



Thank you for your interest in moving to Virginia. Enclosed you will find general information on the Commonwealth.

We have also included a list of agencies and organizations that might be helpful to you as you seek answers to specific questions not covered in this booklet. For relocation information on a specific community, we encourage you to contact the appropriate local chamber of commerce. A listing of Local Chambers can be found on our website under "Virginia Links."

We also recommend that you contact the Virginia Tourism Corporation to request their "Virginia Travel Guide" and a state map, 1-800-932-5827, www.virginia.org.

We hope that this information will help you in learning more about Virginia and in deciding which part of Virginia best suits you.

Again, thank you for contacting the Virginia Chamber of Commerce.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hugh D. Keogh". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "H".

Hugh D. Keogh
President

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VIRGINIA'S REGIONS

Virginia is a place of great natural beauty and rich historical heritage. In the early years of the twentieth century, its economy was still largely agrarian in nature. After the Depression, state leaders saw that many of its citizens were leaving the state and realized that steps needed to be taken to correct the situation. Education, infrastructure, and public policy were the pillars needed to support business recruitment. Virginia had a tradition of excellence in higher education, but opportunities were expanded in 1965 when the Community College System was established. Now twenty-three colleges on forty campuses offer one and two year programs as well as continuing education classes to Virginia's adult population. Transportation needs were addressed and an aggressive policy to attract new industry was developed. In recent years, Virginia consistently has ranked with the leading states in attracting new jobs. The Commonwealth moved long ago from an economy dependent upon agriculture through widespread industrialization. Virginia now enjoys a highly diversified economy with manufacturing the leading basic employer, significant expansion in services to an increasingly metropolitan economy, and major impacts of federal government activities continuing in Hampton Roads and Northern Virginia.

CENTRAL VIRGINIA

Central Virginia extends from just east of the fall line to the west through the capital city of Richmond and on to Charlottesville in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Large sections of the area are peaceful and rural. South of Richmond are farms producing peanuts and cotton, while west of Richmond, hay and corn are grown.

Richmond has been the capital since 1779. The capitol's design was influenced by Thomas Jefferson and is the home for the oldest representative government in the New World. State agencies surround the Capitol Square, but Richmond's strong economy is also supported by medical science and technology, manufacturing, education, finance, distribution and business services. Richmond provides a rich quality of life with myriad opportunities to enjoy the arts, historical sites and museums, nightlife, and recreational pursuits. Virginia Commonwealth University and the University of Virginia are both in Central Virginia as well as other public and private colleges and universities.

THE TIDEWATER REGION

The Tidewater Region is comprised of Virginia's coastal plain. It has one of the finest natural harbors in the world at Hampton Roads. Large marine terminals are located in Norfolk, Newport News, Chesapeake, and Portsmouth, and the area is growing as a national and global distribution

center. Northrop Grumman Newport News is one of the largest, privately owned ship construction companies in the world, and Norfolk is home to the country's largest naval base. There are several high technology centers in the region researching current issues related to aerospace, national defense and basic physics. A wide array of manufacturing and processing facilities has developed within the region. The ocean, bay and rivers also support fishing and seafood industries. An outstanding choice of activities is offered to both the resident and visitor. Symphonies and opera, art and marine museums are available as well as many recreational activities particularly sailing, fishing and swimming.

Williamsburg, the restored eighteenth century capital of Virginia, is the state's number one tourist attraction. The visitor can tour the restored homes and government buildings, dine in the taverns, stroll along Duke of Gloucester Street, visit interesting shops, and attend one of the frequent special events or performances. It is a short drive from Williamsburg to Jamestown, site of the first permanent English settlement in America. English colonists arrived in Jamestown in 1607, and it will soon be celebrating its 400th anniversary. The Yorktown Victory Center is east of Williamsburg. Although the Revolutionary War lasted for another year and a half, American independence was virtually assured after the British surrender at Yorktown on October 19, 1781.

Counties of Virginia's coastal plain near the Chesapeake Bay and along the coastal rivers are home to charming and historic towns like Gloucester, Reedville, Smithfield and Urbanna.

The Eastern Shore, a seventy mile long peninsula with the Atlantic on the east and the Chesapeake Bay on the west, is a place of quaint villages. It is approached either from the north through Maryland or from the south via the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel (the largest bridge tunnel complex in the world). The peninsula's forests and marshes make it a popular area for bird watching, and its low traffic attracts bicyclists. One of the most popular annual events is the Chincoteague Pony Swim in July.

THE VALLEY OF VIRGINIA

The Valley of Virginia runs 200 miles from Winchester in the northeast to Pulaski in the southwest. It is bordered on the east by the Blue Ridge Mountains and in the west by the more rugged Alleghenies. Interstate 81 goes through the center of the region, and the Skyline Drive and the Blue Ridge Parkway are popular scenic drives through the eastern mountain range. The Valley served as a travel route first by the Native Americans, who hunted and fished in the area, and later by English, Scotch-Irish, and German settlers traveling the Wilderness Road.

The area's commercial and medical center is Roanoke, an historic home of rail transportation near the southern end of the valley. There are about 200,000 residents in the Roanoke metropolitan area, the largest city west of Richmond.

Centers of manufacturing and distribution have flourished along the transportation corridors of interstate highways and railroads. Universities established in the Valley have gained national reputations, for example: Virginia Tech (Blacksburg), Washington and Lee University and Virginia Military Institute (Lexington), and James Madison University (Harrisonburg). The Valley also has a strong agricultural tradition. In addition to the region's scenic beauty, there are many places of special interest including Natural Bridge, Natural Chimneys, and Dixie and Luray Caverns.

NORTHERN VIRGINIA

Northern Virginia's proximity to the nation's capital brings to the Commonwealth the economic impacts of the federal government and the associated international and commercial activities and services. As a result, the region has experienced impressive growth in the fields of communications, the internet, computer software and information systems and management. Many large corporations are headquartered there. The region's economic activity generates significant growth in employment and personal income, making Northern Virginia the economic leader of the state with a remarkably thriving retail sector.

There are historical, cultural and recreational sites. Residents and visitors enjoy Old Town Alexandria, Mt. Vernon, Manassas, Wolf Trap Farm Park (the national park for the performing arts), and the Kennedy Center. With the Potomac River and Great Falls Park there are many recreational opportunities as well.

The outlying rural areas of Loudoun County, Orange County and Spotsylvania offer respite from the fast pace of life inside the beltway. There are several Civil War battlefields including Fredericksburg (a charming, historic town), Chancellorsville, and the Wilderness. Fauquier and Culpeper Counties are popular places of residence for horse lovers, and winemaking is becoming a very popular commercial industry here.

SOUTHERN PIEDMONT

While this area's economy depended on agriculture (especially tobacco) for many years, local leaders have put forth a united effort to attract new businesses. Their success is shown by the many manufacturing concerns such as Goodyear, Dan River, Georgia Pacific, and Bassett that have established operations here. Industries associated with textiles, medical supplies, automobile engines and parts, machinery for cellular communities and the nuclear energy industry can be found in this area.

Hunting and fishing are very popular in the Southern Piedmont. There are two large lakes—Smith Mountain Lake and Buggs Island—which enhance the recreational opportunities of the area. There are motor speedways in Martinsville and South Boston that attract large crowds of racing fans and contribute greatly to the local economy. There are six institutions of higher learning in Lynchburg and two four-year colleges in Farmville.

SOUTHWEST HIGHLANDS

From the Valley of Virginia, Interstate 81 climbs into the Southwest Highlands. It is an area of mountain beauty containing the state's highest peak (Mt. Rogers, 5729 ft). Modern highways, railroads and telecommunications connect this scenic region with markets throughout the East, Midwest and around the world. Manufacturing has grown in this region of close communities with an attractive work ethic, relaxed life style, and extensive recreational opportunities. Furniture, plastics, textiles, machinery, and metal goods are all produced here.

Wytheville is the gateway to the Highlands. Many visitors enjoy the Jefferson National Forest and the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. The Appalachian Trail winds through this area and the Virginia Creeper Trail crosses the southern tip of the park.

Abingdon is a charming town, which dates from the 1700's. Best known for the Barter Theatre (the state theater of Virginia) it attracts artists, craftspeople, writers, and actors. Across Main Street from Barter Theatre is the Martha Washington Inn, a popular hotel since the 1930's. At the end of July, Abingdon hosts the extremely popular Virginia Highlands Festival.

Bristol, a town of almost 18,000 on the Virginia/Tennessee line, became an important industrial center in the region. American Country Music has deep roots in the area as noted by the Country Music Mural and Monument in Bristol. The Carter Family Memorial Music Center in Hiltons presents country music shows by the descendents of Carter family legends. There is also the Old Time Fiddlers Convention in Galax. It began in 1935 and is one of the largest gatherings of its kind in the world.

Information contributed by James McKean, Assistance Manager, The Department of Business Assistance.

Information also taken from the following source: Virginia: The Enterprising Dominion Enters the Twenty-First Century, Ed Crews, sponsored by the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Cherbo Publishing Group, Inc., Encino, Calif., 1999.

08/27/02

QUALITY OF LIFE

Virginia has a range of activities to suit a family with even the most diverse interests. A sample of Virginia's natural, cultural, and historical resources that contribute to an exceptional quality of life includes:

- Important historical sites including Williamsburg, Jamestown, Yorktown, Mount Vernon, and Monticello
- Civil War battlefields
- Museums for the arts, history, and science
- Opportunities to enjoy the performing arts including dance, music, and theater
- The Blue Ridge Parkway and Skyline Drive
- Hiking, camping, white water rafting and other outdoor recreational activities
- 3,315 miles of tidal shoreline, including Virginia Beach
- Theme parks, including Paramount's Kings Dominion and Busch Gardens-Williamsburg
- Outlet, upscale, and specialty shops

Climate

Virginia's modified continental climate is influenced by the mountains to the west and the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean to the east. The mountains steer, block, and modify the effects of storms and air masses, and the large open bodies of water modify temperature extremes.

Winters are moderately cold in mountain and valley areas and mild in central and eastern Virginia. Summers are relatively cool in mountain areas and warm and humid in central and eastern areas of the Commonwealth. Mean annual temperatures range from 53°F (12°C) in southwestern Virginia to 59°F (15°C) in southeastern Virginia. Average January temperatures range from 33°F (1°C) in the southwestern mountains to 40°F (4°C) along the southeastern coast. Average July temperatures range from 71°F (22°C) in southwestern Virginia to 78°F (26°C) in eastern coastal areas.

Precipitation is well distributed throughout the year with maximum amounts in late summer and minimum amounts in late fall. Average precipitation amounts range from 38 inches in the western mountains and valleys to 44 inches in southeastern coastal areas. Average annual snowfall amounts range from 27 inches in western Virginia to 9 inches along the coast.

The prevailing winds in eastern and central Virginia are from the south and southwest with more northerly winds in the colder months. Winds in western areas of the state usually are from the west with more northerly flows in winter months.

State and Local Taxes

The Virginia Department of Taxation administers the state income tax and the sales and use tax. The local portion of the sales tax is collected by the state and then distributed.

<http://www.tax.state.va.us>

Virginia Department of Taxation
Office of Customer Services
Post Office Box 1115
Richmond, VA 23218-1115

The State Corporation Commission registers all Virginia corporations and regulates public service companies, insurance firms, financial institutions and utilities.

<http://www.state.va.us/scc/index.html>

Street Address: Tyler Building, 1300 E. Main St., Richmond, Virginia 23219

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1197 Richmond, Virginia 23218

Phone: (Richmond area) 804-371-9967 Toll free (Virginia only) 1-800-552-7945

TDD Phone: 804-371-9206

Local taxes are assessed by each city or county's **Commissioner of the Revenue**, an elected position. That is also the first stop when seeking a local business license. Look in the blue pages of your local telephone book.

Virginia Demographics

Quick Facts about Virginia

Population 2000	7,078,515
Population 2001 Estimate	7,187,734
Population Percent Increase 4/1/00-7/1/01	0.3%
Population Percent Increase 1990 - 2000	14.4%
Percent of Persons Under 5 Years Old, 2000	6.5%
Percent of Persons Under 18 Years Old, 2000	24.6%
Percent of Persons Over 65 Years Old, 2000	11.2%
Black or African American Persons 2000	19.6%
White Persons 2000	72.3%
American Indian/Alaska Native 2000	0.03%
Persons of Hispanic/Latino Origin 2000	4.7%

Percent of Persons Age 25 High School Grad	81.5%
Percent of Persons Age 25 BA or Higher	29.5%
Persons with a Disability 5 Years Old + 2000	1,155,083
Homeownership Rate 2000	68.1%
Mean Travel Time to Work 16 Years Old + (minutes)	27
Households 2000	2,699,173
Persons Per Households 2000	2.54
Median Household Money Income 1999	\$46,677
Per Capita Money Income 1999	\$23,975
Persons Below Poverty 1999	9.6%

Business Quick Facts

Retail Sales 1997 (\$1,000)	\$62,569,924
Manufacturer Shipments 1997 (\$1,000)	\$83,814,009
Land Area 2000 (square miles)	39,594
Persons Per Square Mile 2000	178.8

Source: US Census Bureau
www.quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/51000.html

State Parks

Shenandoah
Douthat State Park
540-862-8100

Goshen Pass Natural Area
540-862-8100

Poor Mountain Natural Area Preserve
540-265-5234

Raymond "Andy" Guest Jr.
Shenandoah River State Park
540-622-6840

Sky Meadows State Park

540-592-3556

Northern Virginia

George Washington's Grist Mill
Historic State Park
703-780-2000

Lake Anna State Park
540-854-5503

Leesylvania State Park
703-670-0372

Mason Neck State Park
703-550-0960

Tidewater and Eastern Shore

Bell Isle State Park

804-462-5030

Bethel Beach Natural Area
Preserve
804-786-7951

Bush Mill Stream Natural Area
Preserve
804-786-7951

Caledon Natural Area
540-663-3861

Cape Charles Coastal Habitat
Natural Area Preserve
804-786-7951

Chippokes Plantation State Park
757-294-3625

False Cape State Park

757-426-7128	Holiday Lake State Park 434-248-6308	Claytor Lake State Park 540-643-2500
First Landing State Park 757-412-2300	James River State Park 434-933-4355	Clinch Mountain Wildlife Management Area 276-781-7400
Hickory Hollow Natural Area Preserve 804-786-7951	Oconeechee State Park 434-374-2210	Grayson Highlands State Park 276-579-7092
Hughlett Point Natural Area Preserve 804-786-7951	Pocahontas State Park 804-796-4255	Hungry Mother State Park 276-781-7400
Kiptopeke State Park 757-331-2267	Sailor's Creek Battlefield Historic State Park 434-392-3435	Hemlock Haven Conference Center 276-781-7425
New Point Comfort Natural Area Preserve 804-786-7951	Smith Mountain Lake State Park 540-297-6066	Lick Creek Natural Area 276-781-7400
North Landing River Natural Area Preserve 757-925-2318	Staunton River Battlefield State Park 434-454-4312	Natural Tunnel State Park 276-940-2674
Westmoreland State Park 804-493-8821	Staunton River State Park 434-572-4623	Cove Ridge Center 276-940-2696
York River State Park 757-566-3036	Twin Lakes State Park 434-392-3435	Pinnacle Natural Area Preserve 276-676-5673
Central	Cedar Crest Conference Center 434-767-2398	Shot Tower & New River Trail State Park 276-699-6778
Bear Creek Lake State Park 804-492-4410	Blue Ridge Highlands	Southwest Virginia Museum Historical State Park 276-523-1322
Chub Sandhill Natural Area Preserve 757-925-2318	Breaks Interstate Park 276-865-4413	Wilderness Road State Park 276-445-3065
Fair Stone State Park 276-930-2424	Buffalo Mountain Natural Area Preserve 276-676-5673	

Education

According to most of our newcomers, education of their children is the most important factor in relocation. Here is some basic information.

Documents needed to enroll in a Virginia Public School:

1. Original Birth Certificate
2. Original Social Security Card
3. Updated medical records on Virginia State Health Form
4. Transcript from former school
5. Proof of residency may be required

Most schools begin the Tuesday after Labor Day.

The official web site for the Department of Education is

<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/>

For additional information, contact the specific city or county that you will be living in. A full listing of cities and counties are listed on the official web site or you can call 1-800-292-3820.

A complete list of private schools is available by calling
The Virginia Council for Private Education
804-282-8273
www.vcpe.org

For Information on Home Schooling, call the following organization
Home Educators Association of Virginia (HEAV)
804-288-1608
www.heav.org

TRANSPORTATION

For information on transportation, please contact the following departments:

Department of Aviation
5702 Gulfstream Road
Richmond International Airport
Richmond, VA 23250-2422
804-236-3624
www.doav.state.va.us

Department of Transportation
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
804-786-2701
www.vdot.state.va.us

Department of Rail and Public Transportation
1401 East Broad Street
14th Floor

Richmond, VA 23219

804-786-4440
www.drpt.state.va.us

Virginia Airports with Regularly Scheduled Commercial Service

<u>Airport</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
Dulles International Airport	Fairfax/Loudoun County	703-572-2700
Ronald Reagan National Airport	Arlington	703-417-8000
Norfolk International Airport	Norfolk	757-857-3200
Richmond International Airport	Richmond	804-226-3000
Roanoke Regional Airport	Roanoke	540-362-1999
Newport News-Williamsburg	Newport News	757-877-0221
Charlottesville-Albemarle County	Charlottesville	434-973-8341
Lynchburg Regional Airport	Lynchburg	434-582-1150
Shenandoah Valley Regional	Staunton	800-428-4322

Motor Vehicles and Drivers Licenses Department of Motor Vehicles

All new residents must transfer their drivers' licenses to the Commonwealth of Virginia within 30 days of establishing residency. A road and written test will be waived if a valid out of state license exists.

All new residents must also register their automobiles within 30 days of establishing residency in the state. (One suggestion: Do not put your Virginia tags on until after you have your state inspection sticker and your city or county decal on your windshield.)

The official web site for the DMV is

www.dmv.state.va.us

The web site contains a wealth of information. It will answer all your questions. You can also call 804-367-0538 for your area information number for the Department of Motor Vehicles and for more detailed information.

Voter Registration

Virginia Board of Elections

To vote in Virginia, you must be a citizen of the United States, 18 years old and a resident of the state and your precinct for 30 days before the election.

The official web site for Virginia Voter Registration is

www.sbe.state.va.us/VotRegServ

To register online go to

www.sbe.state.va.us/VotRegServ/Forms/voter.registration.forms.htm

List of Resources

Virginia Department of Education
James Monroe Bldg. 25th Floor
101 North 14th Street
Richmond, VA 23219
804-225-2023
www.pen.k12.va.us

Department of Motor Vehicles
2300 West Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23220
804-367-6600
www.dmv.state.va.us

Department of Taxation
600 East Main Street, 23rd Floor
Richmond, VA 23219
804-786-3587
www.tax.state.va.us

**Virginia Economic Development
Partnership**
Riverfront Plaza, 19th Floor

901 East Byrd Street
Richmond, VA 23219
804-371-8106
www.yesvirginia.org

Virginia Employment Commission
703 East Main Street
Richmond, VA 23219
804-786-3001
www.vec.state.va.us

Department of Business Assistance
707 East Main Street
Suite 300
Richmond, Virginia 23219
804-371-8200 www.dba.state.va.us

Library of Virginia
800 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219-8000
804-692-3500
www.lib.va.us

State Council of Higher Education

James Monroe Building
101 North 14th Street
Richmond, VA 23219
804-225-2600
www.schev.edu

Virginia Tourism Corporation
901 East Byrd Street
Richmond, VA 23219
804-786-2051, 1-800-932-5827
www.virginia.org

Virginia Municipal League
P. O. Box 12164
Richmond, VA 23241
804-649-8471
www.vml.org

Virginia Association of Counties
1001 East Broad Street
Suite LL20

For Retirement Information:

Department for the Aging
1600 Forest Avenue
Preston Building, Suite 102
Richmond, VA 23229
804-662-9333
www.aging.state.va.us

Seniors Housing Guide
P. O. Box 4130
Midlothian, VA 23112
804-674-5004
www.seniorhousingguide.com

AARP
707 East Main Street
Suite 910
Richmond, VA 23219
804-819-1902
www.aarp.org

Senior Source
8536 Eversham Road
Richmond, VA 23294
804-218-2686
www.the-seniorsource.com

Richmond, VA 23219
804-788-6652
www.vaco.org

Department of Social Services
Theater Row Building, 9th Floor
730 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219-1849
804-692-1900
www.dss.state.va.us

Virginia Association of Realtors
10231 Telegraph Road
Glen Allen, VA 23059
804-264-5033
www.varealtor.com