

2025 VACo LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Virginia Association of Counties



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2025 TOP FUNDING PRIORITY

VACo supports legislative action to implement the recommendations of JLARC's landmark 2023 report on Virginia's K-12 Funding Formula where they coincide with local prevailing practices. In the near term, VACo encourages prioritization of efforts to restore pre-recession era K-12 funding, especially eliminating the cap on support positions; provide full state support for the actual number of K-12 staff positions employed; and revise the methodology for calculating teacher salaries to more adequately reflect the actual salaries being paid by school divisions.

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Farm and Forestland Preservation

VACo supports preserving and enhancing the ability for counties to balance growth and development, as it pertains to farm and forestland, within their jurisdiction.

COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Broadband

VACo requests that the Commonwealth provide 100 percent match funding to counties to build the necessary telecommunications infrastructure, including cellular communications, to deploy universal affordable access to the internet for all areas, particularly in underserved and rural areas, and streamline the application process for both the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) and Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) grants.

Affordable and Workforce Housing

VACo supports increasing federal and state funding and appropriate incentives to assist localities to create and sustain more affordable housing.

EDUCATION

Education Funding

VACo supports full state funding for public education, including the Standards of Quality (SOQ) as recommended by the Board of Education, the Joint Legislative Audit & Review Commission (JLARC), and Joint Subcommittee on Elementary and Secondary Education Funding.

ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY, AND LAND USE

Energy Policy

VACo supports energy policies and goals that reduce greenhouse gas emissions without compromising reliable and affordable access to electricity, and that address potential environmental impacts and life cycle costs for the manufacture, disposal, re-use, or recycle of material inputs. New sources of potential energy generation should include a range of technologies such as solar, wind, hydroelectric, hydrogen, geothermal, and nuclear, including small modular nuclear reactors.

Water Quality Funding

VACo supports sufficient and sustained financial and technical assistance to counties to improve water quality and meet all federal and state standards to reduce pollution.

FINANCE AND ELECTIONS

Local Finance

VACo supports preserving the authority of county governments to collect revenues necessary to provide local public services.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Local Authority

VACo supports relaxation of the Dillon Rule by enhancing local authority and autonomy in matters including land use, revenue measures, procurement, and other issues of local concern. VACo supports extending powers currently granted to some local governments to all local governments. VACo opposes legislation that erodes local authority.

Unfunded Mandates

VACo opposes unfunded mandates and shifting fiscal responsibility for existing and new programs by the Commonwealth from the state to localities.

HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Health and Human Resources Funding

VACo supports transparent state policies and funding to ensure the Commonwealth's at-risk families have access to high quality and appropriate services. The Commonwealth should provide full funding to localities and their state administrative entities for state-mandated human services and provide the necessary program flexibility to enable localities to provide comprehensive and case-tailored services.

Crisis Services and State Hospital Capacity to Accept Individuals Subject to Temporary Detention Orders

VACo supports efforts to address census pressures at state hospitals through near-term funding measures, to include efforts to stabilize staffing, that will ensure that all state hospitals have the capacity to receive admissions of individuals subject to temporary detention orders without delays.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Funding

The Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) is committed to advocating for a robust and sustainable transportation funding framework that effectively addresses the evolving needs of our communities across the Commonwealth.

VACo's full Legislative Program is available at <https://www.vaco.org/advocacy/legislative-publications/>

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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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