



Virginia Association of Counties



County Officials' Summit



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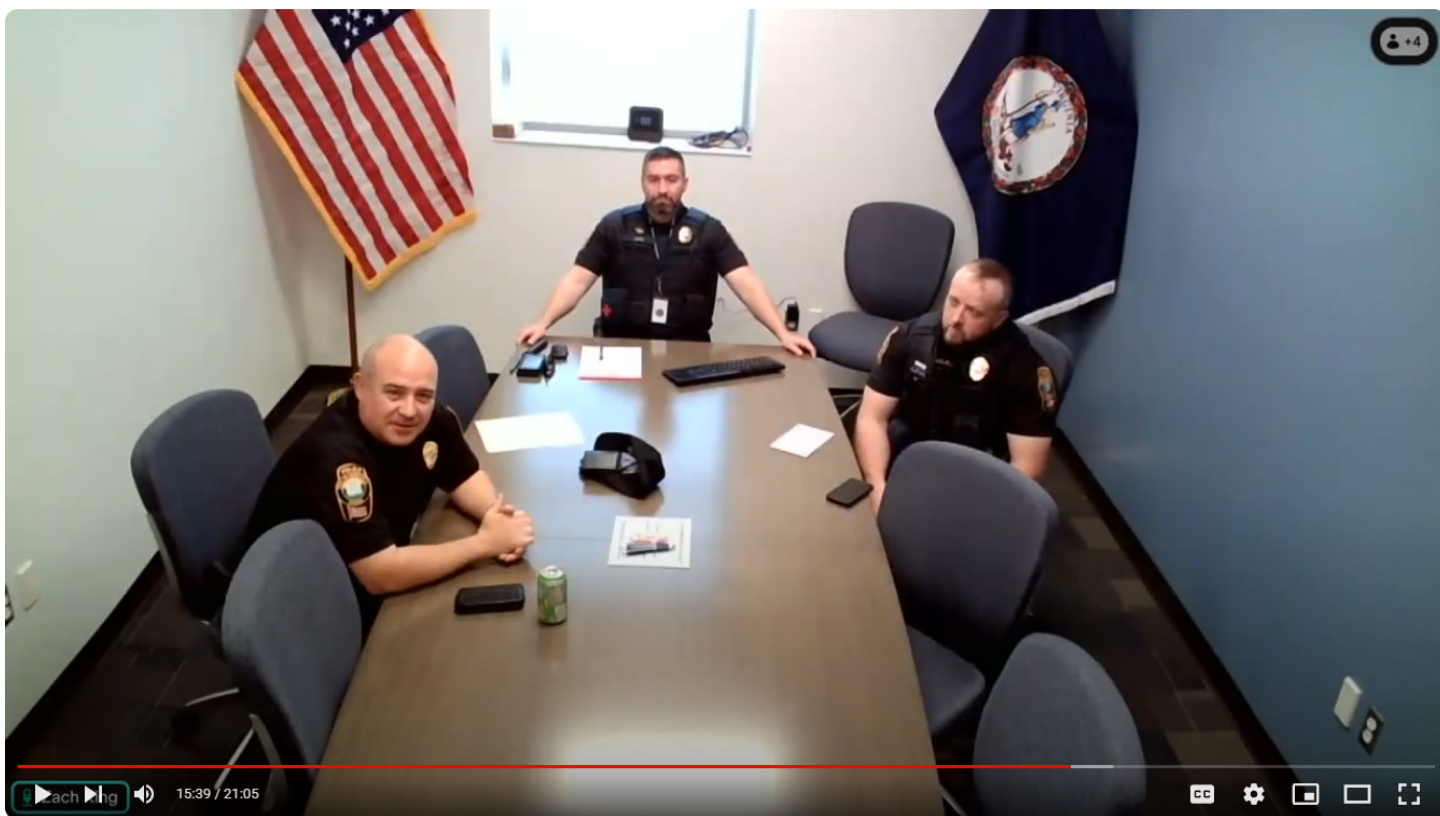
Richmond Marriott

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- ✓ Political and Legislative Discussions
- ✓ Counties Networking and Engaging
- ✓ VACo Steering Committee Meetings

[VACo County Officials' Summit Website](#)



Premier Partner Spotlight

Blue Line Solutions Testimonials

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

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

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

"That's absolutely fantastic that we can make a difference in a community," Blue Line Solutions CEO/Founder Mark Hutchinson said. ([Click to hear what VACo members are saying about Blue Line Solutions!](#))

VACo Appoints Katie Boyle as Deputy Director



RICHMOND (June 21, 2024)—The Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) is pleased to announce [the appointment](#) of **Katie Boyle** as Deputy Director. Boyle joined VACo on July 1, 2016, and has been an integral part of the advocacy team as Director of Government Affairs covering finance, elections, and health and human resources.

“Katie is an outstanding team member, who has been a leader and a tremendous supporter to our team for many years,” VACo Executive Director **Dean Lynch** said. “In her new role, Katie will continue to ensure the continuity of VACo’s operations in advocacy, education, community engagement, communications, and business development. Over time, she will also take on a more significant role in our administrative functions.”

Boyle is a highly respected lobbyist who is known for her intelligence, tenacity, and work ethic. Boyle is a comforting ally to many VACo members who seek her expertise on an array of legislative issues.

“I’ve truly enjoyed working with the VACo team, our Board of Directors, and our members, and I’m honored and excited to be supporting VACo in new ways,” Boyle said.

Boyle arrived at VACo after 11 years in Fairfax County where she steadily rose through the ranks. She was named Deputy Legislative Director in 2013 and advocated on behalf of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on a variety of legislative issues before the General Assembly.

Boyle holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in English Language and Literature from the University of Virginia.

Enter the 2024 VACo Achievement Awards

Deadline is July 1, 2024



Dear **VACo Members** –

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

[2024 Achievement Awards Submission Form](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

**[ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS
SUBMISSION FORM](#)**



Visit Montgomery County and the Old Montgomery County Courthouse

Location: 1 East Main Street / South Franklin Street

Built: 1974 – 1976

Style: Modern / Brutalist

Architect: Scherertz-Franklin

Contractor: Graves Construction Company

Description: The building faces south and is a four story buff colored brick, concrete and glass structure. The building is located on the landscaped grounds of the Courthouse Square in the center of Christiansburg. The south front has a large glass section at the central entrance. The upper stories have horizontal windows. The roof line is flat. The building is now an office building. On the grounds is the eagle from the 1909 County Courthouse.

History: The county was created in 1776 and Christiansburg was selected as the county seat in 1777. The first courthouse was built by the Davis brothers in 1808 on the Courthouse Square. The second courthouse in 1815 was a rebuild of the previous courthouse. The third courthouse was a two story brick structure built by James Toncray in 1834 to 1836. The fourth courthouse was designed by Huggins & Bates and built by N B Moore in 1909 being a remodel of the previous courthouse with an Edwardian appearance. The courthouse was demolished. The fifth courthouse was constructed in 1975 to 1976 and is still standing. The sixth courthouse was constructed in 2009 to 2012.

Note: The eagle from the 1909 courthouse cupola was saved and placed on the Courthouse Square. There is a similar eagle on the old Roanoke County Courthouse which was also designed by Huggins & Bates.

SOURCE: courthouses.co

VACo 2024 REGIONAL MEETINGS

IN-PERSON MEETINGS

REGIONS 1&4 - MAY 1 | PRINCE GEORGE

REGION 2 - MAY 22 | JAMES CITY

REGION 13 - JUNE 11 | SCOTT

REGIONS 10&12 - JULY 10 | FLOYD

REGION 3 - JULY 25 | HANOVER

VIRTUAL MEETINGS

REGIONS 6&7 - JULY

REGION 8 - AUGUST

REGIONS 5&9&11 - AUGUST

In Partnership With

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SolarApp+: How Local Governments Can Save Time and Money on Rooftop Solar Permitting
By: Ashish Kapoor, Senior Energy and Climate Advisor at Piedmont Environmental Council

Rooftop solar has numerous local benefits for our localities. Installations can save households money, offer protection from escalating utility rates, provide energy independence and connect clean energy quickly to the grid. A robust rooftop solar market can also mitigate against the need for transmission and create significant local jobs. One of the largest hurdles to more widespread rooftop solar adoption is the permitting process. As rooftop solar becomes increasingly popular in the Commonwealth, permitting can put a further strain on local government resources. As a result, we see increased costs and connection delays on homeowners' solar projects.

SolarApp+, a rooftop solar permitting software, speeds up and automates much of the permitting process. It is now being used by about [200 jurisdictions](#) nationally, which benefits over 25% of the rooftop solar market. Aside from a \$25 administrative fee on applications, SolarApp+ is a completely free program that saves localities thousands of hours of staff time. Projects approved by SolarApp+ are 37% less likely to fail an inspection than traditionally reviewed projects. In addition to solar projects, the software also applies to energy storage and main panel upgrades. In the future, the program plans to expand applicability to heat pumps and residential EV chargers.

In Virginia, two localities, Harrisonburg and Culpeper County, have successfully adopted SolarApp+. In September of 2022, Culpeper County fully adopted the program to great success. The County was recently featured in a webinar with Virginia Energy and NVRC to speak about their adoption [process](#). In their first year and a half using SolarApp+, the County increased their approved rooftop solar permits to 130. Just as impressively, they saved the time and resource equivalent of a full time employee.

According to the County's SolarApp+ announcement, "the benefits with this program are many: online plan review process 24/7/365, online credit card payments, quick permit turnaround, and a reduction in permit fees due to the time savings in staff service participation."

This November, SolarApp+ will have a booth at the VACo conference. Please stop by the booth to learn more. In the meantime, if your locality is interested in learning more about SolarApp+, please contact me at akapoor@pecva.org and I can connect you to the appropriate program staff.



Solar APP+



Roanoke County Economic Development Announces Two Appointments

This year, we have experienced unprecedented growth in Roanoke County, Virginia, with \$177 million in business investments and the addition of 1,800 new jobs. We are pleased to announce the growth of our own department with the appointments of Lindsay Webb as Assistant Director of Business Retention and Operations and Alexander Jones as Assistant Director of Marketing and Business Development.

“We are thrilled to welcome two talented individuals from within our organization to the Economic Development team,” said Megan Baker, Director of Economic Development. “Both bring extensive knowledge and a deep commitment to our community, which will be crucial as we continue to promote growth and development within Roanoke County.”

[Click here for full press release.](#)

PHOTO CREDIT: CHERYL ZIBISKY



One of the Friendliest Places in the South!

Floyd was named one of the [“20 Friendliest Places In The South”](#) by Southern Living Magazine! The Floyd Country Store was noted by the magazine as having “The Friendliest Front Porch.”

We are so proud and honored for our small town to be recognized in this way, and we look forward to meeting new friendly faces as the tourism season kicks into high gear. Whether you are local or a visitor whose home away from home is Floyd, thank you for helping make our little town such a special place!



June 5, 2024

Floyd Wins Big in Tourism Funding

For Immediate Release

Contact: Dr. Linda S. Millsaps
County Administrator
(919) 696-8180

Andrew Morris
Town Manager
(540) 745-2565

Kathleen Legg
Tourism Director
(540) 239-8509

Floyd, VA – Floyd’s tourism program and associated venues and businesses won big in the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) Spring 2024 Grant & Sponsorship Program. Second only to one other community in the Commonwealth, Floyd Tourism, local businesses, nonprofits, the Town of Floyd, as well as regional and nationally known festivals garnered an impressive \$86,820.30 in the most recent funding cycle.

The three largest awards went to FloydFest 24, Floyd Tourism for Floyd Fusion: Amplifying Art, Culture, and Adventure, and the Country Store to support the Friday Night Jamboree. “To find ourselves back home in Floyd County, bringing Festival Park & FloydFest to life, and then to be awarded the top grant sum from Virginia Tourism Corporation, catalyzes our mission to be cultural and musical ambassadors for the county we’ve always loved and wanted to make proud,” said Sam Calhoun, COO of FloydFest/Across-the-Way Productions, Inc. “Knowing that we are joined by myriad others locally collecting top and first-time awards speaks to what we have collectively curated and created in this county, and underscores that the hard work we do translates into meaningful economic impact and development.” Floyd Tourism Director Kathleen Legg offered similar thoughts, “These funds will significantly enhance our local tourism offerings, spotlighting Floyd as a premier destination for visitors seeking unique experiences. This support highlights the incredible potential of our community and paves the way for continued growth and prosperity in our tourism sector.”

[More on Next Page](#)

Programs funded for the first time include Tuggles Gas Roadside Inn, the Town of Floyd, the Floyd Center for the Arts, and Floyd Yoga Jam 2024 RETROspective. Yoga Jam organizer Katie Turman said, "It's incredibly humbling and rewarding to have the state's support in our competitive region that features so many incredible events and festivals. We are excited to introduce our town and our Floyd Yoga Jam community to new faces!".

"We are extremely proud of our amazing community and are so excited about what VTC realizes we offer to our visitors and residents. The success of Floyd started more than 50 years ago with a few handfuls of individuals full of vision and tenacity. We are sustaining their dream with a family of folks who love Floyd, our mountains, our arts, our music, and each other," stated County Administrator Linda Millsaps. Town Manager Andrew Morris agrees, "Floyd has become a tourism hub in Southwest Virginia. Members of the local business community work tirelessly to provide an unforgettable experience for visitors. Locals meet you with a smile and a wave as you enjoy Floyd's outdoor adventures, live music, and restaurants. The 'Floyd vibe' is unmatched in this area!"

Tourism programming and development in Floyd is a combined Town and County effort, supported by a Tourism Development Council of local business and government leaders. Kathleen Legg serves as Director of the tourism program.

Look for all the great happenings at www.visitfloydva.com. A complete listing of all Floyd 2024 awards is below:

- Tuggle's Gap Roadside Inn LLC Experience Authentic Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains Hospitality \$3,350.00
- Town of Floyd - Small Town Event Series \$6,052.50
- Floyd Tourism - Floyd on 2 Wheels \$6,052.50
- Floyd Tourism - Floyd Fusion: Amplifying Art, Culture, and Adventure \$18,000.00
- Floyd Country Store Friday Night Jamboree: A Community Thriving on Living Traditions for 40 Years \$13,000.00
- Floyd Center for the Arts - Art Adventures: Explore & Learn! \$6,865.30
- Floyd Yoga Jam 2024 RETROspective - Floyd Yoga Jam 2024- Retrospective \$9,000.00
- FloydFest 24~Horizon FloydFest 24~Horizon \$20,000.00
- Floyd Small Town Fall Festival - Small Town Fall Festival \$4,500.00

Public Comment Period Now Open on Proposed Children's Services Act Policy Regarding Submission of Reimbursement Requests; VACo Seeks County Feedback on Proposal

At its June 13 meeting, the State Executive Council (SEC) approved submission of a revised draft of SEC Policy 4.5.2 for a second period of public comment, which will close on August 16, 2024.

The proposed revisions to the policy, which may be found at [this link](#), stem from discussions at the SEC at its December meeting regarding a set of appeals from several counties that had missed the September 30 deadline for submission of reimbursement requests. Under current SEC policy, counties in this situation may submit a waiver request to the Office of Children's Services, but the Executive Director does not have explicit authority to grant these requests, so waiver requests must be considered by the SEC. The proposed revisions to the policy would allow the Executive Director to grant a waiver based on a determination of "good cause," as defined in the policy. A locality that disagrees with the Executive Director's determination could appeal to the State Executive Council.



Based on feedback from members, VACo [submitted public comments on an earlier draft of the proposed policy](#), which was circulated for an initial public comment period beginning in March 2024. VACo's suggestions were largely incorporated into the revised draft; however, SEC members raised several issues during the June 13 discussion on which VACo seeks further input from members.

Specifically, VACo is interested in situations in which providers do not submit invoices in a timely fashion. The June 13 policy draft would list "[i]nstances where provider invoices to localities are delayed pending resolution of appeals of Medicaid denials of payment" as an example of "good cause" for which a waiver from the September 30 reimbursement deadline could be granted. VACo seeks feedback from members as to whether this language adequately addresses situations of delayed receipt of invoices.

Member feedback will inform VACo's public comments and may be sent to Katie Boyle (kboyle@vaco.org). Members may also submit comments directly to the Office of Children's Services; public comment is being accepted until 5 p.m. on August 16, 2024, and may be submitted online via the Public Policy Comment Form (available at [this link](#)), via email to csa.office@csa.virginia.gov, or via U.S. Mail (1604 Santa Rosa Road, Suite 137, Richmond VA 23229). If members submit comments directly to the Office of Children's Services, VACo staff would greatly appreciate receiving a copy of your comments.

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

Office of Children's Services Proposes Streamlined Method for Providing Reimbursements to Localities; County Feedback Sought



The Office of Children's Services (OCS) recently announced a proposal to streamline the process of providing reimbursements to localities from state pool funding. Under current budget language, the state allocates an initial distribution of funds to each locality based on the greater of (i) that locality's percentage of 1997 CSA pool fund program expenditures (relative to total 1997 pool fund expenditures) or (ii) the latest available three-year average of actual pool fund program expenditures. When a locality exhausts that initial allocation, it must request a supplemental allocation from OCS, a process that can be cumbersome for both the locality and OCS.

OCS is proposing to consolidate the base and supplemental allocations into a single funding pool, and to reimburse localities based on their eligible CSA expenditures as submitted to OCS. OCS has emphasized that this proposal will have no effect on the existing sum-sufficient provisions governing the Children's Services Act.

If OCS moves forward with this concept, staff will submit a proposal through the Administration's budget development process to amend the Appropriation Act to consolidate the base allocation and supplemental funding language. If the proposal were included in the Governor's December 2024 budget and approved by the General Assembly during the 2025 session, the changes would likely take effect in FY 2026.

Slides from a recent briefing provided by OCS staff may be found at [this link](#). VACo would appreciate receiving any comments on the proposal, which may be directed to Katie Boyle at kboyle@vaco.org.

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

Office of Children’s Services Seeks Public Comment by August 1 on Proposed Repeal of Policy 4.3 – “Carve Out” of Allocation for Development of New/Expanded Services



On June 13, the State Executive Council approved circulating for an initial public comment period a proposal to repeal SEC Policy 4.3. After this initial 45-day public comment period, which will close on August 1, the SEC will determine whether to move forward with a specific policy proposal; if so, there will be an additional opportunity for public comment.

The current policy sets out a process for two or more localities to set aside a portion of their state and local pool fund allocations (up to \$100,000 per jurisdiction, or 5 percent of the local allocation, whichever is smaller) to cover start-up costs for new or expanded CSA services, with an aggregate statewide cap of \$2 million. The Office of Children’s Services is proposing to repeal this policy, as its implementation is contingent on a state appropriation of \$2 million, which has never been funded. Background information on the policy may be found at [this link](#), and the full text of the policy is available at [this link](#).

Member feedback will inform VACo’s public comments and may be sent to Katie Boyle (kboyle@vaco.org). Comments may be submitted through the Public Policy Comment Form on the OCS website (<https://www.csa.virginia.gov/doecsa123>), via email to csa.office@csa.virginia.gov, or via US mail or other forms of delivery through 5 p.m. on August 1, 2024. If members submit comments directly to the Office of Children’s Services, VACo staff would greatly appreciate receiving a copy of your comments.

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

Chesterfield County Hosts Behavioral Health Commission



The Behavioral Health Commission met on June 22 at Chesterfield County's Eanes Pittman Public Safety Training Center to receive a briefing from Chesterfield County Sheriff Karl Leonard and his staff about their efforts to provide mental health treatment and to support recovery within the jail. Commission members also adopted a work plan for the remainder of the year, accepting the recommendations of the Commission's Executive Committee, which had proposed a draft work plan earlier in the month.

Sheriff Leonard and Kerri Rhodes, Behavioral and Mental Health Director for the Sheriff's Office, spoke passionately about their commitment to providing mental and behavioral health care for the individuals incarcerated in the Chesterfield County jail, highlighting the HARP program as an important example of efforts to break the cycle of addiction and recidivism. HARP is a voluntary substance use disorder treatment program provided within the jail that involves peer-to-peer counseling as well as other clinical and educational programming, and [has been shown in an independent evaluation to reduce recidivism](#) among program graduates. Chesterfield County won VACo's 2017 Best Large County Achievement Award for the HARP program. Despite the success of HARP and other programming within the jail, Sheriff Leonard and Ms. Rhodes stressed the importance of a better society-wide approach to mental health, pointing out that the jail has become a de facto psychiatric treatment facility and noting that at times, individuals in crisis end up in the jail for lack of an alternative option.

Commission members endorsed the draft workplan proposed by the Executive Committee; the plan includes a mix of specific studies and ongoing monitoring and oversight.

Ongoing monitoring and oversight projects include the following:

- **Tracking current efforts on health care workforce programs:** As part of the Commission's ongoing charge to map current initiatives in behavioral health, staff will collaborate with the Joint Commission on Health Care (which is conducting a study of all health care workforce programs, to include behavioral health programs), as well as with the Virginia Healthcare Workforce Development Authority, and provide a report in December.

- **Tracking current efforts on crisis services implementation:** As another element of the Commission's work to document current initiatives, staff will develop a map of efforts to enhance the state's crisis services system. Budget language directs the Secretary of Health and Human Resources to report on the use of funding appropriated during the 2023 and 2024 General Assembly sessions to expand and modernize the state's crisis services system. A report is scheduled for December.
- **Reporting on system metrics:** Staff plans to continue quarterly updates on key metrics.
- **Program monitoring:** Staff suggested that the Commission develop a rolling list of programs to be evaluated, which would allow staff to work continuously on these efforts without requiring formal direction via the adoption of a new workplan each year. Further discussion of this plan is scheduled for September.
- **Monitoring and evaluation of Permanent Supportive Housing:** Staff plans to evaluate the effectiveness of this program in improving long-term outcomes, with a report planned for October.
- **STEP-VA implementation:** Budget language directs the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services to report to the Commission, among other entities, on the changes to STEP-VA performance measures and benchmarks that are anticipated to be included in Community Services Board performance contracts. The Department is also required to conduct a needs assessment for each of the nine service components of STEP-VA, as well as a cost estimate for these unmet needs. Both reports are due by December 1. Commission staff anticipate using the data and metrics that are developed this year to begin conducting oversight of the programs beginning in 2025.

Additional studies to be undertaken include the following:

- **Law enforcement interactions with individuals with mental illness and other disorders:** Legislation to provide an affirmative defense to prosecution for assault or assault and battery for individuals whose behaviors resulted from mental illness or neurocognitive disorders was vetoed by the Governor, and the Disability Commission referred the issue to the Behavioral Health Commission. Staff has proposed determining to what extent law enforcement officers receive adequate training in interacting with individuals in crisis and what barriers might be impeding adequate training.
- **Alignment of civil admissions laws and processes with crisis system:** Legislation enacted in 2024 directs the Commission to study how best to align current civil admissions statutes and processes with the delivery of services in the crisis system. Staff plans to provide an interim briefing in November and a final report in fall 2025.

Commission staff also provided an update on the outcome of legislative and budgetary proposals introduced at the Commission's request during the 2024 General Assembly session. The meeting slides may be found at [this link](#). The Commission's next meeting is scheduled for July 9.

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

State General Fund Revenues Continue to Exceed Expectations in May

Earlier this week, Governor Youngkin released the most recent [monthly report](#) from Secretary of Finance Stephen Cummings on state General Fund revenues, which continued to perform well in May, led by a strong showing in individual income tax collections. Total General Fund revenues were up by 14.2 percent in May; on a fiscal year-to-date basis, General Fund revenues have increased by 5.9 percent (\$1.48 billion), and are ahead of the revised forecast included in the budgets approved last month by \$1.09 billion.

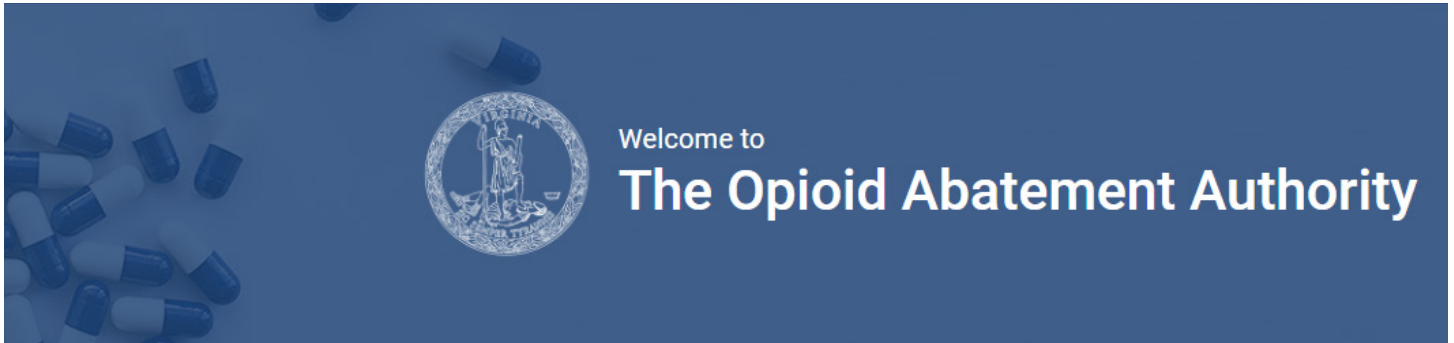
Individual income tax withholding collections increased by 20.9 percent in May (year-over-year), and have grown by 5.5 percent fiscal year-to-date, outpacing the forecast by \$152.9 million. Individual income tax nonwithholding, typically one of the more volatile sources of state revenue, was up by 5.1 percent in May; although collections are down by 2.7 percent for the year, nonwithholding collections are outperforming the forecast by \$575.8 million on a fiscal year-to-date basis. Sales tax collections, the other major source of state General Fund collections, are up by 2.6 percent in May; revenues are down by 0.7 percent on a fiscal year-to-date basis, but are also ahead of projections, outpacing the forecast by \$162.1 million. Corporate income tax collections continued to underperform in May, declining by 92.5 percent, but Secretary Cummings's memorandum notes that this drop is "mainly attributable to the timing of the issuance of corporate income tax refunds." On a fiscal year-to-date basis, collections in this source are down by 4.7 percent, and are lagging the forecast by \$191.3 million.

In summarizing his outlook, Secretary Cummings wrote, "Revenue growth has exceeded expectations throughout FY 2024, supported by stronger than expected economic fundamentals which gives us confidence in the near term. However, the path of future economic growth and resulting revenue collections will depend in large part on inflation and the Fed's efforts to bring it under control." He pointed out that the Federal Reserve's Federal Open Market Committee left interest rates unchanged at its meeting last week and has signaled one possible rate cut before the end of the year. Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell [explained the Committee's approach in his post-meeting press conference](#) by noting that there has been "modest further progress toward our inflation objective [of 2 percent]," but that the Committee was not yet confident that inflation is moving "sustainably" toward the 2 percent target.

The next revenue report from the state is expected at the August meeting of the "money committees," which typically includes a review of the recently-concluded fiscal year and traditionally marks a pivot toward budget development for the upcoming General Assembly session. This meeting is scheduled for August 21.

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

City and County Award Packages to be Sent Soon



On May 23 the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) **approved** \$22,672,333 in grants to communities across Virginia for opioid abatement and remediation efforts.

For all cities and/or counties awarded, OAA will be sending an award package email that contains the award package and other required actions. Look for these emails to start this week and be completed by the end of the month.

If you are a primary contact for an award, please ensure to add **info@voaa.us** to your address book to help ensure the award package email doesn't end up in spam/junk.



Coming soon to this space at VACo Headquarters - the VACo Wall of Presidents (by decades)!



PREMIER PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Talking Solar with **Michael Zehner**
Director of Planning & Community Development
The Berkley Group

Part 1

*Helping Counties Navigate the Land Use
Challenges and Opportunities*

WITH THE BERKLEY GROUP



PREMIER PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Talking Solar with **Michael Zehner**
Director of Planning & Community Development
The Berkley Group

Part 2

*The Legislative and Regulatory Framework
for Approving Applications in Virginia*

WITH THE BERKLEY GROUP



PREMIER PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Talking Solar with **Michael Zehner**
Director of Planning & Community Development
The Berkley Group

Part 3

The Future Energy Landscape of Virginia

WITH THE BERKLEY GROUP



Talking Energy with the Berkley Group's Director of Planning & Community Development **Michael Zehner.**

Join us for this 3-part series. Click on each panel to view videos.

Cardinal News to host conference on cannabis October 15



[Cardinal News](#) will present an educational conference on cannabis October 15 in partnership with Roanoke College in Salem.

Virginia is the only state where personal possession of small amounts of cannabis is legal, but retail sales are not. The theme of the day-long conference is “Confused about cannabis?” and will feature speakers who will address the political, economic, health and legal aspects of cannabis.

Confirmed speakers include:

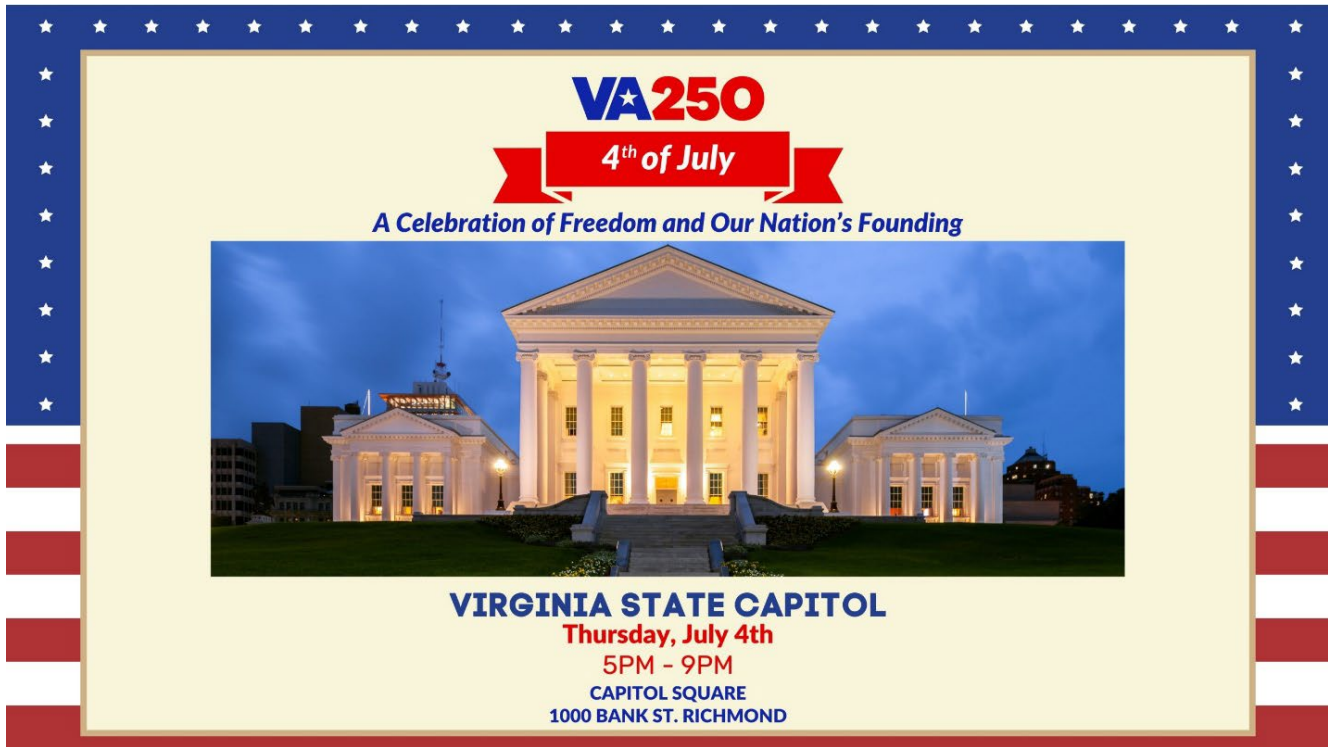
- **Jeremy Preiss**, acting head and chief officer of the Virginia Cannabis Control Authority
- State health commissioner **Karen Shelton**
- **Chuck Slemo**, currently chief deputy attorney general
- **Kyle Kilgore**, Scott County commonwealth’s attorney
- **Tahir Johnson**, president of the Minority Cannabis Business Association
- **Chelsea Higgs Wise**, Marijuana Justice
- **Jason Blanchette**, Virginia Cannabis Association
- **Cat Packer**, Drug Policy Alliance
- **Sabrina Bergen**, American Bankers Association
- Multiple state legislators from both parties
- Researchers from the Fralin Biomedical Institute, the University of Virginia, Johns Hopkins University and Temple University.

Visit Virginia’s Blue Ridge is also helping to smooth logistics for those traveling to the Roanoke Valley, and sponsorship opportunities are available. The conference is expected to attract participants from across Virginia, but space is limited. More information about the program, sponsorships and early bird registrations [are available now](#). To take advantage of a \$25 discount off the \$150 ticket, use the promo code “early bird” before August 1.

Independence Day at the Virginia State Capitol

A Celebration of Freedom and Our Nation's Founding

July 4, 2024 | 5:00 – 9:00 pm



"...I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated, by succeeding Generations, as the great anniversary Festival... with Pomp and Parade, with Shews, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more..." – John Adams, 1776

This year, [Virginia's Fourth of July celebration](#) promises to be unlike any other. Inspired by John Adams' vision of a grand festival, the majestic Virginia State Capitol grounds will transform into a vibrant hub of activity, bursting with the sights and sounds of Virginia's diverse communities.

Imagine the sights, sounds, and energy of Virginians from all walks of life engaging with what Freedom means today through performances of spoken word, dance, and music as a prelude to unifying and inspiring keynote remarks and a very special finale. Confirmed speakers and performers include:

- Master of Ceremonies: [Geoff Bennett](#), PBS News Hour Co-Anchor
- [Quantico Marine Band](#)
- [Roanoke Symphony Orchestra & Chorus](#)

Enjoy free parking and shuttle service to this exciting, FREE public event! [Please RSVP](#) to help us plan for the best experience and receive the latest updates.

As this event takes place in Capitol Square, please [click here](#) for a list of prohibited items from Capitol Police.

See how **Blue Line Solutions** helped **Smyth County** become a safer community **VIDEO**



**Mark Hutchinson | CEO/Founder
Blue Line Solutions**

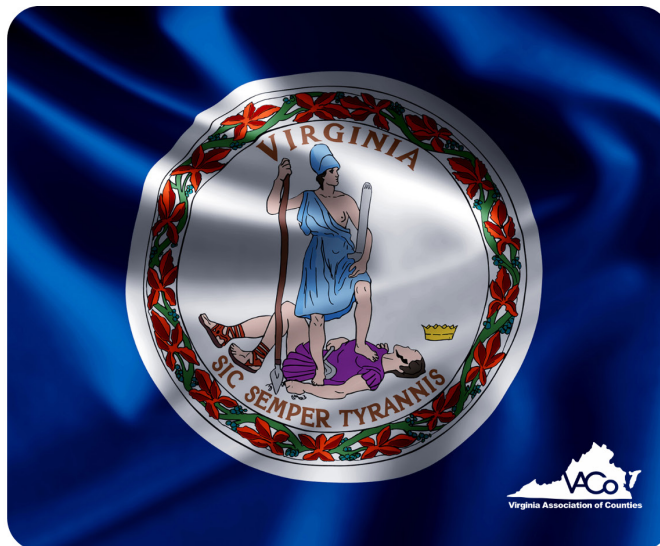


What makes **Blue Line Solutions** stand out? **VIDEO**



VACo Releases 2024 Legislative Summary

VACo LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY



2024 Edition

www.vaco.org

The [Legislative Summary](#) details the actions of the 2024 General Assembly. It also includes information on legislation of interest to counties.

This edition contains links to bills through the General Assembly's Legislative Information System and includes studies and statistics of importance to counties.

[Read VACo's 2024 Legislative Summary](#)

VACo Contact: [VACo Legislative Team](#)

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

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

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

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

Additional Resources

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

Aetna Contact

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



Part 1

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



Part 2

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

BLUELINE

SOLUTIONS



PHOTO SPEED ENFORCEMENT

What it means for your community

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

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



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

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

Eastern Virginia RSM Randy Campbell
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Questions?

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VACo Seeks to Create Mentorship Program for Supervisors



Dear Members/County Administrators...

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

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

We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Karie Walker
Director of Programs and Development
Virginia Association of Counties



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).





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

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

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



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

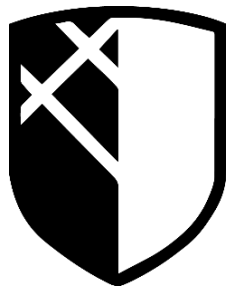
Grant funding and comprehensive planning services will be allocated to support municipalities, schools, and organizations across the state in joining the growing NFC wellness campaign, an award-winning initiative now celebrating its 500th Healthy Community in America.

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

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

Let's build a healthier Virginia, together.

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



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY

WE MAKE LEADERS BETTER

NACo Cyberattack Simulation

Simulation Topic: Supplier Management Access

We'd like to share that our **June '24** simulation has been fully sponsored! That means you and an unlimited number of your colleagues/peers can join the virtual training at **NO COST**. Details to review and share with your network are below -- both public and private sector cybersecurity managers and risk leaders are welcome to attend.

Simulation Topic: Supplier Management Access

Virtual: June 17 - 21

[Register Here](#) - No Cost

Effective supplier management is integral to the operational efficiency of any organization, yet it poses inherent cybersecurity risks, especially concerning supplier access to sensitive systems and data. This cyber attack simulation focuses on evaluating the vulnerabilities and potential threats associated with supplier access including third-party vendor breaches, unauthorized use of supplier credentials, and supplier-initiated cyber threats. The simulation aims to foster a deeper comprehension of the complexities surrounding supplier access risks and to facilitate the development and testing of robust strategies for mitigating these risks effectively.

WHAT IS THE TIME COMMITMENT?

Designed with a daily commitment of 45 to 90 minutes for the duration of one week, activities can be accessed anywhere online and can be completed at the convenience of the participant's schedule. The intentionally designed data injections followed by participant responses (nine in total) foster high levels of engagement that assess current preparedness and tools to close security gaps.

WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE?

The cyberattack simulation is designed for any cybersecurity manager as well as teams responsible for risk defense, protection, and recovery (including managers in HR, policy, finance, public safety, and emergency services).

REGISTER TODAY: [sign up here!](#)

If you have any questions, please email the Academy at moderator@pdaleadership.com.

The Professional Development Academy | www.pdaleadership.com
Cyberattack Simulation Training: *for a growing threat landscape.*



OneDigital is thrilled to be one of VACo's newest Premier Partners.

What truly distinguishes OneDigital as a leading **insurance, financial services, and HR consulting advisory firm** is our holistic approach to creating environments that enable people to do their best work and live their best lives. OneDigital understands that counties face rising insurance costs while still struggling to attract/retain talent. This is why we use proprietary software to provide accurate and predictable insurance consulting projections for those core benefits that impact your bottom line and incorporate solutions to improve retention. While voluntary benefits may be the focus of other providers, OneDigital has the expertise in alternative funding strategies, best-in-class analytics, and an in-house actuarial team.

OneDigital has a track record of providing cost-saving solutions to counties. This has been achieved through creative funding strategies, rate holds, and exclusive partnerships with various carriers. One of these exclusive partnerships is through VACORP and Anthem Life. OneDigital is responsible for the inception of the Virginia Local Disability Program (VLDP) which is through the Virginia Retirement System (VRS). Our team of fierce advocates negotiated a 5-year locked rate, including short-term and long-term disability benefits. Your division may already work with us in this capacity, as we currently serve over 270 public sector entities in the VLDP program.



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

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VACo's lobbying efforts have helped stem the tide of unfunded mandates and have saved Counties millions of dollars every year.



EDUCATION

Our educational programs offer County leaders and staff opportunities to become more effective in their communities.



MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

Some of VACo's best moments are when members convene and work to improve communities all over the Commonwealth.



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

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