

STRONGER TOGETHER

BUILDING BRIDGES,
EMPOWERING CHANGE

Virginia Funders Network 4th Annual Conference

Presented by



Monday, April 28, 2025

10:00am Registration Opens

12:00pm Welcome Plenary | Meeting the Moment: Philanthropy's Role in a Time of Change

How should philanthropy lead in today's constantly changing environment to ensure Virginia communities are thriving? How do we use active listening in our work with grantees to demonstrate empathy and understanding when they face the pressures of uncertain funding and negative public perception? How do we stay true to our philanthropic missions? During this opening session for the 2025 Conference, we will learn about the state of nonprofits, hear how philanthropy is stepping up to lead, explore the changing demographics of Virginia and its economic impact on our communities, and celebrate examples of Virginia funders who are meeting the moment.

Location: Lansdowne Ballroom AB

Planning Team:

- Edgar Aranda-Yanoc, The Meyer Foundation
- Mary Fant Donnan, The Alleghany Foundation
- Jill McCormick, Jackson Foundation
- Heather Peeler, ACT for Alexandria

Speakers:

- Phil Buchanan, The Center for Effective Philanthropy
- Dr. Qian Cai, Weldon Cooper Center
- Sean McMurray, Wellspring Foundation of Southwest Virginia
- Heather Peeler, ACT for Alexandria
- Ricshawn Adkins Roane, Weissberg Foundation
- Stephanie Sneed, The Meyer Foundation

Sponsors:



2:00pm Breakout Session | Identifying New Opportunities for Rural Community Growth

Rural communities are central to Virginia's identity, economy, and future prosperity. Yet, they've long been held back by inadequate investments in areas such as infrastructure, healthcare, and education. This lack of opportunity has contributed to the loss of residents, lessening human capital, and stifling growth and vitality in many communities. With the right resources and support, these regions have the potential to thrive. This session will highlight three programs and tools, all rooted in best practices, that communities can access to uplift rural voices, strengthen leadership, and create opportunities.

Location: Lansdowne Ballroom D

Planning Team:

- Lincoln Boykin, River Counties Community Foundation
- Jarrod Elwell, Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond
- Bonita Robertson-Hardy, Aspen Institute
- Sarah Reardon, Jessie Ball duPont Fund
- Chandler Vaughan, Virginia Rural Center

Speakers:

- Jason Smith, Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond
- Bonita Robertson-Hardy, Aspen Institute
- Chandler Vaughan, Virginia Rural Center

Sponsors:



Supporting Sponsors: Department of Housing and Community Development | River Counties Community Foundation

2:00pm Breakout Session | Philanthropy's Role in Policy & Advocacy During a Time of Change

At this time of change, philanthropy has a crucial opportunity to educate and influence members of the public and policymakers about the impact of our work with partners in communities. This breakout session will focus on the tools and rules of policy and advocacy, and highlight how we can work within our organization and with community partners to make a difference. Funders will talk about how they got started and the journey they are on in policy and advocacy, and can learn from other attendees in small group discussions.

Location: Faulkner

Planning Team:

- Kisha Bwenge, Charlottesville Area Community Foundation
- Julia McKay, Bainum Family Foundation
- Meg Pienkowski, Robins Foundation
- Brandi Yee, ACT for Alexandria

Speakers:

- Kisha Bwenge, Charlottesville Area Community Foundation
- Rebecca Cisek, Bainum Foundation
- Brian Johns, Virginia Organizing
- Abby Levine, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Brandi Yee, ACT for Alexandria (*moderator*)

Sponsors:



2:00pm **Breakout Session | Impacting the Environment and Our Communities through Grantmaking and Collaboration**

For the past 2 conferences, VFN has supported members' journey to recognize the intersections between our environment and many of our priority funding areas such as health, housing, economic development, and social justice. The environment can provide a lens for unity among seemingly disparate priorities and communities. We've also introduced members to some of the many organizations supporting this critical work.

This year, we're bringing together members to talk about how they are all approaching the environmental space. You'll learn how recent federal actions are impacting our air, water, land, and climate and what funders can do in response to helping their communities and the Commonwealth. You will also learn how funders have worked together to make a difference in environmental health and community resilience. And, at a time when so much is at stake, you will be asked if you wish to be a part of a growing community of those interested in learning and supporting environmentally related opportunities at the state, regional, and/or local levels.

Location: Lansdowne C

Planning Team & Speakers:

- Lincoln Boykin, River Counties Community Foundation
- Emily MacCartney, Virginia Natural Gas
- Joe Maroon, Virginia Environmental Endowment
- Megan McPherson, Chesapeake Bay Funders Network
- Sari Raskin, Community Foundation for Northern Virginia (*moderator*)

Supporting Sponsors: Community Foundation for Northern Virginia | Virginia Environmental Endowment | Virginia Natural Gas

2:00pm **Breakout Session | Are We Better Together: Can Community Collaboration Improve Our Philanthropic Efforts?**

This session will highlight three different models of community collaboration in their various stages of maturity (emerging, recently launched/growing, and mature). Attendees will hear essential information about how these collaborations developed, how to effectively partner with community organizations and public entities, including understanding the different types of collaborations, key considerations for building successful partnerships, strategies for navigating diverse perspectives, and best practices for measuring impact and sustainability within community projects. Join us to learn more about SAW Housing in the Central Blue Ridge, Carver Food Enterprise Center in the Piedmont region, and Our Health in Winchester.

Location: Bacon

Planning Team:

- Jarrod Elwell, Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond
- Shara Gibson, GO Virginia (*moderator*)
- Dan Layman, Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge
- Lisa O'Mara, Locus
- Rebecca Rowe, Department of Housing and Community Development

Speakers:

- Sharen Gromling, Our Health
- Dan Layman, Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge
- Lenah Nguyen, Virginia Cooperative Extension

Sponsor:



4:30pm Welcome Reception

Join us for the official kick-off of VFN's 4th Annual Conference and help celebrate with friends, heavy appetizers, and drinks!

Location: Pavilion

Speakers:

- Paulin Cheatham, Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation
- Dr. Bill Hazel, Claude Moore Opportunities
- Stephanie Nerantzis, Claude Moore Charitable Foundation
- Phyllis Randall, Loudoun County Chair of the Board of Supervisors

Special performance by [A Place to Be](#)

Sponsor:



Supporting Sponsor: Community Foundation for Loudoun and Northern Fauquier Counties

Tuesday, April 29, 2025

7:00am Breakfast in Riverside Hearth

8:30am Morning Plenary | Workforce Collaboration Models for Economic Mobility

A strong workforce pipeline requires an ecosystem that engages government, education, and business. Philanthropy's inclusion in this ecosystem strengthens collaboration. Philanthropic dollars provide flexibility, can fill gaps, and test innovative solutions.

In this session, we will hear from Virginia's leaders in government, education, business, and philanthropy who are working together to ensure that the Commonwealth's approach to workforce development provides economic mobility for individuals and creates the workforce needed for a community—and the entire Commonwealth—to thrive.

Location: Lansdowne Ballroom AB

Planning Team:

- Scott Andrews-Weckerly, The Community Foundation for a greater Richmond
- Abigail Hollingsworth, Bank of America
- Stephanie Nerantzis, Claude Moore Charitable Foundation
- Polly Raible, Delta Dental of Virginia Foundation

Speakers:

- Kirk Cox, Virginia Business Higher Education Council
- Dr. David Dore, Virginia Community College System
- Dr. Bill Hazel, Claude Moore Opportunities (*moderator*)
- Abigail Hollingsworth, Bank of America
- Sarah Holland, Virginia Health Catalyst
- Nicole Overlay, Virginia Works
- Polly Raible, Delta Dental of Virginia Foundation
- Bryan Slater, Secretary of Labor
- Sean Terrell, Reynolds Community College

Sponsor:



Supporting Sponsor: Altria

10:30am Deep Dive Session | Best Practices in Disaster Philanthropy

Virginia communities have faced natural hazards and human-made and technical disasters. Just last fall, Hurricane Helene caused flooding and major damage to Southwest Virginia communities where nearly 4,300 households were approved for Individual Household Assistance from FEMA. Virginia funders quickly responded to provide timely resources to support those impacted.

What are the best practices for funders to support communities when these tragedies occur? What lessons can be learned from those who have been engaged in disaster philanthropy efforts? During this session, Tanya Gulliver-Garcia, Director of Advisory and Education Services at the Center for Disaster Philanthropy, will lead a conversation about philanthropy's role and provide tips for when to respond and how to do so effectively.

Location: Bacon

Planning Team:

- Jarrod Elwell, Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond
- Sandy Strayer, The Harvest Foundation

Speakers:

- Tanya Gulliver-Garcia, Center for Disaster Philanthropy

Sponsors:



10:30am Deep Dive Session | Building a Local News Ecosystem in Virginia

During last year's Conference, VFN launched a discussion about philanthropy's role in addressing the loss of local news outlets and the loss of reporters covering local news, both of which negatively impact community cohesion, civic participation, and government accountability.

Join us as we discuss the collaborative work that has occurred this past year to explore solutions to this challenge. This session will unveil the results of a landscape analysis conducted by the Karsh Institute of Democracy on Virginia's local news ecosystem and explore the next steps in creating a Virginia Press Forward Chapter to ensure that every Virginia community has reliable and vibrant local news that amplifies stories *about* and *for* everyone.

Location: Lansdowne Ballroom C

Planning Team:

- Stefanie Abbott, The Karsh Institute of Democracy at UVA
- Michael Bolden, American Press Institute
- Matthew Gibson, Virginia Humanities
- Holly Hatcher, Anne & Gene Worrell Foundation
- Amy Petty, PATH Foundation

Speakers:

- Stefanie Abbott, The Karsh Institute of Democracy at UVA
- Michael Bolden, American Press Institute
- Jessica Kimpell Johnson, The Karsh Institute of Democracy at UVA

Sponsor:



Supporting Sponsor: American Press Institute

10:30am **Deep Dive Session | Value of Research to Funding Decisions**

How does research add value to the work of philanthropy? How do funders use research as tools for more than grantmaking decisions? In this session, you will hear from four VFN members who will share their journey to incorporate research and data in their approach. Learn how funders develop the capacity within their organizations to create the internal infrastructure to support research activities and how they use data to engage their partners and stakeholders to strengthen their communities.

Location: Faulkner

Planning Team & Speakers:

- Isabel Eljaiek, The Community Foundation for a greater Richmond
- Mike Monteith, Peninsula Community Foundation of Virginia (*retired*)
- Sari Raskin, Community Foundation for Northern Virginia
- Courtney Rice, Northern Virginia Health Foundation
- Katina Williams, United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg

Sponsors:



10:30am Deep Dive Session | Impact Investing

In a rapidly shifting economic and political landscape, impact investing stands as one of philanthropy's most powerful tools for creating systemic change. As funders across Virginia seek to align investments with community priorities, this session offers an opportunity for deep reflection and strategic dialogue. Join us and engage in an honest, exploratory conversation about the opportunities and challenges of investing for impact in today's climate. Participants will walk away with insights on leveraging impact investments, how to navigate emerging risks and opportunities, and how to foster board alignment around impact investing as a means of advancing mission-driven work.

Location: Lansdowne Ballroom D

Planning Team:

- Chris Crothers, Jessie Ball duPont Fund
- Michelle Nelson, The Community Foundation for a greater Richmond
- Lisa O'Mara, Locus
- Stephanie Randolph, Purple Tiger Impact

Speakers:

- Kecia Easley, Impact Experience
- Jenna Nicholas, Impact Experience

Sponsors:



Supporting Sponsor: Virginia CDFI Coalition

12:00pm Lunch Plenary | Meeting the Moment: Innovations in Health Access for All

As philanthropy, we are called to meet the moment and ensure all who live in Virginia have access to quality, affordable care. This session describes how Virginia funders can respond to unmet need for health care in our communities and most vulnerable populations, and will highlight innovative programs serving specific populations. Hemi Tewarson, Executive Director of the National Association of State Health Policy (NASHP) will reflect on the current state of health access in the US and in states, including Virginia. This will be followed by several examples of philanthropic innovations in health access in Virginia. This session is designed to inspire us to take action in policy, programming, and narrative change/storytelling strategies.

Location: Lansdowne Ballroom AB

Planning Team:

- Reggie Gordon, Richmond Memorial Health Foundation
- Krystal Moyers, Augusta Health
- Erin Matthews Thomas, Potomac Health Foundation
- Suzy Quinn, Inova Health Foundation

Speakers:

- Dr. Sage Bolte, Inova
- Isaac Izzillo, Augusta Health
- Alex Gorny, Fenwick Foundation
- Edward Jones, ABFE (*moderator*)
- Kendra Jones, Richmond Memorial Health Foundation
- Alexandra Luevano, Mercy Free Medical Clinic
- Hemi Tewarson, National Association of State Health Policy

Sponsors:

Supporting Sponsor: Potomac Health Foundation

2:00pm **Role Based Learning Session | Program Officers**

Program officers and grantmaking staff sit at the intersection of nonprofit partners, foundation priorities, and a rapidly changing world. Building off of the March Program Officer Coffee & Conversation meeting, this interactive session will explore practical ways we can support nonprofits beyond grant funding. Participants will learn about a framework for types of capital in addition to financial resources that can be used to strengthen relationships and broaden opportunities for nonprofit organizations. Come ready to connect, share experiences, exchange ideas, and uplift creative strategies to support nonprofits in this moment.

Location: Faulkner

Planning Team & Speakers:

- Fiona Charles, Obici Healthcare Foundation
- Brandy Cramer, The Cameron Foundation
- Susan Hallett, Bob and Anna Lou Schaberg Foundation
- Joshua Hearne, Danville Regional Foundation
- Rachel Lynch, Northern Virginia Health Foundation
- Jessica Mullen, Obici Healthcare Foundation

Sponsor:



2:00pm **Role Based Learning Session | Finance**

Join your colleagues for the first annual finance role-based learning session at the VFN conference and get to know others who share a similar role or similar professional interests in member organizations across the Commonwealth. This session will focus on networking and Hot Topics for Finance professionals. Examples of Hot Topics to be discussed are budgeting, investment management, and financial storytelling. If you are a finance staff or board member, or interested in finance, this session is for you!

Location: Bacon

Planning Team & Speakers:

- Linda Hall, Atlantic Union Bank
- Rusty Little, Wellspring Foundation of Southwest Virginia
- Michelle Nelson, The Community Foundation for a greater Richmond
- Grant Pearse, PATH Foundation

Supporting Sponsor: Atlantic Union Bank

2:15pm **Role Based Learning Session | Trustees**

Join your fellow trustees for this afternoon workshop and interactive session to explore your unique role as fiduciaries, stewards, strategy leaders, and organizational champions. How do you keep your eye on the long game amid short-term disruptions? What are the issues top of mind for trustees, and how can you effectively address them? How do you navigate leadership changes both at the staff and board level? During this peer-to-peer gathering, participants will learn, share, and build connections in a trustee-only space.

Location: Lansdowne AB & D

Planning Team:

- Elizabeth Cabell Jennings, Clearview Fiduciary Alliance & Cabell Foundation (*Trustee*)
- Susie Lee, Northern Virginia Health Foundation (*Trustee*)
- David Nicosia, Truist Foundations and Endowments Specialty Practice
- Mike Sahakian, Truist Foundations and Endowments Specialty Practice

Speakers:

- Eileen Johnson, Whiteford, Taylor & Preston LLP

Sponsor:



2:15pm **Role Based Learning Session | Chief Executive Officers**

CEOs provide a strategic vision that leads to transformational change within an organization. For CEOs of philanthropic organizations, this vision includes one for the communities they serve. How do CEOs navigate the myriad demands and roles of their jobs, inspire and tend to the well-being of their teams, maintain the confidence of their boards, stay current with legal responsibilities, and lead in times of change? With opportunities to discuss the issues that are top of mind for leaders and learn from each other, this session will explore the answers to these questions and more.

Location: Lansdowne Ballroom AB & C

Planning Team:

- Nadine Marsh Carter, The Cameron Foundation
- Amy Nisenson, The Mary Morton Parsons Foundation
- Jennifer Owens, Arlington Community Foundation
- Jessica Wirgau, Community Foundation of the New River Valley

Speaker:

- Eileen Johnson, Whiteford, Taylor & Preston LLP

Sponsor:

The Mary Morton
Parsons Foundation



4:30pm **VIP Reception**

We invite current and former members of VFN's Advisory Board to join with the members of VFN's Sustainers Circle for a time of celebrating all that we have accomplished together.

Invitation to follow.

Location: Terrace

5:30pm **Dine Arouds**

We invite guests to join one of the dine arounds nearby to connect and share a meal with peers! Dine around groups include: Community Foundations, Corporate members, Trustees, CEOs, Program Officers, Finance members, Health Legacy, Family Foundations, or simply connect with others.

7:30pm **Wine & Wishes for Virginia Philanthropy in 2025 and Beyond**

After a dinner with colleagues and friends, join us for a fun, interactive session to unwind with wine and share your wishes for funder practices in 2025 and beyond. What do you wish Virginia funders did more of? What do you wish Virginia funders did less of? We'll celebrate VFN's 5th Anniversary with cake and wonderful Loudoun County wines (or the beverage of your choice). Our "birthday wishes" will be shared at the end of the conference.

Location: Lansdowne Ballroom Foyer

Planning Team:

- Lincoln Boykin, River Counties Community Foundation
- Fiona Charles, Obici Healthcare Foundation
- Kelly Thomasson, Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation

Special performance by the Loudoun Symphony

Sponsor:



Wednesday, April 30, 2025

6:45am **Walk/Run**

Location: Meet across from Coton & Rye

7:00am **Breakfast in Riverside Hearth**

Sponsor:



8:45am **Breakout Session | AI in Philanthropy's Work: Knowing More is an Absolute Necessity**

Curious about what AI actually means for philanthropy (besides all the buzzwords)? This session offers a friendly, practical walk-through of how AI is showing up in our sector—from the basics to the bold. We'll talk about what organizational needs before diving into tools, explore real-life use cases, and even get into the cool and not-so-cool sides of AI (think: time-saving hacks vs. privacy headaches). There'll be interactive exercises, a peek at what Google Gemini can do, and plenty of space to ask questions—no tech background required.

Location: Bacon

Planning Team:

- Andy Johnston, PATH Foundation

- Mike Monteith, Peninsula Community Foundation of Virginia (*retired*)
- Courtney Rice, Northern Virginia Health Foundation
- Albert Walker, Richmond Memorial Health Foundation

Speakers:

- Alan Delbridge, The Community Foundation for a greater Richmond
- Alex Mouw, Amazon Web Services

8:45am Breakout Session | Attainable and Affordable Housing

Attainable, affordable, accessible, and safe housing continues to be a number one concern for Virginia's residents and communities. There is a role for all sectors - government, business, and the social (nonprofit) sector - in providing affordable and workforce housing. Virginia funders are using a continuum of strategies to address community needs, from thought partnership to building and preserving housing, from public education to providing wrap-around services or supports. Join this breakout session to learn more about what other funders are doing to ensure attainable and affordable housing in their communities. Join us to learn more about VFN's new publication, Finding your Lane: Housing Affordability Action Guide for Virginia Funders.

Location: Lansdowne Ballroom C

Planning Team:

- Nicole Acosta, Community Foundation for Loudoun and Northern Fauquier Counties
- Sean McMurray, Wellspring Foundation of Southwest Virginia
- Mayana Rice, Appalachian Highlands Housing Partners
- Chris Thompson, Virginia Housing

Speakers:

- Nicole Acosta, Community Foundation for Loudoun and Northern Fauquier Counties
- Andy Davenport, Community Housing Partners
- Jill Norcross, Northern Virginia Housing Alliance
- Jake Powell, Community Housing Partners
- Scott Andrews-Weckerly, The Community Foundation for a greater Richmond

Sponsor:



8:45am Breakout Session | Capacity & Durability Building for the Nonprofit Sector

The sustainability of the nonprofit sector is top-of-mind for funders, especially during times of disruption and sudden change. What is philanthropy's role in supporting nonprofits to create the infrastructure necessary for stability during this time of uncertainty? What strategies did funders use during the COVID-19 pandemic that can inform our work now? This session will explore grantmaking practices built on engagement with community partners and ways funders are working together to create resilience in the nonprofit sector. Attendees will leave this session with tips for immediate action and ideas for ways to build proactive solutions for the long-term.

Location: Conant

Planning Team:

- Nicole Acosta, Community Foundation for Loudoun and Northern Fauquier Counties
- Fiona Charles, Obici Healthcare Foundation
- Joshua Hearne, Danville Regional Foundation
- Wendy McGrady, The Curtis Group

Speakers:

- Darius Graham, Greater Washington Community Foundation
- Joshua Hearne, Danville Regional Foundation

Supporting Sponsor: Northern Virginia Health Foundation

8:45am

Breakout Session | Finding Low Barrier and Nontraditional Approaches to Virginia's Youth Mental Health Crisis

Like many states, Virginia continues to be overwhelmed with mental health crises and day-to-day needs, especially for our youth. What can funders do to help address specific areas of need as the landscape of programs and approaches continues to expand as well? This session will identify some key factors in understanding the landscape through multiple lenses – programming, training, and sustainability – and multiple approaches for addressing youth mental health in your community using low barrier or nontraditional approaches.

Location: Lansdowne Ballroom D

Planning Team & Speakers:

- Lisa Baehre, Sandler Center Foundation
- Analise Gammel, Serve Virginia
- Andrea Lancaster, Virginia Health Care Foundation
- Damion Perkins, Kaiser Permanente
- Vinetta Shah, Jenkins Foundation

Sponsor:



Supporting Sponsor: Anonymous | Kaiser Permanente | Sandler Center Foundation

10:00am

Closing Plenary | Caregiving & Wellbeing, and VFN Updates

According to recent studies, there are more than five million paid caregivers nationally and estimates of unpaid caregivers, including children and adolescents, are in the tens of millions. What are their stories, and how are their experiences interwoven with the broader context of the cultural and economic conditions in the U.S., leading to a care system tipping into crisis?

This closing session of the conference will explore these questions and the role that philanthropy can play in addressing solutions to this often unrecognized and rapidly increasing need. Be the first to see key scenes from *Caregiving*, a new 2-hour documentary series, executive produced by Bradley Cooper, a production of Lea Pictures and WETA Washington, D.C., in association with Ark Media, scheduled to air on PBS stations nationwide in June 2025. The screenings will be followed by remarks from the documentary's executive producer Tom Chiodo and a conversation moderated by NBC News / MSNBC anchor and caregiver Richard Lui, with Jessica Guthrie, a Virginia caregiver featured in the short film, and representatives from VFN member organizations.

Location: Lansdowne Ballroom AB

Planning Team:

- Erin Hogan, Bank of America
- David Shang, PATH Foundation

Speakers:

- Tom Chiodo, WETA
- Jessica Guthrie (*Caregiver*)
- Andy Johnston, PATH Foundation
- Richard Lui, MSNBC/NBC News
- Marcia Cox-Mitchell, Bainum Family Foundation

Sponsors:



PATH FOUNDATION

12:00 pm Adjourn