



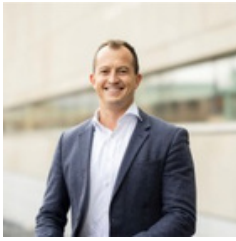
# ANNUAL REPORT



**FY 2022**

**VIRGINIA FIRST CITIES COALITION**

**REBOUNDED & RESILIENCY**



Chair, Andreas Addison  
Member, City Council-Richmond



Kelly Harris-Braxton, J.D.  
Executive Director

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

Dear Virginia First Cities Supporter:

Virginia First Cities continues to advocate for the issues identified by our member cities as most important. During the 2022 General Assembly Session, with state revenues more robust than ever, we realized this as an opportune moment to press for VFC top priorities in the areas of economic development, education (At-Risk Add-On), increased street maintenance funding and public safety (HB599). We were pleased with our results, yet, we know there is much more to tackle. This continues to be a time of monumental opportunity for cities. We must embrace this moment to advance policies that will address some of our most important priorities like growing wealth and stabilizing families.

Virginia First Cities has had success in improving k-12 education in our cities through funding and programming. We understand the effects that poverty has on underperforming schools and are committed to creative approaches to this multi-faceted issue. We will likely face challenges to the k-12 education system as it stands. We know that there is room for improvement and our children deserve the best we can offer. We must grow and change to address the needs of low wealth communities and students attending our most challenged schools.

Virginia First Cities is determined to make the most of this time when revenues are available. Changes and opportunities come with new leadership, and we are meeting with partners and members of the Governor's administration to explore, educate and strategize to put our cities in the best place possible.

We will be sharing ideas with our members as we prepare for the 2023 General Assembly Session and ask for your input and participation as we fine tune our agenda. Virginia First Cities is intent on strategically addressing the needs of our communities.

# Legislative Director's Report

Laura Bateman

The buildup to the 2022 Session was significant because it represented the presentation of a budget developed by outgoing Governor Northam and the end of his gubernatorial administration. The Governor's Introduced Budget for FY23-24 had a great deal to commend it to the Virginia First Cities Coalition, as it included historic levels of funding for the At-Risk Add-On, the Housing Trust Fund, Enterprise Zones, and Teacher Residency Program. However, it was sadly absent any tangible increase in funding for very important programs to our historic, core cities like Aid to Local Police (HB 599), as well as funding for local street maintenance payments.

General Assembly Session 2022 kicked off with a great deal of change, as the GOP swept all three statewide offices and regained control of the House of Delegates. The result of this change was a great deal of pushing and pulling between the Youngkin Administration, the House of Delegates' GOP majority, and the Senate Democratic-controlled chamber on those issues that: 1) Governor Youngkin was focused on, including tax relief, education, and COVID response; and 2) those policy issues and priorities the Senate Democrats vowed to uphold, including criminal justice reform.

As has happened lately, the 2022 General Assembly adjourned sine die on March 12, 2022 without a budget. The push and pull of the two chambers and the Youngkin Administration priorities regarding how to spend the unprecedented amount of additional general funds prevented a timely compromise when it came to the state budget. Governor Youngkin proactively called for a Special Session in early April to address the all-important budget, but as happens, the General Assembly's money committees politely said that they would produce their budget conference report on their own timeline.

On April 27th the General Assembly reconvened the Veto Session where Governor Youngkin amended 100+ bills and vetoed 26 bills. The governor's amendments were in many cases more than just technical/grammatical, instead quite substantial. Every bill that was vetoed by the governor passed the General Assembly with bipartisan support. In the end, though, all of the governor's vetoes were sustained and his amendment/recommendations were mostly adopted. Does this signal an end to the days of gentle, bipartisan cooperation in Virginia state government? Time will tell, but I think not.

In May 2022 we received word that a bi-partisan budget was in the offing. As is custom in Virginia state budgetary matters, all sides claimed victory and claimed that they compromised, which is reassurance that "the Virginia Way" is intact. So, after months of debate, politics, and lobbying, the Governor signed the final budget in June.

This was definitely a good, if not historic, state budget for Virginia First Cities. It certainly helped that \$13 billion in new general funds were available for the 2022-24 biennium. The post-pandemic (or is it)

2022 General Assembly saw the moving of the needle in many of the areas where VFC has traditionally focused our public policy and legislative outreach.

In tax policy, VFC advocacy and efforts to nearly double the standard deduction and increase the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) came to fruition. Public education is always an important area of advocacy for VFC and the adopted state budget provided a large boost in funding in areas of particular importance to us. First, a historic nearly \$1 billion state commitment to help with local school construction was adopted. This commitment included prioritizing state construction funding to localities with higher fiscal stress. The At-Risk Add-On (ARAO) was also funded at historic levels. This is significant as the ARAO has long been a priority of VFC and is the single most targeted funding source for our city school divisions. In another VFC priority, the Virginia Preschool Initiative also received more funding through a higher per pupil payment and the addition of 3-year-old slots. The budget also partly eliminated the support position cap, which has been a sore point for localities since 2009. Other funding increases were provided for school principals and reading specialists. The budget also added \$1 billion to the VRS Trust Fund, which will strengthen the teacher retirement pool and ultimately lower contribution rates for localities.

Likewise, our perennial effort to press for increased funding for our city's road maintenance needs was successful with a \$30 million increase over the biennium. Significantly, the General Assembly directed VDOT to undertake a study of the methodology for local road maintenance, an outgrowth of a JLARC recommendation and VFC advocacy. We are also very pleased to report that the General Assembly and the Governor provided the first appreciable increase to the HB 599/Aid to Local Police funding since the Gilmore Administration. The state also provided a modest \$3 per day increase in jail per diems – the first increase since 2012.

In the economic development area of VFC priorities, we clearly have work to do to further educate the General Assembly and the Youngkin Administration on fine programs like the CDFI Fund, Enterprise Zone Real Property Improvement Program, and Brownfields Redevelopment. After all, getting properties back to productive use “raises all boats.”

We are in the first year of a new gubernatorial administration and have three more years to build on our momentum. You can rest assured that we will be doing just that.

# Discretionary Application Programs Advocated by VFC

	Round 1&2	FY 2012-22	GY 2016-2021	FY 2022	FY 2022	FY 2022
	Employment TANF Grant	Brownfields Restoration	Enterprise Zone Program Grants	IRF/Port Revitalization	Historic Rehab Tax Credit Expenditures	Extended School Funding*
CHARLOTTESVILLE	\$106,630	\$62,290	\$0	\$0	\$229,877	\$0
DANVILLE	\$597,118	\$1,100,000	\$3,191,067	\$0	\$867,181	\$0
HAMPTON	\$230,850	\$21,615	\$5,791,120	\$0	\$0	\$50,000
HARRISONBURG	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$780,891	\$0
HOPEWELL	\$0	\$90,430	\$778,347	\$0	\$0	\$0
LEXINGTON	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
LYNCHBURG	\$280,498	\$667,426	\$5,488,401	\$0	\$5,647,834	\$0
MARTINSVILLE	\$271,204	\$711,146	\$325,083	\$0	\$0	\$0
NEWPORT NEWS	\$896,803	\$500,000	\$7,927,166	\$500,000	\$0	\$50,000
NORFOLK	\$741,998	\$700,000	\$3,883,494	\$394,000	\$57,375,134	\$0
PETERSBURG	\$547,482	\$412,500	\$1,201,393	\$600,000	\$24,573,464	\$0
PORTSMOUTH	\$122,269	\$0	\$1,091,127	\$856,000	\$0	\$0
RICHMOND CITY	\$2,282,866	\$600,000	\$15,136,486	\$0	\$103,399,188	\$0
STAUNTON	\$0	\$531,200	\$801,254	\$0	\$958,537	\$0
WILLIAMSBURG	\$159,303	\$470,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
WINCHESTER	<u>\$284,041</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$406,282</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$888,040</u>	<u>\$280,029</u>
<b>Total VFC</b>	<b>\$6,521,062</b>	<b>\$5,866,607</b>	<b>\$46,021,220</b>	<b>\$2,350,000</b>	<b>\$194,720,146</b>	<b>\$380,029</b>
<b>Total State</b>	<b>\$8,504,615</b>	<b>\$12,542,940</b>	<b>\$81,547,275</b>	<b>\$3,420,000</b>	<b>\$250,807,112</b>	<b>\$1,757,524</b>
<b>VFC % of State</b>	<b>76.7%</b>	<b>46.8%</b>	<b>56.4%</b>	<b>68.7%</b>	<b>79.6%</b>	<b>21.6%</b>

# State Formula Programs Advocated by VFC

	<b>FY 2022</b>	<b>FY 2022</b>	<b>FY 2022</b>	<b>FY 2022</b>
	<b>Street Maintenance</b>	<b>Aid to Police (HB599)</b>	<b>At-Risk Student Add-on</b>	<b>VA Preschool Initiative</b>
CHARLOTTESVILLE	\$4,357,670	\$2,238,352	\$576,868	\$872,051
DANVILLE	\$11,491,749	\$2,808,031	\$4,024,232	\$1,299,007
HAMPTON	\$17,541,094	\$7,254,948	\$6,927,830	\$3,594,245
HARRISONBURG	\$5,323,436	\$1,455,524	\$3,273,216	\$1,210,803
HOPEWELL	\$4,198,451	\$1,409,073	\$2,682,584	\$882,097
LEXINGTON	\$834,138	\$212,730	\$34,807	\$0
LYNCHBURG	\$12,573,285	\$3,259,430	\$3,366,689	\$1,308,729
MARTINSVILLE	\$3,573,686	\$935,927	\$1,454,016	\$538,415
NEWPORT NEWS	\$18,237,420	\$9,722,394	\$11,139,401	\$4,542,463
NORFOLK	\$26,115,609	\$12,428,086	\$11,806,507	\$6,620,417
PETERSBURG	\$6,218,843	\$2,248,994	\$3,720,431	\$1,151,344
PORTSMOUTH	\$13,171,449	\$6,435,546	\$6,349,568	\$2,574,266
RICHMOND CITY	\$28,999,203	\$15,452,002	\$11,341,861	\$2,842,369
STAUNTON	\$4,368,448	\$954,887	\$656,430	\$328,101
WILLIAMSBURG	\$1,955,097	\$415,174	\$39,459	\$0
WINCHESTER	\$34,555,298	\$903,947	\$1,399,592	\$582,740
<b>Total VFC</b>	<b>\$193,514,876</b>	<b>\$68,135,045</b>	<b>\$68,793,491</b>	<b>\$28,347,047</b>
<b>Total State</b>	<b>\$395,770,777</b>	<b>\$191,746,081</b>	<b>\$228,945,900</b>	<b>\$102,954,896</b>
<b>VFC % of State</b>	<b>48.9%</b>	<b>35.5%</b>	<b>30.0%</b>	<b>27.5%</b>

# Executive Committee & Board of Directors

*Please note that the listing below is current as of the beginning of FY 2022*

## Executive Committee

Chair - Hon. Andreas Addison, Council Member, City of Richmond  
Vice Chair - Hon. Lisa Lucas-Burke, Council Member, City of Portsmouth  
Secretary - Mr. Leon Towarnicki, City Manager, City of Martinsville  
Treasurer - Mr. Eric Campbell, City Manager, City of Harrisonburg  
Member at Large – Hon. Beau Wright, Council Member, City of Lynchburg  
Member at Large - Mr. Ken Larking, City Manager, City of Danville  
Immediate Past Chair - Hon. Mamie B. Johnson, Council Member, City of Norfolk

## Board of Directors

Hon. Sena Magill, Vice Mayor, City of Charlottesville  
Mr. Chip Boyles, City Manager, City of Charlottesville  
Hon. Sherman Saunders, Council Member, City of Danville  
Hon. Chris Snead, Council Member, City of Hampton  
Ms. Mary Bunting, City Manager, City of Hampton  
Hon. Sal Romero, Vice Mayor, City of Harrisonburg  
Hon. Patience Bennett, Vice Mayor, City of Hopewell  
Mr. John M. “March” Altman, Jr., City Manager, City of Hopewell  
Hon. Frank Friedman, Mayor, City of Lexington  
Ms. Jim Halasz, City Manager, City of Lexington  
Mr. Wynter Benda, City Manager, City of Lynchburg  
Hon. Jennifer Bowles, Councilmember, City of Martinsville  
Hon. Tina Vick, Vice Mayor, City of Newport News  
Ms. Cindy Rohlf, City Manager, City of Newport News  
Mr. Chip Filer, City Manager, City of Norfolk  
Hon. Treska Wilson-Smith, Councilmember, City of Petersburg  
Ms. Stuart Turille, City Manager, City of Petersburg  
Ms. Angel Jones, City Manager, City of Portsmouth  
Mr.. Lincoln Saunders Chief Administrative Officer, City of Richmond  
Hon. Brenda Mead, Council Member, City of Staunton  
Mr. Steven Rosenberg, City Manager, City of Staunton  
Hon. Caleb Rogers, Council Member, City of Williamsburg  
Mr. Andrew Trivette, City Manager, City of Williamsburg  
Hon. John David Smith, Jr., Mayor, City of Winchester  
Mr. Dan Hoffman, City Manager, City of Winchester

## Virginia First Cities Staff

Kelly Harris-Braxton, Executive Director, kharrisbraxton@vafirstcities.com

Jim Regimbal, Policy Director, jjregimbal@gmail.com

Laura Bateman, Legislative Director, batemanconsultingllc@gmail.com

Jamie Crawford, Policy Coordinator, jcrawford@img-llc.net

### FY 2022

2 - Executive Committee meetings

9 - Legislative Liaison meetings

Fall Legislative Board Meeting - November 12, 2021

VFC Advocacy Day - February 2, 2022

VFC Annual Meeting - May 13, 2022, Richmond, VA  
Chamber RVA and Virtual



*Brian Horn, Director  
Va Dept. Housing & Community  
Development*



*VFC Chair, Addison and Exec. Dir  
Harris-Braxton*



*Andrew Trivette, City Manager, Williamsburg  
Williamsburg approach, Community  
Wealth Building*



*Hampton Mayor, Donnie Tuck*



*Exec. Dir. Harris-Braxton*





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

Virginia First Cities  
1108 E. Main Street, Suite 601  
Richmond, VA. 23219  
(804) 307-8183