



VACAP NEWS

February 2025

Inside this Issue

- Save the Date for VACAP May Regional Meetings
 - VACAP Legislative Conference Wrap-Up
 - USDA Grant Opportunity: Distance Learning/Telehealth
 - Serve Virginia's 2025 Virginia Volunteerism Summit: Early Bird Tickets Available
 - Governor Youngkin Announces Over \$23.6 Million in CDBG Block Grants
 - Virginia's Senior Groups Advocate in Richmond
 - VDSS Launches New Lock/Unlock Feature for SNAP/EBT cards & ConnectEBT
 - SERCAP Project Featured on Appalachian Housing Podcast
 - Two Upcoming Virtual Trainings from NCAP
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Save the Date for VACAP May Regional Meetings

Join VACAP and your Community Action peers in May 2025 for regional meetings as we gather leaders in your respective subject matter area and strategic sponsors for a day of networking and training. Tentative timing for each meeting is 9:30 AM – 2:00 PM.

May 8 – join us in Williamsburg at the College of William and Mary's School of Education

May 13 – join us in Wytheville at the Wytheville Meeting Center.

Registration and additional details will be available soon. You are welcome to attend either or both meetings. Please add the date and location to your calendar and we'll see you in May!

VACAP Legislative Conference Wrap-Up

Last week, more than 110 attendees joined us in Richmond, Virginia for our annual Legislative Conference. This year's conference featured an Energy and Weatherization Symposium and other educational training sessions. On February 12, over 30 Community Action advocates braced the weather and participated in several visits with the General Assembly and their staffs, focusing on investment in the Whole Family Approach and Community Action hold harmless funding, our top priorities for the 2025 Legislative Session.



USDA Grant Opportunity for Distance Learning and Telehealth Programs

The USDA Distance Learning and Telehealth Grants are designed to assist communities with virtual programming to reach rural populations. \$40 million in funding is available through grants with a 15% non-federal match required. Awards range from \$50,000 to \$1 million, and applications are due March 6, 2025.

Learn more and apply here: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/telecommunications-programs/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants>

Serve Virginia's 2025 VA Volunteerism Summit: Early Bird Tickets Available

The Serve Virginia 2025 Virginia Volunteerism Summit will take place virtually on May 14-15, with follow-up in-person SERVE convenings in June.

Keynote speakers for this year's Summit include Dr. Akilah Watkins and Manu Meel. Participants will engage in workshops to learn best practices, co-create new ideas, and hear insights from new studies and service plans specific to Virginia.

Early bird tickets are available through March 11, and cost \$75 for individuals or \$70 each for group registrations.

Learn more and register here: <https://servevirginia.org/find-resources/virginia-volunteerism-summit/>

Governor Youngkin Announces Over \$23.6 Million in CDBG Block Grants

On February 6, Governor Youngkin announced awards for 33 Virginia projects through its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program to rehabilitate housing, revitalize downtown districts, and improve water and sewer infrastructure.

STEP, Inc. is involved in an award from this program through partnership with its local Franklin County government. Funding will support planning for the STEP, Inc. Pathways for Program Expansion project.

Learn more here about the CDBG awardees here:

<https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/news-releases/2025/february/name-1040690-en.html>

Virginia's Senior Groups Advocate in Richmond

VACAP Board Member Donna Smith from the Eastern Shore AAA/CAA is spotlighted in the article below for her advocacy efforts for seniors.

On Wednesday, February 5, about 200 senior citizens from 25 Area Agencies on Aging traveled to Richmond to advocate for funding to improve the quality of life for the state's more than 2 million residents over the age of 60.

Read more in the article here: <https://www.wvtf.org/news/2025-02-05/virginias-senior-groups-advocate-in-richmond>

VDSS Launches New Lock/Unlock Feature for SNAP/EBT cards & ConnectEBT

The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) has announced the launch of a new lock/unlock feature for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards. Those connected with the ConnectEBT app are able to lock their card right after making a purchase, and then unlock it immediately before they use it again. This new anti-theft feature aims to reduce skimming and other fraudulent activities that ultimately reduce benefits from customer accounts.

Learn more here: <https://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/EBTLockUnlock/>

SERCAP Project Featured on Appalachian Housing Podcast

SERCAP staff Kenneth Rodgers and Evangeline Richie recently appeared on the WV Public Broadcasting podcast *Housing Options are Few & Far Between in Appalachia*.

Kenneth and Evangeline discussed SERCAP's Indoor Plumbing and Rehabilitation program, which is designed for low- to moderate-income homeowners who have no indoor plumbing, no potable water, or a failed septic system. The podcast highlights SERCAP's efforts in the context of decreased funding through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for federal assistance programs, and a larger proportion of Appalachian low- to moderate-income homeowners living in homes built before 1930.

Learn more and listen to the podcast here: <https://wvpublic.org/us-them-housing-options-are-few-far-between-in-appalachia/>

Two Upcoming Virtual Trainings from NCAP

- 1. The Power of Partnership: How CAAs and Workforce Boards Can Collaborate for Success – Tuesday, February 25 at 1:00PM ET**

Collaboration between Community Action Agencies (CAAs) and local workforce boards plays a vital role in workforce development and community impact. This webinar, hosted in partnership with the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB), will explore the role of workforce boards and provide actionable strategies for building effective partnerships.

Register for The Power of Partnership here:

<https://communityactionpartnership.zoom.us/meeting/register/bvEeMoIvSKSPjW86N-bnFw#/registration>

- 2. Understanding the Upward Mobility Framework, Part 1**

Discover how the Upward Mobility Framework can help your agency and partners to advance upward mobility and create change that promotes greater opportunity and prosperity for all. NCAP staff, Community Action Agency (CAA) leaders, and experts from the Upward Mobility Initiative Team at the Urban Institute have planned a two-part learning series to introduce the Upward Mobility Framework and spotlight its use in several CAAs. This framework is an evidence-based foundation that defines upward mobility and the factors that influence it. The suite of tools developed by the Urban Institute team includes an Upward Mobility Data Dashboard to help local leaders measure and promote upward mobility in every county and over 480 cities.

Part One of this series, led by the Urban Institute, will introduce the framework's three-part definition of social and economic mobility, economic success, power and autonomy, and dignity and belonging.

Register for Understanding the Upward Mobility Framework, Part 1 here:

https://communityactionpartnership.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_w4xZRsdpS823ugurRUKirg#/registration