



## **VACAP NEWS**

January 2024

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### **VACAP Legislative Conference**

We're excited to welcome everyone to Richmond, VA for VACAP's 2024 Legislative Conference and rally everyone's energy around our 2024 priorities, requesting a \$5.8 million annual investment to expand the successful whole family approach pilot from six agencies to a statewide program through community action and increasing the CASH Campaign/Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program from \$185,725 to \$935,725. We have over 80 attendees registered and 28 agencies represented.

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### **2024 Marks the Start of 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Community Action**

2024 will mark 60 years since the birth of Community Action! Over the next 12 months and into 2025, NCAP, NCAF, CAPLAW, VACAP and the Community Action Network will commemorate the 60th anniversary with national, state, and local events and activities. There are several tools available for you to consider using to recognize the 60 years of Community Action. Consider flyers,

events or social media posts that highlight the amazing impacts of your agency and all the good work that has been done in the Community. Success stories of clients paired with some facts and figures are a great way to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary and all the great work you and your staff do on a daily basis in Community Action.

This is a great time to share your vision for the future and focus on the community action brand in Virginia – Whole Family Approach.

60th logo and resources available at:

<https://files.constantcontact.com/d52d9850501/75238709-2ff7-4ace-b13e-6769df229341.pdf>



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## **Save the Date! VACAP Regional Meeting Dates Announced**

**Plan now to bring a staff member for every peer group.**

Regional Meetings are designed to:

- Inspire team members by remembering the spirit of community action – our Why!
- Hear updates from key partners
- Break into peer groups and learn from peers – develop new relationships and peer partners

Peer groups that are planned include: CEO/ED, Senior Leaders, HR, Fiscal, IT, ROMA/Planner, all program areas (weatherization/housing, Head Start, whole family, digital opportunity/broadband and MORE)

Save the Date for:

May 1, 2024: Wytheville, VA

May 15, 2024: Williamsburg, VA

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## 2024-2026 CSBG State Plan Now Available for Review and Comment Period Open

The comment period will run from December 1, 2023 – January 31, 2024. Please use this time to submit any feedback to our great state partners! Any comments, questions, or feedback can be submitted by using the form at this link: <https://forms.office.com/g/fHHBq8Qma>

All state plan documents can be viewed on the CSBG State Plan webpage on LearnWorlds: <https://vacsb.learnworlds.com/24-26-csbg-state-plan>

If you have any questions or have trouble accessing the documents please do not hesitate to reach out to [csbg@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:csbg@dss.virginia.gov).

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## Goodreads and Newsworthy Updates



The screenshot shows a news article from the Richmond Times-Dispatch. The article is titled "Kinship care tops social services agenda" and is dated Friday, January 12, 2024. The author is Dave Ress. The article discusses the expansion of kinship care programs in Virginia, highlighting the role of Commissioner Danny Avula and Secretary of Health and Human Resources John Littell. It mentions that the state's general fund is being used to support these programs, and that the current TANF program is being reviewed. The article also notes that the state's standard for eligibility for TANF is among the strictest in the nation, and that the current TANF program is being reviewed. The article includes photos of John Littell and Danny Avula.

Commissioner Danny Avula gave a shout out to Community Action as a key partner of the social services network in Virginia during his presentation to the House Committee on Health and Human Services. He also touched on TANF appropriations and programs as well.

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## **VACAP Submits Letter of Support to DHCD Regarding Statewide Digital Opportunity Plan**

VACAP submitted a letter of support to the Department of Housing and Community Development for their Statewide Digital Opportunity Plan. The Department was accepting comments and feedback on their draft statewide plan which will be finalized and shared with the National Telecommunications and Information Agency (NTIA). The statewide plan is needed before funds can be dispersed to DHCD for digital opportunity funds. The department put together this report in partnership with our network who completed regional digital opportunity plans in the summer of 2023. Community Action was named as a key partner in the digital opportunity space and the report mentioned expanding upon the efforts of the network with more funding and grant opportunities in 2024. VACAP will continue to monitor as more information becomes available.

Link to view letter submitted to DHCD: <https://www.vacap.org/statewide-digital-opportunity-plan-letter-of-support/>

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## **VACAP Submits Letter of Support to Virginia Energy**

Virginia Energy will be submitting an application to the U.S. Department of Energy for funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (\$3.4 million earmarked for Virginia) towards residential energy contractor training funds. Virginia Energy held two stakeholder meetings in 2023 to gather stakeholder feedback and support. Funds can be used to train new or existing residential energy workforce, support partnerships to develop and implement a workforce development program and provide testing and certification. VACAP submitted a letter of support and encouraged Virginia Energy to consider the VACAP network as valuable partners that can lead in training residential energy workforce and provide wrap-around services, a key part of Virginia Energy's application to DOE. VACAP encourages members to stay engaged with Virginia Energy as new funding will be available for current and new weatherization staff training and certification.

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## **VACAP Shares Concerns with Office of Head Start Regarding Proposed New Regulations**

VACAP submitted comments to the Office of Head Start in regards to new proposed regulations that would put unfunded mandates on CAAs. The policy goals are well intentioned but are done through unfunded mandates that will drastically impact the ability to serve our communities. Without additional funding, implementation of these proposed regulations would result in fewer slots available to families who need child care and whole family services at a critical time. VACAP thanks the VACAP Head Start committee and Virginia Head Start Association for their leadership in this effort. We also are grateful to NCAP, CAPLAW and National Head Start Association for leading national sign on letters with detailed comments. Please contact your congressional delegation while the Office of Head Start considers public comments that were due by January 29, 2024 to the agency. Congressional offices need to hear how these proposed regulations would negatively affect your operations, families and the local economy.

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## **DHCD: Upcoming Input Sessions for the Affordable and Special Needs Housing Program**

In preparation for the next fiscal year, the DHCD Affordable and Special Needs Housing (ASNH) program is holding input sessions regarding the Housing Trust Fund, National Housing TRUST Fund and federal HOME funds.

In these sessions the Department will reflect on changes in the program over the last two years and hold breakouts for nonprofit and for-profit developers to discuss future changes to the program.

ASNH is holding input sessions on the following dates:

Northern Virginia: January 30, 2024  
Central Library - 1015 N Quincy St.  
Arlington, VA 22201

Tidewater: January 31, 2024  
Grissom Library - 366 Deshazor Dr.  
Newport News, VA 23608

Charlottesville: February 1, 2024  
Jefferson-Madison Regional Library  
201 E Market St, Charlottesville, VA 22902

Register to attend an input session:

<https://dmz1.dhcd.virginia.gov/dhcdevents/registration.aspx?EID=544>

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## **ARC Opens Applications for 2024 Substance Use Disorder Recovery-to-Work Projects**

Applications for ARC's 2024 INSPIRE Initiative to address substance use disorder workforce challenges are due March 8, 2024.

Through INSPIRE awards in 2024, ARC will continue to support the creation and expansion of services that help Appalachians in recovery from substance abuse disorder obtain a job and stay on the job.

Successful INSPIRE projects could include enhanced support services, strategies to integrate plans with existing state and regional economic development activities, and community- and partnership-based approaches for stronger coordination among services and providers.

### **KEY DATES**

- Pre-Application Workshops:
  - January 23, 2024, Asheville, NC
  - January 30, 2024, Birmingham, AL
  - February 6, 2024, Portsmouth, OH
  - February 8, 2024, Virtual

- February 16, 2024: Letters of Intent (LOI) due for INSPIRE implementation grants up to \$500,000 and planning grants up to \$50,000
- March 8, 2024: Final applications due
- Fall 2024: Awards announced

Learn more about the INSPIRE Initiative and how to apply: <https://www.arc.gov/grants-and-opportunities/sud/inspire-initiative-application-information/>

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## **Sustainable Energy Resources for Consumers (SERC) grant application period is open**

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) announces an opportunity for Subgrantees to apply for Sustainable Energy Resources for Consumers (SERC) grants.

SERC funds pass through the Grantee office to the WAP Subgrantee which can be a nonprofit entity or Community Action Agency (CAA), tribe, or other public entity such as a housing authority.

SERC BIL funds shall be used to install renewable energy systems and other energy technologies and solutions not covered under WAP.

Applicants may apply for more than one grant if they meet the eligibility requirements for each individual grant.

To apply and learn more about the grant: <https://www.energy.gov/scep/wap/apply-innovation-grant>

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## **2024 Volunteerism Summit: Early Bird Tickets Available**

The annual Virginia Volunteerism Summit taking place on May 15 & 16, 2024 is the Commonwealth's leading event for organizations and individuals making a difference in their communities. Serve Virginia and the Virginia Service Foundation host the annual gathering, featuring a diverse array of workshops, networking events and inspiring keynote speakers to promote innovation across the sector. This year's conference will be virtual.

Register here: <https://servevirginia.org/find-resources/virginia-volunteerism-summit/>

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## **Apply Today for NCAP's 2024 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) Learning Cohort**

This 9-month opportunity, presented in collaboration with the Seattle Jobs Initiative (SJI) and American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Services (USDA FNS).

Scheduled to run from March to November 2024, this cohort provides Community Action Agencies with a unique chance to explore the potential fit of SNAP E&T within your organizations. Participants will benefit from tailored services, including technical assistance from SNAP E&T experts and peers, customized training and materials, and application assistance for those interested in becoming SNAP E&T Third-Party Partners.

The application deadline is January 31st, 2024. For any inquiries or to express your interest, feel free to reach out to Hayleigh Rockenback, SNAP E&T Senior Associate, at [hrockenback@communitypartnership.com](mailto:hrockenback@communitypartnership.com).

Link to application: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NCAP24SNAPCohort>