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Beachside with Becky



Becky Dickson

Beachside with Becky

There comes that mysterious meeting in life when someone acknowledges who we are and what we can be, igniting the circuits of our highest potential..... Rusty Berkus

I remember when this happened for me. Long ago (about 30 years ago) before my career in local government even started, I worked for a company doing land development and commercial construction. The proverbial "window" opened and I jumped at the job knowing nothing about it. (Little did I know this would be one of the many times the "window" would open and I would jump through knowing little about what I was in for...). While the job was tough and totally out of my comfort zone, my boss constantly demonstrated that he had confidence in me-more than I had in myself. I grew over the years working for him. I guess I faked it till I made it! One day, we were meeting on financing for a strip shopping center and out of the blue he looked at me and said..."you know, no matter where you go or what you do, you will always be a star, you will shine. You just will. ..". Yes, quite cheesy I know, but I have to say, it has stuck with me all

these years. It wasn't so much that one sentence, as it was that the one sentence summed up how he felt about my potential and what I was capable of. I think in some strange way I worked to make him right or maybe he knew I would work and so he was right.

I try to remember how just one sentence, perhaps passing, insignificant words to us, can stick with a person their whole lives. Good and bad. I wish I had remembered this early in my career, but mentoring and supporting and lifting others up were not as high on my priority list as they should have been. I now know they should have been first on the list. Little else we impact or produce really matters. My wish for me, and for you all, is that we take a moment to lift someone up, that we imprint in their minds and hearts just what they are capable of...that somehow we help them to believe in themselves. It's pretty cool that we can do that for people and take it from me, they will remember.

Signing off,

Becky

[Contact Becky Dickson](#)

Position Changes

December, 2015

• Barry Helms, town manager for Christiansburg since 2011 and having served the town for 22 years, announced his retirement, effective June, 2016.



• Travis Quesenberry, administrator for King George County for the past 13+ years, announced his retirement, effective December, 2016.

• Melissa Peacor, Prince William County executive for the past 6 years and a county employee for 30 years, announced her retirement, effective January 31, 2016.

• Barry Thompson, finance director and treasurer for the town of Vinton, has been appointed interim manager there.

• Kim Payne, city manager for Lynchburg for 15 years, announced his retirement, effective June 30, 2016.

• Joe Paxton, administrator for Rockingham County since 2004, has announced his retirement, effective July 31, 2016.

• Jim Spore, who is retiring as city manager of Virginia Beach, will become president and CEO of Reinvent Hampton Roads.

• Frank Force, city manager for Williamsburg from 1967 to 1991, passed away at the age of 90.

- Brent Fedors, vice president and business line leader for the facilities management division of AECOM, a global infrastructure firm, has been appointed administrator for Gloucester County.
- Edmund Giles, town manager for Chatham, has announced that he is stepping down from that post effective end of the month for health reasons.
- Joe King, recently retired manager for the city of Danville, passed away at the age of 65.

Member Spotlight - Maurice Jones



Maurice Jones

Jones building Charlottesville's trust, even under intense scrutiny

By Chris Suarez | Posted: Saturday, December 12, 2015 4:49 pm Daily Progress

Charlottesville city manager Maurice Jones has been the city manager for five years in Charlottesville. It hasn't been an easy five years for Charlottesville City Manager Maurice Jones. Despite living under a microscope as he helms what is essentially a business serving nearly 50,000 people, with almost 1,000 employees and an approximately \$150 million annual budget, he said he wouldn't want to be anywhere else. "It's been a wonderful experience," Jones said. "It's a lot of challenges, but at the same time there's

been a lot of opportunity for the city. Many times when those challenges have arisen, be it economic or law enforcement-related, our staff has risen to the occasion and addressed those issues effectively and with great professionalism."

After spending the past five years trudging through the trials and tribulations of managing the city's daily operations, its staff and the expectations of both Charlottesville constituents and a biennially rotating cast of city councilors, Jones' contract was renewed earlier this year for a three-year extension to Dec. 6, 2018.

Despite working upwards of 60 hours per week and spending another 10 to 30 hours each week in the last two years working toward an MBA from the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business, Jones, 45, said he wants to stick around as the city's CEO. "I look forward to many more years ahead of me," he said. Jones will continue to earn an annual salary of \$184,026.07 with benefits, including 164 hours of vacation and administrative leave. [Read the rest of the article here.](#)

[Contact Maurice Jones](#)

Member Spotlight - Frank Force

Former Williamsburg city manager dies at age 90

The Virginia Gazette

WILLIAMSBURG - Frank Force, who served as Williamsburg's city manager from 1967 to 1991, died Monday morning - 12/14/15 - at 90. Force was remembered as

someone who made an impact on the community. Former mayor Jeanne Zeidler, knew him throughout the years while he was city manager and from the Rotary Club. "He was a strong personality," she said, and he didn't mind doing work. "He's was the kind of person you'd see out there shoveling the snow himself when we had a storm." Gil Granger who served 12 years on City Council, including a stint as mayor when Force was manager, also had an anecdote about storms while recalling Force's life. Granger wrote in an email to the Gazette that Force didn't like to treat roads with "expensive, fast acting chemical that tore up the cars and asphalt" after snow and ice storms. Instead, Force preferred a "WTA plan (Wait Til April)" treatment. "You could always count on his budget to be conservative. Income would exceed projections and expenses would be less than projections. Ideas of councilpersons could be met, if reasonable," Granger wrote. "He will be missed by his beloved Marge as well as all who served with and under him. His imprint and leadership have been left all over the city, as well as the community at large." Force was one of only two city managers in Williamsburg over nearly the last half century. He was succeeded by Jack Tuttle, who retired this year after also serving 24 years. Former City Councilman Bobby Braxton, who said he knew Force mostly through the Rotary, contrasted the two long-time managers. "He was a very different manager from Jack," said Braxton, of Force. "But that's what they needed then. He took great pride in his city and did good job of it." Zeidler said Force approached the job as an engineer. "As an engineer, he paid a lot of attention to what the city looked like and to safety," she said. Force was a native of Ohio and served as city manager in Radford before coming to Williamsburg. He was a the a member of Rotary International for 52 years. He was an honorary member of the Kiwanis Club, a member of the Middle Plantation Club, and a member of the United Methodist Church. "Oh, he was a very devoted Rotarian," Braxton said. That's something Granger recalled as well. "City Council met twice a month - 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 2 p.m. - and always finished up in time for Rotary (6 p.m.). One newly elected councilman who had run advocating the 4th Thursday meeting be moved to an evening meeting so working people could attend acquiesced to an amendment by a Rotarian adding 'if necessary'" Granger recalled. "From that date to present, business has been done in one meeting a month. No second meeting has been necessary and no Rotarian has missed a meeting because of City Council." Force is survived by his wife of 63 years, Marjorie, a daughter, a son and two grandchildren.

Member Spotlight - Pat Coffield

Saying goodbye: Coffield looks back over 25
years of service

BOB STUART, News Virginian

VERONA -- Pat Coffield has mastered serving as Augusta County's administrator for a quarter century. The 62-year-old Tidewater native is armed with a master's degree in administration from George Washington University. But there is no university curriculum or professor who could have taught Coffield what he has learned about county



Pat Coffield

management. He has had to juggle finance, working with supervisors and mentoring and management of county staff. As he prepares to leave office at the end of December, Coffield can say that a key "part of the job" is working with elected boards of supervisors, who call him after hearing concerns from their constituents. "If you disregard that you are in trouble," said Coffield during a recent interview. When he hasn't been busy working with supervisors, Coffield has dived into his responsibilities with county agencies. And like many confident leaders, he has not been afraid to delegate to others. For many years, now retired Assistant Augusta County Administrator John McGehee handled such duties as human resources and fire and rescue. The late Community Development director Dale Cobb tackled planning and zoning issues. More recently, Coffield has handed off important work to his successor, Tim Fitzgerald, and to Finance Director Jennifer Whetzel. "You have to delegate," said Coffield, who said he also has worked with local members of the General Assembly regarding Augusta County's concerns. "My job has been the political and financial side," he said. When he began working in local government in the 1970s in Suffolk and later in Portsmouth, Coffield closely watched City Manager Bob House. House was an administrator he worked with in both communities. He had a reputation as a developer of water systems and as a teacher to young professionals like Coffield. "He surrounded himself with young professionals," said Coffield, who spent 7 years learning about local government from House. Coffield has used those lessons to develop his staff in Augusta County. He also got an instructive lesson in local government. Coffield arrived in Suffolk and worked as a senior analyst and director of research for 6 years after that community's consolidation from a county to a city. The 9 years he spent as an assistant city manager in Portsmouth offered the chance to go from a "rural to urban" setting. Portsmouth was a city of more than 100,000. The urban setting allowed Coffield to learn all about water, sewer, engineering, planning, zoning and other local government functions. Coffield was told of the potential opening for Augusta County administrator by his friend Bill O'Brien, the former Rockingham County administrator, in 1987. Both had trained together at the Senior Executive Institute in Charlottesville. O'Brien suggested Coffield apply for the Augusta County position when it opened. O'Brien recently said his intuition about Coffield proved correct. "I always thought he would be a person of integrity, that when he told you something you could take it to the bank," O'Brien said. "He had the interests of Augusta County at heart. He did an outstanding job." Coffield remembers the prodding he received from O'Brien. "He said Augusta County was well managed and strong financially because of retiring Administrator Dick Huff," Coffield said. He was familiar with Augusta County after doing his undergraduate work at Madison College. Coffield thought "it was a wonderful place to be." As he has prepared to leave the job of county administrator, Coffield has challenged members of his staff. He asked Whetzel during an employee evaluation about future career plans beyond budgets and finance. The result is that Whetzel will become Augusta County's deputy administrator when Fitzgerald succeeds Coffield in January. "It's important for someone in the next phase of their career to grow mentally," Coffield said. Supervisors have also provided Coffield with a reservoir of knowledge over the past 25 years. He has benefited from the diverse backgrounds and perspectives they have brought to their jobs. "Larry Wills was an

engineer, Gerald Garber was a farmer and Marshall Pattie was a professor," Coffield said of current, former and future board members. Garber, who is returning as the Middle River District supervisor in January after being off the board for a term, said Coffield was always a "very reliable, very steady" leader who never proved to be surprising. And Garber credits Coffield with some strong hires among senior staff. "He has put in place a very good team. There is not a lot of holes," he said. Wills, who is retiring from the Middle River District seat, echoed Garber. He said Coffield has been strong in developing and getting the most out of his staff. "He has found a way to use their capabilities to the fullest," Wills said. Wills said Coffield's financial management of Augusta County has been masterful. "The county is in very good financial shape," said Wills, who said Coffield always made sure Augusta County had sufficient funding available for projects. Pastures District Supervisor Tracy Pyles spoke of Coffield's work during the Dec. 9 board meeting. He said the outgoing administrator had a vision for Mill Place Commerce Park, the county's industrial park, and Middle River Regional Jail. And he said Coffield's leadership was typified by his staff's work ethic. "What we get every year -- the number of people that show up to work without an absence," Pyles said. "That comes from leadership. That is people not being stirred up every day about these things that are not right." Coffield learned of the importance of putting county development in places with infrastructure such as Stuarts Draft, and to respect the agricultural heritage of Augusta County, Virginia's second most productive agricultural county. He learned much about regional governance during his 25 years in Augusta County. The county, Staunton and Waynesboro have joined forces on social services, the regional landfill and Middle River Regional Jail. Coffield said he has "been blessed" to work with strong leaders during that time in both Waynesboro and Staunton. Wills credits Coffield with the success of regional ventures, saying he worked hard on cooperating and showing strong leadership. The day of the interview found Coffield performing "one of the fun parts" of his job, inspecting the renovation of a flood control dam in western Augusta County. He spent an hour touring the construction work on Todd Lake Dam with County Engineer Doug Wolfe. And after leaving the dam, he enjoyed a ride through the rolling pastures that dot the farms near Mount Solon and Stokesville. While retirement beckons, Coffield said he could envision working as a "part-time, transitional" manager for a community while that community seeks a permanent person. Coffield will work during the early part of 2016 to help with the transition to Fitzgerald's leadership. Coffield said he has been honored "to work for wonderful boards ... great citizens, and probably equal or more importantly, to work beside past and present employees of Augusta County."

Tedd's Take

The New Year

I want to take this moment to express my appreciation for the opportunity to be part of the VLGMA e-Newsletter, and be given space to address issues, both important and trivial, on a monthly basis.

During my years as a city manager and previously in support roles to that office, I had to have "no opinion," particularly on



Tedd Povar

political and other sensitive issues. Of course, while you do have them, you take your livelihood in your hands if you choose to make them known!

Now, in this fantastic role of supporting the city, county, and town administrations across Virginia without the burden of folks looking over my shoulder or micromanaging my every statement and action, I have the liberty to write about a lot of things with the hope that someone might find one or more of those topics of interest. I never thought I'd play the role of a columnist or commentator, or write anything beyond the normal business memos and official letters that go with a management job.

So..... another year has begun, and new issues will present themselves. It's a national election year, but I'm going to stay FAR away from that circus. My realm, both here and in my day-to-day work, will be the nuts and bolts of running government, and I'll try to find topics that are of general interest to you, the fine folks that do the really important stuff that makes your place, this state, and this nation a super place to live.

Here's to a happy and healthy new year!

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

Certificate News

The spring semester is just around the corner and the Certificate is as busy as ever. New and returning students are getting ready for classes while preparations are also underway for more professional development opportunities. The coming months will surely be rewarding for all involved.

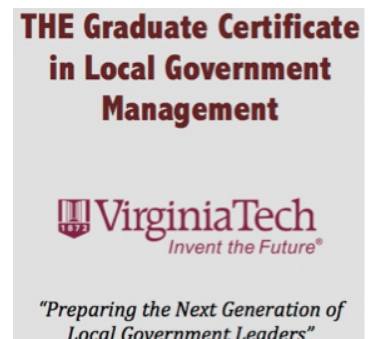
For those interested in branching out of their comfort zones, the Certificate program is hosting one-day workshops featuring John Nalbandian and The Alliance for Innovation. These Contemporary Leadership Challenge workshops will take place on April 6th in Abingdon and on April 8th in Stafford. Stay tuned for more information!

Also, the Certificate will be hosting the third Professional Development in Local Government conference next summer in Roanoke. Save the date for August 8 and 9! Dr. John Nalbandian will be the keynote speaker, and there will be sessions on lessons learned, media relations, and the Alliance for Innovation. For more information, visit <http://www.cpe.vt.edu/lgm/>.

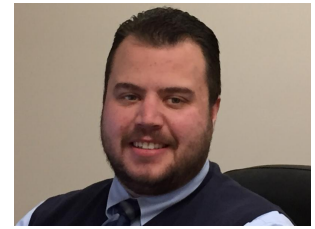
Lastly, if you are interested in any of the Certificate's courses or programming, Director Stephanie Davis is always willing to answer questions. Feel free to contact her at sddavis@vt.edu or 804-980-5549.

A DAO in the Life - Cody Sexton

When I originally volunteered to write this article, life was stable. Everything was as it should be; everything was in a



state of calm maintenance. Then, in the span of two weeks, my County Administrator surprisingly announced her resignation and an immediate family member shockingly passed away. Both my professional world and my personal life were rocked to their cores, but nothing like that happens without an opportunity for reflection and growth.



Cody Sexton

As local government professionals, change is something to which we must become accustomed. We are in but not of politics yet close enough to be tossed around from time to time. And, despite the seeming permanence of the institutions of state, foundations shake all of the time. We have a responsibility, however, to our organizations and our communities to ensure an effective and efficient administration of the local government. This is where the DAOs step up.

In my own experience, whether with my family or my coworkers, all react and respond differently to change; though, people seem to seek out a new stability. A DAO must possess the leadership abilities, the trust, the institutional memory, and the guiding hand to keep the ship of state level. This does not mean that we do not mourn or that we do not doubt. It simply means that our duty must prevail. The alternative to such stability is chaos.

When you look at a storm tossed ocean, the surface is a complete mess, yet when you look below, the deeper waters are calm. The fish still go about their business protected by stronger forces than the tumult above. We, the DAOs provide that protection to the organization and the workings within. While the administrators and managers look up and out from the organization, we must keep our eyes on the operations below. We maintain the steady pulse.

Life is never the same after change, sudden or planned; you merely find a new normal. Thankfully, there are preservers and protectors who help the search. I am a proud DAO and am stronger for the role I serve. To me, it is the ultimate manifestation of the calling of public service because, as Tennyson wrote, we are "made weak by time and fate, but strong in will to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

[Contact Cody Sexton](#)

Civic Engagement Best Practices - Local Government Education Week



Sarah Snead

April 2016 Local Government Education Week: Let's partner with K-12 students to learn what we are about!

Prepared by Cindy Mester, Civic Engagement
Committee Chair and Sarah Snead, Deputy
County Administrator, Chesterfield County



Cindy Mester

In 2012 the General Assembly adopted House Joint Resolution #93 proclaiming the first week of April as Local Government Education week in honor of the formation of the Council-Manager form of government in the City of Staunton, VA.

The VLGMA Civic Engagement Committee has been developing tools to engage students, our future leaders, in order to acknowledge good community building work, educate on all local government services provided at the local level, and to increase student's awareness of career opportunities in local government. This will help us strengthen interest in local government management/public service as a viable career.

As part of this effort VLGMA asks each locality's governing body to adopt a proclamation honoring this week and a template is also provided on the Civic Engagement webpage on the VLGMA website www.icma.org/vlgma. However, adopting a proclamation is not enough to really engage in a partnership with the local school district and the young people of our community. So we hope each locality will develop an engagement plan that meets your local need. To aid in this effort the Civic Engagement Committee has pulled together numerous resources that are also posted on the website that include a great elementary school level book, high school teachers' resource guide with lesson plans and a report of various civic engagement best practices used by VLGMA members. Activities are not restricted to the first week of April but can occur throughout the year and be highlighted in April. For example, Chesterfield County passed a resolution proclaiming the first week in April as Local Government Education Week (also on VLGMA website www.icma.org/vlgma). However, Chesterfield County encourages students to become active in local government through the Model County Government program. Model County Government is an educational experience for 12th grade government students at Chesterfield County high schools provided by a partnership of Youth Planning and Development, Chesterfield Public Schools and Cooperative Extension. Through conversations, observations and actual experiences, our students develop an appreciation for and a better understanding of local government. The students attend a Board of Supervisor meeting, School Board Public Engagement session and each student shadows a county or school leader. While this initiative has typically been held in the fall, most recently the event was during budget season to provide maximum exposure to that process. For additional information on Model County Government please contact Jana Carter, Director of Youth Services at (804) 796-7100 or Sarah Snead, Deputy County Administrator of Human Services at (804) 748-1212.

Local activities can include:

1. Provide for all school and public libraries the elementary school level books, Out and About City Hall and Kid's Guide to Local Government, which are available at: <http://www.capstonepub.com>. These are great illustrated resources that describes what services a locality provides and is affordable at about \$20 each in hard cover (paper back also available);
2. Conduct guest readings of the books to elementary classes;
3. Participate in VML's "If I were Mayor" essay contest;
4. Conduct 7th grade website scavenger hunt to learn about public services;
5. Develop a high school service learning program;
6. Conduct mock Governing Body meetings;
7. Share the Teacher's Resource Guide, including sample lesson plans designed for upper middle/high school students, to be used as part of the curriculum for meeting civics/social studies standards of learning; and/or
8. Be a guest speaker to middle or high school students regarding your career as a

City or Deputy Manager and/or discuss community projects (e.g., annual budget, redevelopment effort or capital infrastructure improvements) that the students will see occurring or read in the news.

Check out this website link www.icma.org/vlgma for additional great resources and feel free to contact us with questions and/or to share additional ideas.

Cindy Mester, cmester@fallschurchva.gov and Sarah Snead, sneads@chesterfield.gov

Mel's Poetry Corner



Mel Gillies

Winter Soulstice

In the darkness of the heart womb wait
and in silence incubate.
Listen and be still.
Let the emptiness fulfill.
All mental whirling cease,
shut down completely and release
disturbances that keep
from relaxing infinitely deep.
Experience end less ness
and a sense of all one ness.
Winter Soulstice to feel
the liberation that heals.

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)

Innovation Edge

Resilience, innovation, leadership, and management: topics that are addressed in Alliance's webinar - Emotional Resilience: Adapting to Adversity on January 7, 2016.

Ron Carlee, city manager of Charlotte, NC (and former Arlington County manager) will lead a dynamic discussion on managers' ability to bounce back after adversity and unplanned incidents. Ron's white paper was presented at BIG Ideas 2014, and a subject that touches everyone. The webinar is free to Alliance members and \$49 for non-members. Read more about the webinar [here](#). If you're not able to make the webinar on the 7th, you will be able to find it in the On Demand Store.



About the Alliance for Innovation: The Alliance for Innovation is inspiring innovation to advance communities. As the premier resource for emerging practices in local government, we are building cultures of innovation and connecting thought leaders in the profession with the help of our partners International City/County Management Association and Arizona State University. We are accessible and valuable to all levels of an organization. You can learn more about the Alliance at www.transformgov.org or contact me at saburnett@transformgov.org

Spring DAO Meeting



From the Planning Team Vivian McGettigan, York County Deputy County Administrator and Mark Bellamy, York County Public Works Director:

The County of York will host the Spring DAO meeting at the Yorktown Freight Shed - Riverwalk Landing, 331 Water Street, Yorktown, Virginia on April 8 from 10:00am through 3:00pm. Planning for the meeting is shaping up. The meeting topics include: County Administrator, Neil Morgan sharing his insights on emerging local government issues; we will then explore the seven primary motivations that affect every interpersonal, leadership and management interaction in the Unwrapping the Seven Gifts session; during the lunch break those who are interested in exploring York's beautiful Riverwalk can join a walking tour and discussion of this revitalization project and its positive impacts on York's economic development and quality of life; in the afternoon we will learn more about ICMA's and the Alliance for Innovation's Next Big Things and we will share how York used the materials for an interactive board retreat exercise; we will wrap up the day with a roundtable discussion. For more information about what Yorktown has to offer, please go to www.yorkcounty.gov/tourism. For further information, please go to www.vlgma.org

ICMA News



Call for Nominations is Open for the 2016 ICMA Local Government Excellence Awards

Celebrate the profession by nominating a colleague, your community, or yourself for a 2016 Local Government Excellence Award.

Each year, ICMA recognizes outstanding contributions to the local government management profession through the Local Government Excellence Awards Program. This is an opportunity for both local government professionals and local governments to receive recognition.

Awards are presented to individuals for:

- Career excellence
- Development of new talent,
- Excellence in leadership as an assistant (regardless of title),
- Early career leadership, and
- Academic contributions to the profession.

ICMA's [Local Government Excellence Awards Program](#) also recognizes outstanding local government programs in the areas of community health and safety, community partnerships, community sustainability, and strategic leadership and governance. **Nominations are accepted from both U.S. and International Jurisdictions.** Students are encouraged to nominate a professor for the Academic Award.

New this Year: Submit Your Nomination Online!

For the first time ever, nominations may be submitted online making it easier to nominate a colleague or outstanding program for a Local Government Excellence Award. Please take a moment to consider which of your colleagues has made a significant difference in their community or to the profession; or has your community implemented an innovative or successful program you would like to nominate? Nominations for Local Government Excellence Awards will be accepted through March 9, 2016.

Award recipients will be recognized during ICMA's 102nd Annual Conference in Kansas City, Missouri, September 25-28, 2016, and highlighted in a fall issue of ICMA's PM Magazine. Visit the [website](#) for complete information on both the Local Government Excellence Awards Program and the nomination process.

Calendar

Upcoming Events

VLGMA will be hosting two break rooms during 1) the VML legislative day on January 27th and, 2) the VACo legislative day on February 11th.

Place: 8th Floor West Conference Room in the General Assembly Building

VML's will run from 1:30pm to 3:00pm

VACo's will run from 2pm to 4pm.

Stop by between visits to legislators for coffee, soft drinks, & cookies, and a little down time!

Winter Conference - February 17-19, 2016 at the Omni Hotel in Charlottesville - registration materials available [here](#)

Spring DAO Meeting - April 8, 2016 in York County - more info [here](#)
[More Dates](#)

Future Newsletter Articles

A goal of this e-newsletter is to keep you informed on activities relative to our profession. As with any membership-based organization, contributions by members are welcome and encouraged. Topics can range from a recent achievement in your locality to an upcoming event with networking potential to human interest stories about current or retired members. To contribute simply send your brief e-newsletter content (~5 sentences or less) via email

to [Molly Harlow](#).



Future Newsletter Articles

[VLGMA Website](#)
[ICMA Website](#)
[Alliance for Innovation](#)
[Virginia Municipal League](#)
[VA Association of Counties](#)
[Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service](#)
[ELGL](#)
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