

2017 General Assembly Wrap-Up

Here's a look at how the bills and budget items supported by the Virginia Housing Alliance fared in the 2017 General Assembly session.



VHA SUPPORTED BUDGET ITEMS

Permanent Supportive Housing-Additional \$5 Million- After receiving gains in the biennial budget last year, funding for permanent supportive housing was more than doubled from \$4.27 million a year to \$9.27 million in FY17-18. This funding is administered by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, targeted at serving those with serious mental illness. This budget amendment was a recommendation of the Deeds Commission.

Housing Trust Fund-Defended Last Year's Gains- In 2016, the Housing Trust Fund received an additional \$3 million in the biennial budget bringing the fund up to \$5.5 million a year for FY17 and FY18. The General Assembly maintained the new funding level for FY17 this session, without attempting to make any cuts in the Senate or House budget for the first time. VHA did not seek additional funding for the Housing Trust Fund in the 2017 session.

Housing Strategies for Mentally Ill Virginians (Item 108 #1c)- This budget item directs the Department of Housing and Community Development along with relevant state agencies and stakeholders including VHA to develop and implement housing strategies for individuals with serious mental illness (SMI) that may include Medicaid financing of housing supportive services. This item combines language from two recommendations of the Deeds Commission.



VHA SUPPORTED BILLS THAT PASSED



HB 2457 (Del. Garrett)- This bill permits the sharing of data, records, and information about applicants for and recipients of services from the 10 agencies under the Health and Human Resources Secretariat, for the purposes of reducing administrative costs for the agencies, reducing paperwork and administrative burdens on service recipients, and increasing access to and quality of services provided by the agencies.

HB 1936 (Del. Carr)- This bill enables localities in Virginia to give Land Banks the power of receivership, making them more effective at repairing and rehabilitating abandoned and blighted buildings that are a drag on many Virginia communities and neighborhoods. In 2016, VHA supported a bill that enabled localities in Virginia to establish Land Banks, a tool that helps communities implement a consistent, proactive strategy for addressing vacant and abandoned properties by turning them into new housing, commercial buildings, and community facilities.



VHA SUPPORTED BILLS THAT FAILED



SB 822 (Sen. Wexton)/ HB 2129 (Del. Levine)- This bill would make it illegal for landlords and others to deny a person housing based solely on their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. Senator Wexton's bill passed the Senate for the second time in 2017 before being tabled in the House.

SB1137 (Del. Mason)- This bill would use the Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) credit to make the credits go farther by lowering the percentage of a donation that can be taken as a credit from 65% to 50% by 2020 which would allow non-profit organizations to obtain more donations from a larger donor pool. NAP credits are a tool to encourage individuals, trusts and businesses to make donations to non-profit organizations for the benefit of low-income Virginians in return for a tax credit.

HB 1899 (Del. Bell)- This bill would exempt onsite proffers related to affordable dwelling units from provisions that determine whether a proffer is unreasonable. In 2016, a bill passed the General Assembly that reformed the proffer system in the state, changing the criteria for what is considered a reasonable onsite proffer in Virginia.