



Workplan 2026

Justin Brown

Senior Associate Director

- 2026 studies
 - Agricultural best management practices cost-share program
 - Judicial allocation methodology



Briefing: September 2026

Virginia's agricultural best management practices cost-share program

Staff: Lauren Axselle, Scarlett Saunders, Christine Wolfe,
Jaron Leon

Study resolution

- Review the Virginia agricultural best management practices cost-share program (VACS) by evaluating the
 - biennial nonpoint source assessment
 - criteria & process to allocate funds and select VACS projects to receive funds
 - contract development process, including determination of award amounts
 - quality of technical assistance provided
 - efforts to verify compliance with program guidelines and requirements

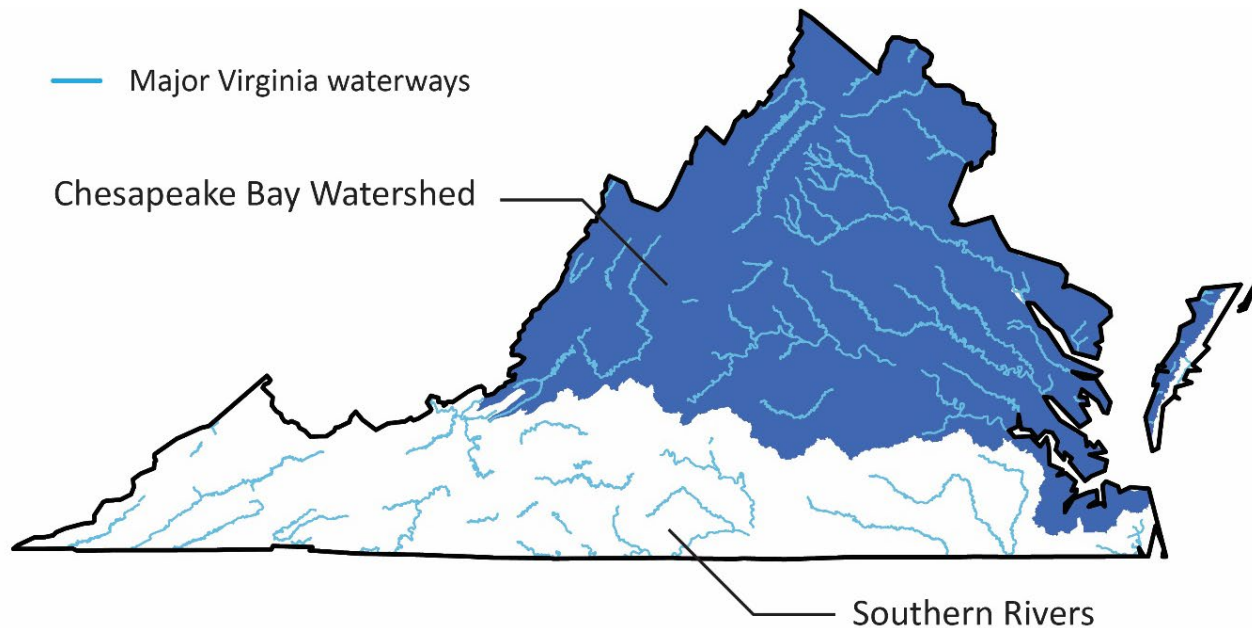
Commission resolution (December 2025)

Background

- VACS pays at least some of the cost for agricultural landowners to reduce pollution
 - Created in 1984 to help reduce nitrogen, phosphorous, and sediment pollution in state waters
 - Critical component of meeting state's Chesapeake Bay pollution reduction goals
- Best management practices include cover crops, riparian buffers, and livestock stream exclusions
- Administered by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and Virginia's 47 soil and water conservation districts (SWCD)

Background

- VACS was appropriated \$223M for FY26, \approx 200% increase since FY17 (inflation-adjusted)
- VACS funding allocation: 70% within Chesapeake Bay watershed; 30% beyond watershed (Southern Rivers)



Study issues

- To what extent are VACS funding levels and allocations across SWCDs reasonable and based on a data-driven process?
- What is the intent of the VACS program and how well is it designed?
- How effectively is VACS being implemented?
- To what extent are VACS projects effectively contributing to reductions in nonpoint source pollution into the Chesapeake Bay?
- How effectively is VACS coordinated with other similar state and federal programs?

Research activities

- Interview DCR, SWCDs, subject-matter experts, agricultural producer and conservation stakeholder groups, and other states
- Analyze data from DCR and SWCDs about VACS trends, award characteristics, and results
- Review documentation about VACS process and requirements and basis for specific agricultural best management practices
- Survey SWCD staff, SWCD board members, and agricultural producers about opportunities to improve VACS design or implementation



Briefing: December 2026

Virginia's judicial allocation methodology

Staff: Mark Gribbin, Kate Agnelli, Sarah Berday-Sacks,
Brittany Utz

Study resolution

- Study the methodology used to determine judicial allocations within the Commonwealth
 - analyze data and methods used in the National Center for State Courts' (NCSC) judicial workload assessments
 - examine existing court efficiency measures and factors substantially affecting court efficiency and changes that would help standardize practices across courts
 - determine if there are more accurate means of assessing judge workload and if other organizations exist to conduct judicial workload assessments

SJ 259 (2025)

Background

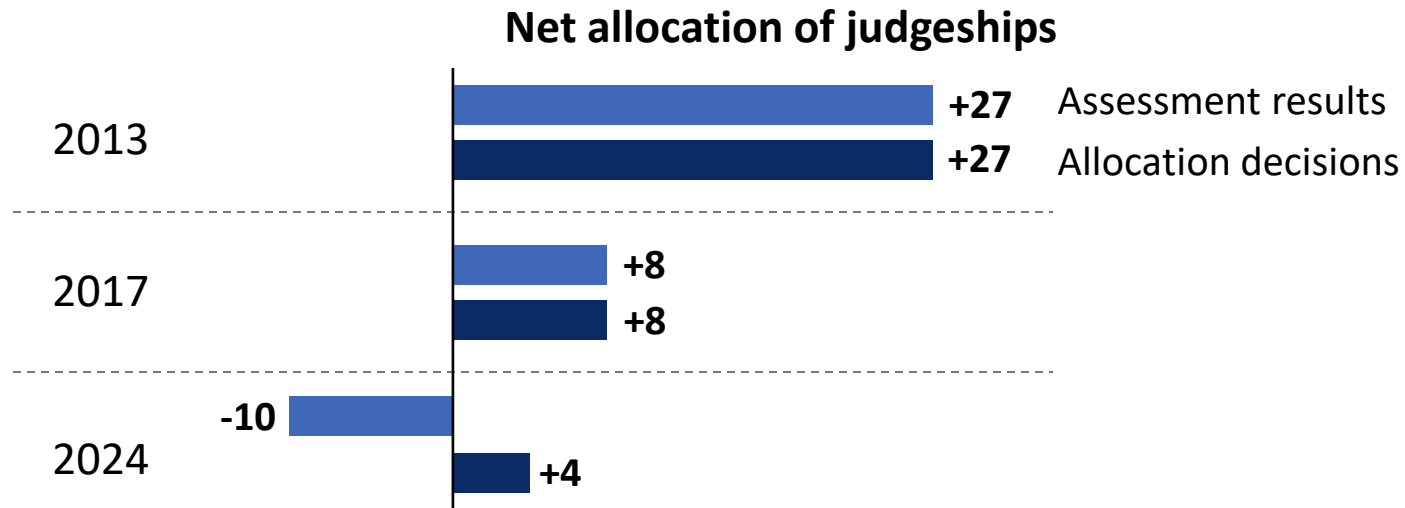
- General Assembly decides how many judges state needs; there are currently 447
 - circuit courts = 175 judges
 - general district courts = 134 judges
 - juvenile & domestic relations courts = 138 judges
- Judicial allocation informed by periodic assessments
 - General Assembly directs the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court to contract with NCSC to assess judge workload
 - NCSC assessments conducted in 2013, 2017, & 2024

Background

- NCSC specializes in judicial workload assessments; conducted assessments for \approx 30 states in last 15 years
- Uses a “weighted caseload” approach accounting for
 - time judges spend on different types of cases
 - time judges have available for casework
 - size of court caseloads
- Overseen by panel of Virginia judges, appointed by chief justice, which makes key assessment decisions
- Informs Virginia’s Judicial Council and Committee on District Courts, which make recommendations on judicial allocation changes to the General Assembly

Background

- General Assembly used 2013 and 2017 assessments to inform judicial allocation decisions but did not appear to use 2024 assessment
- Questions raised after 2024 assessment about study data and methodology, variations in case complexity, and practices across courts



Study issues

- What are the implications and limitations (if any) of Virginia's past judicial needs assessments, including the methods and data used?
- How do Virginia's judicial needs assessments compare to other states, and have they been well-designed, reasonable, and adequately informed by available information?

Study issues (continued)

- How (if at all) does variation across court practices affect judge workloads and data used in Virginia's judicial needs assessments, including whether best or more efficient practices are used?
- What changes (if any) should be made to (i) future judicial needs assessments to better estimate judge needs, (ii) the state's broader judicial allocation process, or (iii) certain court practices to better facilitate judge efficiency and improve court data?

Research activities

- Interview subject-matter experts, judges and court staff, third parties, state and national organizations, & other states
- Analyze court data and NCSC assessment methodologies, assumptions, and data
- Review research literature about judicial needs assessments and court practices; NCSC documentation; and court practices, requirements, and guidance
- Identify sample of courts to review based on court practice and efficiency factors
- Model how changes to data, assumptions, and methodology could affect judicial allocation process and results

Tracey Smith

Associate Director

- 2026 studies
 - Assisted living and in-home care
 - Oversight of Medicaid managed care organizations



Briefing: November 2026

Assisted living and in-home services for Virginia's aging population

Staff: Joe McMahon, Dillon Wild, Mitch Parry, Hannah Garfinkel, and Jaron Leon

Study resolution

- Determine number of assisted living and non-medical in-home service providers, their services, their capacity, and their costs by
 - region
 - whether they accept public funding
- Estimate shortages by service type and region and identify shortage reasons
- Summarize what is known about service quality and contributors to poor quality
- Evaluate effectiveness of state's quality assurance mechanisms

Commission resolution (December 2025)

Background

- As Virginia's population ages, demand for services to age at home or in assisted living facilities is increasing
 - About 16% of Virginians are 65+, projected to increase to 20% by 2030; increases will occur in all state regions
 - Southside and Southwest Virginia have greatest proportion of aging residents
- Concerns expressed about availability and affordability of services
 - Scarcity of providers in some regions of the state
 - Little public assistance with service costs
 - "Middle market" individuals (i.e., too much income to qualify for public assistance but not enough to afford private pay rates) are increasingly priced out

Background

- Assisted living and in-home care can help prevent or delay the need for older Virginians to receive more expensive and intensive care
- Both assist adults with activities of daily living (ADLs*) and medication management
 - In-home care also assists with tasks such as managing finances, cooking, shopping, transportation, etc.
- While skilled nursing and in-home medical care are important components of aging services, they are not included in this study

**ADLs include eating, bathing, dressing, toileting, and transferring*

Background

- Median monthly ALF cost was \$6,945 in 2025
- State's auxiliary grant is the primary public assistance for ALFs
- General Assembly sets auxiliary grant amount, which despite increases, covers less than cost of typical ALF
- In-home care costs are not well-documented but are likely much cheaper
 - ~\$3,200 per member per month (FY25) spent on recipients of Medicaid's Commonwealth Coordinated Care Plus ("CCC+") waiver
 - Public assistance for in-home care includes the waiver and some services provided by AAAs and LDSS

AAAs=Area agencies on aging, LDSS=Local departments of social services

Background

- State law requires VDSS to inspect ALFs at least once per year; inspectors also respond to complaints
 - VDSS can impose restrictions, mandate staff training, impose civil penalties, or revoke a facility's license
- DHP Board of Long-term Care Administrators licenses ALF administrators separately
 - Sets licensure requirements, provides continuing education, investigates complaints, can impose monetary penalties or revoke licenses
- VDH oversees in-home care providers
 - Currently has a backlog of inspections

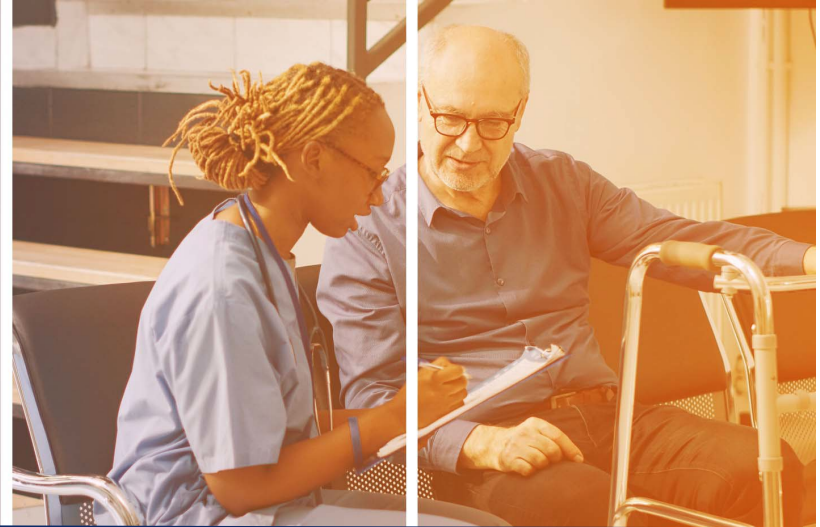
VDSS=Virginia Department of Social Services, DHP=Department of Health Professions, VDH=Virginia Department of Health

Study issues

- What is the supply and affordability of assisted living and in-home care in Virginia?
- To what extent are Virginia's assisted living facilities providing safe and quality care?
- What factors contribute to unsafe or poor-quality assisted living conditions?
- How well does the state ensure the quality of assisted living and in-home care?
- What steps could be taken to increase the supply, quality, and affordability of these services?

Research activities

- Interview state and local agencies, industry and advocacy groups, staff in other states, ALF administrators, in-home care providers, caregiver support professionals
- Collect and analyze information and data on ALF operating costs and charges, supply of ALF beds by type and region, components of ALF quality, LDSS and AAA in-home care services and expenditures, aging population demographics
- Survey ALF administrators, VDSS regional licensing inspectors, LDSS and AAA staff
- Observe ALF inspections
- Compare Virginia regulations and requirements to other states and best practices



Briefing: December 2026

Oversight of Virginia's Medicaid managed care organizations

Staff: Stefanie Papps, Kate Hopkins, Sam Lesemann, Leslie Morales-Noyola, Sarah Smith

Study resolution

- Evaluate how well the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) manages and oversees the state's Medicaid managed care program and managed care organizations (MCOs)
 - DMAS's approach to ensuring that recipients have access to care through MCO provider networks
 - Extent to which MCOs are paid based on outcomes and quality of care
 - How DMAS ensures recipients can access medically appropriate care while also detecting and preventing overutilization, inefficiencies, fraud, waste, and abuse

Commission resolution (December 2025)

Study resolution (continued)

- DMAS's approach to financial oversight, rate setting, and expenditure forecasting
- Opportunities to improve the quality and efficiency of service delivery and facilitate budget predictability

Background

- Most recent forecast of Virginia Medicaid spending predicts total spending will increase \$8.6B for FY27–28, compared with FY25–26 (▲\$2.7B in general funds)
- Virginia spends more per average Medicaid member than most other states (2023 data shows VA ranks 8th)
- Spending is driven by older adults and people with disabilities; make up the smallest group of enrollees but account for nearly half of spending
- Virginia's Medicaid enrollment peaked in May 2023 and has declined since; 2019 Medicaid expansion and federal COVID-19 policies drove enrollment growth

Background

- Managed care model of service delivery has replaced the traditional fee-for-service model
- Under fee-for-service, DMAS directly managed and paid for Medicaid member benefits
- Under managed care, state contracts with private insurance companies (MCOs) to manage a comprehensive set of Medicaid benefits
 - State pays MCOs a fixed monthly payment per member (i.e., capitation payment); MCOs are responsible for costs exceeding that payment
- Effective MCO oversight can help control costs, improve health outcomes, and ensure efficient and effective expenditure of public dollars

Study issues

- What is driving Medicaid spending increases, and how well does DMAS identify and address them?
- How well does DMAS ensure that Medicaid members receive good customer service from their MCOs?
- How well does DMAS ensure MCOs secure appropriate and medically necessary services for members and that MCOs minimize inefficient or unnecessary service utilization?
- Do DMAS policies and oversight ensure that members can access care and that providers participate in MCO networks?

Study issues (continued)

- How well does DMAS ensure capitation rates accurately reflect the MCO operational cost and that its MCO payment policies promote efficiency and good member outcomes?
- To what extent are DMAS's spending forecasts reliable, methodologically rigorous, and transparent?
- Does DMAS have the staff, organization, and strategy to effectively manage and oversee the managed care program?

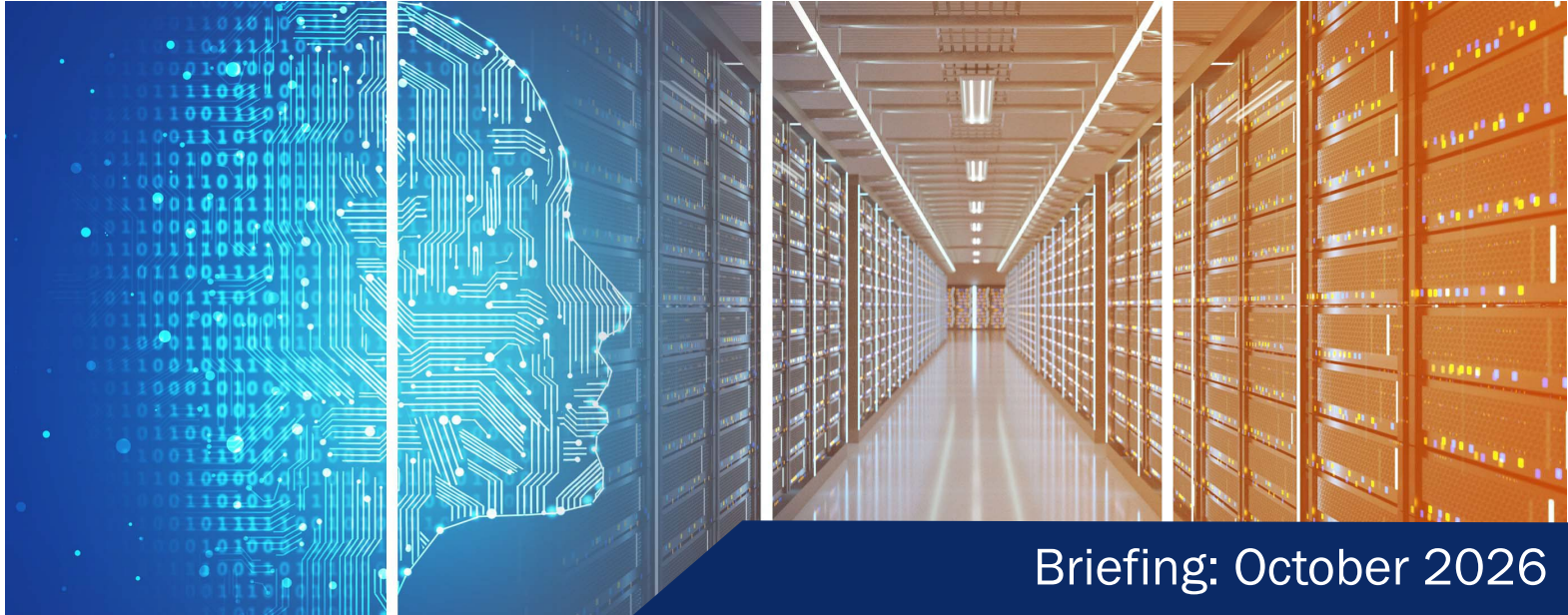
Research activities

- Interview DMAS staff, MCO staff, staff working for DMAS's actuary, other state Medicaid agencies, and national experts
- Analyze data on Medicaid spending, individual member claims, provider activity in each MCO's network, Medicaid member outcomes and satisfaction, DMAS staffing levels and trends
- Survey DMAS staff and providers in each MCO's network
- Review member case files, monthly reports on MCO compliance, MCO service denials, documentation about DMAS's capitation rate setting and forecasting functions, and academic and research literature on various topics

Kimberly Sarte

Associate Director

- Artificial intelligence
- Ongoing evaluation and oversight
 - Evaluation of economic development incentives
 - Oversight of VRS, Commonwealth Savers, and VITA
 - Racial and ethnic impact statements
- Fiscal analysis
 - Annual reports
 - Fiscal impact reviews



Briefing: October 2026

Artificial intelligence in the Commonwealth

Staff: Drew Dickinson, Alex Jansson, Laura White,
Madison McCaffrey

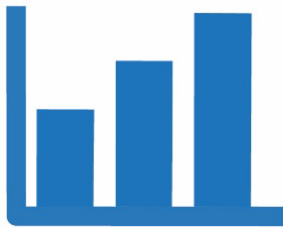
Study resolution

- Directs JLARC to review the use, governance, regulation, and oversight of AI in the Commonwealth
 - Use in state government, including opportunities and risks
 - State agency skills to use AI effectively
 - State policies and process for use in state government
 - Governance structure for oversight of AI as it evolves
 - Legislation in other states
 - AI use outside of state government that may require state regulation
 - Factors impacting AI cost and availability

Commission resolution (December 2025). Higher ed use of AI will be addressed in 2027 JLARC study pursuant to HJ 32 (2026).

Background

- AI is a broad term to describe machine-based systems that infer how to make predictions, generate content, or achieve objectives



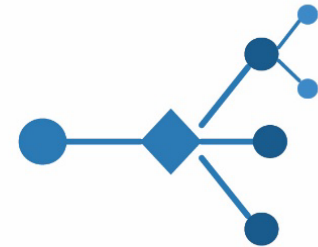
Predictive AI

Classifies, predicts, scores, or recommends.



Generative AI

Creates new content such as text, images, code, or video.



Agentic AI

Plans and carries out multi-step tasks to achieve an objective.

Background

- Modern AI systems present opportunities and risks for state governments
 - Opportunities – improved citizen accessibility, operational efficiency, and enhanced decision support
 - Risks – systematic errors and biases in government decisions, privacy violations, and enhanced cybersecurity threats
- States are increasingly proposing and passing legislation to mitigate AI risks
 - Virginia - 30 bills introduced and 7 passed (2026 session)
 - Federal executive order creates uncertainty regarding future scope of state AI regulation

Background

- Several Virginia state entities are involved in the management and oversight of IT in Virginia, including AI
 - VITA provides centralized IT services and has established standards related to AI systems and use cases
 - Office of Data Governance and Analytics has issued guidance to help agencies prepare for responsible AI use
 - Joint Commission on Technology and Science advises the General Assembly on technology-related matters, evaluates proposed technology legislation, and has released multiple AI-related publications

Study issues

- How are Virginia state agencies using or planning to use AI?
- What challenges do agencies report encountering in efforts to implement AI?
- What key opportunities and risks do AI systems present for state agencies?
- Is Virginia state government well-positioned to implement responsible and trustworthy AI systems?

Study issues (continued)

- How can legislators identify the most substantial risks to the public from AI use outside state government and address them through legislation, where necessary?
- What factors affect the cost and availability of AI systems, and what are their expected trends in the near term?

Research activities

- Interviews with Virginia state agencies, VITA, AI experts, other states, and other stakeholders
- Survey of Virginia state agency chief information officers (CIOs)
- Analysis of VITA's AI registry and agency IT planning and procurement documents
- Reviews of relevant state and federal laws and regulations, AI risk frameworks, and national research on AI systems



Briefings: June and November 2026

Ongoing evaluation of economic development incentives

Staff: Ellen Miller

Effectiveness of film, media, and tourism incentives (June 2026)

- Governor's Motion Picture Opportunity Fund
- Motion Picture Production Tax Credit
- Film, Television, and Audio Production Inputs Exemption
- Tourism Development Financing Program
- Governor's New Airline Service Incentive Fund
- Media Provider Equipment Exemption

Annual economic development incentives report (November 2026)

- Spending for all incentives
- Performance of completed projects receiving grants
- Biennial assessment of economic benefits of total spending on incentives



Briefings: Ongoing in 2026

Ongoing oversight: VRS, Commonwealth Savers, and VITA

Staff: Alex Jansson

Virginia Retirement System

- Oversight update (July)
- Independent actuarial audit of VRS (July)
- Update from VRS director and chief investment officer (July)
- Oversight report (December)
- Attend meetings of the board and advisory committees (year-round)

Commonwealth Savers Plan

- Biennial oversight report (July)
- Update from Commonwealth Savers chief executive officer and investment director (July)
- Attend meetings of the board and advisory committees (year-round)

Virginia Information Technologies Agency

- Update from VITA leadership (October)
- Attend meetings of IT advisory groups (year-round)

Racial and ethnic impact statements

- Impact on racial and ethnic disparities of proposed criminal justice legislation (2027 session)
- Four racial and ethnic impact statements conducted during 2026 session



Briefings: Ongoing in 2026

Fiscal analysis

Staff: Kimberly Sarte, Justin Brown, Ellen Miller

Annual reports

- Review of State Spending (October)
 - Flow of revenue and expenditures between the state and localities
- State Spending on K–12 Standards of Quality (December)
- Virginia Compared with Other States (January 2027)

Fiscal impact reviews

- Second opinions on fiscal impact of proposed legislation (2027 session)
 - Five fiscal impact reviews conducted during 2026 session
- Fiscal impact reviews of executive orders issued by governor (as requested)

Proposed meeting schedule for 2026

JUNE 3 Film, media, and tourism incentives
APA prior year results

JULY 6 VRS
Commonwealth Savers

AUGUST *No meeting*

SEPTEMBER 8 Agricultural best management practices
Unimplemented JLARC recommendations

OCTOBER 13 Artificial intelligence
State spending
VITA

NOVEMBER 9 Assisted living and in-home care
Economic development incentives

DECEMBER 14 Judicial allocation
Oversight of managed care organizations
VRS
State spending: SOQ

Future work

- Study resolutions passed in 2026 session (to be completed in 2027)
 - HJ 32 – AI use policies at higher ed institutions
 - SJ 23 – Need for Secretariat of Rural Affairs
 - SJ 26 – Expanded discretionary parole eligibility
- Study resolution passed in 2025 session (to be completed by 2028)
 - HJ 434 – Allocation of funding for coastal storm risk management studies
- Study topic subcommittee to meet later this year to assign future work