

Virginia Executive Institute

VEI Fall 2025 - Leadership Challenge Topics

1. Mind the Gap: Workforce Retirements and the Loss of Institutional Wisdom

Virginia's public workforce stands at a pivotal moment. A wave of retirements among long-serving employees threatens to create gaps in institutional knowledge, technical expertise, and critical skills just as state agencies face increasing demands for innovation in technology, data, and service delivery. Without deliberate action, this transition could slow the Commonwealth's ability to deliver efficient, high-quality services to its citizens. This leadership challenge will focus on strategies to review and suggest improvements to the Commonwealth policy on dual incumbency and devise a recommendation on how to capture and transfer institutional knowledge before it is lost, the outcome of which will strengthen the pipeline of new talent with the skills and agility required to meet evolving public service demands. By proactively addressing these challenges, the Commonwealth can preserve its legacy of expertise while cultivating a workforce that is adaptive, innovative, and prepared for the future.

Anton Daniel, VDC; Jamey Doran, VITA; Wendy Howard Cooper, VDOT; Charlotte Lee, Compensation Board; Karen Schettino, VA Tax

2. Invisible No More: Increasing Project Lifesaver Awareness

The proposed initiative aims to expand Virginia's Project Lifesaver program to enhance the safety and well-being of individuals with cognitive disorders, such as Alzheimer's disease, autism, Down syndrome, and other conditions that predispose them to wandering. By increasing statewide access to this life-saving services and awareness, we seek to reduce the risks associated with wandering and provide peace of mind to families and caregivers.

Ray Dunkle, Virginia Lottery; Chiquita Hills, VA Tax; Colleen Maxwell VPB; Lauren Mollerup VDOT; Laverne Morris, VSU

3. Smart Commonwealth: AI Literacy for All

Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming how we work and interact with others, and as it becomes embedded in public services and the workforce, state employees must be equipped with the knowledge and skills to engage with AI safely and effectively. This project seeks to strengthen AI literacy across state government by evaluating risks such as privacy, misinformation, and ethical concerns, while also identifying best practices for targeted messaging and training. The project will consider successful state initiatives to extract strategies that can be tailored to Virginia's workforce, and it will research how to present AI safety awareness and training. The project will culminate with recommendations for outreach, education, and collaboration.

Bryant Bays, VDF; Tamarah Holmes, Ph.D, DHCD; Sumi Lanneau, VA Energy; Scott Marshall, SCC; Megan Scanlon, Court of Appeals

4. Empowering the Digital Citizens of the Future

Our group project will focus on measures to empower young Virginians to be strong digital citizens, take ownership of their digital lives, and avoid scams and fraud. As technology advances and new trends emerge, including advanced phishing techniques, additional increased outreach and education are needed. Our primary focus will be approaches to equip schools to educate K-12 students about the essentials of digital citizenship.

Shawn Casey, CCA; Mike Cizenski, SCC; Lauren Cunningham, DBHDS; Samantha Guzman, DPOR; Theresa Hunter, DFP

