



Virginia Association of Community Services Boards (VACSB) Priorities for the 2023-2024 State Budget

CSB WORKFORCE CRISIS: Last year, VACSB began its advocacy in support of a four-pronged approach to workforce development initiatives for CSBs. The General Assembly did not provide any funding for those initiatives which means that **workforce development will remain VACSB's top priority for the 2023 session. As such, the VACSB requests \$162.6M in FY24 to provide quarterly recruitment and retention bonuses for direct care positions in CSBs.** State psychiatric facilities received funding to address compensation issues in FY22 and FY23 and are slated to receive additional funding in FY24. CSBs need a similar level of investment in order to stabilize the community-based system of care across all service lines.

Until workforce is addressed with a comprehensive strategy for the entire public system, the CSBs will continue to lose their staff to not only private providers, but now also to state psychiatric hospitals, and may struggle to meet the increased demand for behavioral health and developmental disability services in their communities.

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY (DD) WAIVER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS: The VACSB has worked closely with The Arc of Virginia on a vision for improvements to the DD services system which requires funding to support DD-specific workforce development initiatives and provider development programs, funding for DD Waiver slots, and budget language to begin the formation of core services offerings to help individuals with DD avoid a behavioral health crisis. VACSB will support additional Waiver slots to address the Priority One wait list, but recognizes that funding for CSB workforce has to also be made available to assure staff can provide the services involved with each new Waiver slot.

STEP-VA INFLATION PRESSURES: All of the steps of STEP-VA have now been funded, however, funding for the initial steps has remained level since inception. In order to mitigate the cost of inflation, **VACSB is requesting an additional \$8.7M in ongoing funding for Same Day Access, primary care screening and outpatient services.** This funding should be provided for flexible use among the three service areas according to each CSB's needs.

UNDERAGE CANNABIS USE PREVENTION PROGRAMS: Legislation legalizing simple possession of cannabis passed in 2021 with language directing a portion of the revenue from retail sales to cannabis prevention and treatment programs. With retail sales on hold, CSBs do not have appropriate funding to effectively develop and engage in cannabis youth prevention programs. Therefore, the VACSB requests **\$2.5M in ongoing funds until such time as revenues from retail cannabis sales are made available.** The key to successful prevention campaigns is ensuring that they are deployed well ahead of policy changes such as cannabis legalization. These funds will position CSBs to fully engage in this critical prevention effort.

In addition to the priorities listed above, VACSB will support amendments from its advocacy partners provided that they align with VACSB's core mission and values.