



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

2021 GENERAL ASSEMBLY LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Increase and preserve critical funding streams for public education, public safety, human services, transportation and other core services:

- During the COVID-19 Pandemic, provide additional unallocated funding to localities so that it can be spent on the areas of greatest need.
- Fully fund K-12 education, including the Standards of Quality and the Cost of Competing factor. Ensure that state funding for Arlington Public Schools reflects pre-Pandemic levels to ensure continuity of instruction.
- Protect existing Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) revenues; restore funding levels that were diverted in 2018 to fund WMATA's capital funding gap; protect Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority capital funding and replace projected revenues that will not materialize due to the COVID-19 virus.
- Fully fund Community Services Boards with the amount of General Fund dollars given prior to Medicaid expansion in order to finance the cost of local eligibility workers and case managers. The current funding anticipated Medicaid expansion savings that have not materialized for numerous reasons – the CSBs do not receive reimbursement for all individuals they serve, not all CSB clients qualify for Medicaid expansion, not all are willing to apply for these services, reimbursement rates do not cover the cost of services, the Managed Care environment is difficult for this set of clients, and there is a time lag between when the service is delivered and when it is paid for by a Managed Care Organization. All these reasons make it extremely difficult for the CSBs to function, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Support a significant increase and a sustainable source of funding for the Housing Trust Fund. Similarly support increased funding and programming to prevent evictions and to protect our most vulnerable residents.



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

POLICY STATEMENTS UPDATED FOR 2021 GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION

A. Finance

1. Local Taxing Authority: Preserve all current local taxing authority, including business license, and machinery and tools tax administration, real estate and rate making authority. Any modifications to local taxing authority must include an alternative revenue authority with reliable, sustainable revenue sources.
2. Communications Sales and Use Tax: Modernize the communications tax by resetting the rate to the same level as the state sales tax and broaden coverage to include services that have become available since the original law was adopted. Oppose transfers of these revenues to the state general fund for purposes other than those stipulated in the Code of Virginia.

B. Transportation

1. Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Funding: Protect existing transit programs, the new funding included in the 2020 General Assembly Session's Omnibus Transportation Bill, and all other dedicated funding for WMATA and VRE and all other dedicated funding for WMATA.
2. Long Bridge Project: Support the long-fought expansion of passenger rail across the Long Bridge for more efficient Virginia Railway Express service, and the improvement of all Amtrak and commuter rail from Washington, DC to the south.
3. Personal Delivery Devices (Robots): Monitor these devices, both in Arlington and elsewhere in the Commonwealth, to determine if the statute needs to be revised to accommodate robot deliveries and protect the safety of our residents.
4. Speed Cameras: Grant local authority to expand the implementation of automated traffic enforcement beyond the just-approved school and work zones. Automated ticket enforcement has the potential to improve safety, reduce unnecessary interactions between residents and police, and further advance confidence in equitable outcomes by reducing or eliminating the possibility of race-based disparities in speed enforcement.
5. Reducing Speed Limits: Authorize localities to reduce the speed limit to less than 25 miles per hour on any roadway that is located in a business or a residential district within its boundaries.

"Arlington will be a diverse and inclusive world-class urban community with secure, attractive residential and commercial neighborhoods where people unite to form a caring, learning, participating, sustainable community in which each person is important."

-Arlington County Vision Statement

C. Education

1. Support Personnel: Eliminate the artificial funding cap placed on support positions and restore the inflation factor for non-personal support costs.
2. At-Risk Add-on: Retain an at-risk add-on that would provide additional funding based on the number of students who meet that criteria.
3. Youth Mental Health: Increase the number of school-based mental health professionals.
4. Average Daily Membership and Sales Tax Collections: Continue to hold-harmless the funding in Sales Tax distributions to local school divisions and Direct Aid payment amounts based on average daily membership until the impacts of COVID-19 on both sources of funding cease.
5. Support for Distance Learning: Provide additional resources and legislative authority to enable distance learning for students, both during the COVID-19 pandemic, and afterwards to enable access to classwork, homework and school projects.

D. General Government

1. Unfunded Mandates: Oppose any mandates that are not fully funded, including additional administrative burdens on local governments.
2. Broadband Access: Expand access to the Internet to assist with tele-work, tele-medicine, and educational needs during an extended health emergency, and beyond for personal prosperity and stability,
3. Extension of Authority to Hold Electronic Meetings During a Declared Emergency: Extend the current authority for a public body to meet during an emergency declared by the Governor (relating to the COVID-19 public health pandemic) where meeting in public is impracticable or unsafe so that such public body, including any state, local, regional or regulatory body, or any governing board, may meet by electronic means until the end of the (current public health) emergency has been declared.
4. Virtual Meetings for Public Bodies: Support provisions that would permit localities and public bodies to set their own rules regarding virtual participation.

5. Elections Measures: Codify the budget measures adopted by the 2020 Special Session relating to elections including provisions to resolve or cure absentee ballots that are missing information or have incorrect information; to require ballot drop off boxes in public locations; and to no longer require a witness signature on an absentee ballot.

E. Land Use and Housing

1. Land Use Policies: Support the authority of local governments to plan, zone, and enforce land use regulations, without restricting local zoning authority or the zoning process.
2. Legal Assistance Information to Accompany Eviction Notifications: Require eviction notices (five days' notice for payment issues and 21/30 notices terminating rental agreement in 30 days if the issue is not remedied in 21 days) to include contact information for legal assistance helplines and organizations.

F. Civil Rights Initiatives

1. Immigration: Oppose any state mandate to localities requiring local law enforcement officers to evaluate the immigration status of individuals encountered during lawful stops or other routine police activities.
2. Human Trafficking: Support measures to combat human trafficking, including enhanced training of law enforcement personnel.

G. Public Safety/Emergencies

1. Jail Per Diems: Increase per diem funding to a level that recognizes the costs of housing inmates in local jails.
2. Jail Diversion Efforts: Support jail diversion efforts for mental health and substance-abusing individuals who become involved with the criminal justice system.
3. Next Generation 911: Support the statewide transition to Next Generation 911 using state funds that will be dedicated to the 911 Services Board; this should not be an unfunded mandate for which localities become accountable.

H. Energy and the Environment

Energy

1. Renewable Energy Purchase from Any Incumbent Electric Utility: Permit individual retail customers to purchase 100% renewable electricity from any licensed competitive supplier of electric energy regardless of whether the incumbent utility offers it also.
2. Benchmarking: Authorize localities to require commercial buildings 50,000 square feet and larger to disclose annual energy usage to the locality via Portfolio.
3. On-Bill Financing/On-Bill Repayment: Establish on-bill financing (utility-funded) and/or on-bill repayment (third-party funded) programs for energy efficiency upgrades to residential and commercial properties. These programs are offered by 110 energy utilities across the nation, and feature low interest rates, long pay-back periods, performance-based improvements, and pre-qualified contractors; and also expand the eligible market to drive energy equity.

Environment

1. Establish Virginia Bank for Energy and Resilience: Direct the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) to create an “Energy and Resiliency Bank” using public and private funds to serve as a catalyst for innovation and implementation of advanced energy efficiency practices, renewable energy deployment, increased resiliency, and other environmental programming throughout the Commonwealth.
2. Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF): Increase SLAF funding to at least \$50 million annually to support projects that provide Chesapeake Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) nutrient and sediment reductions required under MS4 permits. Evaluate updating proposal scoring criteria to assign points to projects that also support local stormwater resiliency priorities and needs.
3. Preserving Trees: Support legislation to provide greater incentives for tree canopy preservation and planting in the context of compliance with the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act and related environmental laws. Tree preservation legislation should provide local governments with greater flexibility in the reforestation, conservation, preservation, and management of urban forests to include incentives to developers to maximize tree preservation and planting to offset tree removal.

4. Polystyrene Food-Service Containers: Enact authority for local option to develop incentives or regulations to decrease or otherwise regulate the distribution, sale or offer of polystyrene food-service containers.

I. Human Services

1. STEP-VA: Continue to allocate funding for the next steps of STEP-VA. Now that Same Day Access and Primary Care Screening has been completed, fund the remainder of the Outpatient Services step. Extend the implementation deadline for all the STEPs from July 2021 to July 2022.
2. Mobile Crisis Services: Monitor statewide efforts to establish mobile crisis service pilots to ensure that they work for justice-involved individuals in Arlington County and are appropriate substitutes for, or supplements to, law enforcement responses.
3. Psychiatric Beds: Due to a critical shortage of local beds and challenges relating to accessing out-of-region beds, promulgate rules to increase the number of psychiatric beds across Virginia, to adequately meet the needs of individuals with Serious Mental Illness (SMI).
4. Mandatory Outpatient Treatment: Support refinement of strategies for timely and targeted mental health services, including MOT which show promise but are underused in Virginia. Such efforts must include provision of sufficient state funding for case management and services delivered in the community along with education and technical assistance to stakeholders in the justice and behavioral health community.
5. Infection Prevention: Require that nursing homes and assisted living facilities employ a full-time infection preventionist and maintain an accessible inventory of appropriate personal protective equipment
6. Long-Term Care Staffing Standards: Improve Long-Term Care standards by providing living wages, paid sick days, overtime pay, and training for workers, as well as funding to meet state and national staffing standards for Ombudsman staff to patient ratios.
7. Child Care: Increase funding for the state's child care subsidy program and direct the Virginia Department of Social Services to enact program changes that increase participation of child care providers (e.g., reduce the administrative burden on participating providers) and increase participation of families (e.g., eliminate child support requirements). Provide safe and affordable access to childcare during the COVID-19 pandemic to allow local businesses to resume operations and our local economy to recover. Local flexibility to administer or expand support services for childcare is critical.
8. Women's Health Care and Services: Support unrestricted access to the full range of reproductive health services.

9. Funding for Locality Response to COVID-19 pandemic: Ensure that local governments have adequate funding to combat the coronavirus, equip essential workers, local businesses, schools and the general public to keep them safe and free from the coronavirus.