



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

2025 GENERAL ASSEMBLY LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE

Every year, Arlington County creates a legislative package that outlines the County's legislative principles and priorities for the Virginia General Assembly Session. The 2025 General Assembly Session will be a "short" 45-day session, beginning January 8, 2025, and ending in late February. The General Assembly will make amendments to the biennial budget adopted during the 2024 legislative session.

The legislative principles are broader themes that will guide our approach to the General Assembly session and our engagement strategy for our legislative priorities.

- 1) Fully Fund Commitments to Local Government
Ensure the state government pays its debts and fully funds commitments made for services and staffing to local governments before funding additional new priorities.
- 2) JLARC Education Study
Expediently implement and fund recommendations from the 2023 report including updating Standards of Quality, eliminating the support cap, and providing additional staffing positions for K-12 education.
- 3) Workforce Resiliency
Streamline state and federal processes to account for local constraints on staffing. Strengthen resource pipelines and pay workers fair wages to incentivize filling high demand positions.
- 4) Acknowledge the Emerging Field of Artificial Intelligence (AI)
Seek to responsibly and efficiently use AI to leverage capabilities that improve operations, service delivery, and other functions of effective government.

The legislative priorities, which can be found on the following pages, are specific issues, policies, and revenue measures that the County intends to expend significant political capital on, in addition to asking our General Assembly delegation to support on behalf of the County.



2025 GENERAL ASSEMBLY LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

A. Education and Youth

1. JLARC Education Study: Expeditiously implement and fund recommendations from the 2023 report including updating Standards of Quality, eliminating the support cap, and providing additional staffing positions for K-12 education.
2. Teacher Raises: Support state teacher pay increases without conditions such as local matches, recognizing that Arlington Public Schools annually raises teacher salaries at levels consistent with local revenue and further, funds from local revenue the full salaries and increases of many positions above the state's Standards of Quality-funded positions.
3. Youth Mental Health: Expand funding to provide professional staff and services for student mental health needs, including afterschool programming and activities.
4. Child Care: Increase public investment to expand the number of publicly funded slots and ensure slots are distributed to localities based on the size of the eligible population; provide up to \$3,000 per teacher who participates in Virginia Quality Birth to Five (VQB5) to incentivize program participation and quality improvement; adjust Ready Region funding to ensure local governments receive sufficient resources for implementation of state requirements, including classroom observations, developing a coordinated enrollment system, and family engagement efforts; and continue to adjust child care subsidies to account for the actual cost of care based on regular, locality and regional market analyses.

B. Human Services

1. Mental Health Crisis Intervention: Increase state funding for a community-based comprehensive system of care that keeps Arlingtonians in Northern Virginia. This includes funding workforce shortages for local crisis receiving centers and mobile crisis response units; reducing the burden on law enforcement during the temporary detention and emergency custody order process; and a solution for the lack of available state hospital beds for people in mental health crisis.
2. Developmental Disability (DD) Waiver Services: Request funds to cover the onboarding time of new support coordinators hired to administer the historic 3,440 DD waiver slots funded in the 2024 General Assembly.



3. Reproductive Health Care and Services: Maintain unrestricted access to the full range of reproductive health services for all persons.
4. LGBTQ+ Rights: Protect existing legislation that codifies rights and protections for LGBTQ+ Virginians. Support any proposed expansions to those rights and reinforce school boards in their efforts to allow LGBTQ+ students freedom of expression.
5. 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.
6. Paid Family Medical Leave: Require the Virginia Employment Commission to establish a paid family and medical leave insurance program with benefits to cover employees for up to twelve weeks of leave.
7. Food Security: Increase Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits from \$23/month to \$50/month for older adults to meet their nutritional needs.
8. Social Safety Net Programs: Support stable, predictable funding and positions to administer increased caseloads for local programs such as Medicaid, childcare subsidies, Area Agencies on Aging, and SNAP. Caseloads have exponentially increased post-covid, but funding and staffing levels have not risen to meet demand.
9. Kinship Care: Allow for reciprocity in border agreements between neighboring jurisdictions for children to be placed with family members instead of going into the foster care system.

C. Housing and Land Use

1. Tenant Rights: Expand tenant rights and expand the County's authority to enforce tenants' rights. This includes an increase in the notification window to 60 days for all landlords to notify tenants of a non-renewal for a multi-month lease; providing protection in situations of inadequate health and safety conditions, a right to counsel in eviction proceedings, and a required training for multi-family residential staff of their responsibilities under the Virginia Rental Landlord and Tenant Act (VRLTA).
2. Housing Trust Fund: Support a significant increase and a sustainable source of funding for the Housing Trust Fund. Remove other barriers to build affordable housing.



3. Land Use Policies: Protect the authority of local governments to plan, zone, and enforce land use regulations, without restricting local zoning authority or the zoning process.

D. 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. Sales Tax on Groceries: Oppose the exemption of groceries and hygiene products from the local option sales tax unless the General Assembly can establish a viable revenue replacement for local governments. Codify a revenue replacement strategy for education and transportation funding.
3. Real Estate Assessments: Protect the use of industry standards to achieve fair market value. Oppose limits to local assessor's ability to assess all properties fairly and equitably within the county.
4. Excess Clerk Fees: Restore approximately \$200,000 of excess clerk fees to Arlington County. During the budget crisis in 2009, the state amended the formula and took away 1/3 of the funding to larger localities.

E. Transportation

1. Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Funding: Advocate for long-term, sustainable, dedicated state funding and expanded revenue opportunities to meet the growing needs of public transit in our region. It is essential that stakeholders – local, regional, state, and federal, and the public and private sector – work together to ensure that Metro continues to meet transportation and economic development demands and operates with dedicated operating and capital funding in a more predictable structure.
2. Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVRTA) Funding: Protect existing NVRTA revenues and continue efforts to restore state funding diverted in 2018 to secure dedicated funding for the State of Good Repair needs of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). Of the \$102 million annually that was diverted in 2018, \$63.5 million has been restored; \$38.5 million still needs to be restored.



3. Towing: Grant authority to localities to provide better consumer protections for people who have their cars towed.
4. Funding for Regional Transportation to Improve Mobility: Ensure the Commonwealth's \$295 million non-general fund investments for new and expanded transportation projects materialize as part of the Amazon HQ2 development. As Amazon brings more than 25,000 jobs to our region, the Commonwealth will support an additional Metro entrance at Crystal City station; improvements to U.S. Route 1 in Arlington County; a connection from Crystal City to Reagan National Airport; and a bus route expansion in Pentagon City, Crystal City and Potomac Yard to improve mobility for our region.
5. Vision Zero: Support localities in achieving Virginia's commitment to zero transportation-related deaths and serious injuries on streets and trails. Secure additional funding for projects and staffing positions, update engineering safety standards, expand driver's license education requirements to be more bike, pedestrian, and transit oriented, and grant local authority for automated speed and intersection enforcement beyond work and school zones.
6. Autonomous Vehicles: Support an urban study with local government representation to create an Autonomous Vehicle (AV) Testing Program under which AVs can be tested to safely navigate public roadways. The study should consider what legal framework might be desirable to authorize such a program and other AV issues such as safety oversight, data collection, insurance, and permitting.

F. Economic Development

1. State Funding for Economic Growth Initiatives: Bolster local and regional development efforts by maintaining and expanding state funding for economic development policies and programs.
2. Office Market Repositioning: Support state strategies and programs that aim to revitalize commercial districts and to convert and develop obsolete office buildings.
3. Tourism: Promote tourism by funding marketing costs to attract both first-time and repeat visitors to Virginia.



G. Criminal Justice Reform

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. Reimbursable Positions Related to Body Worn Cameras: Provide state funding for additional positions related to body worn cameras to increase transparency and accountability with law enforcement. Additional staff in the Commonwealth's Attorney, Police Department, Fire Department, Sheriff's Office, and Public Defender's Office are all critical to effectively implement Body Worn Camera programs.
3. Funding for Prosecutor and Public Defender Offices: Ensure there is adequate funding for the prosecution and defense of misdemeanors, civil duties, and the creation of diversion services.
4. Sexual and Gender Based Violence: Support measures to combat and respond to sexual and gender-based violence and crimes including human trafficking, intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
5. Marijuana and Vaping: Ensure legislation regarding marijuana and vaping remains consistent with Arlington County's local revenue, land use, and public health and safety policies.
6. Fraud and Abuse: Create a mechanism in state code to freeze funds that are fraudulently stolen and to return the assets to vulnerable populations.

H. General Government

1. Unfunded Mandates: Oppose any mandates that are not fully funded, including additional administrative burdens and public notice requirements on local governments.
2. Electronic Meetings for Public Bodies: Permanently allow virtual participation for public bodies to meet by electronic means under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.
3. Broadband Access: Implement a statewide subsidy program to offset internet costs for low-income households (earning up to 60% AMI), ensuring equitable access and bridging the digital divide to enhance participation in educational, employment, and healthcare opportunities.



4. Procurement: Protect local authority on matters related to procurement such as the open bidding process and the state portal for advertising projects.

I. Public Safety/Emergencies

1. Staffing: Maintain ongoing funding for police departments (“599 money”), fire departments, sheriffs, jail personnel, emergency management disaster coordinators, and other emergency medical services personnel.
2. Jail Diversion Efforts: Adequately fund jail diversion efforts for mental health and substance-abusing individuals who become involved with the criminal justice system.
3. Swatting: Support full restitution for costs associated with a law enforcement response that results from a hoax communication to 9-1-1.

J. Energy, Environment, and Climate Change

1. Protect Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI): Protect the cap-and-invest program and commit to spend hundreds of millions of dollars of unspent auction proceeds on local low-and-moderate income energy efficiency and stormwater management projects. Funding for these projects may not otherwise be available through local or state funding sources.
2. Protect Virginia Clean Economy Act: Support transition to a sustainable and reliable power grid while achieving lower emission levels associated with 100% renewable energy sources in the Commonwealth by 2050. In the interim, prioritize solutions that emphasize energy efficiency, grid- and behind-the-meter energy storage, and strategies that minimize direct waste landfill.
3. Public/Private Partnerships: Expand the ability and authority of local jurisdictions to encourage private sector efforts to support and regulate energy efficiency incentive and climate programs, reduce fossil fuel use, promote safety, and shift to renewable energy. Such measures include, but are not limited to, local and regional green banks, stronger and stretch building energy codes, electric vehicle and solar infrastructure, carbon emitting landscaping equipment, local commercial building efficiency benchmarking, and zero emission transportation options.

4. Renewable Energy Choice: Permit retail customers the choice to purchase 100% renewable electricity from any licensed competitive supplier of electric energy regardless of whether the incumbent utility also offers it. Purchases can be made individually, as part of a collaborative or alliance, or through local government agencies administering aggregated commercial and residential renewable energy purchases to meet local/regional climate and equity objectives.
5. Conserving and Expanding Tree Canopy: Support legislation to provide local governments with greater authority in the reforestation, conservation, and management of urban forests in recognition of their ability to capture and store carbon, reduce stormwater runoff, improve air quality, lower energy use, mitigate invasive plant species effects, and mitigate urban heat islands and their health effects.
6. Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF): Increase SLAF funding 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.
7. Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS): Support policies that promote producer responsibility for environmental, public health, and infrastructure impacts of chemical compounds such as PFAS. Ensure that parties affected by past practices retain rights to fully recoup costs incurred by regulatory actions, public health impacts, and/or environmental cleanup. Oppose policies or regulations which transfer cost of PFAS management onto stormwater, wastewater, and/or drinking water-based utilities.