



**Virginia Rural Leadership Institute**  
PRESENTED BY THE VIRGINIA RURAL CENTER

VIRGINIA RURAL CENTER'S

# VIRGINIA RURAL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

2026

**SPONSORSHIP  
GUIDE**

# Background

The Virginia Rural Leadership Institute (VRLI) is a rural leadership program that develops and supports highly-skilled, highly-motivated leaders who are committed to revitalizing their communities across the Commonwealth. VRLI addresses the need for high-quality, professional leadership and economic development training that equips community leaders with the skills they need to lead long-term economic advancement in their community and region. The program also seeks to increase cooperation, collaboration, and coordination across a broad array of organizations and sectors. Each year, VRLI will accept up to 30 applicants.

VRLI provides opportunities for participants to hear from economic development and leadership experts, engage with and learn from peers, apply knowledge through classroom exercises, and learn about community successes. VRLI Cohort Members will:

- Increase understanding of leadership, data, and issue trends in Virginia
- Increase understanding of community & economic development
- Teach skills in effective collaboration at the local, regional, and state level
- Increase knowledge of resources available to their community and how to access them
- Build a regional network of community leaders to encourage peer learning, resource sharing and collaboration
- Become part of the Center's leadership alumni network, which will provide annual professional development, mentoring, and peer networking.



# Sponsorship Opportunities

**The Virginia Rural Leadership Institute** costs \$3,500 per Cohort Member. Help support our efforts by sponsoring VRLI. If interested, please reach out to [VaRuralLeadership@cfrv.org](mailto:VaRuralLeadership@cfrv.org)



## **Champion - \$25,000**

- Specific Session sponsor
- Sponsor remarks to class
- Branding and marketing in participant materials, website and social media for all 4 Sessions
- Sponsorship Spotlight during all 4 Sessions



## **Partner - \$10,000**

- Specific Session Break sponsor
- Branding and marketing in participant materials, website and social media for all 4 Sessions
- Sponsorship Spotlight during 2 Sessions



## **Advocate - \$7,500**

- Branding and marketing in participant materials, website and social media for all 4 Sessions
- Sponsorship Spotlight during 1 Session



## **Supporter - \$5,000**

- Branding and marketing in participant materials, website and social media for all 4 Sessions
- Industry Tour sponsor



# 2026 Program

The program consists of four sessions, each spanning three days, typically on a Wednesday (half day), Thursday, and Friday (half day).

**SESSION 1: SOUTHSIDE**  
April 22, 23 & 24

**SESSION 2: MIDDLE PENINSULA  
AND NORTHERN NECK**  
June 10, 11 & 12

**SESSION 3: SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA**  
August 12, 13 & 14

**SESSION 4: SHENANDOAH VALLEY**  
September 30, October 1 & 2



2024 VRLI Cohort, 25 of 28 Members



2023 VRLI Cohort, 24 of 28 Members

**"Every rural experience is unique. The blend of distinct communities, industries, and individuals makes the Virginia Rural Leadership Institute a one-of-a-kind program you won't find anywhere else in the country."  
- 2024 Cohort Member**

# Return on Investment

## Sessions

Each of VRLI's 4 sessions highlight rural communities and their stories. Not only does VRLI feature each community's success, but also directly invests in each host locality.

**“VRLI is a professional transformative experience. Investing time in the sessions to travel and experience thriving rural communities opened connections to models of work and leadership to innovate... VRLI opened the doors to be there that I could not have found or opened by myself.”**

**-2023 Cohort Member**

## Participants

VRLI cohort members represent a wide array of career fields, rural geographies, as well as ages, genders, races, and ethnicities. Part of the value of VRLI is bringing these cohort members together to learn from leading rural experts, as well as one another.

**“I'm just very appreciative of the opportunity this has provided me. I'm learning a lot about different parts of the state while making strong connections with my classmates.” -2024 Cohort Member**

## Mentorship & Community Impact Projects

Each VRLI Cohort Member is paired with a mentor that advises them on advancing their career and impact in rural Virginia, as well as on the development of their Community Impact Project. These projects, which are designed by every cohort member produce a tangible impact after graduation in the cohort members' communities.



**2022 VRLI Cohort, 26 of 29 Cohort Members**

# Our Story

The VRC is the established voice for rural localities throughout the Commonwealth and recognizes the demonstrated lack of mechanisms specifically focused on rural Virginia. VRC has long recognized the need for this opportunity and plans to address this with the creation and implementation of the Virginia Rural Leadership Institute.

## Our Team

### **Kristie Proctor**

**Executive Director**

Virginia Rural Center

### **Chandler Vaughan**

**Development Consultant**

**Program Coordinator**

Virginia Rural Leadership Institute

