



# Resilience Coordination Working Group

*Meeting Summary June 27, 2023*

## **Opening Remarks**

Matthew Wells, Director, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (VDCR)

## **Welcome & Working Group Charge and Workplan Review**

Presented by the Performance Management Group (PMG)

This Working Group is being established by the Chief Resilience Officer in furtherance of Governor Youngkin's goal of addressing challenges related to flooding and resilience, and in the spirit of engaging collaboratively with the General Assembly on this important issue. The Working Group will have the following purposes:

- To consider and assess strategies and policies for the Commonwealth to improve intergovernmental and interagency coordination; and
- To maximize the procurement of federal and private funding opportunities in planning for and implementing flood resilience throughout the Commonwealth.

Facilitators from PMG restated the working group scope of work and plan/schedule for the remaining work including opportunities for all members to review drafts of the report recommendations before it is finalized. It was highlighted that all proposed recommendations within the final report will continue to be developed and reviewed by the working group during monthly meetings.

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### Information Sharing: Working Group Draft Recommendations

Presented by PMG

Revised draft recommendations for improving resiliency planning and coordination in Virginia were presented for discussion. These draft recommendations were sent to working group members in advance on Thursday, June 22. Draft recommendations included feedback provided by the working group at the May meeting as well as verbiage proposed by DCR but not yet reviewed by the working group. The DCR information included implementation considerations specific to recommendations, clarifying language, new recommendations, etc.

At a high level, the recommendations are:

- **Establish a new Office of the CRO** reporting to the Governor that coordinates resiliency efforts with state agencies based on a “hub (CRO) and spoke model (Agencies)”
- **Support Resilience Planning** by implementing changes to the Code of Virginia to align CRMP & FPMP plans and establish a new group focusing on statewide resiliency planning or re-scope the role of the Coastal TAC
- **Support Locality Readiness** by creating grants support position(s) and resilience assessments
- **Enhance Resilience Data & Resources** through state and local data needs survey and establishing a clearinghouse of resilience data

The working group generally accepted the updates and verbiage proposed by DCR and added clarifying language where appropriate; highlights of the discussion included:

- Expanding the scope of the CRO to all resiliency efforts (not limited to flooding) with the understanding that will increase the staffing needs and including an advocacy role for capitalizing on federal funds
- The hub and spoke model proposed for the new CRO Office will improve opportunities for efficiency and effectiveness while the existing funds will remain with the state agencies. It was discussed that the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI) might serve as a model for the new Office.
- The establishment of grants specialist positions likely needs further research regarding where the positions would be placed, e.g., the new CRO Office, the PDCs, etc. as the location will have funding implications. The Virginia DEQ CZM’s grants program as well as other states’ programs could serve as models.

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- Discussion around the recommended clearinghouse of resiliency data prompted additional questions that should be considered such as:
  - Will the clearinghouse only support authoritative data or include interpretative data?
  - Would this be similar to VA Open Data Portal?
  - How will localities be able to interact with the clearinghouse?

### Information Sharing: Funding Presentation: Examples of Existing Funding Approaches/Processes (VA and Beyond)

Presented by DCR

The presentation focused on the following goals:

- Increase readiness for federal funding streams
- Align state funding streams
- Leverage private and support local funding streams

Readiness was defined as “a measurement of our capacity to research, apply, win, and manage federal funding opportunities successfully within our limited resources.” Examples of “Federal Funding Readiness” were reviewed (e.g., FEMA STORM Act) as well as considerations relevant to Virginia. A model based on California was reviewed as it might be applicable to the Commonwealth. The goal of “Aligning State Funding” was reviewed again with considerations relevant to Virginia and how the California model might be applicable. It was noted a challenge is that coordination between agencies generally happens on an ad hoc basis and while there are exceptions, there is currently no established coordination process for funding around resilience. The third goal, of “Leveraging Local and Private Funding” was reviewed and it was noted this was a challenge due to a lack of information on public-private partnerships.

### Breakout Session: Maximizing Funding Opportunities

The working group was organized into four groups to identify ways to support the following goals identified in the DCR presentation. Questions were provided to promote discussion

- Goal 1: Increasing Virginia’s federal grant readiness - effectively receiving and capturing federal dollars
- Goal 2: Improving awareness and coordination of state-administered funding programs
- Goal 3: Leveraging private sector funds and supporting local funding streams

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Breakout Questions to Consider for Each Goal:

- How could the new structure achieve this goal?
- What additional mechanisms need to be in place to achieve this goal?
- Is there a specific “data need” to achieve this goal?

### Large Group Discussion

After one hour of small group work, members reconvened as a larger group to report their responses to the questions above for each of the funding goals:

#### Goal #1: Increasing Virginia’s federal grant readiness - effectively receiving and capturing federal dollars

- Change the goal from “grant” readiness to “funding” readiness to include non-grant dollars, for example USACE studies, Congressional earmarking
- Observations on the function of the hub-and-spoke model coordinating structure to advance this goal:
  - The proposed coordination structure is generally well established to support the funding goals.
  - There needs to be a coordinating entity to keep key agencies and personnel aware of resiliency funding opportunities and resiliency projects (the “grants ecosystem”).
  - The CRO Office can serve as a coordinator for state and federal resiliency fund opportunities based on “line of sight” into agency resiliency programs
    - It was noted that given the current governing structure, it is unlikely the CRO will be able to influence federal policy as there is not enough time to develop relationships at the federal level.
    - It was noted the CRO will need to be a “super connector” to quickly develop relationships across the Commonwealth and that the staff of the new CRO Office will need to be capable to supporting changing administrations.
    - CRO Staff should help facilitate federal grant dollars via identifying opportunities for stacking funds and identifying co-benefits
    - There should be a CRO staff person identified to monitor the grant ecosystem
    - Understand opportunities: Identify where funding opportunities exist
    - Communicate, coordinate, encourage: Connect funding opportunities to programmatic needs
    - Support: offer support for attaining funding – letters of support, guidance, understand localities
    - Includes coordination and communication
    - CRO Staff should serve as a conduit to: (1) identify a baseline for what funding opportunities exist; (2) scan and survey existing state programs and staff in coordination with Inter-Agency Working Group

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- and Resilience Coordinators; (3) serve as a conduit between state/federal funding and state/local points of contact (“Who is best suited?”)
  - CRO office will offer a “line of sight” into agency programs via the hub-and-spoke model
  - CRO Office can work as a non-federal sponsor for federal \$ - where locality involvement is required in federal funding efforts for resilience, CRO office can work as a partner
  - CRO office should work as an advocate to federal entities on behalf of localities, PDCs in Virginia
  - CRO office should create and maintain connections to academic partners
- Agency Resilience Coordinators:
  - Should monitor available funding opportunities
  - Resilience Coordinators should be the participants in the Inter-agency Working Group
- The new grants specialists should share regional info back to state, including data
  - For example, need to understand local capacity to contribute local \$
- The Inter-Agency Working Group should be leveraged for communication, collaboration, info sharing
- Additional mechanisms that need to be in place to achieve this goal include:
  - There needs to be a catalog of “shovel ready” projects that can be quickly matched against grants as they become available.
  - Clarification is likely needed on procurement policies and procedures relating to state and federal grant funding (e.g., what is allowable, how recipient is paying determines if/when Procurement Act kicks in)
  - A key goal should be to view funding opportunities through the lens of the Commonwealth’s resiliency efforts
    - All state agencies should structure their programs with the goal of leveraging federal dollars
  - Engaging universities...
    - VA needs to take a collaborative approach to cross-university collaboration and reduce competition – state needs to find a way to incentivize this
    - Universities can provide technical assistance to localities (ex., RAFT, and other tools)
    - Universities should serve in an advisory role to the CRO office

### Goal #2: Improving awareness and coordination of state-administered funding programs

- Observations on the function of the hub-and-spoke model coordinating structure to advance this goal:
  - Need coordinating structure to keep key agencies and personnel connected

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- Agency CRO should advocate internally to add resilience efforts into agency grant applications
- CRO Office should convene a “user group” for resource/knowledge sharing for agency *staff* (not necessarily the decision-makers)
- Have a grants position (and/or CRO Office, academic partners, other partners) to offer training on state/federal funding opportunities
- Key is to leverage inter-agency working group to do awareness building and training with agencies
  - This will require sufficient staffing (see Louisiana as a model)
- Need to find incentives for collaboration in the inter-agency working group:
  - Offering participants a voice in the process, shared ownership of the working group, emphasizing that agency roles and responsibilities remain with those agencies
- Additional mechanisms that need to be in place to achieve this goal include:
  - The DEQ grants model (including staff) would be something to further investigate
  - Ex. – Go VA – some characteristics may fit here; mirror at the local level – state coordination/structure
    - Regional proposals for funding decided by the state board

### Goal #3: Leveraging private sector funds and supporting local funding streams

- Observations on the function of the hub-and-spoke model coordinating structure to advance this goal:
  - CRO office should leverage the private sector dollars for state, local, private needs – especially to support privately-held critical infrastructure
  - CRO Office should participate in environmental finance trade groups/organizations to identify data needs, conduct relationship building, marketing to make the case for investment in Virginia.
  - CRO Office should prioritize working with others to create financial incentives (i.e. tax) or other incentives and education for the private sector
- Additional mechanisms that need to be in place to achieve this goal include:
  - Federal grants are reimbursable projects where the moneys need to be expended and then reimbursed. Localities would likely benefit in their resilience efforts if the state advanced the money up front as the localities likely do not have sufficient resources to initiate projects.
  - Where matching grants are used, localities would likely benefit in their resilience efforts if the state cover all or a portion of the required match.
  - Other states and resiliency focused organizations created foundations to make the process of obtaining private funds easier. Examples include the [Georgia Natural Resources Foundation](#) and the [Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary Foundation](#).

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- Options exist to engage the public sector in grant writing and research
- State should create a “one stop shop” for business resilience – maybe led by economic development or small business liaison (does not need to be led by the CRO) – this could provide regulatory assistance (including permitting), contractor connections, etc.
  
- Specific data needs to achieve this goal include:
  - The state should complete financial analysis of localities to assess their ability to pursue grants
  - May need a vulnerability assessment (data) to identify needs
    - Assessment would include: identifying need, design, finding funds
  
- Other Notes:
  - PPP vs. PPEA (Public-Private Education Facilities and Infrastructure Act)
  - Private sector funding is largely unregulated and therefore the requirements may not be as stringent as Federal funding; it would likely be to focus the projects based on the driver of the private sector funds (e.g., tailor the project to meet the grant rather than find a grant that meets the project).
  - NGOs may be required to access additional funding due to funding requirements.

### Public Comment

After the group discussions, there was an opportunity for public comment. No public comment was received.

### Next Steps

All future working group meetings will be in-person and the next meeting will be on August 1 at The University of Virginia Darden School of Business in Charlottesville (100 Darden Blvd, Charlottesville, VA 22901).

### Adjournment

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### Working Group Members and Alternates in Attendance

Organization	Representative	Alternate
Center for Coastal Studies	Wendy Stout	
Chesapeake Bay Commission	Adrienne Kotula	
Chesapeake Bay Foundation	Jay Ford	
Clark Nexsen	Chris Stone	
Environmental Defense Foundation	Emily Steinhilber	Grace Tucker
Hampton Roads PDC	Whitney Katchmark	
Home Builders Association of Virginia		Speaker Pollard
Institute for Coastal Adaptation and Resilience		Carol Considine
Institute for Engagement & Negotiation	Tanya Denckla Cobb	
Middle Peninsula PDC	Lewis Lawrence	
Port of Virginia		Scott Whitehurst
Virginia Agribusiness Council	Heidi Hertz	
Virginia Association of Counties	Joe Lerch	
VA Association of Soil and Water Districts	Robert Pickett	
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation	Matthew Wells	
Virginia Department of Emergency Management		Robert Coates
Virginia Department of Energy	David Hawkins	
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality	Sharon Baxter	
Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development	Bill Curtis	
Virginia Department of Transportation	Angel Deem	Chris Swanson
Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources	Becky Gwynn	
Virginia Economic Development Partnership	Lindsay Akers	
Virginia Farm Bureau	Martha Moore	Katelyn Jordan
Virginia Institute of Marine Science	Mark Luckenbach	
Virginia Marine Resources Commission		Rachael Peabody
Virginia Resources Authority	Shawn Crumlish	

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation Working Group Staff	VCU Performance Management Group Facilitators
Matthew Dalon	Gina Barber
Darryl Glover	Sarah Jackson
Carolyn Heaps-Pecaro	Wheeler Wood