

### ENGAGE

Culture  
Education & Fiduciary  
Literacy  
Communications

### PROTECT

Compliance  
Workplace Safety  
Operational Continuity  
Cyber Security



**Ritter Jonas**  
Senior Business Development Executive  
804.393.2122 | [rjonas@onedigital.com](mailto: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.
- **Local festivals:** Attract visitors with a fascinating historical exhibit.

Book the museum for your school or community event today! Visit [the VA250 website](#) for more information and to schedule a visit.





## Get your VA250 license plates - now available

Are you ready to show your pride in America's 250th anniversary? The VA250 commemorative license plate is now available for purchase! As a symbol of our nation's rich history and bright future, this limited-edition license plate offers a unique opportunity to drive with a piece of history.

By purchasing a VA250 license plate, you're not only adding a stylish touch to your vehicle, but you're also supporting a worthy cause. A portion of the proceeds from each plate sold will be donated directly to VA250, a non-profit organization dedicated to creating educational programs, events, and exhibits to commemorate America's 250th anniversary.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to own a piece of history and support a great cause. [Visit the Virginia DMV website](#) to purchase your VA250 license plate today.

## Virginia County Supervisors' Manual 8th Edition



Eighth Edition of VACo's **Virginia County Supervisors' Manual** is in stock. The Supervisors' Manual is the number one resource on the framework of county government and the responsibilities of the county board.

### ORDER YOUR ALL-NEW VOLUME NOW

## ORDER FORM

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTY (OR ORGANIZATION): \_\_\_\_\_

SHIPPING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY / STATE / ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

## PAYMENT INFORMATION

Manuals are \$75 for VACo Members. Manuals are \$150 for Non Members.

Number of Copies \_\_\_\_\_.

Check enclosed for \$\_\_\_\_\_ Make payable to **VACo Services, Inc.**

**If you are paying by credit card, an invoice will be sent you.**

**Mail completed form to:**

Virginia Association of Counties  
1207 East Main Street, Suite 300  
Richmond, VA 23219-3627

**Or FAX form to 804.788.0083** Questions? Call

804.343.2507





The Virginia Association of Counties accepts employment ads in a PDF file or a link to a job site. Please include information for applying, and a link to other important information. Please do not fax your employment ad. VACo members are not charged for placing an employment ad. **The cost is \$100 per ad for non-VACo members.** VACo publishes the ad on its website and mobile app as well as the upcoming County Connections issue. If you have any questions or concerns, please email [Valerie Russell](#).

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[PRINCIPAL ENGINEER](#) | Chesterfield County | Chesterfield County | Posted December 22

[PRINCIPAL ENGINEER \(TECH SUPPORT\)](#) | Chesterfield County | Posted December 22

[CASHIER/GROUND ATTENDANT](#) | Chesterfield County | Posted December 22

[HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR \(ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING\)](#) | Chesterfield County | Posted December 22

[SENIOR TRAINING ANALYST \(CPI & CPR/FIRST AID\)](#) | Chesterfield County |

[EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES](#) | Spotsylvania County | Posted December 22

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[MANAGER IV, ADVANCED SOCIAL SERVICES CASE MANAGEMENT](#) | Prince George County | Posted December 16

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[EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER](#) | Prince George County | Posted December 16

[BUILDING MAINTENANCE MECHANIC](#) | Prince George County | Posted December 16

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[PRINCIPAL PLANT OPERATOR \(NIGHT SHIFT\)](#) | Chesterfield County | Posted December 15

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[PARTS DRIVER \(PART-TIME\)](#) | Chesterfield County | Posted December 15

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[\*\*HUMAN RESOURCES GENERALIST\*\*](#) | Fluvanna County | Posted December 2

[\*\*HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR\*\*](#) | Fluvanna County | Posted December 2

[\*\*BUILDING SERVICES WORKER I\*\*](#) | Fluvanna County | Posted December 2

[\*\*UTILITIES SYSTEM OPERATORS I, II, III, IV, OR V\*\*](#) | Fluvanna County  
| Posted December 2

[\*\*PART-TIME FACILITIES ASSISTANT/SENIOR CENTER REC AIDE\*\*](#) | Fluvanna County | Posted December 2

[\*\*DEPUTY SHERIFF\*\*](#) | Fluvanna County  
| Posted December 2

[\*\*PART TIME DEPUTY SHERIFF\*\*](#) | Fluvanna County | Posted December 2

[\*\*COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER I \(NO EMD CERTIFICATIONS\) & COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER II \(EMD CERTIFICATION\)\*\*](#) | Fluvanna County  
| Posted December 2

[\*\*EQUIPMENT & FLEET MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN \(MECHANIC\)\*\*](#) | Fluvanna County | Posted December 2

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[\*\*VICTIM WITNESS PROGRAM ASSISTANT – PT/NO BENEFITS\*\*](#) | Fluvanna County | Posted December 2

[\*\*HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR \(ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING\)\*\*](#) | Chesterfield County | Posted December 1

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[\*\*PRINCIPAL PLANT OPERATOR \(MAINTENANCE\)\*\*](#) | Chesterfield County | Posted November 28

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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.



### BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

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

## VACo LEADERSHIP



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**Victor S. Angry**  
Prince William County



President-Elect  
**Phil C. North**  
Roanoke County



First Vice President  
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Accomack County



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## VACo STAFF

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**Deputy Director** | Katie Boyle

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**General Counsel** | Phyllis A. Errico, Esq., CAE

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**Director of Local Government Policy** | Joe Lerch, AICP

**Administrative Coordinator** | Valerie M. Russell

**Director of Programs and Development** | Karie Walker, CAE

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

1207 East Main Street | Suite 300  
Richmond, VA 23219-3627  
Phone: 804.788.6652 | [www.vaco.org](http://www.vaco.org)

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