

Virginia Executive Institute

VEI Spring 2025 - Leadership Challenge Topics

1. Virginia Forward – Reimagining Digital Access to Government Services

As the Commonwealth evolves, there's a growing need to demonstrate the value of government services and deliver a seamless digital experience for citizens. Virginia Forward proposes a bold transformation of Virginia's digital presence through a reimagined *Virginia.gov*. By leveraging AI—intuitive search, smart chatbots, and cross-agency tools—we aim to build a one-stop hub for accessing government services. This initiative enhances transparency, trust, efficiency, and accessibility. With a unified brand, performance dashboards, and consistent user experience across agency sites, Virginia Forward positions the state as a leader in digital government—drawing on best practices nationwide and globally to build a future-ready Commonwealth.

Kim Barton: DVS, Luke Black: VADOC, Melissa Gordon: VDH, Holly Mortlock: SCC, Stacy Pendleton: DHRM, Harvey Powers: DCJS

2. Designing a More Human-Centered Virginia

The Commonwealth is investing in modern technology and infrastructure, yet agencies face significant challenges with effectively implementing new systems due to a misalignment between new system capabilities and needs. To address the challenges, we propose a human-centered design approach. Human-centered design focuses on incorporating feedback from all stakeholders (those who are using the system and system outputs) into the design and implementation of systems and processes to address the needs, experiences, and challenges of both the agency's employees and the citizens they serve. It replaces assumptions with data from stakeholders. Our leadership challenge will conclude with an opportunity to increase human-centered design in the design and deployment of government platforms.

Cindi Fellows: DMV, Matt Gomez: DSS, Lauren Govoni: SCC, Heather Legere: DVS, Deanna Oware: DRPT, Mike Palmer: TAX

3. Pathways to Purpose: Promoting Jobs in Virginia State Government

Virginia state government offers a wide range of career opportunities, but many young job seekers are not aware of them. Agencies face challenges attracting younger workers and often see high turnover within the first five years—largely due to a lack of early career pathway visibility. Navigating the current job portal is difficult without prior knowledge, limiting access to available roles. This proposal introduces a three-part solution: a job search tool tailored to entry-level applicants, outreach materials for schools, and an annual career fair to highlight public sector careers. Additional efforts include a self-guided exploration app, a marketing toolkit for educators, and an “Open House” event where agencies can connect directly with students—helping to fill critical vacancies and build a stronger future workforce.

Nancy Chen: TAX, Brendan Delbos: DWR, Elizabeth Lee: DSS, Emily Stock: DRPT

4. Leveraging Veteran Talent to Fill Critical Roles in Virginia State Government

Virginia state agencies can have difficulty filling certain critical state employee positions. These jobs often require specialized skills and experience that align with the training and expertise of military veterans. Virginia could leverage the highly qualified military veteran population to help fill critical state agency positions. To research this topic, we will identify types of Virginia state agency positions that are difficult to fill, determine what Virginia state programs currently exist to help veterans fill these positions, determine how other states attract veterans to fill critical state agency positions, and brainstorm opportunities to improve existing state programs or create new state programs.

Naveen Abraham: VITA, Lauren Axelle: JLARC, Terry Crockett: VA529, Eric Johnson: DVS, Phyllis Poole: DSS

