



Virginia Association of Community Services Boards (VACSB) Priorities for the 2024-2026 State Budget

Dollar figures will be added once they are calculated and vetted for accuracy with our state agency partners.

The Virginia Association of Community Services Boards (VACSB) will support amendments from its advocacy partners once they are advanced.

CSBS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: VACSB is requesting funding for the following areas to act as a mechanism for recruitment and retention in the short term as well as to develop a pipeline for staff at all levels which will result in a robust and stable workforce in the public safety net system. VACSB will request funding for CSBs to provide the following: **Paid Internships, Clinical Supervision Hours, Student Loan Repayment Programs, Scholarship Programs.**

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES (STEP-VA inflation Pressures): VACSB is thankful that the General Assembly included in its budget for FY24 half of the funding requested to account for inflation, since inception, in the first three steps of STEP-VA. Due to the late breaking nature of the budget, the funds will only be available in the second half of the fiscal year and are considered one-time. **VACSB will request the other half of the funding in the next biennium as well as funding for inflationary adjustments to the remaining steps.** The funding should be provided for flexible use among all the services areas of STEP-VA and should be ongoing beyond this biennium.

SCHOOL BASED SERVICES: VACSB will seek budget language which authorizes DMAS to conduct a **rate study for school-based services** for children and youth with behavioral health service needs. This was meant to be part of phase two of Project BRAVO, but without authority DMAS cannot proceed.

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER (SUD) SERVICES: VACSB is requesting a **12.5% rate increase for the Substance Use Disorder (SUD) services** that did not receive the permanent 12.5% rate increase other behavioral health services received. Those services are: **Office Based Addiction Treatment (OBAT), Opioid Treatment Program (OTP), Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP) and Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP).** The CSBs are experiencing a workforce crisis in all areas of services, including SUD services and increasing rates is one way to increase compensation for CSB workforce.

EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES: VACSB is requesting an increase in funding for Early Intervention Services for the following reasons: local systems experienced a shortfall totaling \$1.2M in FY23; the \$2.2M in emergency ARPA funds for Early Intervention services ended in FY23, and the increase in the number of children needing early intervention services increases each year. In addition, increases for the next few years are expected to be larger than in the past because of a rise in autism spectrum disorder and substance-exposed infants.

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY (DD) WAIVER SERVICES: VACSB is requesting budget language that directs DMAS to conduct a **rebase of the DD Waiver services reimbursement rates prior to each biennial budget.** VACSB will also continue to support additional Waiver slots to address the Priority One wait list but recognizes that stabilization of the CSBs workforce as well as Waiver service providers must also be a priority for the state to ensure there are adequate staff to provide the services involved with each new Waiver slot. One of the ways to help the CSB workforce crisis and to improve provider availability is through reimbursement rate increases.

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 will request 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.