

2023

Legislative Agenda



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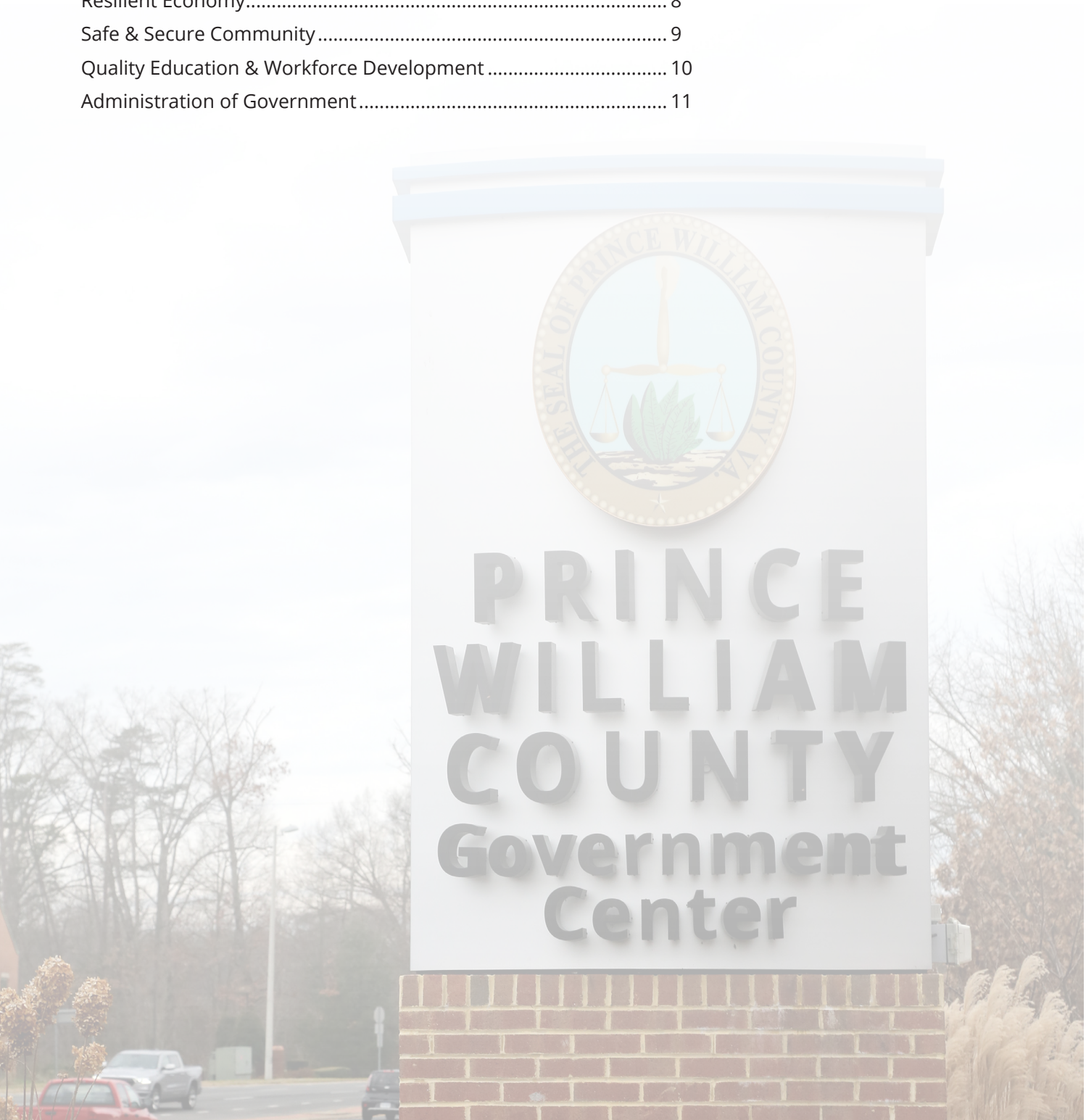
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2023 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, VA

Prince William County will support legislation, policies and appropriations measures that:

- Mitigate the burden of unfunded mandates on Prince William County.
- Provide resources that impact the most vulnerable in the community.
- Allow for opportunities to leverage resources in partnership with the Commonwealth to best meet the needs of the county.
- Support legislation and measures that will enable Prince William County to attract targeted employers.
- Promote environmental stewardship that enhances the quality of life for the residents of Prince William County.
- Support initiatives that promote efficiency and transparency in government.
- Fully fund the standards for education and cost to compete.

Prince William County will oppose legislation, policies and appropriations measures that:

- Reduce funding or shift the costs of shared services to the county from the Commonwealth for essential services.
- Attempt to preempt, restrict or limit local revenue-raising authority or adversely impact existing taxing authority (e.g., removing a funding source, such as TOT).
- Impose additional fees on the county for measures that are clearly the responsibility of the Commonwealth.
- Infringe on the local authority and flexibility to control policies and procedures governing local land use matters, as land use decisions are local in character and should be determined and solved at the local level.
- Negatively impact the current applicable legal standard(s) in any local tax matter.
- Compromise presumption of real or tangible property assessments.

TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

Prince William County's Strategic Goal: Provide an accessible, comprehensive, multi-modal network of transportation infrastructure that improves local and regional mobility. Prince William County residents and business owners place a high value on mobility and transportation in the County by desiring an accessible, safe, multi-modal transportation network. In response, Prince William County government will seek to prioritize providing equitable access to multimodal transportation options in the community. Enhancing local, state, regional, and federal partnerships must continue to allow the County to leverage and identify project funding. Congestion will be further reduced by prioritizing critical infrastructure projects that expand capacity that support both local and regional mobility and sustainable growth.

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY SUPPORTS

Transportation/Mobility Projects Safety Improvements

Prince William County requests that the General Assembly encourage the Commonwealth Transportation Board and Virginia Department of Transportation to review traffic calming and safety standards to enable localities to implement safety improvements more broadly on facilities that currently do not qualify and increase dedicated funding for traffic safety improvements.

Examples of projects that are local priorities for traffic safety improvements but do not qualify include but are not limited to:

- Roadways with high numbers of accidents but no documented speeding, including:
 - Cardinal Drive.
 - Waterway Drive.
 - Rollins Ford Road.
- Rural roads with documented speeding but geometry limitations and/or high volumes, including:
 - Purcell Road.
 - Brentsville Road.
 - Joplin Road.

In addition to traffic calming, safety improvements include bicycle and pedestrian improvements in high-volume corridors, such as:

- Interstate interchange/bridge crossings.
- Primary roadways.
- Comp Plan roadways.

Increase dedicated funding through various programs to fund improvements mentioned above:

- Additional funding for Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP).
- New funding program for traffic calming and small safety improvements.
- New program for high pedestrian and bicycle crossings (such as pedestrian bridges and multiuse trails).

Remove Ambiguous Language in Eminent Domain Legislation and Include Specific Language of Definition of Lost Access and Lost Profits

Recent changes to Virginia Code § 25.1-230.1 related to lost access and profits better enable businesses to claim lost profits, but the new language in the code provides no clear parameters for determining access and profit impacts and introduces significant uncertainty to the right-of-way process for both localities and property owners. The county has a well-established history of successfully working with private parties to resolve property acquisitions. Without clear standards for demonstrating lost profits, the county will have less information from private parties to consider in negotiations, which will likely hinder those negotiations and may increase the number of cases that require time-consuming and expensive litigation. Prince William County will continue to monitor and would support changes to remove ambiguous language in the code and include specific language that provides clear definitions of lost access and lost profits.

Restore NVTAFunding

Prince William County supports legislation that continues to restore NVTAFunding that was lost as part of House Bill 1539 and Senate Bill 856, passed in 2018. This includes supporting any changes that protects NVTAFunding. Restoration of the \$38.5 million in NVTAFunding will ensure that Northern Virginia jurisdictions will have adequate funding to solve the region's transportation issues. In addition, Prince William County supports the protection of all revenues provided to NVTAFunding through legislation dating back to 2013. Any restoration of NVTAFunding should include state funding and revenue sources.

Restore Funding Source for Lost Transportation Revenue Resulting from the Elimination of the State Sales and Use Tax on Groceries

The 2022 General Assembly action resulted in a \$190 million loss in dedicated transportation revenue for the 2022-2024 biennial budget and \$741.4 million over the Six-Year Improvement Plan (SYIP), reducing funding to public transportation by \$83 million over the SYIP and \$27 million for Virginia's passenger and freight rail programs. This loss was not offset with state general fund revenue or any alternative funding source. If not addressed, this funding loss will have a long-term negative impact on transportation in the Commonwealth. Therefore, Prince William County supports efforts to restore funding levels impacted by recent policy measures and opposes appropriations or legislative steps which can adversely affect future transportation funding levels.

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY WILL MONITOR

JLARC Transportation Analysis

Prince William County will closely review the contents of any Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission analysis of transportation funding in the Commonwealth to determine the impact on local and regional transportation funding streams and planning.

Springfield-Quantico Public Transportation Study

The 2020 session of the Virginia General Assembly approved budget language directing the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation to conduct a feasibility study to address the following:

"F. The Department of Rail and Public Transportation, in cooperation with Fairfax and Prince William counties, shall evaluate enhanced public transportation services from the Franconia-Springfield Metro Station to Fort Belvoir, Lorton, Potomac Mills, and Marine Corps Base Quantico in Prince William County, including the cost and feasibility of extending the Blue Line and other multimodal options such as bus rapid transit along Interstate 95 and U.S. Route 1. The Director of the Department of Rail and Public Transportation shall submit a report of its findings to the Chairs of the House Appropriations Committee and the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee by December 1, 2021."

With the range of multimodal transit investments proposed by this analysis, Prince William County will continue to monitor proposed planning and appropriations measures from local, state and federal resources to facilitate such infrastructure improvements.

HEALTH, WELLBEING & HUMAN SERVICES

Prince William County's Strategic Goal: Promote physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing through timely and equitable access to services and resources to enhance the quality of life for residents. Individuals' health and wellbeing can be determined by their opportunities and their environment. Access to services for all residents using a holistic model that connects residents searching for services that meet their needs when they are at their most vulnerable or at risk of vulnerability is essential for health and wellbeing. Behavioral, mental, and physical health are interrelated and require person-centered responses due to the uniqueness of each individual's situation. Living in the community versus institutional living, reducing stigma around seeking services, supports and treatment, increasing access to insurance and public benefits due to low income, having food security, and navigating toward stable housing are all keys to community wellbeing.

LEGISLATIVE REQUESTS

Allow Sharing of Long-Term Care Medicaid Uniform Assessment Instruments (UAI) with Local Departments of Social Services (New Priority)

The Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) requires a Uniform Assessment Instrument (UAI) be completed by the Local Health District and the local Department of Social Services (Adult Protective Services Team) for Long-Term Care Medicaid applicants. The UAI must be completed in person and at home within 30 days. Prince William County cannot keep up with demand, which continues to increase.

The Code of Virginia requires DMAS to have a contractor to help with overdue applications; however, they do not have a contractor. Several other agencies do UAIs, such as the Area Agency on Aging staff who currently do UAIs in the home for Assisted Living facilities. However, currently, the Code of Virginia does not allow those UAIs to be shared with the local DSS, creating inefficiencies and delays in completing the assessments.

Prince William County supports funding be provided to DMAS for contractors to help with overdue applications, as required by law. In addition, Prince William County requests a legislative change to allow the UAIs **already completed** by the Area Agency on Aging staff, hospitals and other local departments of social services – within the allotted timeframe – to be transferred to a local DSS and used for submission for long-term care Medicaid eligibility. This is critical for one of our most vulnerable populations, who are eligible financially and medically to go to a nursing home or receive in-home care.

APPROPRIATIONS REQUESTS

Ongoing Operational Support for a Prince William Regional Crisis Receiving Center (CRC) for Adults and Youth

In FY 20 and FY 21, 364 and 362 residents under a Temporary Detention Order (TDO) were placed outside of Prince William County because there were no inpatient beds. Prince William has significantly more individuals placed out of area than any other Community Services Board in the region. The Board of County Supervisors approved \$2.7 million in ongoing funding needed for the first phase of the Crisis Receiving Center ("CRC"), which will consist of eight adult crisis stabilization beds and eight 23-hour observation units/recliners. Additional ongoing funding is needed to bring on the full 16 crisis stabilization beds and 16 23-hour observation units/recliners for adults and eight youth crisis stabilization beds and eight youth 23-hour observation units/recliners.

The CRC for adults and youth in Prince William County is a key component to a robust behavioral health crisis system that will provide a place to go for those most vulnerable and in need of behavioral health crisis services. Further, the CRC will reduce dependency on state hospital beds, reduce the number of residents placed outside of the NOVA region for inpatient services, reduce the impact on public safety staff who spend significant hours waiting for individuals under emergency custody and temporary detention orders and reduce the impact on local hospital emergency rooms.

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY SUPPORTS

Prince William County Juvenile Services Facility

Based upon a 2020 study, a plan was developed to address a community-based continuum of programs and services for youth (and their families) involved with or at risk of being involved with the juvenile justice system. This group developed the Juvenile Justice Improvement Project (JJIP) Report. The JJIP report included five recommendations: 1) develop a community-based continuum of programs and services that foster restorative justice policies and practices; 2) create community-based, less secure placement options, 3) establish youth and family reception centers; 4) develop and improve cross-system collaboration among juvenile justice stakeholders; and 5) update and improve information technology capabilities.

To address these needs, Prince William County is currently in the planning stages for the development of a new juvenile justice services facility. The county supports the development of such a facility to serve the needs of juveniles in the community and will monitor the legislative recommendations on juvenile justice services by the Virginia Commission on Youth, Advisory Committee on Evaluating the Effectiveness and Efficiency of Virginia’s Juvenile Detention Centers.

Address the Behavioral Health Workforce Crisis

A national workforce shortage has left behavioral health and developmental disability treatment providers struggling to meet the increased demand for services. While demand for services is growing, the ability to recruit and retain qualified employees has become increasingly difficult. The pandemic exacerbated the already significant workforce shortage. In January 2022, the Virginia Health Care Foundation completed an Assessment of the Capacity of Virginia’s Licensed Behavioral Health (BH) Workforce. This assessment revealed that a significant number of BH professionals are at or near retirement age, and that despite Virginia’s 40 graduate-level BH programs graduating nearly 800 individuals annually, the number who go on to licensure in Virginia is insufficient and does not even maintain the already inadequate supply of BH professionals.

Prince William County government supports the Northern Virginia Community Services Boards’ (CSB) request for sufficient funding for an increase in salaries that is comparative to the market rate and demonstrates the value of the work being done and funding to assist in the repayment of student loans in exchange for a commitment to work in the public sector. Prince William County government further supports the Northern Virginia CSB’s request for a legislative approach to decreasing the regulatory/administrative burdens through expediting credentialing and decreasing regulatory requirements.

Increase Community Capacity for Services

There does not exist within Prince William County a residential facility for youth substance-use disorders offering withdrawal management and Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT). MAT for youth is very limited within the county and region. Community Services supports the Northern Virginia CSB’s request to increase funding in order to build community capacity within Region 2 for 24/7 specialized residential programs, particularly for youth with a substance use disorder.

Eliminate Priority 1 of the Developmental Disabilities Waiver Waitlist

Prince William County currently has 930 individuals with a developmental disability significant enough for them to be eligible for a Medicaid Waiver. Of those, 184 individuals are designated as Priority One, indicating that these individuals have been determined to need services within one year and represent the most urgent of service needs. Virginia has approximately 3,007 individuals on the Priority One waitlist and 13,777 individuals on the VA Waiver Waitlist. Through the Developmental Disabilities waiver program, individuals receive support and service options for successful and integrated living, learning, physical and behavioral health, employment, recreation and community inclusion. In FY 23, no additional waiver slots were provided by the Virginia General Assembly. Addressing the Priority One waitlist will help those with the greatest need and provide cost savings through early intervention and prevention efforts which decrease instances of mental health crisis, institutionalization and incarceration.

Replace the Virginia Case Management System

Prince William County supports the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) and the Virginia League of Social Service (VLSS) to request funding to replace the Virginia Case Management System, which is the state system used for determining eligibility for public assistance. It does not work well and is often “down.” Prince William County supports the VDSS and VLSS language to require a thorough market check in accordance with Virginia Information Technology Agency requirements before starting development of the system.

Solutions Addressing Lack of Available State Hospital Beds

Prince William County supports solutions that address the lack of available state hospital beds for people in a mental health crisis that will enable all state hospitals to receive admissions of individuals subject to temporary detention orders without delays.

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY WILL MONITOR

JLARC Report on Community Services Boards

Prince William County will monitor and evaluate the forthcoming JLARC report on community services boards to determine any local fiscal impact or implications for the delivery of services.

Housing and Land Use Policies

Prince William County will closely monitor and report on the anticipated proposals from the Governor and General Assembly addressing affordable housing. In addition, the county will track all legislation pertaining to local authority, land use planning and housing matters, correlating all bills to the county’s current land use and planning policies and regulations.

RESILIENT ECONOMY

Prince William County's Strategic Goal: Diversify, support, and expand the local economy to ensure equitable economic growth through innovative business/talent attraction, promotion, and investment. A resilient economy for Prince William County improves the economic well-being of the community, creates and maintains jobs, expands the commercial tax base, and enhances the quality of life for residents. The County encourages business development, redevelopment, business retention, expansion, investment, and workforce development. Further, the County attracts business investment by focusing on its targeted industries while aligning with its Comprehensive Plan.

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY SUPPORTS

George Mason University Science and Technology Campus

Prince William County supports the funding for George Mason University in-state undergraduates at the average per student level of doctoral institutions in Virginia, which will help the SciTech campus, and GMU as a whole, further its goal to be an economic engine for Northern Virginia.

Broadband Availability

Prince William County supports the expansion of broadband access across Prince William County. This effort will include a continuous review of opportunities with state and federal programs to improve access to modern broadband infrastructure for the citizens of Prince William County.

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY WILL MONITOR

Cannabis Legislation

Whereas there are significant community factors associated with the legalization of cannabis, Prince William County will closely monitor and report on all legislation associated with this policy measure. Given the financial implications with forthcoming retail developments, land use, regulatory, permitting, public safety, agricultural and human resources issues, all legislation pertaining to cannabis legalization will be reviewed for county impact.

Gaming Legislation

With the release of a new report by JLARC on gaming in Virginia, and given the existing and prospective projects in the gaming space with anticipated significant economic impact for the community and county, Prince William County will actively monitor gaming legislation initiated during the 2023 session.

SAFE & SECURE COMMUNITY

Prince William County's Strategic Goal: Provide a safe and secure community through prevention, readiness, and service excellence. Prince William County residents desire to live in a safe community where they feel secure in knowing they will be protected from harm, treated equitably, and provided resources that will assist them in continuing to thrive. Prince William County considers the safety and security of its residents a top priority and is forward thinking in meeting the challenges of this goal. Building a positive rapport, establishing an environment where everyone feels heard, strengthening relationships and collaboration between public safety agencies, county stakeholders and county residents are the building blocks to a safer community.

APPROPRIATIONS REQUESTS

Adequate Funding for Pretrial Services and Local Probation Services

Alternatives to incarceration, such as local probation and pretrial services, should be funded equitably in Virginia. Additionally, an updated funding formula and process should be established per the Crime Commission's recommendation in 2016 to ensure alternatives to incarceration are available locally and appropriately funded consistently throughout the state. This is necessary to ensure a fair and equitable criminal justice system. Recent sessions of the General Assembly have recognized the value of these services and provided modest and needed increases in state funding.

Preserve State Assistance to Local Police Departments (599 Funding)

The state created a program of financial assistance to local police departments (HB599). The Code of Virginia provides that "599" funding is to increase at the same rate as growth in state General Fund revenue collections. Recent appropriations for this priority should be preserved by the General Assembly.

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY SUPPORTS

Alternative Transportation for Temporary Detention Orders

Prince William County law enforcement spends an inordinate amount of time transporting persons in crisis to a mental health hospital on a temporary detention order (TDO). Transporting to a hospital outside the county requires two officers, which hence removes them from their primary responsibilities. Transports (roundtrip) can take between two and 14 hours. The contracted provider for the Commonwealth has staffing limitations and is unable to handle all transports for persons deemed appropriate. Prince William County supports the General Assembly allocating the needed resources to implement the statewide Alternative Transportation Plan without any added local funding burden.

Properly Secured Firearms

From January 1, 2022, through October 31, 2022, Prince William County had 115 guns reported stolen from a vehicle. With the increase in gun violence around the country, the county will monitor legislation and efforts that address gun violence that has specifically been instigated with firearms acquired from unsecured vehicles.

QUALITY EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Prince William County's Strategic Goal: Provide quality and equitable education for all learners and develop and attract a well-trained talented workforce. Prince William County values a world class education for all, from our youngest students in the PWC schools on through to all ages. While learning and education enrich the individuals, they also enrich the community attracting families seeking to provide their children with world class education, by creating skilled workers, and informed citizens that form a talent pool that can draw businesses to our area. The Board of County Supervisors, through collaboration with the school system, institutions of higher education, and local businesses can enhance the educational and training experiences throughout the county for all residents. This is achieved by expanding information about and access to existing programming, identifying, and removing barriers to participation, and developing new opportunities for job training.

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY SUPPORTS

Educational Funding Priorities

- 1. Support full funding for K-12 education, to include increased state funding for operational and capital needs of Prince William County Schools.
- 2. Support full state funding for the actual cost of meeting the Standards of Quality (SOQ) requirements, not just the minimum assumed to be necessary by the state.
- 3. Support fully funding the Cost of Competing Adjustment (COCA) for PWCS support staff, which will ensure that local funding will go toward meeting the needs of the schools, rather than backfilling state reductions or requirements.
- 4. Prince William County will evaluate the forthcoming JLARC report on funding of the Standards of Quality to determine any local fiscal impact.

Higher Education

Prince William County recognizes the role of higher education and continuing education needs within the community. To that end, the county supports the advancement of programs and facilities needed by George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) to address the higher education needs of county residents.

Specifically, Prince William County will support efforts by George Mason University to improve its ability to compete for national and internationally acclaimed faculty and staff by the Commonwealth, providing the resources needed to attract and retain staff at all levels.

Further, Prince William County will support efforts by NVCC in seeking increased investment in workforce funding with a focus on the unprecedented needs for credentialed workers in healthcare, manufacturing, technology and skilled trades.

ADMINISTRATION OF GOVERNMENT

Prince William County's Strategic Vision: Prince William County is a diverse community striving to be healthy, safe and caring with a thriving economy and a protected natural environment.

The county supports efficiency and transparency in government, and pledges to monitor and review all legislation that impacts county administrative functions, impacts county fiscal standing and has implications for county employees and management.

LEGISLATIVE REQUESTS

Allow Localities to Pay Supplements for Public Defenders Directly to the Indigent Defense Commission (New Priority)

The Code of Virginia, §19.2-163.01:1.C, states, "Funds provided by any county or city under this section shall be paid directly to the employees with notice to the Indigent Defense Commission of any amount so provided." Prince William County currently provides a 15 percent supplement directly to public defenders; however, doing so creates administrative burdens on the county, but more importantly, the supplemental amount is not counted towards the employee's retirement plan. Therefore, the county is requesting that the legislation be changed to allow for the supplement payments to be made directly to the Indigent Defense Commission, which will then provide the supplement to their employees as part of their regular pay advices. This is in line with the supplement that the county pays to the Virginia Department of Health and the Juvenile Court Services Unit.

APPROPRIATIONS REQUESTS

Internship/Registered Apprentice Program (New Priority)

Businesses within the automotive and building trades industries are scrambling to attract, hire and retain qualified individuals with the necessary skills to meet the growing demands. In years past, skilled tradespersons were widely available due to training for these skills being available in high schools, community colleges and trade schools. There was a natural flow of talent. However, the diminished availability of this type of training from schools and a declined favorable perception of the trades coupled with a rapidly retiring workforce have created a severe deficit of available and forecasted talent. A best management practice adopted by businesses to address this crisis is adopting robust training plans as part of their talent acquisition and retention processes. The main program that many companies are turning to is the U.S. Department of Labor's Registered Apprenticeship Program. As such, the county is requesting \$250,000 in FY2024 to help create an internship and registered apprentice program that would create a pipeline of trained workers to fill county vacancies in these hard-to-fill positions.

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY SUPPORTS

Public Notice of Advertisements and Procurement

The county should be able to publish notices of meetings, county activities, land use changes, procurement and other items important to the citizens by means other than newspaper publication to ensure the most visibility to the community. The General Assembly should comprehensively update the publication provisions of state law for local governments to allow the county to communicate with the citizens it serves by efficient means designed to reach the greatest number of recipients. This should include prominent placement of such notices on the county's website, social media dissemination and emails to citizens who register for such notifications.

Due Diligence of FOIA Legislation

Prince William County supports the position that any changes to the Freedom of Information Act should be forwarded to the FOIA Advisory Council for review and recommendations prior to General Assembly consideration or enactment. The county also supports efforts to recover its actual, reasonable costs incurred in responding to a FOIA request pursuant to its adopted FOIA policy.

Opioid Abatement Authority Composition and Framework

Prince William County supports the current Opioid Abatement Authority composition and framework, which was established after a lengthy, thoughtful, and deliberative process, including input from numerous State and local government stakeholders. The newly established Authority and its staff are only beginning their critically important work, and the county and other localities are confident that the Authority and staff will do so efficiently, effectively and in the best interest of Virginia and county residents, and therefore, believe no changes are necessary at this time.

This agenda is not meant to be an exhaustive listing of all issues but to serve as a guide to matters of concern to the Board of County Supervisors and the community at large.

Prince William County looks forward to working with the county delegation to the Virginia General Assembly during the course of the 2023 session. Staff will also work closely with the county's federal delegation to accomplish the goals of the Board and the community.

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