

## VACo Analysis of Governor's Introduced Budget Amendments



Governor Youngkin presented his proposed amendments to the 2024-2026 biennium budget on Wednesday, December 18. As VACo reported in its [initial review](#), the Governor had good news to share with the “money committees,” noting that the overall health of the state’s economy and strong revenue collections in the first part of the fiscal year warranted an upward adjustment to the revenue forecast. The Governor’s budget expects \$2.1 billion in additional revenue in FY 2025 and \$1.1 billion in FY 2026, relative to revenues assumed in the current biennium budget, which was built around a December 2023 forecast that expected a mild recession. In addition, the budget appropriates excess revenues from FY 2024 of approximately \$653 million for operating expenditures and \$400 million for capital costs over the biennium.

The Governor included several tax policy proposals in his budget, including exempting cash tips (cash payments and electronic tips) from state income taxes; making the current standard deduction levels for income taxes permanent (the increases enacted in recent years are scheduled to expire on January 1, 2026, absent legislative action); and using market-based sourcing for the attribution of income for multi-state businesses for sales of services and intangible personal property for purposes of corporate income tax. As widely reported in the media, the introduced budget also includes \$1.1 billion to fund three years’ worth of income tax credits for certain taxpayers to offset the cost of personal property taxes on motor vehicles.

In his December 18 remarks, the Governor highlighted several areas of focus for proposed spending items in his budget, including investments in workforce development, business site readiness, disaster relief, environmental quality, and public safety. A review of the elements of the introduced budget of interest to local governments follows below.

**Next steps:** Senators may submit amendments to the introduced budget until 5:00 on Friday, January 10; Delegates' deadline is Monday, January 13. VACo is 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 midnight on Sunday, February 2. The Governor's budget is the vehicle for amendments - in other words, if a provision is included in the Governor's budget and no amendment is approved to remove it, that provision remains. 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 Governor has 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 2 reconvened session.

### **Amendments of concern – VACo encourages members to alert your legislators to these provisions:**

- **Virginia Preschool Initiative:** Eliminates the current cap on the Local Composite Index of 0.5000 for the Virginia Preschool Initiative, effective July 1, 2025. This proposal, which was also included in the Governor's introduced budget in December 2023, but not adopted by the legislature, would mean that the local share would increase for this program for localities with LCIs above 0.5000. A list of affected localities may be found in [VACo's report on a similar proposal last session](#).
- **Children's Services Act:** Includes language capping the state's contribution to the program by stipulating that the rate of state reimbursement to localities for private day educational services for services provided on or after July 1, 2025, may not increase more than 2.5 percent over the rates for such services provided the previous year. VACo has worked with advocacy partners to submit amendments to remove this provision, which would leave localities to fund both the state and local shares of costs for rate increases in excess of this threshold.

### **Additional provisions of interest to local governments:**

#### **Car tax credit**

- Deposits \$1.1 billion in FY 2025 to fund a new Car Tax Credit, a refundable income tax credit for taxable years beginning January 1, 2025. The credit would be available to an individual whose federal adjusted gross income does not exceed \$50,000, or to married persons filing a joint return whose federal adjusted gross income does not exceed \$100,000. The credit is capped at \$150 for single filers and \$300 for married persons, or the amount actually paid in personal property tax on qualifying vehicles, whichever is less. If a locality increases its personal property tax rate on qualifying vehicles by more than 2.5 percent above the rate it imposed the prior year, taxpayers in that locality do not qualify for the credit. The \$1.1 billion deposit would fund the credits for taxable years beginning January 1, 2025 and before January 1, 2028.

#### **School capital**

- Increases funding for the School Construction Assistance Program by \$290 million over the biennium (\$140 million over the biennium from casino gaming revenues and \$150 million in FY 2025 from the Literary Fund).

**K-12**

- Does not include additional funding for recommendations from JLARC's 2023 study of K-12 funding.
- Includes a series of technical amendments to capture updates in average daily membership, categorical and incentive program costs, English language learner data, Lottery proceeds, participation in certain programs, and sales tax distribution.
- Provides \$61 million in FY 2025 and \$5 million in FY 2026 for a new student assessment contract, pending a report on the planned cost.
- Provides \$50 million in FY 2025 for infrastructure, technical training, and evidence-based supports for schools identified as "needing intensive support" or "off track" under the Board of Education's School Performance and Support Framework. Also provides \$250,000 in FY 2025 and \$1 million in FY 2026 for regional support specialists focused on math, literacy, and science to assist schools so identified.
- Establishes the Virginia Opportunity Scholarship Program with \$50 million in FY 2026; the Program will provide grant awards for qualified students to support certain expenses of attending an accredited private school in the Commonwealth.
- Deposits \$25 million in FY 2025 to the College Partnership Laboratory School Fund for the design, launch, and operation of college partnership laboratory schools established by a Historically Black College or University in Virginia.

**Compensation**

- Retains across-the-board compensation actions in the 2024 Appropriation Act (3 percent salary increases in each year of the biennium for state employees, state-supported local employees, and SOQ-recognized instructional and support staff).
- Provides additional funding of \$130,716 in FY 2026 for salary increases due to population increases in certain Constitutional offices.
- Provides \$1.4 million in FY 2026 for an additional 9.3 percent salary increase for all Sheriff's dispatch positions, effective July 1, 2025.

**Early Childhood**

- Provides \$15 million in FY 2025 to establish an early learning capital supply-building fund to make competitive grants to increase the supply of quality early learning spaces in childcare and early learning deserts; this funding includes the \$1 million included in the 2024 Appropriation Act for a Memorandum of Understanding with Reynolds Community College to establish a child care facility near Richmond for the benefit of state employees, which has been redirected to the new building fund.
- Proposes several changes to the Child Care Subsidy Program and the Mixed Delivery Grant Program. For FY 2026, would require that family copayment rates be set at \$5 per month for households with income below 100 percent of the federal poverty level, and up to 7 percent of annual income for all other households (current copayments begin at \$0 for families with income below the poverty guidelines and increase as family income increases, with a cap of 7 percent of gross countable income for any family). For FY 2026, would impose a time limit of 90 days for job search for purposes of parental work and job search requirements, with one extension permitted for extraordinary circumstances.
- Bars the enrollment of additional school-age children in the Child Care Subsidy Program as of July 1, 2025, unless they qualify as "hard to serve," a category that the Department of Education is directed to define no later than July 1, 2025.

- Directs the Department of Education to revise attendance requirements for the Child Care Subsidy Program and the Virginia Preschool Initiative, and to revise attendance requirements for the Mixed-Delivery Initiative in consultation with the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation.
- Directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction to establish a workgroup to review the current structure of all publicly-funded out-of-school time learning and extracurricular programs and make recommendations on how to position Virginia as a national model for this programming for working families, to include recommendations on whether to resume enrollment of school-age children in the Child Care Subsidy Program. A report is due by September 1, 2025.

### **Administration**

- Provides an additional \$1.9 million in FY 2025 in increased state matching funds for the federal State and Local Cybersecurity Grant program.
- Directs the Virginia Information Technologies Agency and the Virginia Fusion Center to provide a semi-annual confidential briefing to the Joint Subcommittee on Cyber Risk (whose members are to be designated by the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees) regarding current and emerging cybersecurity risks to the Commonwealth and recommended risk reduction initiatives. Specifies that additional meetings of the Joint Subcommittee shall be held as directed by the chairs, upon the written request of the Chief Information Officer of the Commonwealth.

### **Agriculture and Forestry**

- Provides \$250,000 in FY 2026 for the new Pasture, Rangeland, and Forage Premium Assistance Program, which will reimburse a portion of the annual federal premium paid by livestock producers enrolled in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Risk Management Agency Rainfall Index Pasture, Rangeland, Forage (PRF) insurance program.
- Moves the \$250,000 in FY 2026 previously appropriated directly to support the Blue Catfish Processing, Flash Freezing, and Infrastructure Grant Program to the Governor's Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund and earmarks the funding to support the Program.
- Provides \$450,000 in FY 2026 to establish the Large Animal Veterinary Loan Repayment program through the Virginia Department of Health.

### **Commerce and Trade/Economic Development**

- Provides an additional \$50 million for the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program Fund in FY 2026.
- Establishes the Disaster Assistance Fund, to be used to address life, safety, and housing costs not covered by federal assistance, private donations, or insurance, and deposits \$25 million from the General Fund in FY 2025 for this purpose; directs the deposit of proceeds from the December 2023 Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative auction into the Fund (the Governor indicated in his remarks that this action would provide an additional \$100 million).
- Moves \$10 million in Virginia Telecommunication Initiative funding from FY 2026 to FY 2025.
- Moves \$69.1 million provided for biotechnology research initiatives in the 2024 Appropriation Act from FY 2026 to FY 2025, and provides an additional \$35 million in FY 2025 for investments in identified regional innovation clusters. Directs the Virginia Innovation Partnership Authority to convene a task force to review and recommend investments in regional initiatives.
- Provides \$3.9 million in FY 2025 to reimburse Wythe County for certain infrastructure costs associated with an economic development project.



## Visit Prince George County and the Prince George County Historic Courthouse

**Location:** 6604 Courthouse Road / Administration Drive

**Built:** 1882 – 1883

**Style:** Greek Revival

**Architect:** F.B. Leavenworth

**Contractor:** J. Chappall

**PHOTO CREDIT:**  
[Calder Loth, 2022](#)

**Description:** The building faces south and is a two story red colored brick structure. The rectangular shaped building is located on landscaped grounds in the center of Prince George to the south of the courthouse. The south front of the building has an arcade on the first story with three large arches and recessed entrance with white colored wood frame. On the second story are vertical windows. The roof is hipped. An addition was constructed in 1929. The architect was Fred A Bishop and the contractor was Coupee Lai. On the west side is the one story red colored brick Clerk's Office built in 1900. On the southeast side is the Commissioner of the Revenue and Treasurer's Office built in 1935. On the west side is the Assessor's Office built in 1921.

**History:** The county was created in 1702 and Chapal's Creek was selected as the county seat. In 1714, the county seat was moved to Bailey's Creek and the first courthouse was built in 1714. The county seat was moved to Prince George in 1784 and the second courthouse was built in 1810. The courthouse was destroyed during the Civil War in 1864. The third courthouse was built by John Tinsley in 1868. The fourth courthouse was constructed in 1882 to 1883 and is still standing. The fifth and present courthouse was constructed in 1988 to 1990.

**SOURCE:** [American Courthouses](#)

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SAVE THE DATES!

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**VACo Supervisors Certification  
Program (Budget Module)**

January to March 2025  
VACo Headquarters

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**VACo County Government Day**

Thursday, January 23, 2025  
Omni Richmond Hotel

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**VACo Chairpersons' Institute**

Friday and Saturday, January 24-25, 2025  
Omni Richmond Hotel and  
VACo Headquarters

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Join us for these important events.

Call VACo at 804.788.6652 for more information



## VAcorp's Stephanie Heintzleman Retires

We all know Stephanie Heintzleman. We talked to her at Regional Meetings. We mingled with her at the Annual Conference. We saw her at the County Officials' Summit and other events. She has been a big part of VACo - spanning all the way back to 1987 when she started her career at Charlotte County. In fact, her LinkedIn profile lists only two jobs - Assistant County Administrator with Charlotte County and Member Services Director with VAcorp - that's around 38 years of service to counties.

We will miss you Stephanie. We will miss your welcoming smile by the famous VAcorp popcorn machine. We will miss hearing about your family. And we will miss having such a passionate, helpful, and smart professional fighting to improve all of Virginia's communities. Thank you Stephanie for your many years of service, and stop by some time to visit.

-- All the best from your VACo friends



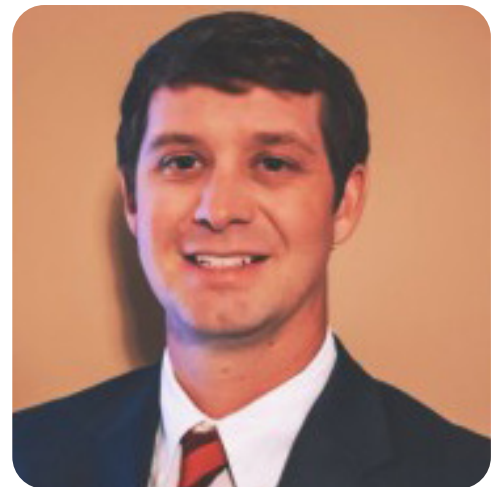
### **The following is a communication sent to VAcorp members about Stephanie Heintzleman's retirement and Morgan Quicke's hiring**

Dear VAcorp Members,

It is with immense gratitude that we announce the retirement of Stephanie Heintzleman as Director of Public Entities, effective January 6, 2025. For nearly 20 years, Stephanie has been an integral part of VAcorp's success, helping our pool grow from just over 200 members in 2006 to nearly 600 members today.

Stephanie brought invaluable expertise to VAcorp, shaped by nearly two decades of experience as Assistant County Administrator in Charlotte County, VA. Her firsthand understanding of the challenges faced by our members allowed her to deliver practical solutions and meaningful support.

During her time with VAcorp, Stephanie was instrumental in helping implement groundbreaking, innovative initiatives, including the creation of the LODA Trust Fund to assist localities, the establishment of the Hybrid Disability Program to ensure long-term financial resources through continuously growing insured payrolls, and the expansion of the VFIS-VAcorp partnership, which provides critical workers' compensation coverage for volunteer emergency responders.



[More on Next Page](#)

Stephanie shared these heartfelt words about her time with VAcorp:

*“After close to 40 years working with local governments with nearly 20 years as VAcorp Director of Member Services, I am stepping into retirement with a deep sense of gratitude and pride. Working with you, our valued members, has been a highlight of my career. Helping you with creative coverages and strategies to avoid risks while watching the risk pool grow has been rewarding. I sincerely thank you for your trust, loyalty, kindness, and support throughout the years. It has been an honor to work alongside you. While retiring, I am confident the foundation VAcorp has built will continue to serve you well long into the future. Thank you for making this journey so memorable.”*

As we celebrate Stephanie’s remarkable career, we are also excited to share that Morgan Quicke will step into the role of Director of Public Entities. Morgan brings with him a wealth of experience, having served as County Administrator for Richmond County for more than 10 years and as a member of the VAcorp board. His deep understanding of local government operations and his knowledge of VAcorp’s mission make him exceptionally well-suited for this role.

Morgan expressed his commitment to continuing VAcorp’s tradition of excellence, stating:

*“I am incredibly proud and grateful to join the VAcorp team and look forward to building on the great relationships that Stephanie has established and maintained over the last 20 years with our members. Virginia Local Government is extremely special to me, as it is the foundational layer of government that exists to support our employees, citizens, and businesses daily. VAcorp has been a trusted and innovative partner that our members rely on and we will continue to exceed those expectations and create solutions that you expect.”*

Morgan’s proven leadership and familiarity with VAcorp will ensure a seamless transition and continued success for our members. We are confident Morgan will excel in this position, and we look forward to the expertise, dedication, and fresh perspective he will bring to the team.

While we will greatly miss Stephanie’s daily presence and the energy she brought to VAcorp, we are excited for this new chapter in her life. Her legacy of leadership, innovation, and care will continue to shape the future of VAcorp, and we are deeply grateful for her many years of dedicated service.

Please join us in celebrating Stephanie’s remarkable career and welcoming Morgan Quicke as the new Director of Public Entities.





At the last Rockingham County Board of Supervisors Meeting - the board recognized County Administrator Stephen King for his 24 years of dedicated service to Rockingham County and congratulated him on his retirement.

We thank you Stephen for your dedicated service to our community and service to the residents of our county.

**Rockingham County is a better place because of his service!**



VACo President and James City County Chair Ruth Larson and VACo Executive Director Dean Lynch are participating in the National Council of County Association Executives (NCCAE) Meeting of Presidents and Executive Directors.

The NACo educational event is held at George Washington's Mount Vernon.

## VCU Review and Assessment of the Sufficiency of Fire and Medical Services Report Released



A recent [report](#) presented by Virginia Commonwealth University Center for Public Policy provides an independent third-party confirmation of what many in local government already know to be true: localities struggle to fully fund fire and rescue services across the state, especially in rural areas with declining populations. The confluence of current restrictions on funding sources, declining volunteerism, national competition for a small pool of federal funds, and increasing emergency medical service (EMS) calls strain these services. Local fire chiefs and EMS directors need additional support to meet the needs of their communities. Limited funding results in a direct loss of services and can jeopardize the ability of fire and EMS teams to provide quality life-saving services in the time needed. VACo was an active participant in the workgroup that helped determine these findings.

These findings confirm previous workgroup and study conclusions from last year. As previously [reported](#), a separate report published in 2023, “Service to Others: A Report on the Commonwealth’s Fire and EMS Service,” found that fire and EMS call volume has significantly increased, volunteer providers have decreased, and state level funding has only increased slightly despite these factors and in the face of massive spikes in equipment prices. This was the culmination of a workgroup study required by [HB 2175](#) from the 2023 General Assembly session. This VACo supported bill directed the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security to convene a workgroup with various representatives of relevant state agencies and stakeholder groups. Unfortunately, despite this urgent, statewide, and cross-jurisdictional need, the letter accompanying the report from Terrence Cole, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, stated, “that policy solutions should be largely focused at the local level” and that “while

[More on Next Page](#)

there is merit in the individual recommendations of the report, it lacks a realistic policy and funding recommendation.”

In part due to lack of additional action or resources committed by the Commonwealth to address fire and EMS needs and the contention that the report stemming from HB 2175 lacked sufficient objectivity due to lack of funding to obtain third-party technical experts, [budget language](#) and funding was introduced by Delegate Mark Sickles, supported by VACo, and enacted during the 2024 legislative session to complete a further review and assessment of the sufficiency of fire and emergency medical services funding in the Commonwealth. VCU was ultimately utilized to provide third-party technical expertise.

According to the report, fire and EMS provision, which used to be seen as a primarily local responsibility, is in a new era in the United States. Changing call types, reduced volunteerism, and new financial burdens have driven more and more states to contribute to local fire and EMS services. Specifically, 44 states provide funding to localities for fire and EMS provision while only 6 states do not. However, the report confirms that local governments provide the lion’s share of funding for fire and EMS service in the Commonwealth. Approximately 97.15% of the \$6.2 billion spent on fire and EMS in Virginia in the three years from Fiscal Year 2021-2023 came from local governments. An estimated 1.13% came from federal sources, and 1.72% from the State. While Virginia currently provides the highest *number* of local fire and EMS funding mechanisms among all states, the large number of funding mechanisms could also present an administrative barrier to access for localities with limited grant-finding and -writing resources.

Despite the sharp decline in fire incidents across the US, the total number of calls received by fire departments has nearly tripled over the last three decades. These factors have led many states to examine new ways to ensure the provision of fire and EMS services to their citizens. In August of 2024, New Mexico became the first US state to provide funding to localities for firefighter personnel alongside EMS personnel. In a diminishing three-year grant design, \$24.9 million was allocated for 190 firefighter and EMS positions across 59 localities. Given the centuries-long transition from primarily volunteer to career and volunteer fire and EMS provision, it is likely that more states will increase investments in local fire and EMS services in the years ahead as they acclimate to the dissipating volunteer composition of the workforces. The vast majority of Virginia localities ranked career and volunteer personnel as the top funding gap, followed by apparatus/ambulances, and facilities.

The report also confirms that additional enforced and proposed federal regulatory burdens such as changes to the Prescription Drug Box Program and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards for fire service pose significant unfunded mandates on local governments. As previously reported [here](#) and [here](#), VACo has continued to engage at both the state and federal level to prevent or mitigate these challenges to local funding and authority.

The report concludes that that there is a need for the State of Virginia to increase its partnership with localities to address the gaps in funding across the Commonwealth. Key recommendations from the report include:

- 1. Increase State Revenue for use by Fire and EMS Agencies:** Increase the revenue received from vehicle registration fees and increase the percentage of the State’s gross premium income from fire insurance.
- 2. Create a Fund for At-Risk Localities:** Target additional state funding to localities most

vulnerable to negative outcomes due to insufficient fire and EMS funding. Include an analysis of local funding contributions, population, land area, call volume, and reported need in allocation decisions.

3. **Increase Flexibility of Use for State Fire and EMS Funds:** For state grants, increase flexibility to allow funding to be used for all major fire and EMS needs, including personnel costs, fire truck and ambulance purchase and/or maintenance, facilities, equipment, training, and communication systems.
4. **Support Volunteer Recruitment:** Create a state campaign for fire/ EMS volunteer recruitment, including tools for training and recruitment, and incentives for employers and volunteers.
5. **Improve Efficiency and Streamline Collaboration:** Initiate collective purchasing processes for equipment, apparatuses, and ambulances; facilitate regional collaboration for inter-locality dispatch systems and mutual aid; create a collective grant writing resource; incentivize and facilitate reporting of fire service calls; and support investment in infrastructure for 5G cell service in rural areas.
6. **Move OEMS under the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security:** Convene an implementation committee to outline a new organizational structure that includes OEMS within the Public Safety and Homeland Security Secretariat. Among other items, the committee should consider merging the Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) into the Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP) versus creating a co-equal Department of EMS; and how to effectively support personnel funding needs with state funds to facilitate sustainable funding structures.

Legislation and budget language addressing some, if not all, of these concerns will likely be debated during the coming General Assembly session. VACo urges the General Assembly to provide additional resources that would assist local governments with the recruitment, retention, training, and support of first responders such as law enforcement, fire and EMS personnel, and 9-1-1 dispatchers. VACo will continue to introduce and support legislation and budget amendments that seek to achieve these goals and provide updates as the session progresses.

The full report may be found [here](#).

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

# I-81 Corridor Improvement Plan Updates



Members of the I-81 Advisory Committee from across the Commonwealth gathered in Lexington on December 13, 2024 to discuss the status of the I-81 Corridor Improvement Plan (the Plan). The role of the Committee is to advise or make any recommendations to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) regarding the Plan. The meeting was positive in that updates to Interstate-81, and other related modes of transportations along the corridor, are being completed in a reasonable time frame and the projects have the necessary funding to support not only the current Plan but to support additional projects.

The success of Interstate 81 is critical to the success of western Virginia and the Commonwealth as a whole. I-81 is the main artery of transportation through this area and sees \$312 billion in goods while also accounting for 42% of Virginia's interstate truck vehicle miles traveled. During the last meeting of the Committee in October of 2023, there were 34 completed projects in total with 6 projects in the construction phase.

To date, there have been 35 completed projects in total with 16 projects currently under construction, including:

- Road widening (6 projects, scheduled completion date by 2031)
- Acceleration & Deceleration Extensions (3 projects, TBD)

- Additional truck climbing lane (4 projects, 2 scheduled completion date in 2025 and the other 2 in 2028)
- Auxiliary Lane (3 under construction, TBD)

In total there are, as of now, 14 remaining projects for the Plan and these are anticipated to be completed by 2035 or earlier. Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) staff relayed to the Committee that operational improvements such as 42 VDOT signal improvements are completed while 46 are under construction. In addition, 112 Locality single improvements are underway and will be completed in 2025.

The financial overview of the I-81 Program was next on the agenda. After reviewing some history of the creation of funding opportunities for the Program, the general sense is that current revenue projections can support funding the completion of the current I-81 program by 2035 with some residual fund for other projects. New projections over the life of the current program will cost \$3.6 billion through 2035. All debt that is issued through the life of the Program (municipal bonds and Transportation Infrastructure Financing Innovation Act) will be supported by the I-81 Regional Fuels Tax.

The presentation also covered additional funding that has recently been provided to the Plan including:

- \$70 million of General Fund from the first year (FY 2025) which was included in the Chapter 2 Budget Bill passed in 2024
- \$42 million from a federal infrastructure grant
- \$175 million in General Fund surplus from FY 24 to continue advancement of projects in the Corridor Plan (This funding was included in the Governors' 2025 budget bill but is still subject to approval by the General Assembly)

VDOT finance staff also give an extended financial outlook for the I-81 Program. Overall, VDOT staff indicated that after funding the existing I-81 Plan and four additional projects, there are remaining revenue capacities starting FY 2033 to support more projects. The 2018 Corridor Improvement Plan (CIP) identified 106 projects for consideration and ultimately 64 projects were prioritized for funding. There were five additional candidate projects that were identified beyond the original 64 and these are the most complex and highest risk segments of the remaining capital projects from the CIP. The CTB took action to add one of the additional candidate projects to the SYIP (southbound widening between Exits 137 to 128.) VDOT staff has indicated there are enough residual funds to be able to advance these other four additional projects with a current cost estimate of \$656 million and could be completed by the mid-2030s.

In accordance with the §33.2-3604, Code of Virginia, relevant agencies will begin the process of updating the Corridor Improvement Plan beginning this year. Since the current financial outlook allows for additional projects for inclusion in the program, the Advisory Committee along with these relevant agencies will begin to identify a new tranche of I-81 projects to be added to the program.

The next topic of discussion was the I-81 Multimodal Improvement Plan which highlighted updates and information regarding Virginia Breeze. Virginia Breeze is the State-sponsored intercity bus service that runs 7 days a week, 365 days a year. It currently services two routes that use Interstate-81, the

Blacksburg to Washington, D.C. route (Valley Flyer) and the Bristol to Washington, D.C. route (Highlands Rhythm). The Virginia Breeze is a low-cost mode of transportation to connect rural communities to other parts of the Commonwealth. Staff from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) stated that the Virginia Breeze service performs very well. DRPT announced that a new route is currently under development which would link I-64 to I-81 with proposed stops in many localities along the I-64 corridor. The anticipated launch date for this route is October 2025. The full presentation on Virginia Breeze by DRPT may be found [here](#).

The last presentation was from staff at the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRRA). The focus was an update on the New River Valley passenger rail agreement between Norfolk Southern and the VPRRA.

In summary the new agreement executed in August 2024 as opposed to the original 2022 agreement is:

- Faster – service expands to New River Valley two years sooner than 2022 deal
- Cheaper – saves the Commonwealth over \$100m
- Better service - New Bedford service and opens possibility for Radford service and third Roanoke train
- More favorable to expansion - Locates passenger rail station on the mainline to Bristol, reducing future cost of potential southwest expansion by avoiding costly tunnel upgrades
- More control: Dispatch and control of Manassas Line brings the ability to add weekend and night Virginia Railway Express service

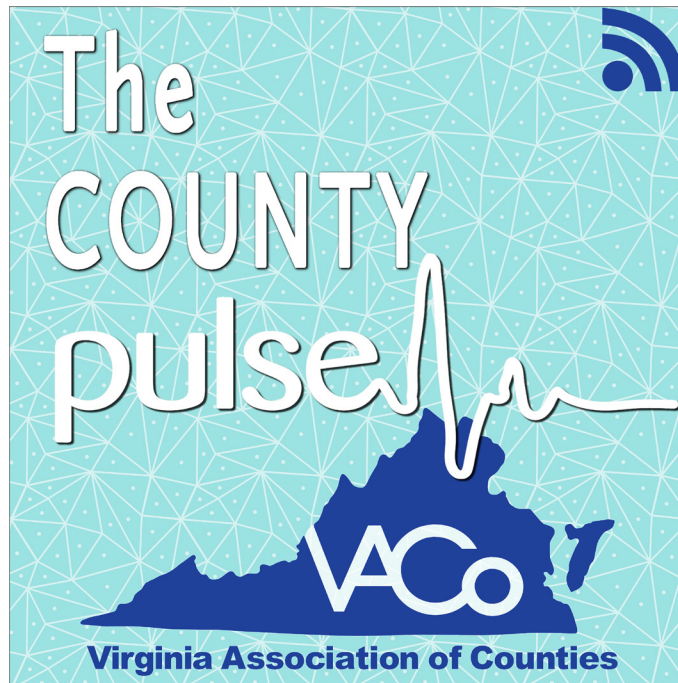
The 2024 agreement is expected to cost the VPRRA \$444 million.

Regarding general business of the I-81 Advisory Committee, the meeting was chaired by Delegate Terry Austin (HD-37). Near the end of the meeting, Delegate Austin recommended that Senator Mark Obenshain (SD-2) be elected Chair of the Committee. Delegate Austin was then elected Vice Chair. VACo Second Vice President and member of the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors, Phil North, also attended the meeting as a member of the I-81 Advisory Committee.

VACo staff would like to thank Delegate Austin for his work and leadership as Chair of the Committee these past few years. Meeting materials from the December 13th meeting may be found [here](#) and the I-81 Improvement Program website can be found [here](#). The entire recorded meeting and public comment section may be accessed [here](#).

**VACo Contact:** [James Hutzler](#)





## Season 4

### Energy Landscape of Virginia Series with Joe Lerch

#### Energy Landscape of Virginia Episode 7 | "Data Centers in Virginia" JLARC Report – Interview with Mark Gribbin



[Listen to the Podcast.](#)

#### "Data Centers in Virginia" JLARC Report – Interview with Mark Gribbin.

In this episode we sit down with Mark Gribbin, Chief Legislative Analyst with the Joint Legislative Audit Review Commission (JLARC). He is the project leader for JLARC's "Data Centers in Virginia" report, which was released December 9th. We go over a summary of the report's findings regarding the economic benefits to Virginia, as well as what challenges lay ahead in regard to meeting the escalating energy demand from the continued growth of the industry. We also discuss the report's legislative recommendations and policy options, some of which include expressly authorizing local governments to address issues related to water usage and noise.

#### RESOURCES

- [JLARC "Data Centers in Virginia" Report](#)
- [Electric Utilities and Data Center Load Growth – Case Summary for SCC PUR-2024-00144](#)

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

January 23, 2025 | Omni Richmond Hotel



# VACo COUNTY GOVERNMENT DAY

**Thursday, January 23, 2025 | [Omni Richmond Hotel](#)**

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

**Date:** Thursday, January 23, 2025

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

**Who should attend:** ALL County Supervisors and staff are encouraged to register and attend.

## Registration Fee

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

## Agenda

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

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

**[REGISTER TODAY!](#)**

# 2025 VACo Chairpersons' Institute

Friday, January 24 &  
Saturday, January 25, 2025  
[Omni Richmond Hotel](#) and  
VACo Headquarters



## AGENDA

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, January 24 and Saturday, January 25

**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

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

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

**REGISTER TODAY!**

# The Virginia Certified County Supervisors' Program



## MODULE 1 – BUDGETING

January 31 – March 21

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 2025!

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

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

**REGISTER TODAY!**

- Adds language clarifying that previously-appropriated funding may be used to demolish derelict structures, perform remediation, and market for sale the Central Virginia Training Center property. Stipulates that proceeds from the sale of the property are to be deposited into the Behavioral Health and Developmental Services Trust Fund.
- Moves the previously-appropriated \$2.5 million in funding for the development of an inland port in the Mount Rogers Planning District from FY 2026 to FY 2025.
- Funds a natural gas study in Patrick County (\$100,000 in FY 2025).
- Eliminates language allowing use of unobligated balances in the Low Income Energy Efficiency Program Fund for a pilot program to assist residents of a manufactured home park or certain nonprofits with acquiring manufactured home parks, and to establish a down payment assistance pilot program.
- Provides \$5 million in FY 2025 to the Virginia Tourism Authority to establish the Virginia Sports Incentive Grant Program; sets aside \$500,000 for the City of Bristol for promotion of a major sporting event.
- Provides \$250,000 in FY 2025 to the Heart of Appalachia Tourism Authority to support a visitor center in St. Paul and \$395,000 in FY 2025 to the Southwest Virginia Regional Recreation Authority to support the Spearhead Trails initiative.

### **Workforce Development**

- Provides an additional \$3.5 million in FY 2026 for the New Economy Workforce Credential Grant Program.
- Provides \$15 million in FY 2026 for the College and Career Ready Virginia program, as well as a one-time transfer of \$20 million in unexpended appropriations in the G3 program. Language directs the reappropriation of unexpended balances from G3 each fiscal year, to be used for G3 or to support demand for the College and Career Ready Virginia program. Language requires eligibility and admission requirements for the College and Career Ready Virginia program to incorporate noncredit workforce training and credentialing through the Virginia Community College System's FastForward Program.
- Provides \$2.1 million in FY 2025 for the Virginia Has Jobs Initiative; the Department of Planning and Budget describes this initiative as a new workforce portal designed to connect potential applicants with available employment and training opportunities.

### **Children's Services Act**

- Provides \$37 million in FY 2025 and \$68.3 million in FY 2026 to fund program growth.
- Eliminates the current process by which localities receive an initial allocation and then submit supplemental requests for additional expenses. Instead, beginning July 1, 2025, the Office of Children's Services will reimburse localities for eligible services as requests are submitted.

### **Medicaid**

- Provides \$632.2 million GF over the biennium for forecasted growth in Medicaid.
- Includes funding and authorization for the Department of Medical Assistance Services to add coverage for services provided to Medicaid beneficiaries during short-term stays for acute care in psychiatric hospitals or residential treatment settings that qualify as Institutes of Mental Disease (such as crisis stabilization units) through a Medicaid waiver.
- Provides funding and authorization for the Department of Medical Assistance Services to provide covered services for incarcerated youth in the 30 days prior to release and immediately after release in accordance with changes in federal law included in the Consolidated Appropriations

Act of 2023 (\$1 million in non-General Funds in FY 2025 and \$367,178 General Funds/\$855,026 non-General Funds in FY 2026).

- Includes funding and authorization for children served in Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTFs) to maintain their enrollment in managed care during their treatment; payments for PRTF per diem payments and required services will still be paid on a fee-for-service basis (\$273,575 GF and \$290,568 NGF in FY 2026).
- Requires a one-year reserve amount to be included in FY 2026 to offset future program costs for any new Medicaid initiative that increases costs and sets aside \$972,941 GF in FY 2026 for this purpose.
- Sets out language to specify the use of funding that was previously provided for the Department of Medical Assistance Services to contract with a vendor to handle all incoming medical assistance-related mail currently directed to local departments of social services.

### **Behavioral Health**

- Provides \$35.2 million in FY 2026 for contracts with private hospitals or other qualified agencies to hire Special Conservators of the Peace to maintain custody of individuals under emergency custody orders or temporary detention orders until the individual is ready for transportation to the bed of temporary detention or is released.
- Provides \$3.5 million in FY 2026 to reimburse local law enforcement agencies for time spent transporting an individual under an emergency custody order or temporary detention order. Stipulates priority for reimbursement for agencies within specified Virginia State Police divisions and agencies who must travel substantial distances to state facilities.
- Funds additional quality improvement specialists, registered nurse care consultants, licensed behavioral analysts, dental staff, and dental services contracts as required by the state's settlement agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice (\$4.6 million GF and \$532,410 NGF in FY 2026).
- Provides \$663,758 in FY 2026 for five additional licensing positions.
- Provides \$1 million in FY 2025 for an education and outreach campaign related to the impacts of social media, mental illness, and substance use on youth.
- Amends language governing eligibility for grants for recovery support services. Current language allows the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services to make grants to members of the Virginia Association of Recovery Residences; the introduced budget proposes to broaden eligibility to "recovery residences certified by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services for recovery support services."
- Provides additional flexibility in the use of the \$15 million per year previously appropriated for school-based health clinics. New language would allow these funds to be used to provide technical assistance to school divisions seeking guidance on integrating mental health services and grants to school divisions to contract for community-based mental health services from public or private community-based providers, in addition to being used to provide grants to contract with federally qualified health centers or other healthcare organizations to establish school-based health clinics to serve students and their families, as specified in current budget language.
- Provides \$1.2 million in FY 2026 for two additional teams through the Marcus Alert initiative.
- Provides \$777,000 in FY 2026 to expand peer support services for youth.
- Provides an additional \$1.5 million in FY 2025 for Part C Early Intervention to address increases in caseloads.
- Provides \$52.1 million GF in FY 2026 for upgrades, renovations, and repairs at state facilities.

- Funds four additional forensic evaluators to address the growing forensic population at certain state hospitals (\$800,908 in FY 2026).
- Funds salary increases for trades staff at state facilities (\$2.2 million in FY 2026 for trades positions at state hospitals; \$146,648 in FY 2026 for trades positions at Southeastern Virginia Training Center and Hiram Davis Medical Center).

### **Health**

- Funds the development of necessary databases for a rainwater harvesting system permitting program (\$118,551 per year).
- Provides \$1.8 million in FY 2026 for the Office of Drinking Water to maintain compliance with federal and state regulations.
- Provides \$546,266 GF and \$421,680 NGF in FY 2026 for rent increases at local health departments.
- Provides an additional \$1 million in FY 2026 for community health workers and doulas in local health districts that serve localities with the highest rates of maternal mortality.
- Increases the fee for an expedited vital records search from \$48 to \$53, effective July 1, 2025.
- Removes language prohibiting changes to the service areas of regional EMS councils.
- Provides \$12 million in FY 2026 for competitive grants to public institutions of higher education to increase the number of nursing graduates in Virginia. Also provides \$1.5 million in FY 2026 for awards to students enrolled in a nursing program at an eligible Virginia institution (a nonprofit private institution of higher education) designated as a Hispanic-Serving Institution by the U.S. Department of Education.
- Provides \$2.5 million in FY 2026 to pilot perinatal health hub programs, to be funded by two-year grant awards for community-based providers.

### **Social Services**

- Provides \$500,000 in FY 2025 and \$7.5 million in FY 2026 to implement recommendations from the Office of the State Inspector General to improve child protective services, to include enhancements to the state child protective services hotline, additional regional consultants, and additional CPS investigator and supervisor positions at local departments of social services.
- Provides \$7.3 million GF and \$6.5 million in NGF in FY 2026 to supplement existing support for income and employment verification and directs the Department of Social Services to investigate alternatives to its current contract.
- Provides \$500,000 GF and \$500,000 NGF in FY 2026 to modernize the statewide 2-1-1 Information and Referral System.
- Provides \$440,000 NGF in FY 2026 for the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Full Employment Program.
- Funds a 3 percent increase in foster care and adoption assistance payments in accordance with budget language requiring a reasonable, automatic adjustment for inflation in fiscal years following a fiscal year in which salary increases are provided to state employees (\$1.5 million GF and \$1.4 million NGF in FY 2026).
- Includes language making clear that administrative costs for the Percentage of Income Payment Program (PIPP) are capped at \$5.5 million annually, which includes program administration for state agencies and local departments of social services. VACo had previously secured clarifying language in the budget to ensure that local administrative costs would be covered by the PIPP Fund and that a local match would not be required.
- Increases the auxiliary grant rate from \$2079/month to \$2103/month, beginning January 1, 2025.

**Natural and Historic Resources**

- Deposits \$26.3 million in FY 2025 from FY 2024 surplus revenues to the Water Quality Improvement Fund and the Virginia Natural Resources Commitment Fund.
- Deposits \$17.4 million in FY 2025 from FY 2024 surplus revenues to the Water Quality Improvement Fund to support the Enhanced Nutrient Removal Certainty Program.
- Provides an additional \$50 million in FY 2025 from FY 2024 surplus revenues for the City of Richmond's Combined Sewer Overflow project (these funds would otherwise have been deposited to the Water Quality Improvement Fund).
- Authorizes \$462,541 in interest earnings from the Water Quality Improvement Fund and the Virginia Natural Resources Commitment Fund in FY 2026 to fund three additional positions to provide oversight and assistance to Soil and Water Conservation Districts.
- Authorizes the use of \$355,393 in interest earnings from the Soil and Water Conservation District Dam Maintenance, Repair, and Rehabilitation Fund to support two positions to oversee maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation projects necessary for District-owned dams to be in compliance with the Dam Safety Act and attendant regulations.
- Replaces \$400 million in bond authorization for wastewater projects over the biennium with a like amount of General Fund dollars from excess FY 2024 revenues.

**Public Safety and Homeland Security**

- Includes \$2.5 million in FY 2025 for competitive grants to localities for the purchase of public safety radio and communications infrastructure equipment. Grants are to be prioritized for localities with above average or high fiscal stress and that are double-distressed according to the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, and that demonstrate need.
- Provides an additional \$6.8 million in FY 2025 for the School Resource Officer Incentive Grants Fund.
- Provides \$5 million in FY 2026 for grants to localities to purchase protective equipment for firefighters. Grants are to be prioritized for localities with above average or high fiscal stress and that are double-distressed according to the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, and that demonstrate need.
- Includes language providing for withholding of HB 599 funding or jail per diem payments from a locality if an official in charge of a jail does not comply with lawful U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainers and does not provide at least 48 hour pre-release notification to ICE, or if an official in charge of a jail or local law enforcement agency or sheriff's office prohibits or impedes communication or cooperation with ICE pursuant to adoption of a local ordinance, procedure, policy, or custom.
- Increases funding for the Office of First Responder Wellness by \$322,218 in FY 2026; expands use of funds to nonprofit organizations that support first responders (in addition to law enforcement).
- Provides an additional \$200,000 per year for the Victim Witness Grant Program; earmarks at least \$500,000 per year for the Office of the Attorney General.
- Directs the Department of Fire Programs to assess the fees charged by the State Fire Marshal's office to conduct fire safety inspections and the costs to provide these services.
- Provides an additional \$3.1 million in FY 2026 for the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) to address increased costs in youth admissions and placements, as well as cost increases for contracted services. Authorizes DJJ to study possible relationships with localities to increase state-run juvenile correctional center bed capacity for committed youth; if such a study is pursued, findings and recommendations must be reported by October 1, 2025.



**Transportation**

- Appropriates \$175 million in FY 2025 in FY 2024 surplus revenues to the I-81 Corridor Improvement Program, as required by the 2024 Appropriation Act.
- Moves \$84.5 million in support for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority from FY 2026 to FY 2025; reduces funding in FY 2025 by \$11.1 million.
- Authorizes a \$20 million Treasury loan for the Roanoke Regional Airport Commission for a runway modification project, subject to Federal Aviation Administration approval of the project.
- Includes language modifying the provisions of the 2024 Appropriation Act regarding toll relief; specifies a locality median income range in the definition of eligible drivers; provides that the Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles is not required to assess a \$40 fee for withholding vehicle registration/renewal associated with outstanding customer balances/fees; and stipulates that the General Funds provided for the program may be used to supplement the Toll Relief program funded by Elizabeth River Crossings.
- Eliminates tolls on the George P. Coleman Bridge, effective January 1, 2026.
- Provides \$1 million in FY 2025 for dredging Back Creek off the York River.

**Tax Policy**

- Provides \$136,038 in FY 2026 for the Department of Taxation to increase the scope of its Memorandum of Understanding with Virginia Tech for the State Land Evaluation and Advisory Council duties to include the development of values for the assessment of open space.
- Raises the threshold for individual taxpayers to make estimated tax payments from the current level of \$150 in tax liability to \$1000, starting with taxable years beginning January 1, 2026.
- Creates an income tax deduction for income derived from cash tips, for taxable years beginning on and after January 1, 2026.
- Makes the existing standard deduction levels permanent (under current law, these levels of \$8,500 for single individuals and \$17,000 for married persons are set to revert to \$3,000 and \$6,000, respectively, after January 1, 2026).
- Harmonizes the interest rate on state tax underpayments or refunds with the rates established by the Internal Revenue Code (current law provides that the rate of interest is the IRS's rate plus two percent).
- Effective with taxable years beginning on and after January 1, 2026, uses market-based sourcing for multi-state businesses for sales of services and intangible personal property for purposes of corporate income tax. Requires the Tax Commissioner to develop guidelines to implement this change, and provides that existing authorization for market-based sourcing previously granted for specific businesses is not affected by the new language.

**Reserves**

- As required by statute, proposes to deposit \$294.5 million from FY 2024 collections into the Revenue Reserve Fund in FY 2025 (when there is a fiscal year in which General Fund revenues do not result in a mandatory deposit to the "Rainy Day Fund," the Governor is required to include in the introduced budget a deposit to the Revenue Reserve Fund from General Fund revenue in excess of the forecast, after any required Water Quality Improvement Fund deposit).
- Transfers \$203 million in FY 2025 from the Revenue Reserve Fund to the General Fund; adjusts the cap on the combined amounts in the Revenue Reserve Fund and the Revenue Stabilization Fund from 20 percent of the Commonwealth's three-year average of annual tax revenues derived from taxes on income and retail sales, to 17.53 percent in FY 2025 and 15 percent in FY 2026.

**Other Items**

- Authorizes a \$10 million Treasury loan for the Virginia Lottery for start-up costs and other expenses associated with the implementation of a gaming commission or similar combined gaming agency.
- Includes language stating that the Department of General Services has determined that the necessary water needs of the Piedmont Geriatric Hospital, Virginia Center for Behavioral Rehabilitation (Phases 1 and 2), and Nottoway Correctional Center, would be best satisfied by replacing the Town of Crewe's water treatment plant equipment and infrastructure, replacing the main water transmission line, improving the raw water intake line and pumps, and increasing water capacity by creating wells or raising the reservoir. Authorizes the Department to execute the project; stipulates that the Department may pursue another solution if it later determines that an alternative will best meet the necessary potable and fire protection water needs of the identified facilities. Authorizes the Department to construct, provide, and improve infrastructure as necessary to implement the determined solution, including authorization to acquire land of any public utility, municipality or political subdivision, without obtaining the consent or permission of any locality or public body. Provides that the ownership, construction, and operation of the infrastructure shall not be subject to any state or local permitting requirements or similar ordinances or regulations. Upon completion of construction, the Department is authorized to transfer ownership and/or operation of all or any part of the property to one or more locality, which shall not require the consent or permission of any locality or public body. Declares that the exercise of the power of eminent domain for this purpose is a public use of such property.

VACo Contact: [Legislative Team](#)

# Capitol Contact

## Virginia General Assembly

Virginia Association of Counties • 1207 E. Main Street, Suite 300 • Richmond, VA 23219  
www.vaco.org • 804.788.6652

### **JANUARY 2025**

- **January 9, 2025: [General Assembly Convenes, Adopts Schedule for 2025 General Assembly Session](#)**

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**[Look for Capitol Contact on Tuesdays and Thursdays](#) during 2025 General Assembly Session**



# CONGRATULATIONS SUPERVISOR PRUITT!

[From the Henry County, VA Facebook Page](#)

*Congratulations to Travis Pruitt, Supervisor - Ridgeway District on completing the Virginia Certified County Supervisors Program! This intensive course is designed to enhance the leadership and decision-making skills of county supervisors throughout the Commonwealth. Mr. Pruitt has subsequently been invited by the Virginia Association of Counties to serve on a steering committee to guide policies involving economic and workforce development.*



# 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.

## Congratulations to NACo Leadership Academy Graduates

**We congratulate the December graduates of the National Association of Counties (NACo) Leadership Academy from Virginia.** Joining a distinguished network of over 10,000 alumni, these leaders have successfully completed the 12-week online program. This program equips current and emerging county leaders with the knowledge and skills to excel and better serve their communities.

Ashley Thornton, GIS Manager, Bedford County

Jason Isham, Sergeant, Loudoun County

Lura Bratcher, Housing Services Specialist III, Fairfax County

Dennis Thompson, Probation Pretrial Manager, Prince William County

Lauren Colley, Zoning Official/Codes Compliance Officer, Essex County

Sandra Zacarias, Supervisor, Public Assistance and Employment Services (PAES), Fairfax County

Karla Delgado, Behavioral Health Supervisor - Youth and Family Services, Fairfax County

Nakia Speller, Supportive Services Division Manager, Prince William County

Shariff Ruffin, CS Therapist III, Prince William County

Tiffany Dancy, Benefits and Training Coordinator, Charles City County

David "DJ" Johnston, Deputy Chief Fire-EMS, Hanover County

### Elevate your leadership in 2025!

Invest in your team's future by developing their leadership potential. Our dynamic program empowers your workforce to become effective leaders, both today and tomorrow. Cohorts begin in January, April, August, and September.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE AND ENROLL](#)



## 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.

In Partnership With

# Partnership in Action



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Direct Telephone # 252-725-3064

**Donna Pierce, Client Relations**  
[Donna@pierceins.com](mailto:Donna@pierceins.com)  
Direct Telephone # 704-576-0934



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



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

## Premier Partner Spotlight

# Blue Line Solutions Testimonials

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

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

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

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





## Equipment Lease-Purchase Financing

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

**Contact us for details.**

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

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

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

**CONTACT US TODAY**

### **Questions?**

Contact Steve Mulroy  
804-648-0635

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





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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](mailto: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).





## 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.



### 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



**Sarah Anne Struckmann**  
**Business Development Executive**  
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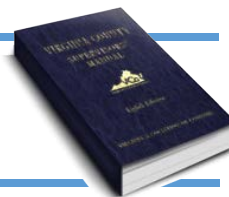


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