

1 **2021 Draft Legislative Program**  
2 **Virginia Association of Counties**

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45 **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND**  
46 **PLANNING**

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48 **Priority**

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50 **Broadband**

51 VACo urges the Commonwealth to provide adequate financial assistance to  
52 counties to build the necessary telecommunications infrastructure to deploy  
53 universal affordable access to the internet for all areas, particularly in  
54 underserved and rural areas. Additionally, VACo supports legislation that  
55 provides additional tools for counties to finance, build and operate open access  
56 networks in partnership with commercial internet service providers. VACo also  
57 supports efforts to streamline the permitting of broadband infrastructure in the  
58 VDOT right-of-way.  
59

60 **Positions**

61  
62 **Economic Development**

63 VACo supports economic development policies and programs that bolster local  
64 and regional development efforts by maintaining and expanding state funding,  
65 streamlining state and federal processes, and granting additional funding and  
66 authority to promote local and regional initiatives. VACo also supports state  
67 funding for Virginia’s planning district commissions and local cooperative  
68 extension offices, which play key roles in addressing regional challenges.  
69

70 **Land Use**

71 VACo supports maintaining local and expanding authority to plan and regulate  
72 land use and opposes any legislation that weakens these key local responsibilities.  
73 VACo also supports legislation that grants localities additional tools to adequately  
74 meet increasing needs for public services driven by new development without  
75 burdening current residents with the cost of new growth through increased real  
76 estate taxes. Such additional tools may include broad impact fee authority for all  
77 counties, and adequate public facilities provisions.  
78

79 **Affordable and Workforce Housing**

80 VACo supports maintaining federal and state funding and appropriate incentives  
81 to assist localities in fostering affordable housing, as well as workforce housing  
82 for employees such as teachers and first responders.  
83

84 **Regulation of Home-based Businesses**

85 VACo opposes any legislation that limits or restricts local authority to regulate  
86 home-based businesses, including short-term rentals regardless of whether  
87 services or goods are purchased through an online hosting platform.  
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**Impacts of Federal and Military Facilities**

VACo supports maintaining federal and state funding and technical assistance to mitigate the impacts on counties affected by federal budget cuts and to sustain current and future federal facilities in Virginia. VACo supports state and local partnerships that work to prevent encroachment and non-compatible land uses next to military installations. VACo also supports workforce training and retraining for programs that support defense activities in Virginia.

**Maintain Public Sector Role in Onsite Sewer Program**

VACo supports an onsite sewage program at the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) that protects public health and the environment in all regions of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth should give special focus to addressing the challenge of failing septic systems and allow localities authority to develop and implement policies that support the state’s program. VACo supports the private sector providing onsite sewage system design, installation, and repair services, as long as the services can be provided at affordable rates and in a timely manner, and as long as VDH continues to provide these direct services as well.

**Siting of Transmission Lines**

VACo supports requiring utilities to seek input from localities and property owners before any actions to construct, modify or enlarge transmission facilities.

# EDUCATION

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## Priority

### **Education Funding**

VACo urges the General Assembly to provide full state funding for public education, including the Standards of Quality (SOQ) as recommended by the Board of Education, where these recommendations coincide with prevailing local practice, targeted incentive programs, capital, and maintenance support, and teacher salaries.

Full state funding should be achieved without reduction to other parts of state public education budgets or to other core services. Changes to school security and high school graduation standards will require additional resources to implement and those costs must be adequately funded by the state. VACo supports additional state resources and additional funding options for localities for capital and school construction costs, including expanding dedicated local sales and use tax authority given to select counties by the General Assembly in 2018.

VACo urges the General Assembly to provide hold-harmless funding for Sales Tax distributions to local school divisions and Direct Aid payment amounts based on average daily membership until the main impacts of COVID-19 on both sources of funding cease. VACo also supports additional resources to provide distance learning and COVID-19 mitigation for in-person instruction.

## Positions

### **Charter Schools**

VACo opposes legislation that removes authority from local school boards and divisions to establish charter schools.

### **Childhood Development and School Readiness**

VACo supports efforts to increase at-risk children’s access to high-quality, enriching learning environments, including more resources and flexibility for localities participating in programs like the Virginia Preschool Initiative and Head Start.

### **Childcare**

VACo supports additional federal and state funding for programs such as the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) to support increased demand for childcare services in communities with school divisions that have opted to provide virtual or hybrid instruction plans to preK-12 students for the 2020-2021 school year as a result of COVID-19 mitigation efforts. Access to safe and affordable childcare is an essential component to allowing local businesses to resume operations and county economies to recover. VACo supports local flexibility to administer or expand support services for childcare.

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**Critical thinking Skills**

VACo supports changes to educational programs and standards that rely less on standardized testing and more on critical thinking skills such as performance-based assessments.

**Funding Support Personnel**

VACo supports full restoration of budget cuts, including the elimination of the funding cap on support positions, and full reinstatement of the Cost of Competing Adjustment “COCA” for support staff. In addition to meeting its obligations to fully fund instructional staff, the Commonwealth should meet its obligation to fully fund K-12 support staff.

**Library System**

VACo supports additional state resources for the funding of financial aid to the local library system.

**Reversion of Funds**

VACo supports the current practice whereby all year-end funds appropriated to the school divisions by the locality revert to the locality, retaining discretion with the governing body to evaluate and approve the reallocation of year-end fund balances.

**School Safety and Security**

VACo supports efforts to improve school safety and preparedness including establishing a Statewide School Safety Drill, for students, teachers, administrators, law enforcement, and other staff to engage in active shooter drills. VACo supports the development of model policies to provide guidance on active shooter drills and updates to school safety plans and drills. VACo supports dedicated state funding to improve school security for both capital and operational costs including funding that would serve as an incentive for local school divisions to hire additional Resource Officers, School Protection Officers, or other security and mental health personnel and measures. VACo supports continued local authority to allow for the placement of Resource Officer and Protection Officers in schools.

**Special Education Regional Tuition Reimbursement Program**

VACo supports enhancing local capacity to serve children with high-level support needs in the least restrictive environment, including regional special education programs. VACo supports local flexibility in the structure of such programs. If a new model for the distribution of funding for special education students with intense support needs is implemented, such a model should be phased in gradually, with state dollars provided to enable school divisions that would otherwise experience reductions in funding to continue to meet federal maintenance of effort requirements.

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**Teacher Shortage and Retention**

VACo urges the General Assembly to approve and fund strategies addressing the teacher shortage in the Commonwealth. VACo supports a targeted approach to teacher shortage by prioritizing areas in critical need, as recommended by the Virginia Department of Education. VACo supports using district-level data to determine how to best fill shortage gaps, especially in hard-to-staff divisions. VACo supports reducing burdens on the teacher workforce in the Commonwealth. VACo supports programs aimed at reducing student debt for teaching in public schools. VACo also supports programs that encourage teachers to stay in the profession including measures that provide mentorship, guidance and other forms of support for teachers in their first five years in the profession.

**Workforce-Ready Students**

VACo supports changes in curriculum and funding that will increase the number of students leaving the K-14 system with workforce-ready credentials. VACo supports incorporating career and technical education curriculum at the elementary school level. VACo supports high school students earning academic credit for participating in an internship, apprenticeship, credential, and other work programs. VACo supports innovative models for schools to give academic credit for students that earn industry workforce skills through certifications, or licensure from an approved education or training provider. VACo supports establishing partnerships to strengthen the school-to-workforce pipeline in a variety of ways including guaranteed employment opportunities with local businesses and learning opportunities shared between local community colleges and high schools.

VACo supports the expansion and funding of workforce training programs such as the Virginia Talent Accelerator Program and the Virginia Jobs Investment Program.

# ENERGY

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## Positions

### **Energy Policy**

VACo supports renewable energy policies and goals that reduce greenhouse gas emissions without compromising reliable and affordable access to electricity. Such policies should allow for responsible coal and natural extraction, processing, and transport while protecting agricultural interests and natural resources.

### **Renewable Energy Production and Energy Efficiency**

VACo supports legislation allowing counties to implement renewable energy and energy efficiency goals. This includes the allowance of third-party power purchase agreements (PPAs) to serve municipal electric accounts, as well as other creative financing mechanisms that enable the development renewable energy sources and energy efficiency programs and measures.

### **Utility-Scale Solar**

VACo supports maintaining local authority to address all impacts and all choices associated with utility-scale projects. Additionally, VACo opposes any expansion or extension of the state-mandated tax exemption on local property taxes for solar equipment

# ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE

## Priority

### **Water Quality Improvement Funding**

VACo supports effective partnerships across all levels of government as well as adequate financial and technical assistance from the federal and state governments to improve water quality. VACo supports improved water quality but opposes strategies that penalize local governments by withdrawing current forms of financial assistance or imposing monitoring, management, or similar requirements on localities without providing sufficient resources to accomplish those processes. VACo supports efforts to continue to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay but opposes additional nutrient regulations on wastewater treatment facilities that are scientifically unsound, economically infeasible, or unnecessary for meeting the Commonwealth's goals. VACo opposes the imposition of a state fee, tax or surcharge, on water, sewer, solid waste, or any service provided by a local government or authority.

## Positions

### **Aquifer Protection**

VACo supports initiatives by the state to assure adoption of actions to reduce high chloride concentrations and loss of artesian head pressure in Virginia's aquifers. VACo also supports a review of regulations and supports education initiatives that promote reclamation of water on a local level for industrial and irrigation uses to offset future demands on all ground and surface water used for human consumption.

### **Biosolids**

VACo supports an effective statewide regulatory program governing land application of biosolids. Such a program should not infringe upon the authority of local governments to monitor compliance. VACo supports the ability of local governments to propose amendments to biosolids permits as they are considered by DEQ.

### **Conservation**

VACo encourages targeted initiatives to facilitate the protection of land for conservation purposes. VACo supports the creation a Purchase of Development Rights program that provides state funding for the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation and participation incentives for landowners. Such programs preserve prime soils for food production and protect important forest land and environmentally sensitive areas in the Commonwealth.

VACo supports voluntary state and federal conservation programs, including the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Conservation Stewardship Program, to assist producers with the implementation of best management practices.



367 **Dam Safety**  
368 VACo supports programs that keep downstream owners and developers aware of  
369 potential inundation zones. VACo also supports sufficient state and federal  
370 funding for the repair and maintenance of dams.

371  
372 **Energy**  
373 *See Energy Subcommittee Platform.*

374  
375 **Hydraulic Fracturing**  
376 VACo supports a stringent state regulatory program for hydraulic fracturing  
377 (“fracking”) that addresses the potential to tap into natural gas reserves in ways  
378 that protect public and private groundwater supplies and preserve local  
379 government authority to regulate and/or ban this type of mining activity through  
380 their land use ordinances. VACo supports transparency efforts that require the  
381 disclosure of all chemicals and chemical mixes used in the fracking process prior  
382 to their use.

383  
384 **Invasive Species and Noxious Weeds**  
385 VACo supports funding for, and the complete implementation of, the Virginia  
386 Invasive Species Management Plan. VACo supports an amendment to the term,  
387 “noxious weeds,” enabling additional invasive plants to be considered for  
388 regulation. All programs and proposals should be evaluated for their commercial  
389 impact, allowing no more than a negligible impact on Virginia’s agricultural  
390 industry. Finally, VACo supports requiring better state prevention and  
391 mitigation practices.

392  
393 **Large Utility Projects**  
394 VACo supports the provision of adequate direction and resources for the state to  
395 improve monitoring and enforcement of Erosion and Sediment Control and  
396 Stormwater requirements by entities constructing large-scale utility projects. The  
397 state should conduct a review of the annual standards, specifications, and  
398 construction general permit requirements to determine adequate protection of  
399 water quality and natural resources.

400  
401 **Non-Point Source Pollution**  
402 VACo supports a well-financed state program to address non-point source runoff  
403 from agricultural operations. The program should encourage implementation of  
404 priority best management practices (BMPs) such as nutrient management  
405 planning, use of cover crops, continuous no-till farming and development of  
406 forested riparian buffers and livestock stream exclusion.

407  
408 **Predator Control**  
409 VACo urges state and federal agencies to support the agricultural industry by  
410 allowing farmers and producers sufficient flexibility when protecting livestock  
411 against predatory animals. VACo encourages the USDA Wildlife Services Division  
412 and the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to allow  
413 producers access to the predator control tools required for the continuation of

414 effective livestock production. VACo also supports USDA’s Livestock Indemnity  
415 Program and the financial relief it provides to producers who have lost livestock  
416 to the attacks of federally protected predators.

417  
418 **Southern Rivers Watershed**

419 VACo supports continued funding for the Southern Rivers Watershed  
420 Enhancement Program to improve water quality in non-Chesapeake Bay  
421 watersheds.

422  
423 **Stormwater Programs**

424 VACo supports state funding that enables local governments to fully satisfy the  
425 resource and funding needs associated with local stormwater management  
426 programs. VACo supports legislation that proposes creative and cost-effective  
427 stormwater management practices. VACo supports initiatives that clarify and  
428 modernize stormwater regulations and permitting processes, including measures  
429 that makes permitting more efficient, reevaluates the fee structure system, and  
430 allows for considerations of factors such as long-term maintenance costs. VACo  
431 supports legislation that proposes innovative solutions to facilitate compliance  
432 with stormwater standards in ways that promote economic development while  
433 achieving water quality goals.

434  
435 **Tree Conservation and Replacement**

436 VACo supports strengthening and expanding tree replacement and tree  
437 conservation statutes to include all localities in Virginia.

438  
439 **Onsite Wastewater Systems**

440 VACo supports legislation ensuring that potential buyers of real property are told  
441 about the type, size and maintenance requirements and associated costs of the  
442 wastewater systems on the property prior to the signing of the initial sales  
443 contract and the recordation of engineered systems plat and deed at the time of  
444 sale.

445  
446 **Uranium Mining**

447 VACo supports continuation of a moratorium on uranium mining and milling  
448 within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

449  
450 **Technical Assistance**

451 VACo supports robust state funding for entities that provide critical resources  
452 and technical assistance to localities in their efforts to comply with  
453 environmental policies and regulations. This includes, but is not limited to,  
454 organizations such as the Virginia Cooperative Extension and Planning District  
455 Commissions (PDCs).

456  
457 **Water Supply Planning**

458 VACo supports appropriations adequate to ensure full funding by the state for the  
459 ongoing development and implementation of state-mandated water supply plans.

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VACo does not support overly burdensome permitting processes or applications for water usage.

PRELIMINARY

# FINANCE

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## Priority

### **Local Finance**

VACo supports the authority of county governments to levy and collect revenue from local business taxes.

## Positions

### **Appeals of Tax Assessments**

VACo opposes proposals to make major changes to the current appeals processes for real or tangible personal property assessments, such as changes to the assessor's presumption of correctness or the role of the state Tax Commissioner with respect to valuation of property.

### **Funding for State Mandated Positions and Jails**

The Commonwealth must meet its obligations to fund appropriate staffing for the state's system of justice, to include clerks, magistrates, Commonwealth's Attorneys, public defenders, district court employees, and probation office employees. In the absence of adequate state support for this critical function of government, localities are frequently placed in the untenable position of supplementing the justice system with local dollars in order to ensure its continued functioning.

VACo urges the Commonwealth to meet its full funding obligations and provide flexibility in the use of state funds for compensation of constitutional officers and state-supported local employees.

VACo requests that jail per diem funding in the 2020-2022 biennial state budget be increased to levels that better represent the costs of housing inmates and be adjusted for inflation in the future so that payments keep pace with rising costs. The current rates of \$4 per day for local-responsible inmates and \$12 per day for state-responsible inmates are inadequate and represent an underfunded mandate on counties. The Compensation Board estimated a total average daily cost of operating local and regional jails at \$87.20 per inmate in FY 2018, of which \$48.05 was contributed by localities.

VACo supports payment of the medical costs of inmates using a cost-effective program jointly funded at the federal and state levels. VACo supports the provision of clinically appropriate health care for individuals incarcerated in local and regional jails; if the state establishes standards for the provision of health care, including behavioral health care, in local and regional jails, these standards should be adopted through the regulatory process with ample opportunity for stakeholder involvement, and the state must provide sufficient funding to allow these standards to be met.

551 **Mitigation of the Effects of Tax-Exempt Property on the Local Tax**  
552 **Base**

553 VACo supports reinstating state payments (PILT) to counties that mitigate the  
554 impacts of state correctional and behavioral healthcare facilities on county  
555 revenue. VACo supports measures to ameliorate the effects of large amounts of  
556 other tax-exempt property on the local tax base, including state assistance with  
557 the costs of state-mandated property tax exemptions.  
558

559 **Legislation with Local Fiscal Impact**

560 VACo supports legislation or other measures providing additional time for  
561 localities to review legislation that may have an impact on local revenues or  
562 expenditures.  
563

564 **Modernization of Communications Sales and Use Tax Structure**

565 VACo supports updating the Communications Sales and Use Tax (CSUT) to  
566 ensure that it reflects the modern telecommunications landscape, which has  
567 evolved since the CSUT took effect in January 2007.  
568

569 VACo opposes any further diversion of Communications Sales and Use Tax Trust  
570 Fund dollars beyond the uses already specified in statute. These revenues should  
571 be held in trust for localities and not diverted for general state purposes.

572 Currently, funds from the Communications Sales and Use Tax Trust Fund are  
573 taken “off the top” for the Department of Taxation’s costs to administer the tax,  
574 the telephone relay center operated by the Department for the Deaf and Hard of  
575 Hearing, and any franchise fees owed to localities. Language adopted in the  
576 2018-2020 biennium budget and continued in the 2020 Appropriations Act  
577 provides for an additional diversion of funds to the state General Fund from  
578 assumed savings in the telephone relay contract; these funds would otherwise  
579 flow to localities.  
580

581 **Real and Personal Property Tax Exemptions Enacted Prior to 2003**

582 VACo supports providing localities the ability to decide whether to maintain  
583 property tax exemptions granted by the General Assembly prior to passage of the  
584 Constitutional amendment vesting the authority to grant such exemptions with  
585 localities. The Constitutional amendment which was passed by the voters in  
586 2002 and took effect in January 2003 placed decision-making authority about  
587 local tax exemptions with local governing bodies, within certain limits, and this  
588 authority should apply to exemptions granted before 2003 as well.  
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# GENERAL GOVERNMENT

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## Priorities

### **Local Authority**

VACo supports relaxation of the Dillon Rule and legislation maintaining and 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 programs by the Commonwealth from the state to localities. When funding for a mandated program is altered, the mandate should be suspended until full funding is restored. When legislation with a cost to localities is passed by the General Assembly, the cost should be borne by the Commonwealth, and the legislation should contain a sunset clause providing that the mandate is not binding on localities until funding by the Commonwealth is provided.

## Positions

### **Collective Bargaining for Public Employees**

VACo opposes any effort to mandate collective bargaining for public employees.

### **Election Costs and Districts**

VACo supports legislation that would decrease the costs of elections to localities. These costs include primaries, voting equipment, personnel and voting places. Cost reduction solutions include requiring parties to pay for primary elections, having one date for primary elections, using printed ballots, establishing countywide voting places and other similar measures. The state should provide adequate funding to localities for optical scan and other voting equipment and registrar costs. VACo also supports legislation to minimize or eliminate Split Voting Precincts. Additionally, VACo supports a streamlined process to address situations in which census boundaries do not align with locally drawn or commonly adhered to boundaries.

### **Ethics Reform**

VACo supports common sense efforts to strengthen Virginia's public ethics and conflicts of interest laws that are applicable and practical at the local level.

### **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)**

VACo opposes changes to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act that would impose additional burdens on localities.

644 **Grievance Hearings**  
645 VACo supports legislation authorizing localities to use an administrative hearing  
646 officer and existing grievance panels and procedures, and opposes the mandate of  
647 a three-member panel. VACo also supports providing immunity to local  
648 government employees, officers, volunteers, administrative hearing officers and  
649 panel members for claims arising out of participation in personnel grievance  
650 procedures.  
651

652 **Interoperability**  
653 VACo supports the state’s goal that agencies and their representatives at the local,  
654 regional, state and federal levels be able to communicate using compatible  
655 systems to respond more effectively during day-to-day operations and major  
656 emergencies. Local governments require dedicated federal and state funding  
657 sources to achieve this goal.  
658

659 **Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1)**  
660 VACo supports the Commonwealth’s transition to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-  
661 1) in a way that does not unfairly burden localities, financially or otherwise.  
662

663 **Pretrial Services**  
664 VACo supports increased funding for and expansion of pretrial services.  
665

666 **Public Notice, Public Hearing and Public Procurement**  
667 VACo supports legislation to streamline required newspaper advertising for  
668 public notices, public hearings and public procurement including legislation to  
669 give localities the option to use electronic or other forms of notification as an  
670 alternative to newspaper advertising.  
671

672 **Public Safety – Body Worn Cameras**  
673 VACo supports maintaining the ability of local governments to adopt policies and  
674 practices regarding body worn cameras that reflect local needs and fiscal realities.  
675

676 **Sovereign Immunity**  
677 VACo opposes any substantive change in local governments’ present defense of  
678 sovereign immunity. VACo opposes bringing counties under the Virginia Tort  
679 Claims Act.  
680

681 **State Assistance for Police Departments**  
682 VACo supports increasing state assistance for police departments through “599”  
683 Aid to Localities. This funding is designed to equalize state funding between  
684 counties in which the sheriff department provides law enforcement and those  
685 cities, counties and towns with a police department.  
686

687 **Workers’ Compensation Presumptions**  
688 VACo opposes any effort to expand workers’ compensation presumptive illnesses  
689 eligibilities for public employees that is not done in concert with additional state  
690 funding assistance to local governments to offset additional insurance liabilities.

# HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES

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## Priority

### **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.

## Positions

### **Aging/Long-Term Care**

VACo supports efforts that allow seniors to remain at home in a safe and secure environment. VACo urges the General Assembly to provide sufficient funding for companion services, in-home services, and home-delivered meals. Due to the increasing number of older adults in Virginia and the rise of Adult Protective Services (APS) cases, VACo supports additional state resources to ensure adequate training for APS workers on topics such as financial exploitation.

### **Behavioral Healthcare**

VACo supports continued funding by the Commonwealth sufficient to allow Community Services Boards (CSBs) to meet adequately the charge of providing services through a community-based system of care. State support must adequately enable CSBs to provide the additional services mandated by the General Assembly to be phased in over the next several years, as well as any additional requirements that may be added.

VACo supports the provision of additional resources to meet the behavioral health needs of justice-involved individuals, such as mobile crisis services and other diversion programs that may be appropriate substitutes for, or supplements to, law enforcement responses. Such work should be coordinated with existing local and state efforts.

Any changes to CSB funding should involve meaningful consultation with localities as key funding partners in the behavioral health system. In addition to local contributions to CSBs, localities make significant commitments to behavioral health through support for services funded through the Children’s Services Act and local spending on behavioral health care in local and regional jails, among other funding commitments.

Proposed changes to the funding structure, such as the creation of new funding formulae, should apply only to new funding. As an alternative, hold-harmless funds must be provided to those CSBs that would stand to lose state funding under any new funding structure.



735 VACo supports the ability of the Department of Behavioral Health and  
736 Developmental Services to waive local matching requirements for CSB funding  
737 for localities experiencing financial hardships.

738 Realignment of the behavioral health funding structure to incentivize  
739 community-based treatment rather than use of state hospitals will require  
740 additional state dollars and must not rely on local funding to backfill  
741 unanticipated costs for hospitalization.

742 VACo supports the creation of additional Medicaid waiver slots to serve  
743 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the community,  
744 approximately 13,600 of whom were on a wait-list as of August 2020.  
745

### 746 **Children’s Services Act**

747 VACo supports equitable cost-sharing between the state and localities for the  
748 costs involved in the placements of children in residential treatment facilities for  
749 non-educational reasons. VACo opposes proposals to limit state participation in  
750 funding services for children and youth who are mandated to be provided with  
751 special education and foster care services.

752 VACo supports enhancing the ability of local school divisions to serve  
753 children with disabilities, to include flexibility in use of state pool funds to serve  
754 children with high-level needs in local or regional programs tailored to meet  
755 those needs, and additional support for special education wraparound services to  
756 help support children in their communities.

757 VACo supports state assistance to localities with contracting for CSA  
758 services to improve localities’ ability to negotiate with providers of these services,  
759 such as private day placements. VACo supports rate setting by the state for  
760 private day placements, with appropriate recognition of cost variations by region.  
761

### 762 **Early Intervention**

763 VACo supports sustainable funding for Part C Early Intervention, which is an  
764 entitlement program that provides services for Virginia’s infants and toddlers.  
765 VACo requests that the General Assembly continue to increase state general  
766 funding to address growth in caseloads and fund rates that address the costs of  
767 providing the services. Underfunding this entitlement program puts pressure on  
768 local revenues to fill funding gaps for this mandated service.  
769

### 770 **Emergency Medical Transportation**

771 VACo supports policies to protect consumers who require air ambulance services.  
772 VACo opposes proposals that would add additional legal and administrative  
773 burdens on local first responders regarding decisions about methods of  
774 transportation in emergency situations.  
775

### 776 **Foster Care**

777 VACo supports efforts to ensure that the state is prepared to meet the  
778 requirements of the recently-enacted federal legislation governing federal  
779 funding for children placed in foster care, to include preparing providers to meet  
780 new standards required in the law. This legislation will allow federal  
781 participation in prevention services that previously have been funded by state

782 and local dollars, but services must meet certain standards in order to qualify for  
783 federal funding. VACo supports state assistance in recruiting appropriate foster  
784 families to care for children who must be removed from their homes. VACo  
785 supports state assistance in recruiting and retaining child welfare workers to  
786 address high rates of turnover in local departments of social services, such as by  
787 increasing the number of partnerships with universities in Virginia, improving  
788 training for child welfare workers by implementing an academy model, and  
789 expanding the Child Welfare Stipend program.

790

### 791 **Group Homes**

792 VACo supports resources necessary for the state to enforce appropriate  
793 regulation of group homes, such as staff qualifications and the condition of the  
794 homes, to ensure the protection of residents' health and safety.

795

### 796 **Healthcare**

797 VACo supports continued state funding for dental care, school nurses and  
798 preventive services and maternal and child health programs offered through local  
799 health departments and local school systems. VACo encourages the state to  
800 prepare for emergency health services access to care and to develop and fund  
801 incentives that would alleviate the nursing shortages felt in many communities.

802

### 803 **Human Trafficking**

804 VACo supports treating survivors of human trafficking as victims, not criminals,  
805 and supports their access to services available to other trauma victims, such as  
806 job placement services, housing assistance, access to education, legal services,  
807 and mental health services.

808

### 809 **Implementation of Medicaid Expansion**

810 VACo supports continued state funding for the local costs associated with  
811 Medicaid expansion, such as local eligibility workers. *[NOTE: Position relocated*  
812 *from Finance section]*

813

### 814 **Local EMS Involvement**

815 VACo supports increased local involvement in state EMS planning to ensure  
816 statewide needs are met and to avoid imposing unnecessary barriers to  
817 volunteerism.

818

### 819 **Prevention Services**

820 VACo supports increased state general funding for community-based service  
821 programs. VACo recognizes programs such as Healthy Families, Comprehensive  
822 Health Investment Project (CHIP) of Virginia, Smart Beginnings, and Resource  
823 Mothers as important models and requests that the General Assembly provide  
824 additional funding for these home- and community-based activities. Investments  
825 in programs that ensure a strong start for children can help reduce the need for  
826 costlier interventions later in life.

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**Substance Abuse**

Efforts to address substance dependency must be comprehensive and coordinated with localities. The state should develop and support evidence-based prevention initiatives and should continue to improve access to treatment.

**Telehealth**

VACo supports the use of electronic information and telecommunications technologies to support long-distance clinical health care, patient and professional health-related education, public health and health administration. Flexibility in the delivery of these services is essential in meeting the needs of residents.

PRELIMINARY

# TRANSPORTATION

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## Priority

### **Transportation Funding**

VACo supports continued study and action to address the causes for declining growth in transportation revenues and to develop recommendations to grow revenue over time to meet increasing demands for new construction and maintenance for existing transportation infrastructure. Such action must address the secondary road needs of counties throughout the Commonwealth, as such funding has been vastly reduced over the past 10 years.

VACo supports changes to simplify the Smart Scale process for allocating transportation funds to reduce time and costs to prepare and review applications. VACo supports adequate funding levels to maintain existing transit capital state match rates which are projected to decline starting in 2021 due to the depletion of transportation bonds.

In 2018 the legislature enacted a dedicated funding solution for Metro that came largely through reallocation of existing revenues, at the expense of other significant transportation projects throughout Northern Virginia. Though significant progress was in the 2020 legislature, VACo supports continuing efforts to replace the regional funding that was redirected from the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority.

## Positions

### **Autonomous Vehicles**

VACo supports continued collaboration with local governments on the development, deployment, and restrictions of use for autonomous vehicles, aerial systems, and related support infrastructure.

### **Local-State Cooperation**

VACo is committed to the protection of local government authority to regulate land use. This authority must be recognized by Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) when evaluations are conducted to determine the consistency between local transportation plans and the Commonwealth's transportation priorities. VACo also opposes the reduction of local control that is associated with the CTB's process of designating Corridors of Statewide Significance and the implementation of Arterial Preservation. Additionally, VACo supports additional flexibility within the VDOT project approval process and standards to be responsive to localities' individual needs. VACo supports the expansion of authority and discretion of Resident Administrators of VDOT to approve modifications to design standards where appropriate with local needs, including reduction of speed limits. VACo also supports local control over applications submitted to the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI).

922 **Devolution of Secondary Roads**  
923 VACo opposes legislative or administrative initiatives that would transfer to  
924 counties the responsibility for the construction, maintenance or operation of new  
925 and existing roads.

926  
927 **Highway Tolls**  
928 VACo opposes the installation of toll facilities on Virginia’s interstate highways  
929 until the Commonwealth Transportation Board has thoroughly reviewed and  
930 assessed the components of a long-term capital improvement program, has  
931 identified and compared all available funding alternatives and has adopted a  
932 proposal that matches capital improvements with realistically available funding  
933 sources.

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935 **Maintenance Priorities**  
936 VACo supports a requirement imposed upon VDOT to implement a notification  
937 plan with the local governing body to establish maintenance priorities.

938  
939 **Orphaned Drainage Outfalls**  
940 VACo dedicated funding assistance to counties to mitigate the impacts of  
941 drainage outfalls with no assigned maintaining entity across the Commonwealth.

942  
943 **Parking**  
944 VACo supports general authority for counties to adopt ordinances regulating,  
945 including prohibiting, the parking of boats, RVs, utility trailers, campers, etc. on  
946 subdivision streets. In addition, VACo supports additional authority that would  
947 allow localities with parking ordinances the ability to enforce such ordinances  
948 using law enforcement, uniformed local employees, or uniformed personnel  
949 under contract with the locality.

950  
951 **Rail Enhancement Fund**  
952 VACo supports authority for counties to approve Rail Enhancement Fund  
953 projects funded by the state and constructed within their jurisdictions.

954  
955 **Railway Crossings**  
956 VACo supports efforts to safely improve mobility issues on roads that cross  
957 railway lines.

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959 **Recordation Tax Distribution to Localities**  
960 VACo supports the restoration of state recordation tax revenues distributed to  
961 counties and cities for use of transportation or public education purposes.

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963 **Regional Transportation Funding**  
964 VACo opposes any efforts to divert existing dedicated regional transportation  
965 revenues to areas and purposes outside of that region unless additional dedicated  
966 funding sources are provided to hold such funding harmless.

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**Truck Size and Weight**

VACo opposes any legislation that seeks to increase truck size or weight beyond the current federal standards, thereby stressing the capacity of the Commonwealth's road systems and putting highways, roads and bridges at risk of increased damage or deterioration.

PRELIMINARY

# **9-1-1 Cost Study**

## **Scope of Work**

**Draft**

The purpose of the study is to determine the statewide cost of 9-1-1 in Virginia and identify potential efficiency improvements. The 9-1-1 Services Board recommended the formation of a committee to provide recommendations on NG9-1-1 recurring costs. The NG9-1-1 Sustainable Funding Committee purports that local 9-1-1 expenses are increasing much more rapidly than the Wireless E-911 Fund. This study should determine statewide 9-1-1 costs, and trends related to these costs, through an analysis of primary PSAP operational expenses over the past five fiscal years.

The 9-1-1 Services Board only has visibility into payments made from the wireless E-911 Fund, but local governments receive funding from other sources. These other sources include Compensation Board, Communications Sales and Use Tax (CSUT), and local funding. Primary PSAP payments from the Wireless E-911 Fund are based on a funding methodology that includes only two determinants: total 9-1-1 calls and population. This study should also include recommendations related to the wireless funding formula that will be recalculated effective July 1, 2023. The Board is particularly interested in strategies to establish an equity-based approach to statewide funding that utilizes metrics and criteria for determining most at-risk PSAPs.