

# FY 2019 Annual Report



Charlottesville \* Danville \* Hampton \* Harrisonburg  
Hopewell \* Lynchburg \* Martinsville \* Newport News  
Norfolk \* Petersburg \* Portsmouth \* Richmond  
Staunton \* Williamsburg \* Winchester



*Chair Chris Snead*  
*Member, City Council-Hampton*



*Kelly Harris-Braxton, J.D.*  
*Executive Director*

## **Chair, Board of Directors & Executive Director's Statement**

Happy Anniversary! This fiscal year marks 20 years of Virginia First Cities’ service and advocacy in the Commonwealth of Virginia. We are Virginia’s policy and legislative coalition dedicated solely to advancing the health and growth of Virginia’s core, historic cities. Since 1999, when our “loose coalition of cities” came together to promote blight legislation at the Virginia General Assembly, Virginia First Cities has learned that we are tremendously successful and “move the needle” when we focus our efforts on issues of mutual concern to our cities.

While the issue of blight was what originally brought our cities together, it was symptomatic of a broader malaise affecting our cities. Despite some real gains, there remains cause for concern. State programs put in place to ameliorate the effects of having to maintain complex infrastructure, public amenities, mandated/public housing, health and welfare services and public transportation, have, in many cases, languished due to lack of state support.

We celebrate the successes of our member cities, but know that underlying issues remain. Virginia’s historic central cities must rely on higher tax rates than surrounding jurisdictions because they serve more people in poverty and have smaller tax bases. For these reasons, Virginia First Cities focuses on programs that break the cycle of poverty and improve economic opportunity for all. From holistic economic development, like the Community Wealth Building grant program and the Brownfields Redevelopment Fund; “economic gardening” initiatives like the Industrial Revitalization Fund; policy and funding changes to help solve Virginia’s unacceptably high rates of eviction; advocacy for state support to close the achievement gap in our public schools; public safety funding to support healthy cities, like Aid to Local Police Departments and diversion programming, your Virginia First Cities team has accomplished much. Yet much more needs our attention.

Thank you to each one of our member cities, current and past board members, community partners, and supportive state and local legislators who have worked side by side to make positive change for our cities. Together, the future of our cities is bright.

# FY 2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Legislative Highlights

- **At-Risk Add-On** - Successfully advocated with our partners to boost funding by \$10.6 million in FY19 to move it from 13 percent to 14.5 percent and by \$14.3 million in FY20 to move it to 16 percent.
- **Enterprise Zone Program** - Secured \$1 million in additional funding to ameliorate the effects of grant proration (boosting it to \$14,500,000 in FY 20).
- **Teacher Residency** - \$250,000 in additional monies for the program (boosting it to \$1,750,000 in FY 20).
- **Virginia Removal or Rehabilitation of Derelict Structures Fund** - Assisted with \$1,000,000 additional funding (boosting to \$2,500,000 in FY20), with the designated increase to be used for removing, renovating or modernizing port-related buildings and facilities in the cities of Portsmouth, Norfolk, Newport News, Richmond or Front Royal.
- Specific budget items VFC worked on for several years that were in the Governor's Introduced Budget and remain in the General Assembly budget. These include:
  - **Community Wealth Building/TANF for Employment Program** - \$21 million
  - **Brownfields Restoration & Economic Redevelopment Assistance Fund** - \$4.5 million
  - **Extended Day/Year School Program Funding** - \$7.5 million
- **Machinery and Tools Tax** - Worked to assure defeat of legislation that would alter the assessment methodology and lower the amount local government could collect.

# Other Highlights

- VFC organized and convened a member **Economic Stimulus Committee** to brainstorm solutions and concrete steps to invigorate our local cities. Bringing in local, state, and regional experts, the Economic Stimulus Committee informed our FY 2019 legislative program that proposed to increase funding for the Main Street Program, the Industrial Revitalization Fund, and the Brownfields Redevelopment Fund, as well as proposed new funding for the Virginia Gateway Community Initiative and the Urban-Private Partnership Redevelopment Fund.
- As the result of Delegate Wilt withdrawing his **Annexation legislation** in the 2019 Session, VFC and our partners in local government, VML and VaCo, met to reach consensus on what an annexation bill might look like in 2020. There was no particular will to pursue permanent moratorium, but there was agreement that we could all work together on pushing for more state dollars for Aid to Localities with Police Departments funding.
- VFC convened a seminar on July 13, 2018, hosted by the City of Richmond Office of **Community Wealth Building**, for 13 VFC member cities to more fully inform their very successful application of the TANF for Employment grant monies. The seminar was based on our members' expressed desire for developing strategies for successful TANF for Employment/Community Wealth Building grants. "Transformational," "inspirational," and "eye-opening" were but a few of the descriptions received from VFC member-city participants. The session was well-received because a second round of TANF for Employment Grant awards resulted in the following VFC members receiving grants: Charlottesville, Hampton, Lynchburg, Martinsville, Newport News CSB, Norfolk, Williamsburg and Danville Community College.
- The following VFC members received **Brownfields grants in FY 2019**: Charlottesville, Hopewell, Lynchburg, Martinsville, Newport News, Norfolk, Richmond and Staunton.
- **Meetings:** VFC's **Fall Legislative Meeting** was held in beautiful Colonial Williamsburg where State Senator Monty Mason joined us and previewed the 2019 Session / Virginia Governor Ralph Northam attended the VFC **Annual Meeting**, May 17, 2019 in Newport News at the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility (JLAB) and participated in an hour-long public policy listening session with VFC membership. Newport News was an exceptional host, and added extra special touches to recognize VFC's 20th anniversary.
- VFC welcomed two new members to our coalition of Virginia's older, core cities: The City of Harrisonburg and the City of Lexington (officially in FY 20).

# Executive Committee & Board of Directors

## Executive Committee

Chair - Honorable Chris Snead, Council Member, City of Hampton  
Vice Chair - Honorable Mamie B. Johnson, Councilwoman, City of Norfolk  
Secretary- Ms. Eden Freeman, City Manager, City of Winchester  
Treasurer - Mr. Steve Owen, City Manager, City of Staunton  
Member at Large – The Honorable Turner Perrow, Council member, City of Lynchburg  
Member at Large - Mr. Leon Towarnicki, City Manager, City of Martinsville  
Member at Large- The Honorable Andreas Addison, Council Member, City of Richmond

## Board of Directors

Honorable Kathy Galvin, Council Member, City of Charlottesville  
Mr. Mike Murphy, Interim City Manager, City of Charlottesville  
Honorable Sherman Saunders, Council Member, City of Danville  
Mr. Ken Larking, City Manager, City of Danville  
Ms. Mary Bunting, City Manager, City of Hampton  
Honorable Sal Romero, Vice Mayor, City of Harrisonburg  
Mr. Eric Campbell, City Manager, City of Harrisonburg  
Honorable Anthony “Tony” Zevgolis, Council Member, City of Hopewell  
Mr. John M. “March” Altman, Jr., City Manager, City of Hopewell  
Ms. Bonnie Svrcek, City Manager, City of Lynchburg  
Honorable Jennifer Bowles, Councilmember, City of Martinsville  
Honorable McKinley Price, Mayor, City of Newport News  
Ms. Cindy Rohlf, City Manager, City of Newport News  
Mr. Douglas Smith, City Manager, City of Norfolk  
Honorable Treska Wilson-Smith, Councilmember, City of Petersburg  
Ms. Aretha R. Ferrell-Benavides, City Manager, City of Petersburg  
Honorable Lisa Lucas-Burke, Councilwoman, City of Portsmouth  
Dr. Lydia Pettis-Patton, City Manager, City of Portsmouth  
Ms. Selena Cuffee-Glenn, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Richmond  
Honorable Brenda Mead, Council Member, City of Staunton  
Honorable Benming Zhang, Council Member, City of Williamsburg  
Mr. Andrew Trivette, Interim City Manager, City of Williamsburg  
Honorable John David Smith, Jr., Mayor, City of Winchester

## Virginia First Cities Staff

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# Discretionary Application Programs Advocated by VFC

	Round 1&2	FY 2012-19	CY 2017	CY 2006-15	FY 2019	FY 2020
	Employment TANF Grant	Brownfields Restoration	Enterprise Zone Program Grants	Historic Rehab Tax Credits	Extended School Funding	Primary Road Extensions
Charlottesville	\$106,630	\$62,290	\$0	\$21,442,789	\$146,709	\$633,442
Danville	\$597,118	\$550,000	\$660,822	\$5,969,833	\$0	\$963,000
Hampton	\$230,850	\$21,615	\$1,382,606	\$1,489,065	\$1,200,000	\$1,000,000
Harrisonburg	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$9,634,817	\$0	\$0
Hopewell	\$0	\$72,215	\$273,022	\$2,524,459	\$0	\$377,450
Lynchburg	\$280,498	\$257,426	\$1,031,547	\$25,648,298	\$0	\$741,926
Martinsville	\$271,204	\$212,146	\$252,925	\$3,391,507	\$0	\$425,000
Newport News	\$896,803	\$550,000	\$1,366,439	\$160,655	\$1,003,308	\$433,379
Norfolk	\$741,998	\$650,000	\$279,450	\$21,011,385	\$0	\$1,000,000
Petersburg	\$547,482	\$362,500	\$189,619	\$25,268,051	\$1,189,594	\$0
Portsmouth	\$122,269	\$0	\$92,834	\$37,956,068	\$0	\$0
Richmond	\$2,282,866	\$600,000	\$3,545,793	\$356,906,251	\$217,490	\$992,765
Staunton	\$0	\$481,200	\$0	\$8,320,064	\$0	\$167,114
Williamsburg	\$159,303	\$200,000	\$0	\$95,986	\$0	\$226,440
Winchester	\$284,041	\$0	\$166,373	\$10,127,938	\$280,282	\$0
<b>Total VFC</b>	<b>\$6,521,062</b>	<b>\$4,019,392</b>	<b>\$9,241,430</b>	<b>\$529,947,166</b>	<b>\$4,037,383</b>	<b>\$6,960,516</b>
<b>Total State</b>	<b>\$8,504,615</b>	<b>\$7,990,182</b>	<b>\$12,650,000</b>	<b>\$812,059,951</b>	<b>\$7,700,000</b>	<b>\$22,100,000</b>
<b>VFC % of State</b>	<b>76.7%</b>	<b>50.3%</b>	<b>73.1%</b>	<b>65.3%</b>	<b>52.4%</b>	<b>31.5%</b>

# State Formula Programs Advocated by VFC

	<b>FY 2019</b>	<b>FY 2019</b>	<b>FY 2019</b>	<b>FY 2019</b>
	<b>Street Maintenance Payments</b>	<b>Aid to Police (HB599)</b>	<b>At-Risk Student Add-on</b>	<b>VA Preschool Initiative</b>
Charlottesville	\$4,204,565	\$2,154,333	\$308,677	\$550,362
Danville	\$11,048,300	\$2,702,628	\$2,095,280	\$994,949
Hampton	\$16,784,389	\$6,982,626	\$3,128,533	\$2,516,440
Harrisonburg	\$4,967,033	\$1,400,890	\$1,576,594	\$968,862
Hopewell	\$4,125,724	\$1,356,182	\$1,455,458	\$740,962
Lynchburg	\$12,094,323	\$3,137,084	\$1,737,796	\$956,491
Martinsville	\$3,396,242	\$900,796	\$767,848	\$253,745
Newport News	\$17,436,685	\$9,357,454	\$5,941,736	\$4,575,873
Norfolk	\$25,035,684	\$11,961,584	\$6,567,456	\$5,737,743
Petersburg	\$5,979,013	\$2,164,576	\$1,831,122	\$1,072,687
Portsmouth	\$12,686,160	\$6,193,981	\$3,088,615	\$2,241,213
Richmond	\$28,015,368	\$14,871,994	\$6,331,421	\$3,614,961
Staunton	\$4,712,712	\$919,045	\$329,352	\$349,176
Williamsburg	\$1,858,628	\$399,590	\$16,638	\$0
Winchester	\$3,264,328	\$870,016	\$736,338	\$495,209
<b>Total VFC</b>	<b>\$155,609,154</b>	<b>\$65,372,777</b>	<b>\$35,912,864</b>	<b>\$25,068,673</b>
<b>Total State</b>	<b>\$385,354,873</b>	<b>\$184,548,683</b>	<b>\$110,582,800</b>	<b>\$70,049,572</b>
<b>VFC % of State</b>	<b>40.4%</b>	<b>35.4%</b>	<b>32.5%</b>	<b>35.8%</b>

# Fall Meeting, Williamsburg



Williamsburg Mayor  
Paul Frieling



Erik Johnston  
Director  
DHCD



Monique Adams  
Executive Director, 757 Angels



Sen. Monty Mason

# Annual Meeting, Newport News



Former VFC Chair, George Wallace &  
VFC Executive Director  
Kelly Harris-Braxton



Newport News City  
Manager Cindy Rohlf



Governor Ralph S. Northam  
Public Policy Listening Session

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