



## HIGHLIGHTS OF GOVERNOR NORTHAM'S BUDGET AMENDMENTS

---

DECEMBER 16, 2020

Governor Northam's proposed budget amendments will help Virginians navigate the next phase of the pandemic, provide much needed relief for working families, and position the Commonwealth to quickly rebuild our economy in a post-pandemic world.

### CONTINUING OUR AGGRESSIVE COVID-19 RESPONSE

- ✓ **Vaccines & Response:** The budget includes \$240 million for public health pandemic response, including \$90 million to support Virginia's vaccination deployment.
- ✓ **P-12 Education:** The budget invests over \$500 million to prevent reductions to school division funding due to COVID-19. The budget invests \$27 million in school counselors and includes \$80 million for a two-percent bonus for teachers and support positions. The budget also restores over \$16 million to expand access to early childhood education.
- ✓ **Evictions:** The budget invests an additional \$25 million in Virginia's Housing Trust Fund in FY2022 to help local and regional efforts to craft housing affordability solutions, matching the \$55 million that is maintained in FY2021 to bring Virginia's HTF to its highest level ever of \$55 million annually. The budget also includes \$15.7 million in FY21 for the Rent and Mortgage Relief Program, and \$1.5 million in FY2022 to fund additional housing attorneys at the Virginia State Bar.
- ✓ **Internet Accessibility:** The budget invests an additional \$15 million in the Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) in FY2022, matching the \$50 million that is maintained in FY2021 to bring the Commonwealth's broadband funding to \$50 million annually, a historic high.

### INVESTING IN THE PEOPLE OF VIRGINIA

- ✓ **Workforce:** The Governor's budget includes \$36 million in FY2022 for the G3 Program to get free or low-cost job skills training in high-need fields through Virginia's community college system.
  - **Virginia's Public Workforce:** The Governor's budget includes \$98 million for a one-time bonus for state employees (\$1,500), adjunct faculty (\$750), and state-supported local employees (1.5 percent), and \$9.5 million for the Compensation Board to increase support for Virginia's constitutional officers. The budget also includes \$100 million for the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) to reduce unfunded liabilities in the retirement plan for public school teachers, the state employee health insurance credit program, and benefits for our first responders.

- ✓ **Higher Education:** The budget restores over \$30 million in previously un-allotted investments in tuition assistance at Virginia’s public institutions of higher education. The budget includes an additional \$8.4 million for investments at Norfolk State University and \$6.1 million at Virginia State University, as well as \$5 million for George Mason University and \$5 million for Old Dominion University.
- ✓ **Health Care:** The budget includes \$23 million to get more Virginians enrolled in the health care exchange and \$2.3 million to fund doula services for expecting Virginia mothers enrolled in Medicaid. The budget also increases LARC funding by \$1 million and also includes \$10 million to update the decades old formula that determines how much the state pays for local health departments.
- ✓ **Natural Resources:** The budget invests \$12 million in the Department of Environmental Quality to better protect Virginia’s air, land and water, and \$13.5 million in water quality and agricultural best management practices (BMPs), bringing Virginia’s BMP investment to \$35 million in FY2022. These investments include staff positions that will help move permit requests in a timely manner. The Governor’s budget also invests \$276,000 to enhance food safety in Virginia, and \$521,000 to develop the hardwood forest habitat program.
- ✓ **Transportation:** The Governor’s budget also invests \$50 million to support extending intercity passenger rail service from Roanoke to the Blacksburg-Christiansburg area, and to increase intercity passenger rail service on the I-81/Route 29 Corridor from Washington, DC.

## TELLING THE TRUE STORY OF OUR PAST

- ✓ The Governor’s budget invests \$25 million in historic justice initiatives, including:
  - \$11 million to support efforts to transform Monument Avenue in Richmond;
  - \$500,000 to replace the statute of Robert E. Lee in the U.S. Capitol;
  - \$108,000 to hire a historic preservationist professional to administer projects involving historic cemeteries, burial grounds and human remains;
  - \$5 million to repatriate tombstones from the former Columbian Harmony Cemetery in Washington, D.C. and create the Harmony Living Shoreline memorial; and
  - \$9 million for the development of a Slavery Heritage Site and improvements to the Slave Trail in Richmond.

## REFORMING VIRGINIA’S CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

- ✓ Governor Northam’s budget includes investments at the Department of Corrections to implement Virginia’s ground-breaking new expansion of inmate earned sentence credits, so that Virginians who do their time, invest in themselves and prepare for re-entering society can do so on an earlier timeframe.
- ✓ The Governor’s budget invests over \$700,000 in the Virginia Parole Board to improve victim services assistance and notification and to hire additional investigators, examiners, and a release planning coordinator.

- ✓ The budget includes a line of credit to Virginia ABC to help pay for the establishment of the Commonwealth's governance and oversight of the legal, adult-use cannabis industry.
- ✓ The Governor's budget also includes \$5 million in FY2021 and \$20 million in FY2022 to pay for the cost of expungement reforms, including automatic expungement of misdemeanor marijuana convictions. The Governor knows the General Assembly must get broader expungement reform right as Virginia proceeds into legalization.
- ✓ The Governor's budget also invests \$5.1 million to fund an expansion of the Virginia Court of Appeals from 11 judges to 15 judges to expand access for Virginians to exercise their right to appeal.

### SERVING THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED US

- ✓ Governor Northam's budget includes over \$700,000 to better serve the behavioral health needs of Virginia's veterans. His budget also invests in establishing better outreach to women veterans from the Department of Veterans Services.

### PREPARING FOR AN UNCERTAIN ECONOMIC FUTURE

- ✓ Governor Northam's budget is based on a revenue forecast that anticipates \$1.2 billion more in revenue than the forecast released in August. While the Governor thinks this is welcome news, much of this new projected revenue is not predictable in future years.
- ✓ As such, Governor Northam's budget also invests \$650 million into revenue reserves, or 8 percent of total revenue, a record reserve for Virginia to guard against uncertain times.