

The Sorensen Institute: Bridging Divides in Civic Engagement

Board of Visitors, Full Board Meeting

December 8, 2023

Lawrence Roberts

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Weldon Cooper Center
for Public Service

Sorensen: Why We Exist

PROVIDING PUBLIC LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS SINCE 1994

- Sorensen was created to
 - ✓ Bridge partisan, regional, racial, public/private sector, and other divides
 - ✓ Build cohorts that represent intellectual diversity and help them bridge partisan, regional, racial, public/private sector, and other divides
 - ✓ Prepare people for public leadership through training around sound public policy development, constructive engagement with others, and ethics
 - ✓ Provide an alternative to increasing national polarization

Sorensen: What We Do

SERVANT LEADERSHIP, EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT

- Key Themes: Trust, Civil Discourse, Respect, and Ethics
- Key Goals: Effective Leadership, Civic Engagement, Cross-Regional Understanding, and Sound Public Policy Practices
- Key Components: Experiential Learning, Peer-to-Peer Exercises, and Active Engagement with Experts

Sorensen's Impact

BUILDING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AT ALL CAREER STAGES

- [Testimonial](#) of Sorensen Program Participants

2023 Political Leaders

Visited **Nine** Regions of the Commonwealth

2023 Emerging Leaders

12 Republicans / **12** Democrats
(**4** Gov. Youngkin Appointees)

2023 High School Leaders (UVA residential program)

Largest Applicant Pool Ever: **87** Applicants for **32** spots

Sorensen Alumni in 2024 General Assembly: 8 Senators and 20 Delegates

Sorensen Alumni

MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTIONS TO VIRGINIA AND BEYOND



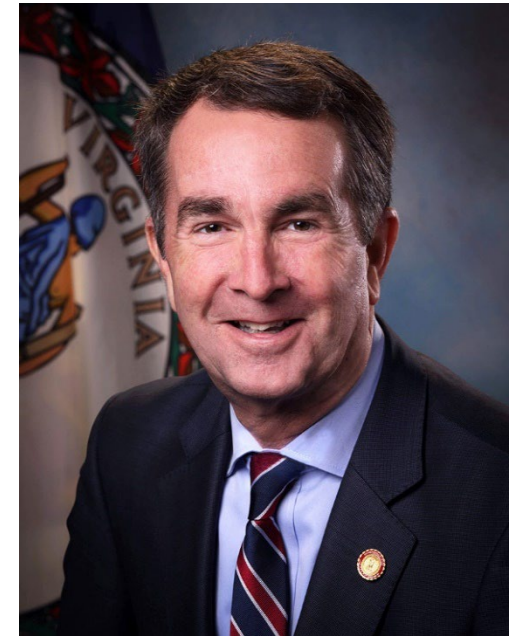
Jennifer Kiggans (R), U.S. Representative
Candidate Training Program alumna



Jennifer McClellan (D), U.S. Representative
Political Leaders Program alumna



Jason Miyares (R), Virginia Attorney General
Political Leaders Program alumnus



Ralph Northam (D), Governor of Virginia
Candidate Training Program alumnus

Virginia Institute of Government (VIG): Front Line of Democracy

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Charles Hartgrove, Managing Director

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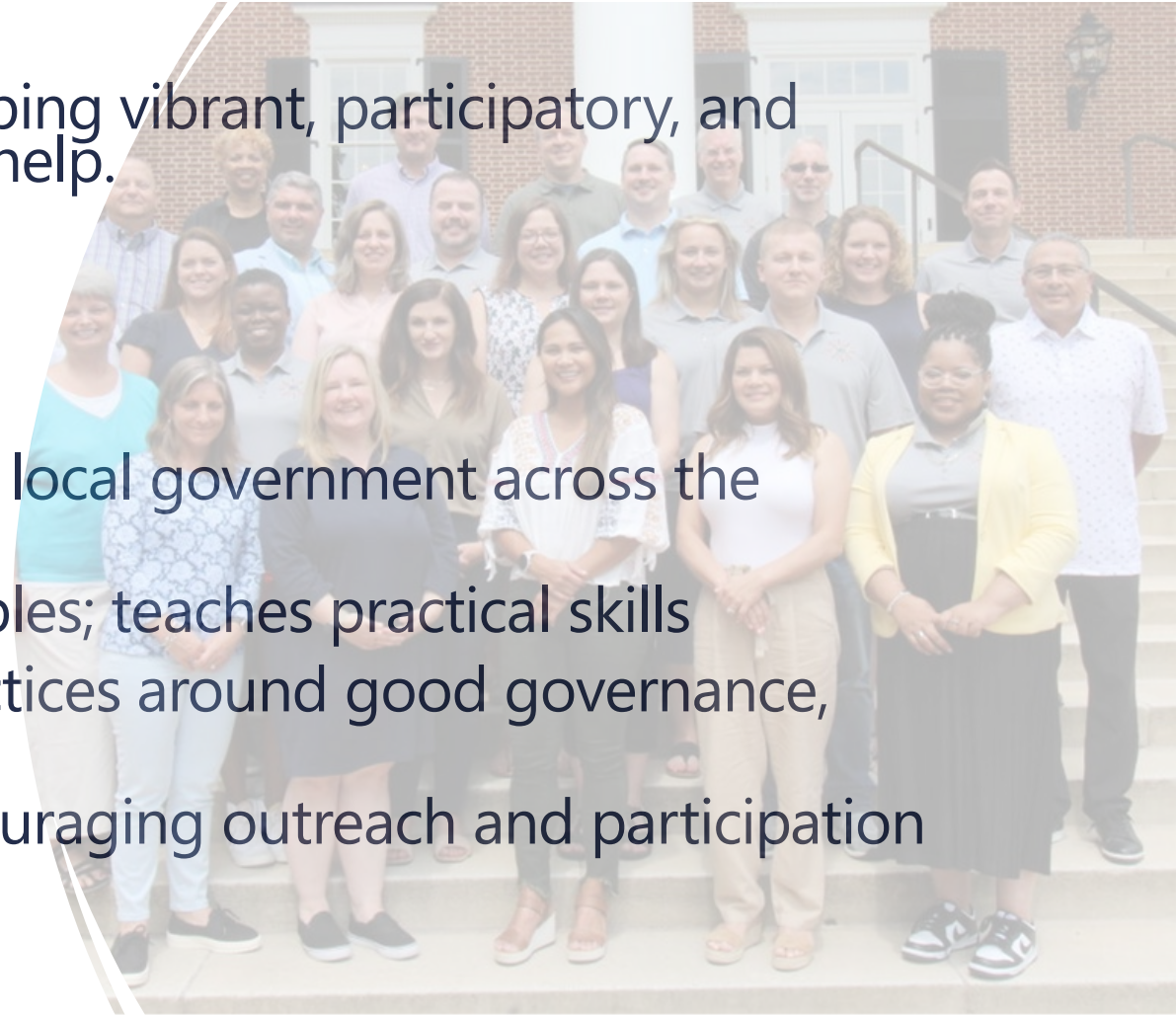
VIG: Why We Exist

ADDRESSING A CRITICAL NEED IN THE COMMONWEALTH AND BEYOND

Local governments play a pivotal role in shaping vibrant, participatory, and inclusive democratic society. But they need help.

The Virginia Institute of Government ...

- ✓ Develops dynamic leaders at all levels of local government across the country
- ✓ Upholds and explains democratic principles; teaches practical skills
- ✓ Helps communities implement best practices around good governance, equity, and resilience
- ✓ Enhances community well being by encouraging outreach and participation



What We Do

EMPOWERING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

We curate a portfolio of services, partnerships, and best practices that provide value and impact for the communities we serve.

- ✓ Provide technical support and training to over 230 Virginia local governments
- ✓ Host six leadership development programs annually at UVA
- ✓ Offer professional development programming to elected and professional local government finance leaders
- ✓ Convene the Local Government Equity Clinic, available online nationwide
- ✓ Create customized consulting services for local elected governing bodies, professional leadership teams, and others

VIG's Impact

BUILDING RESILIENCY, GROWING CAPACITY



Testimonial of Rysheda McClendon, County Attorney for Stafford County, Virginia. Alum of both the LEAD program (2017) and SEI (2022)

FY2023

programming:
196 participants
from **16** states

Discussion

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