

VACo Analysis of Introduced Budget



Governor Youngkin presented his final budget proposal to the members of the “money committees” on Wednesday, December 17. As discussed in VACo’s [initial review](#), the Governor highlighted investments in shared priorities during his tenure in office and encouraged the legislature to maintain a business-friendly policy stance.

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. 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. The tax policy changes (discussed in more detail below) result in a net revenue reduction of \$101.6 million in FY 2026 and \$632.7 million over the biennium. Several large spending items consume much of the available resources, including growth in the Medicaid program, the biennial rebenchmarking of the standards of quality, and proposed compensation actions for SOQ-funded instructional and support positions, state

employees, and state-supported local employees. Department of Planning and Budget Director Michael Maul noted that the proposed biennium budget includes \$4.7 billion in net additional General Fund operating funding; additional Medicaid spending (largely driven by growth in the existing program) represented approximately half of this amount. Budget items of interest to local governments are discussed further below.

Next steps: Legislators may submit amendments to the introduced budget until Friday, January 16. VACo will be working with legislators and advocacy partners to submit several amendments on county priorities. The money committees will review proposed amendments, and each committee will propose its own set of revisions to the introduced budget by mid-February. Each chamber will approve its version of the budget and then differences between the two versions will be resolved in a conference committee. A compromise agreed to by the budget conferees will then be considered by both chambers. After passage of the conference report and adjournment of the legislature, the new Governor will have the opportunity to offer amendments to the legislature's version of the budget, which would be considered by the General Assembly along with the Governor's amendments to all other bills and resolutions at the April 22 reconvened session.

Proposals of concern - VACo encourages members to alert your legislators to these provisions:

- Cap on state responsibility for funding private day special education services through Children's Services Act (CSA): 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. The state Department of Planning and Budget assumes that this change will result in savings to the state of \$3.4 million in FY 2027 and \$3.7 million in FY 2028.
- Reduction in state match for community-based services funded through CSA: Directs the state match for community-based services to be reduced to reflect an average state match rate of 71 percent; the 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.

Additional provisions of interest to local governments**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) or 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 would be available to school divisions that certify to the Department of Education that a bonus of a minimum average of 2 percent or equivalent action will be provided during FY 2026. The state 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

NOTE: The Department of Education's explanation of actions in the introduced budget and templates for calculating estimated payments to individual school divisions are available on the Department's website at [this link](#).

- Includes a series of technical adjustments in the "caboose" budget for FY 2026, including capturing \$110.6 million in state savings associated with updated average daily membership projections and \$30.2 million in state savings from the English Language Learner program based on updated data, and replacing \$48.3 million in General Funds (GF) with an equivalent amount of Lottery proceeds.
- Provides \$543.8 million over the biennium to fund rebenchmarking of the Standards of Quality and other routine updates to school funding. This figure reflects the net cost after capturing \$214 million over the biennium in savings to the state associated with decreases in VRS and OPEB employer contribution rates, as well as \$365 million over the biennium in savings due to updated average daily membership projections, as well as the recalculation of the Local Composite Index and other technical adjustments.
- Reflects a net increase of \$16.5 million in FY 2027 and \$37.6 million in FY 2028 from updated sales tax distribution figures.
- Includes \$625,438 in FY 2027 and \$1.1 million in FY 2028 to adjust the supplemental payment that holds localities harmless for lost revenue associated with the elimination of the state portion of the sales tax on groceries.
- Beginning in FY 2028, authorizes the Department of Education to withhold a portion of Lottery-funded Infrastructure and Operations Per Pupil Funds from school divisions that do not comply with annual reporting requirements.

- Uses \$185 million in FY 2027 and \$100 million in FY 2028 from the Literary Fund for the state's share of school employee retirement contributions (and captures equivalent GF savings).

School Capital

- 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.
- Stipulates that local school boards may not exclude public charter schools, regional public charter schools, or joint and regional schools from consideration for School Construction Assistance Program grants.

Electronic Meetings and Transparency Requirements

- The introduced budget removes prior emergency-specific language authorizing electronic meetings during a gubernatorial state of emergency and instead requires any public body meeting electronically under existing FOIA authority (§ 2.2-3708.2) to post a recording or transcript within FOIA timeframes and distribute meeting minutes using the same method as meeting notice, reinforcing uniform transparency requirements.

Early Childhood

- Provides \$500,000 per year to establish and maintain a platform for affordable child care subsidy accounts; provides \$1 million in FY 2027 as matching funds to incentivize employer contributions to these accounts to support child care costs for their employees; state funds must be matched dollar-for-dollar by employers, not to exceed \$1,000 per child or \$2,500 per family.
- Reflects an additional \$13.2 million in FY 2027 and \$17.5 million in FY 2028 in federal funds for the Child Care Subsidy Program.
- Funds an additional 6,745 slots per year in the Child Care Subsidy Program by redirecting \$71 million in FY 2027 and \$66.6 million in FY 2028 from assumed nonparticipation rates for the Virginia Preschool Initiative.

Administration – Constitutional Officers and Jails

- 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.
- Exempts the Department of Taxation from paying any fee for remote access to land records.
- Provides the state's share of costs for the Roanoke County Jail Renovation Project (\$5,024) and for the Piedmont Regional Jail Upgrade Project (\$279,827) in FY 2027.

VA 250

Celebrating Virginia's History: Abraham Beydler Historic Home

Visit Shenandoah County!



The Abraham Beydler House, constructed around 1800 by German immigrant and Mennonite Abraham Beydler, reflects the Federal style of architecture prevalent in the Shenandoah Valley during the Early National period. Situated on a rise of land near the North Fork of the Shenandoah River, it is a two-story, Flemish-bond brick dwelling with a prominent brick ell added around 1850, doubling the size of the house. Molded brick cornices across the front and rear elevations and flared brick jack arches over the windows and doors are typical features of a well-to-do farmer's house of the period. The Abraham Beydler House's fine interior woodwork is also well preserved. A one-and-a-half-story brick smokehouse/summer kitchen on a high basement is adjacent to the house and is unusual for its Flemish-bond brickwork. Today the Shenandoah County property is known as Valhalla Farm.

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 Parish/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



VAcorp 2026 Pool Update Virtual Meeting



JOIN US
January 29th
or 30th, 2026



Hosted By
Administrator
CHRIS CAREY

**SIGN UP BY CLICKING
ON "REGISTER HERE"
OR BY SCANNING
THE QR CODE**

**REGISTER
HERE**



VAcorp is hosting two webinars: January 29 at 2:00 p.m. and January 30 at 10:00 a.m.

Join VAcorp Administrator Chris Carey for an overview of the risk pool, including VAcorp's financial health and the current state of the insurance industry, with a high-level look at individual lines of coverage. Chris will also discuss program enhancements designed to better serve our members in the year ahead. This is an opportunity to stay informed and learn more about the priorities that guide VAcorp.

Please register by clicking "Register Here" or by scanning the QR code above.

A link to join the webinar will be emailed the day before the live session. Each session will be recorded and posted on www.VAcorp.org shortly after the presentation.

Please mark your calendar for **January 29 at 2:00 p.m.** or **January 30 at 10:00 a.m.** We look forward to seeing you there!

Nelson County Announces Hiring of New Director of Social Services

Nelson County is pleased to announce the appointment of Elizabeth Grace Carter Deshong as the County's new Director of Social Services, effective January 1, 2026.

Ms. Deshong brings more than 20 years of public service experience, including over a decade of leadership in human services, child welfare, and community-based programming. She returns to Nelson County after serving as Division Supervisor with the Central Shenandoah Valley Office on Youth, where she oversaw multiple youth and family service programs, managed budgets and staff, secured grant funding, and strengthened partnerships across jurisdictions.

Ms. Deshong is well known to the Nelson County community, having previously served in several roles at the Nelson County Department of Social Services, including Family Services Supervisor, Family Services Specialist IV, and Foster Care and Adoption Specialist. Her work included oversight of Child Protective Services, Foster Care, Adoption, Adult Protective Services, and In-Home Services, as well as collaboration with the courts, law enforcement, schools, and regional service providers.

"Grace Deshong brings an exceptional combination of experience, integrity, and deep local knowledge," said Candy McGarry, Nelson County Administrator. "Her proven leadership and commitment to protecting vulnerable citizens make her uniquely qualified to lead the Department of Social Services during a period of growth and transformation for the County."

Ms. Deshong holds a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice and Sociology from Averett University and a Master of Arts in Executive Leadership from Liberty University. Her professional background also includes nearly nine years with the Virginia State Police, further strengthening her experience in public safety, crisis response, and interagency collaboration.

As Director, Ms. Deshong will oversee all social service and financial assistance programs, supervise staff, manage departmental operations and budgets, and work closely with County leadership, the Local Social Services Advisory Board, and community partners to ensure high-quality, responsive services for Nelson County residents.

"I am honored to serve Nelson County in this role," said Ms. Deshong. "This community has shaped my career, and I am deeply committed to supporting our staff and ensuring that individuals and families have access to the resources they need to thrive. I look forward to building on the department's strong foundation and guiding it into the future."

Ms. Deshong's appointment comes as Nelson County continues its significant investment in human services infrastructure, including the construction of a new state-of-the-art Department of Social Services building, scheduled for completion in late 2026 or early 2027.

For more information about Nelson County and its services, visit www.nelsoncounty-va.gov.



Enter the 2026 VACo Achievement Awards

Deadline is Friday, April 3, 2026



Dear VACo Members –

It's time for the 2026 Achievement Awards Program. Any county department is eligible to compete so ENTER NOW!

[2026 Achievement Awards Submission Form](#)

All entries are required to be submitted in electronic form. No paper copy submissions are necessary. The electronic submissions should be a PDF or WORD file. **Electronic submissions through [this link](#) must be received by Friday, April 3, 2026.**

Last year, [we processed 155 entries](#) and selected 57 winners from over 32 Counties. VACo presented awards at Board of Supervisors Meetings, recognized winners at the 91st Annual Conference, and issued a news release to statewide media.

The judges for the 2026 Achievement Awards will be announced soon.

VACo has received more than 1,200 entries over the past decade. Last year's Best Achievement winner was **Wythe County** for its "**Hitachi Energy Arena Revitalization**" program.

VACo encourages all Counties, big and small, to enter the 2026 Achievement Awards Program. Please contact gcharter@vaco.org with questions or for more information.

[Achievement Awards Submission Form](#) | [Achievement Awards Website](#)
[2025 Achievement Awards Press Release](#) | [Past Achievement Award Winners](#)



Thursday, January 22, 2026 and Saturday, April 18, 2026

Virtual and VACo Headquarters

Part One – Thursday, January 22 | 10am-1pm | Virtual

This session offers critical tools to support you as you begin your service as a Supervisor. Learn from experts about developing the county budget and complying with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (VFOIA) and the Virginia State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act (COIA). The FOIA and COIA training will satisfy your statutory obligation to be trained on these important laws within two months of assuming office.

SPEAKERS

- **Matt Harris**, Deputy County Administrator, Chesterfield County
- **Matthew Hawkins**, Staff Attorney, Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council
- **Joe Underwood**, Senior Attorney, Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council

REGISTER FOR
PART 1 TODAY!

Part Two – Saturday, April 18 | In person at VACo Offices – 1207 E. Main Street, Richmond VA 23219

Join us for briefings by subject matter experts on important topics for Supervisors, including economic development, working with Constitutional officers, and planning and land use, as well as an opportunity to network with fellow Supervisors.

Registration information to follow! Please contact Valerie Russell at vrussell@vaco.org with any questions.

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 with questions. REGISTER TODAY!

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

REGISTER TODAY!

Full Agenda Coming Soon

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 with questions. And email Karie Walker at 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 with questions or for more information.

REGISTER TODAY!

Supporting Local Decisions in Addressing Housing Needs

By [Dean Lynch, CAE](#)

Executive Director

Virginia Association of Counties

The following commentary appeared in the Richmond Times-Dispatch on January 2.



Discovery Ridge (left), a community of townhomes in Henrico County, features homes that are three stories, with three bedrooms, two full baths, two half-baths and a one-car garage.

Housing affordability is one of the most pressing challenges facing Virginia today. From our largest metropolitan regions to our most rural communities, Virginians struggle to find homes they can afford – a home near where they work, where they can raise families, and where they can contribute to their local economies. The Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) recognizes both the urgency of this challenge and the opportunity it presents. We strongly support affordable housing initiatives, and we look forward to partnering with Governor-Elect Abigail Spanberger and her administration, members of the General Assembly, and the housing industry to develop and support housing incentives that are rooted in local decision-making.

Across the Commonwealth, counties are already demonstrating that locally driven solutions work. As Smyth County Administrator Shawn Utt will tell you, housing is not an abstract policy discussion—it is a daily reality. For more than a decade, Smyth County saw fewer than five speculative homes built between 2008 and 2023. Faced with that reality, the Smyth County Board of Supervisors chose action over inertia. On April 13, 2023, they launched the innovative *Smyth Grow* program, dedicating \$3 million to create a 0% interest, revolving loan fund in partnership with the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission.

More HOUSING on Next Page

Just a few years later, [Smyth Grow](#) is approaching 100 speculative homes—100 families positively impacted because local leaders understood their market, their barriers, and their opportunities. “This program has been an amazing catalyst for reinvestment not just by developers but by our own citizens as well,” Utt said. “The housing market growth is well above the 80-plus homes we’ve developed, and the desire to invest in yourself and your community is contagious.” These successes are not isolated.

Each year following the General Assembly session, VACo travels the Commonwealth to hear directly from county officials about their challenges and priorities. This past spring and summer, VACo held Regional Meetings in Brunswick, Sussex, Henrico, Pittsylvania, King George, Dickenson, Bland, Prince William, Gloucester, and Shenandoah counties. Officials from across Virginia attended alongside state legislators, and in every single meeting, housing supply and affordability rose to the top.

From Accomack County to York County, we heard successes and frustrations, innovative ideas and structural constraints. But one thing was unmistakable: county officials are deeply invested in addressing housing needs—and they are already doing the work.

Consider Henrico County. Beginning July 1, 2024, and using \$60 million in previously unbudgeted data center revenues, Henrico established an affordable [housing trust fund](#). Within months, in partnership with a private homebuilder and the Maggie Walker Land Trust, the county announced two townhouse developments totaling 30 units for first-time homebuyers meeting income requirements.

Henrico County Board of Supervisors Chair Tyrone E. Nelson put it plainly: “We’ll soon have 30 new townhomes that will be affordable and available to qualifying first-time homebuyers, like hardworking nurses and others in health care, restaurant staff, and office employees.” County officials expect [the program](#) to eventually support 100 to 150 homes per year as awareness and participation grow. These examples reinforce a critical truth: local decision-making is the most effective strategy for addressing housing challenges. A by-right approach or top-down mandate is neither necessary nor appropriate for a Commonwealth as diverse as Virginia.

VACo represents all 95 counties—each with distinct geographies, economies, infrastructure, budgets, and housing markets. A one-size-fits-all legislative approach risks solving one county’s problem at the expense of another’s.

Floyd County illustrates this point. Housing challenges in Southwest Virginia look very different from those in Northern Virginia.

“Here in this end of the state, in these mountains, it’s very difficult to build roads,” said Floyd County Vice Chairman and VACo First Vice President Jerry Boothe. “We are looking to put in new homes geared toward the local workforce—teachers, first responders, industry workers—but it costs about \$1 million per mile for roads. That’s our biggest cost.”

In response, Floyd County adopted a new Land Division Ordinance to allow small subdivisions on private roads built to basic standards, recognizing that VDOT-level road requirements can make modest housing developments financially impossible in mountainous terrain.

Floyd County also launched a [housing rehabilitation program](#) that has already renovated or rebuilt 14 homes for 29 residents—primarily seniors and individuals with disabilities, along with several families with young children. Nine homes received critical repairs, while five were completely rebuilt. Due to overwhelming demand and proven success, the county was recently awarded \$1.2 million in additional grant funding to rehabilitate eight more homes, including four complete rebuilds.

In Prince William County, elected officials adopted the first-ever [Affordable Dwelling Unit \(AfDU\) Ordinance](#), which is a significant zoning text amendment and marks a pivotal step in expanding access to housing for low- and moderate-income families.

The ordinance establishes a voluntary incentive program that offers density bonuses to developers who include affordable housing in their projects and creates the Prince William County Housing Trust Fund to provide gap financing for eligible affordable housing projects. The Board of Supervisors also committed approximately \$5 million for the next 5 years for total of \$31 million to finance eligible projects.

“This is a huge step forward for Prince William County,” said Board of County Supervisors Chair At-Large Deshundra Jefferson. “Everyone deserves a safe and affordable place to call home, including Prince William’s essential workers. This ordinance is not just about buildings - it’s about people, families, and the future of our community. We are creating real, long-term solutions that will help address the growing need for affordable housing.”

And Henry County recently helped some of its working families with the construction of [four new homes](#), which are built on former drug-blighted parcels. The county is planning on completing nine more new homes in future years.

These are not theoretical policy ideas. They are practical, community-driven solutions shaped by people who know their communities best.

VACo believes strongly that addressing housing affordability will require collaboration—between local governments, the state, the private sector, and nonprofit partners. We are encouraged by the opportunity to work with Governor-Elect Spanberger and her administration, the General Assembly, and housing stakeholders to develop incentives that empower counties rather than constrain them.

Solutions to housing challenges are not always found in legislative mandates or uniform statutes. More often, they are built through trust, flexibility, and partnership—by local leaders using state support to meet local needs.

That is why VACo supports affordable housing initiatives, collaboration at every level, and remains steadfast in protecting local decision-making. When communities are empowered to lead, Virginians are the ones who benefit.

Report Published on Status of Virginia's EMS Medication Kit Transition



Virginia's transition away from hospital-stocked emergency medication kits toward EMS-agency-stocked drug kits—required by federal changes under the Drug Supply Chain Security Act (DSCSA) and the Protecting Patient Access to Emergency Medications Act—has largely been completed despite the challenges posed to local governments to implement the shift in services. A 2025 [report](#) issued by the Virginia Board of Pharmacy, in collaboration with the Virginia Department of Health and the Office of Emergency Medical Services, provides a comprehensive overview of the Commonwealth's progress and lessons learned during this complex, statewide transition. The report finds that most EMS agencies across Virginia have successfully transitioned from the long-standing hospital kit-exchange model to compliant, agency-stocked medication systems, meeting federal and state regulatory requirements while maintaining service levels for patients.

As previously [reported](#), Federal legislation passed in 2017 known as the Protecting Patient Access to Emergency Medications Act, subsequent proposed regulations published by DEA, and FDA's announcement of its intention to enforce certain requirements of the Drug Supply Chain Security Act, 21 U.S.C. § 351 et seq. ("DSCSA"), resulted in a determination by hospital pharmacies in late 2023 that the hospitals could no longer legally participate in an emergency drug kit exchange process with EMS agencies as of November 27, 2024.

Beginning in January 2024, stakeholder meetings were convened, by the Virginia Department of Health EMS Medical Direction Committee and the Virginia Regional EMS Medication Kit Transition Workgroup, to discuss a transition plan. After significant input from stakeholders, the Board of Pharmacy adopted emergency regulations in a specially convened meeting to create a new model consistent with the federal law and DEA's proposed regulations. The emergency regulations became effective on August 20, 2024.

Concurrently, regional EMS councils worked diligently with EMS agencies in their regions to determine the optimal model to obtain and transfer drugs for use in emergency drug kits. The Board developed a virtual inspection process for expeditiously performing initial inspections prior to issuing 300 controlled substance registrations to EMS agencies and approving over 700 designated locations.

In October 2024, FDA announced a DSCSA exemption from the enhanced drug distribution security requirements of section 582 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act for eligible trading partners which extended until November 27, 2025. Based on this announcement, hospital pharmacies agreed to continue providing emergency drug kits, if needed, until April 15, 2025, with the understanding that both EMS and hospital pharmacy stakeholders would actively continue to complete the transition.

According to report findings, “While current and future challenges exist, most stakeholders agree that the transition for how EMS agencies receive and handle emergency drug kits in Virginia has gone well. One hospital pharmacist reported that she could not recall a hospital project, short of building a new hospital, in which so much time was invested with involvement from multiple disciplines, health system leadership, and the convening of dozens and dozens of meetings. Strong collaboration from stakeholders and state and federal partners was invaluable during this transition.”

Among the report’s notable findings:

- Approximately 300 controlled substance registrations have been issued to EMS agencies and regional EMS councils, covering more than 700 designated locations statewide.
- Most EMS agencies reported no reduction in service levels, although a small number—primarily rural or low-call-volume agencies—adjusted service levels or limited the scope of medications carried due to cost and operational concerns.
- Regional EMS councils played a critical role in helping agencies select compliant models, navigate DEA and Board of Pharmacy requirements, and coordinate purchasing, storage, and disposal practices.

The report emphasizes that the success of the transition hinged on unprecedented collaboration among EMS agencies, regional EMS councils, hospital pharmacists, state regulators, and federal partners. Emergency regulations adopted by the Board of Pharmacy in August 2024 provided a flexible, EMS-informed framework that allowed regions to tailor compliance models to local needs while meeting federal requirements.

VACo previously [highlighted](#) this collaborative effort in County Connections with an article recognizing the work of the Virginia Regional EMS Medication Kit Transition Workgroup the presentation of a 2025 PEMS Special Recognition Award. That article underscored the scale and urgency of the transition and the extraordinary efforts undertaken by EMS leaders, pharmacists, and partner organizations to meet the April 15, 2025, deadline.

While the report acknowledges ongoing challenges related to costs, long-term sustainability, and medication disposal, it concludes that Virginia’s EMS system is now on a more secure and compliant footing with respect to emergency medications. Continued monitoring, technical assistance, and potential future policy discussions will be critical to ensuring that smaller and rural agencies can sustain compliance without compromising patient care.

More information on the report can be accessed [here](#). VACo will continue to track implementation issues, funding concerns, and any future federal or state regulatory developments affecting EMS medication management.

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

Northern Virginia Growing Needs of Public Transit Joint Subcommittee (SJ 28) Recommendations Finalized

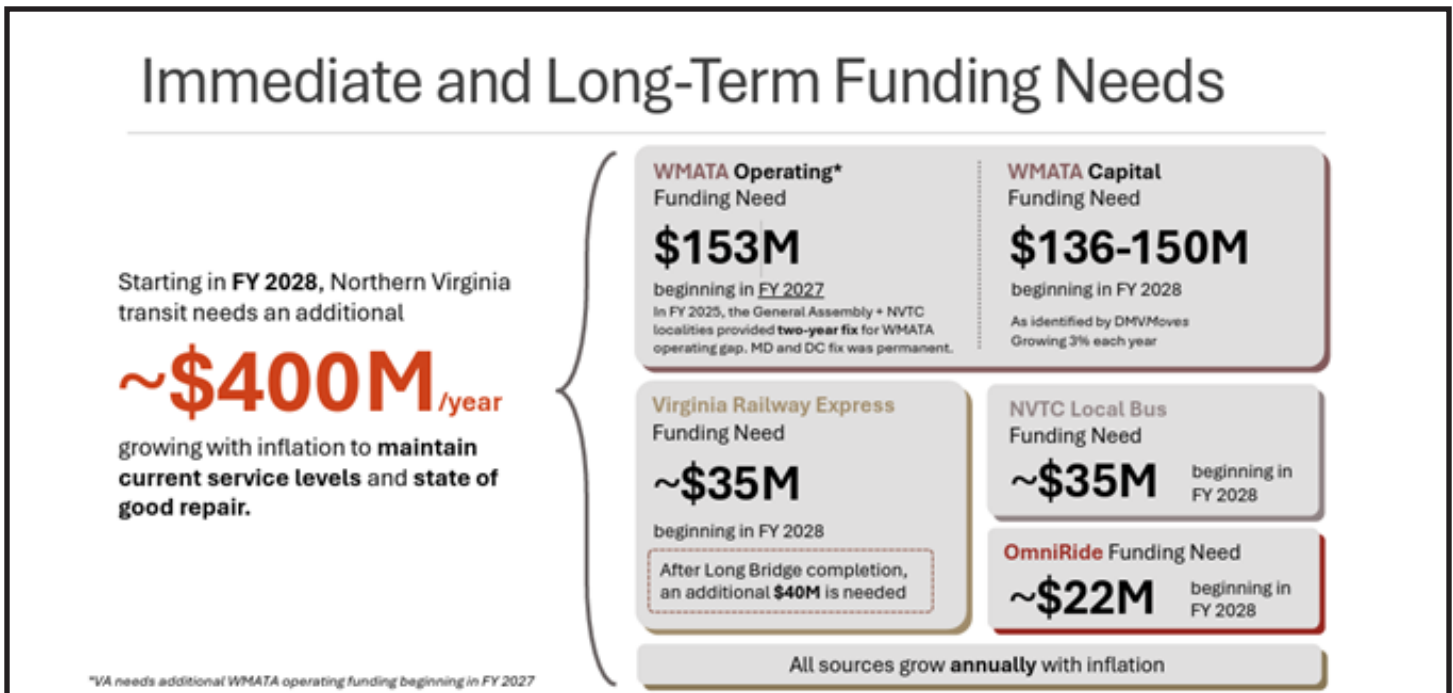


In 2024, the Virginia General Assembly established a Joint Subcommittee through Senate Joint Resolution 28 ([SJ 28](#)) to study long-term, sustainable funding sources and cost-containment strategies for public transit agencies in Northern Virginia, including the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), the Virginia Railway Express (VRE), and the bus systems that serve the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) and Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) transportation districts.

The Subcommittee, chaired by Senator Adam Ebbin with Delegate Mark Sickles as vice-chair, held its last meeting in early November 2025. At the conclusion of this meeting, the Subcommittee adopted a resolution outlining multiple recommendations for the General Assembly to consider regarding the public transit needs of Northern Virginia and the Commonwealth.

[More WMATA on Next Page](#)

Immediate and Long-Term Funding Needs



Beginning in FY 27, the Subcommittee identified a need of approximately \$153 million for Virginia's share of the WMATA operating subsidy. The Subcommittee recommends that WMATA's operating needs should be met with statewide sources of funding while capital needs should be met with regional sources to protect bondability.

Starting in FY 28, the Subcommittee identified a long-term funding need of \$400 million in additional funding annually to maintain current service levels and state of good repair across Northern Virginia transit systems. According to the group, any additional funding should grow with inflation (around 3% annually) and in the case of VRE and WMATA, be bondable.

The Subcommittee did not endorse any specific revenue source to use for the funding need and instead highlighted many different options and combinations of options for the General Assembly to consider. The group stated that there should be regional and statewide funds that contribute to the solution. It is important to note that the Subcommittee did recommend, as it pertains to statewide funding solutions, authorizing additional revenues to the Commonwealth Transportation Fund (CTF) and/or the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund (CMTF). This would provide additional statewide funding not only for the transit agencies identified in this study but would benefit all public transit agencies in the Commonwealth. 15 revenue source options were evaluated by the Subcommittee including:

- Highway use fee
- Retail delivery fee
- Transportation Network Companies (Uber/Lyft) sales tax
- Motor vehicles sales tax

More WMATA on Next Page

- Taxes of motor fuel
- Transient occupancy tax
- Retail sales and use tax

To view estimated revenues of all the potential revenue sources please click [here](#). (note that tolling I-66 inside the beltway was unable to be estimated).

Regional Funding Recommendations

The Subcommittee recommends establishing a PRTC regional transit fund as well as an NVTC regional transit fund. The PRTC fund would support VRE and the PRTC/OmniRide bus system while the NVTC fund would support WMATA, VRE and NVTC local bus systems. Furthermore regarding these regional funds, the Subcommittee recommends that the General Assembly should accept the [JLARC Study recommendation](#) to establish regional surcharges on the highway use fee and mileage-based user fee for the NVTC and PRTC Districts. The recommendations mention that the General Assembly could also consider how the establishment of regional surcharges in other parts of the Commonwealth could benefit transit needs in those districts as well.

Other Recommendations

Other recommendations of the Subcommittee include the General Assembly supporting the WMATA accountability and transparency measures adopted by DMVMoves, which require WMATA to produce and make public:

- a 20-year, conceptual capital plan every five years, which will include an analysis of capital investments and other opportunities to be more cost efficient,
- a funding/financial plan for major projects with a capital cost greater than \$300 million (adjusted for inflation), and
- an annual report on the performance of WMATA and its capital program, actual prior-year and anticipated next-year cost savings and cost efficiency efforts, and the use and outcomes of additional dedicated funding.

Lastly, the Subcommittee recommends the General Assembly should reform Virginia's legislated three percent operating assistance growth cap to encourage WMATA to continue cost containment efforts while ensuring a cap does not negatively impact service improvements, funding transparency, accountability, and the application of WMATA's subsidy allocation formulas.

VACo expects legislation to be brought during the upcoming General Assembly session that incorporates many of the recommendations of the SJ 28 Subcommittee. VACo will be sure to track and report on any proposed legislation throughout the Session.

To view all documents related to the SJ 28 joint Subcommittee, please click [here](#).

VACo Contact: [James Hutzler](#)

VRS Political Subdivision Valuations Reports with New Contribution Rates To Be Posted



VACo recently received important information from the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) regarding the actuarial valuation reports for all political subdivision employers. As previously [reported](#), these reports are important as they contain the retirement contribution rate along with rates for group life insurance and the health insurance credit.

According to VRS:

Later this month, VRS will post online in [myVRS Navigator](#) the latest actuarial valuation reports (as of June 30, 2025) and rate letters for all political subdivision employers. The rate letter will include the retirement contribution rate, along with rates for group life insurance, the health insurance credit and Virginia Local Disability Program (VLDP), if applicable.

The new rates are effective for fiscal years 2027 and 2028, beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2028.

To Access Your Actuarial Valuation

1. Log in to [myVRS Navigator](#). (You may need to coordinate with others in your organization who have access to myVRS Navigator to download the material.)
2. Click on the Reports drop-down menu heading.
3. Scroll to and click on Generated Reports.
4. Type "Valuation" in the report search field to filter the list to include valuation reports for your pension and health insurance credit (if applicable).

Contribution rates for political subdivision plans are calculated based on the assets and liabilities of each individual participating employer.

Employer contributions will vary based on:

- Benefit offerings (enhanced hazardous duty coverage, for example).
- Demographics of the employee group covered.
- Current funded level of the political subdivision's plan.

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

REGIONAL MANAGERS' MEETING



On Monday, December 22, 14 current and retired Administrators from Southside gathered at Charley's Waterfront Café in Farmville to celebrate the end of the year and holiday season.

Group Photo

Front Row – Wade Bartlett (former Prince Edward County Administrator), **Becky Carter** (former Buckingham Administrator), **Susan Adams** (Appomattox County Administrator), **Landon Green** (Charlotte County Administrator), **Tracy Gee** (Lunenburg County Administrator), **Ronnie Roark** (former Nottoway County Administrator), **Taylor Harvie** (former Amelia County Administrator), Dan Witt (former Charlotte County Administrator).

Back Row – Steve Bowen (Nottoway County Administrator), **Derek Stamey** (Cumberland County Administrator), **Morgan Quicke** (former Richmond County Administrator and VAcorp staff member), **Doug Stanley** (Prince Edward County Administrator), **Karl Carter** (Buckingham County Administrator) and **RB Clark** (former Charlotte County Administrator).

Administration – Elections

- Provides \$3.3 million in FY 2027 for implementation of the state's new campaign finance system.

Commerce and Trade/Economic Development

- Deposits an additional \$10 million in FY 2027 to the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program (for a total of \$30 million in FY 2027 and \$20 million in FY 2028).
- Provides \$35 million in FY 2027 to expedite design development and necessary site improvements for an inland port in Washington County, contingent on the Virginia Port Authority providing a scope of work and schedule of estimated expenses.
- Reduces funding for Enterprise Zones by \$500,000 per year and increases funding for the Virginia Main Street Program by an equivalent amount.
- Reduces funding for GO Virginia by \$4.7 million per year; redirects funding to the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research to expand the Great Opportunities in Technology and Engineering Careers program.
- Modifies language regarding use of federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) funding to direct funding to purposes including broadband resiliency, mobile wireless coverage expansion, expansion of broadband infrastructure to and within multi-dwelling units, and critical disaster relief telecommunications resiliency.
- Does not provide additional funding for the Virginia Telecommunication Initiative; language authorizes balances from funds authorized in the 2025 Appropriation Act to be carried forward and reappropriated.
- Provides \$5 million in FY 2027 for the Virginia Sports Tourism Incentive Grants Program.
- Provides \$35 million in FY 2027 for the University of Virginia Institute for Biotechnology; the University is required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Virginia Innovation Partnership Authority setting out performance metrics and sources of private funding.
- Authorizes the Virginia Innovation Partnership Authority to use up to \$500,000 in FY 2027 to plan and develop the Virginia Artificial Intelligence Institute and a coordinated statewide network, in collaboration with Virginia universities and public-private stakeholders, to position Virginia as a global leader in artificial intelligence.

Workforce Development

- Redirects \$13.6 million from balances in the Virginia Community College System in FY 2027 and provides \$13.6 million GF in FY 2028 to the New Economy Workforce Credential Grant Program. Requires the annual report on the program to include an analysis of grant fund utilization by occupational field.

Children's Services Act (CSA)

- Funds the state share of forecasted growth in the program (\$20.7 million GF in FY 2026, \$49.6 million GF in FY 2027, and \$86.5 million GF in FY 2028).
- Captures \$1.3 million in FY 2027 and \$2.4 million in FY 2028 in GF savings associated with removing automatic inflation adjustment for Medicaid rates for psychiatric residential treatment facilities.

Medicaid

- Includes \$410.3 million in FY 2026, \$1.1 billion in FY 2027, and \$1.7 billion in FY 2028 for the state GF share of forecasted growth in Medicaid. These amounts are proposed to be offset by a set of cost-containment measures totaling approximately \$611.5 million over the biennium and \$6.2 million in the caboose; these strategies include imposing a four-hour coverage limit for mobile crisis services and eliminating community stabilization as a covered service; eliminating inflation adjustments for certain provider rates; requiring a review of managed care organizations' administrative expenses and making adjustments in capitated rates; and capping annual spending per recipient on adult dental services.
- 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.
- Provides \$2.5 million in FY 2026, \$69.2 million in FY 2027 and \$65.2 million in FY 2028 from federal funds and the coverage assessment imposed on hospitals to implement the community engagement and eligibility verification requirements from the federal reconciliation legislation enacted in 2025; funding will support IT system changes, outreach, and Department of Medical Assistance (DMAS) staffing.
- Includes \$2.3 million GF per year for DMAS's contracted call center for eligibility determinations.
- Includes an appropriation of \$200 million per year in anticipated federal funding for the new Rural Health Transformation Program established in the 2025 reconciliation legislation; authorizes up to 13 positions at DMAS to be supported with program funds.
- Delays statutory requirements for DMAS to contract with a single third-party pharmacy benefits manager until January 1, 2027, "and such time as sufficient general fund support is provided by the General Assembly through a general appropriation act." This requirement was enacted during the 2025 General Assembly and is scheduled to take effect by July 1, 2026.

Behavioral Health

- Delays the implementation of redesigned Medicaid-funded community mental health services from June 30, 2026, to January 1, 2027. Concerns had been expressed about provider readiness to launch the new services on the originally-scheduled date.
- Provides \$33 million in FY 2027 for safety and security renovations at Catawba Hospital.
- Replaces \$2.7 million per year in GF support for the state 988 system with funds from the Crisis Call Center Fund and provides an additional \$3 million per year in Crisis Call Center Funds to support 988 crisis call center dispatch staff
- Removes language stipulating that each local or regional implementation area for the Marcus Alert system is to receive \$600,000 per year; allowing flexibility in the allocation of this funding was a recommendation of the Behavioral Health Commission. Does not provide additional funding for Marcus Alert implementation.
- Does not increase funding for Part C Early Intervention services. Allows funds appropriated for early intervention services to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to be transferred to the Virginia Department of Health to provide early intervention services through local health departments in accordance with signed agreements.
- Allows DBHDS to make payments to Community Services Boards pursuant to performance

contract terms rather than in 24 semi-monthly installments; also allows DBHDS to distribute funding for jail diversion and reentry services, jail discharge planning, and certain diversion services based on a reimbursement model.

- Provides \$2 million in FY 2027 for the Department of Criminal Justice Services to reimburse local law enforcement agencies for time spent transporting an individual under an emergency custody order or a temporary detention order. Requires priority to be given to agencies within specified regions and localities whose agencies must travel far distances to transport an individual to a state facility.

Aging/Long-Term Care

- Provides an additional \$375,000 per year for Long-Term Care Ombudsman programs at local Area Agencies on Aging.
- Increases the Auxiliary Grant rate from \$2,103 to \$2,130 per month, effective January 1, 2026.
- Funds two additional medical facility inspectors at the Virginia Department of Health to reduce the backlog of complaints regarding nursing facilities (\$291,627 per year).
- Enhances standards for the Medicaid-funded value-based purchasing program for nursing facilities by allowing facilities with major quality or safety issues to be found ineligible for enhanced funding for a period to be determined by DMAS and barring Special Focus Facilities (the poorest-performing facilities under federal quality standards) from receiving enhanced funding.
- Allows \$4.1 million in civil money penalty funds to be used for the federal Nursing Home Staffing Campaign, which uses civil money penalties imposed on nursing facilities for certain types of noncompliance with health and safety standards to provide incentives to nurses to work in nursing facilities and in state inspection roles.
- Directs DMAS and the Virginia Department of Health to create an assessment tool for long-term services and supports screenings for children under the age of 18 and directs the Departments to implement measures necessary to ensure the consistent statewide application of screening criteria. These screenings determine the eligibility and the level of care needed for Medicaid-funded long-term services and supports.

Health

- Provides \$8.2 million in FY 2027 and \$6.8 million in FY 2028 to deploy an electronic health record system across all local health districts.
- Provides \$655,913 GF per year for the state share of rent increases in local health districts.
- Extends the Northern Virginia Firefighter Occupational Screening Pilot Program by one year by providing an additional \$70,000 in FY 2027, but no further funding in FY 2028.
- Directs \$153,850 in FY 2027 and \$176,620 in FY 2028 from funds generated by the Board of Nursing to establish the Virginia Center for the Nursing Workforce under the Department of Health Professions. The Center would be charged with establishing a centralized database to facilitate the scheduling of clinical experience for nursing students, coordinating efforts to maximize enrollment in nursing education, and exploring other strategies to address the shortage of nurses in the Commonwealth.
- Note: The Virginia Department of Health provided updated local match rates for the new biennium to local departments of health last fall as part of the biennial review required by Va. Code § 32.1-34.3.

Social Services - 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.

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.
- Does not include funding for any state cost share for SNAP benefits if the state's error rate is not able to be reduced below the 6 percent threshold in the federal reconciliation bill; states are required to contribute a portion of the costs of SNAP benefits beginning October 1, 2027, if a state's error rate is higher than 6 percent.

Natural and Historic Resources - 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.
- Provides \$43.5 million in FY 2027 to support stormwater assistance projects in localities with municipal separate storm sewer systems through the Stormwater Local Assistance Fund.
- Requires the Department of Environmental Quality to establish a solicitation period for the Water Quality Improvement Fund to determine project demand and criteria to prioritize eligible projects based on quantifiable nutrition reduction impact, cost-effectiveness of the project, impact on cost-shared projects with multiple funding sources, funding need of the requesting entity, and project readiness. Requires that grant agreements for awarded projects must be fully executed before project construction costs are incurred, and bars awards for a grantee to backfill project costs met with any type of taxable debt. VACo has [opposed similar attempts](#) at reforming the WQIF grant process for local wastewater treatment plants.
- Provides \$402,400 in FY 2027 and \$314,209 in FY 2028 for the Virginia Institute of Marine Science to monitor and forecast harmful algal blooms; provides \$750,000 in FY 2027 to the Department of Conservation and Recreation for harmful algal bloom remediation efforts at Lake Anna.

Other Natural and Historic Resources Items

- Deposits an additional \$1 million in FY 2027 to the Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund.
- Authorizes the Department of Conservation and Recreation to acquire or accept the donation of land to establish Oak Hill State Park, contingent on submission of a comprehensive funding plan that includes \$52 million in various nongeneral fund resources and meets certain other requirements.
- Provides \$1.5 million in FY 2027 and \$1.6 million in FY 2028 to the Department of Conservation and Recreation and \$425,244 in FY 2027 and \$290,244 in FY 2028 to the Department of Forestry; these are non-general funds provided to support participation in a ten-year cooperative agreement with the United States Forest Service for trail maintenance and other projects in state parks and adjacent federal lands.

Public Safety and Homeland Security

- Does not include an increase in aid to localities with police departments (“HB 599” funding).
- Provides \$424,000 in FY 2027 and \$288,000 in FY 2028 for communications technology in rural localities. Requires the Virginia Department of Emergency Management to issue a request for proposals from providers of wireless services that utilize satellites to provide communications capabilities for local first responders and emergency managers in rural areas to enhance resiliency during situations where other communication sources fail.
- Redirects \$35 million in interest from the Low-Income Energy Efficiency Fund to support the Cardinal Disaster Relief Fund in FY 2027; stipulates that the Fund is to be used for efforts to address life, safety, and disaster-related response costs not covered by federal support. Also provides \$5 million GF in FY 2027 and \$7 million GF in FY 2028 to support emergency management capability.

- Appropriates non-General Funds for two additional state fire marshal inspector positions (\$207,621 in FY 2027 and \$232,692 in FY 2028).
- Extends the deadline for a report assessing fees charged by the State Fire Marshal's Office to conduct fire safety inspections and determining whether fees should be adjusted based on the cost of these inspections from October 2025 to October 2026.
- Provides \$1.8 million per year for the increased cost of central admissions and placements at the Department of Juvenile Justice and \$942,065 per year for the increased cost of community placement programs.
- Provides \$50.3 million in FY 2026, \$43.6 million in FY 2027, and \$52.2 million in FY 2028 for increased personnel and equipment costs for the Virginia State Police, as well as \$9.3 million in each year of the biennium for IT costs.

Transportation

- Increases the set-aside from the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund from \$1.5 million to \$2 million per year for human services mobility programs. Reduces the set-aside for state safety oversight of fixed rail guideway transit agencies by an equivalent amount.

Veterans and Defense Affairs

- Provides \$2 million in FY 2027 for the Virginia Military Community Infrastructure Grant Program, which awards grants to aid the planning and design, construction, or completion of infrastructure projects that enhance military readiness, installation resiliency, or quality of life for military communities.
- Adds \$100,000 in FY 2027 for the Virginia Values Veterans program, which assists Virginia employers in hiring and retaining veterans.

Tax policy

- Removes language freezing conformity of Virginia's tax code with the federal tax code, allowing tax policy changes included in the federal reconciliation bill that affect the calculation of income to be incorporated into Virginia's tax code.
 - These changes include placing a minimum threshold for charitable giving before deductions are allowed for taxpayers who itemize; restructuring the opportunity zones program; placing a revised limit on the value of itemized deductions; increasing the amount that taxpayers may deduct for investments in certain types of business assets; and allowing more business interest deductions.
 - Proposes departing from conformity with the federal tax code by (1) not allowing retroactive and catch-up deductions for domestic research and experimental expenditures and maintaining the requirement that these costs be amortized over five years and (2) capping the special depreciation for qualified production property (nonresidential property used in manufacturing or production) at 50 percent of the federal amount allowed.
- Proposes a Virginia-specific income subtraction for income attributable to tips, which would be capped at 25 percent of the amount eligible for a federal deduction in Tax Year 2026 and 50 percent of this amount for Tax Years 2027 and beyond. (The federal deduction applies through Tax Year 2028.)
- Proposes a Virginia-specific income subtraction for income attributable to overtime,

which would be capped at 25 percent of the amount eligible for a federal deduction in Tax Year 2026 and 50 percent of this amount for Tax Years 2027 and beyond. (The federal deduction applies through Tax Year 2028.)

- Proposes a Virginia-specific income subtraction for interest on a motor vehicle loan, which would be capped at 25 percent of the amount eligible for a federal deduction in Tax Year 2026 and 50 percent of this amount for Tax Years 2027 and beyond. (The federal deduction applies through Tax Year 2028.)
- Makes the increased standard deduction levels of \$8,750 for individuals/\$17,500 for joint filers permanent; these higher amounts were slated to expire on January 1, 2027.
- Makes provisions allowing taxpayers to claim a refundable Virginia income tax credit of 20 percent of the federal Earned Income Tax Credit permanent; these provisions would otherwise expire on January 1, 2027.
- Makes provisions creating the elective pass-through entity income tax permanent; these provisions were slated to expire on January 1, 2027.
- Extends the sales and use tax exemption for data centers to 2050 and to 2055 or 2065 for data center operators meeting certain additional capital investment and job creation requirements.
- Implements market-based sourcing for the attribution of sales for purposes of calculating corporate income tax, with certain modifications for defense contractors and telecommunications companies.

Reserves

- Deposits \$312.3 million from excess FY 2025 revenues into the Revenue Reserve Fund by June 30, 2026. Transfers \$323.4 million from the Revenue Reserve Fund to the General Fund (this action keeps the combined balances in the Revenue Stabilization Fund and the Revenue Reserve Fund in compliance with the overall cap of 15 percent of the Commonwealth's average annual income and sales tax revenues for the last three years).

Other items

- Provides \$374,223 in FY 2027 and \$152,223 in FY 2028 to the Department of Taxation to support a website providing for communication between the Department and localities.
- Requires agencies with previously-authorized ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund projects with dollars unexpended as of June 30, 2026, to provide reports detailing plans to ensure that funds are expended prior to the December 31 deadline.
- Requires the first \$1.1 billion in FY 2026 revenues in excess of the forecast, after any required Revenue Stabilization Fund deposits, to be used to fund certain state agency and higher education capital projects with cash rather than bond proceeds.

VACo Contact: [**VACo Legislative Team**](#)



David Blount
Executive Director,
VAPDC
Director of
Legislative
Services, Thomas
Jefferson PDC
[BIO](#)

Session 1

Friday, January 9, 2026, 12:00 pm
A 2026 General Assembly Walk Through

The 2026 General Assembly kicks off in mid-January for a 60-day session. A new Administration comes into office and there are many new members of the House of Delegates. Topping the list of tasks will be crafting a new biennial state budget and addressing top legislative issues like energy and housing. This session will take participants through an overview of the legislative process, highlights the governor's budget proposal, and will review anticipated legislative issues of interest to localities and regions.

Session 2

Friday, February 6, 2026, 12:00 pm
Planning for Agriculture Toolkit

American Farmland Trust (AFT) has released a new statewide resource to help Virginia's communities protect farmland and support a thriving agricultural future. The Planning for Agriculture in Virginia Toolkit is an online collection of guidance materials, fact sheets, success stories, and other resources. Join this session to hear and see how it can be used to help local leaders, land use planners, the farming community, and others to guide growth and strengthen farm viability.

Julia Freedgood
Senior Fellow
and Senior
Program Advisor,
American
Farmland Trust
[BIO](#)

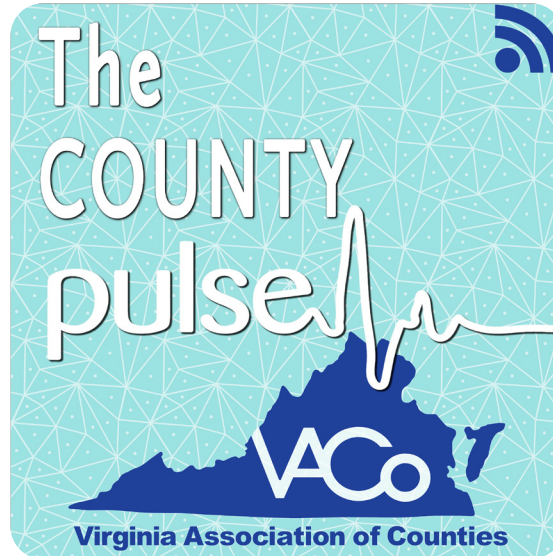


Session 3

Friday, March 6, 2026, 12:00 pm
TBA

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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.

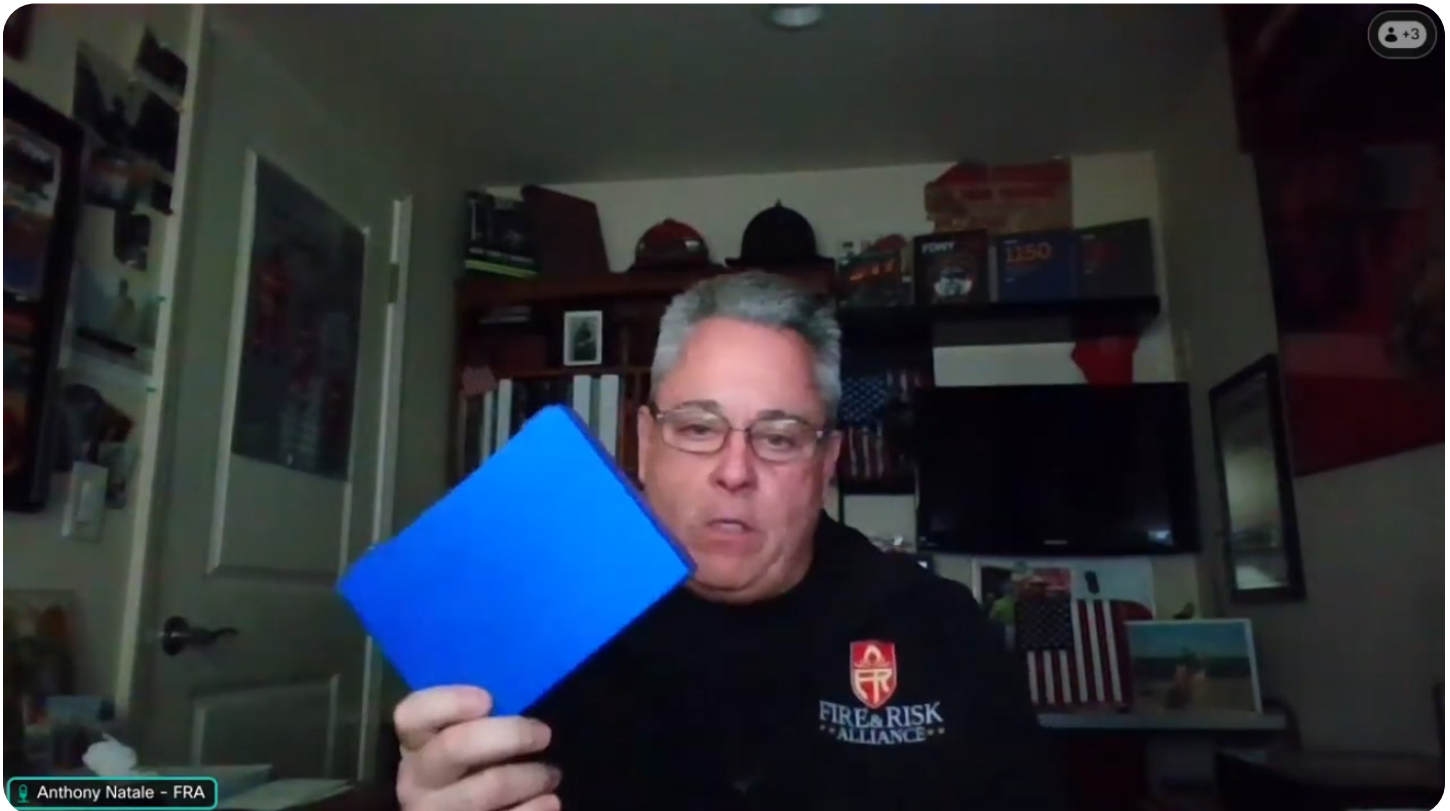
The JLARC study, directed by the General Assembly, found that Virginia's current Standards of Quality (SOQ) funding formula significantly underestimates the true cost of providing a high-quality public education. While the SOQ formula calculated that school divisions needed roughly \$10.7 billion in 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-standarddevelopment/855>)
- Energy Storage Facility Siting Agreement – Chesterfield County Example (<https://chesterfieldcova.portal.civicclerk.com/event/1232/files/agenda/3600>)

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

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 or 804.343.2511.

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

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

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- Competitive rates and low closing costs.
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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**](mailto:smulroy@valocalfinance.org)





INTRODUCING A VACo PREMIER PARTNER

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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

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

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



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

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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).





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



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



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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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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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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

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