



2019 General Assembly Legislative Program



Community Wealth Building

Virginia First Cities pioneered funding for the TANF for Employment Grant Program intended to provide aid to local governments to eradicate long term, intractable poverty through workforce/career training and access to holistic wraparound services. VFC supports budget actions to:

- Maintain funding for the current TANF for Employment Grant Programs at \$7.5 million (round 1) and \$3 million (round 2) in each FY 2020 and FY 2021.
- Support housing initiatives including the development and implementation of
 - An **eviction diversion pilot program**;
 - Increased support for the **Virginia Housing Trust Fund**;
 - Better access to affordable housing;
 - Financing for public housing replacement;
 - Use a portion of the unspent balance of TANF funding to leverage **funding for public housing replacement**.

Economic Gardening Initiative/Resiliency/Sustainability

(Growing and nurturing local businesses)

1. Increase funding for the **Virginia Industrial Revitalization Fund** to leverage local and private resources to achieve market driven redevelopment of these structures. This, in turn, will create a catalyst for long-term employment opportunities and on-going physical and economic revitalization.
1. Support funding of \$2,510,000 for a **Virginia Gateway Communities Program** to leverage stakeholder equity with local investments and organized, intensive and consistent efforts to create mixed use and mixed modal spaces reflective of the local community.
2. Provide \$5 million in FY 2020 for the **Urban Public-Private Partnership Redevelopment Fund** (§15.2-2415) to provide grants or loans to local governments for assembling, planning, clearing, and preparing sites for redevelopment by private developers.

Economic Gardening Initiative/Resiliency/Sustainability (Cont.)

- Support an increase to the \$2.25 million in each year for the **Brownfields Restoration and Remediation Program**.
- **Enterprise Zone Program** funding to avoid grant proration to the Real Property Investment Tax Credit.
- Oppose a decrease or further extension of the cap on the **Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit**.
- Support flood/resilience risk reduction infrastructure projects and aid to localities for tidal and street flooding mitigation efforts including grant matching and the **Shoreline Assistance Fund**.
- Support maximum funding for the **Storm Water Local Assistance Fund (SLAF)**.
- Support the **Healthy Food Financing and the Grocery Investment Fund** to ensure our cities have access to thriving, sustainable grocery options and that these businesses succeed.

Education

- VFC requests the General Assembly to fulfill its constitutional obligation to provide a “**high quality**” **public education** and adequately fund its true cost.
- Increase the **At-Risk Add-On** to aid high poverty school divisions from 14% to 20%.
- Increase funding for the **Master Teacher Residency Program** to \$3 million in FY 2020 as well as support for teacher mentoring programs
- Increase the appropriation to \$1.5 million for **Teaching Scholarship Loans** in FY 2020.
- Support funding new avenues for **public school construction** and renovation costs.

Tax Policy/Education

In order to fund education initiatives, VFC advocates a two-pronged approach to respond to federal tax changes.

1. Return the revenues attributable to the federal individual income tax changes to the citizens via an increase to the state Standard Income Tax Deduction and/or provide a Refundable Earned Income Tax Credit.
2. Retain the revenues associated with the permanent business provisions and use for additional K-12 funding.

Public Safety

- Support paying local governments \$14 per day for all **state-responsible inmates** incarcerated in local jails, for whom they are now paying \$12 per day.
- Support the General Assembly giving local governments the authority **to regulate the possession of firearms on property owned, operated, managed or under the control of the local government.**
- Fund **Aid to Localities with Police Departments** according to statute (§9.1-169) with a formula that is responsive to urban police departments.
- With the increased usage of **police body worn cameras**, and the resulting administrative costs that come with this use, we request that the state refrain from mandating the hiring of additional local commonwealth attorneys and further cost shifting to local governments and, ultimately, the taxpayers.

Disclaimer

The 2019 VFC Legislative Agenda has been considered by the VFC Board of Directors, comprised of representatives from each member city.

Each item included in the VFC Legislative Agenda may not be officially supported by every member city.