



Session E-2: The Virginia Emergency Support Team

*Michelle Oblinsky, Bureau Chief of the VEST,
Virginia Department of Emergency Management*

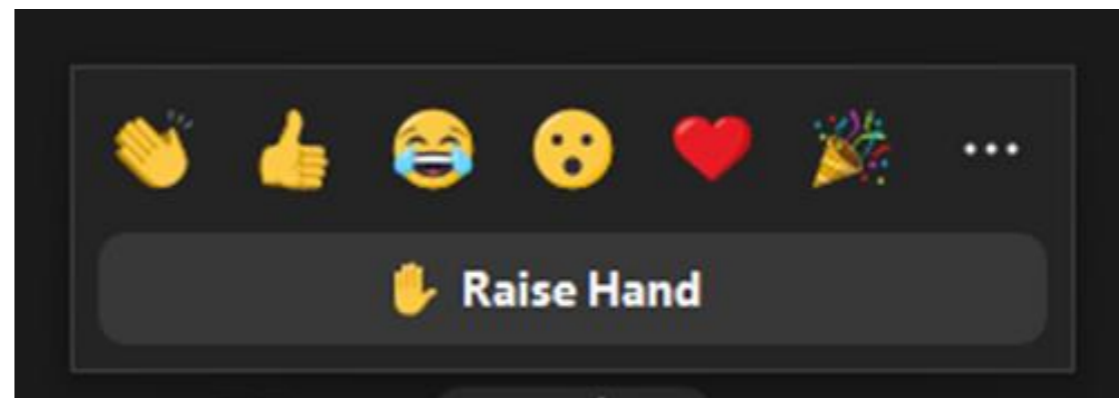
*Virginia Emergency Management Symposium
June 17, 2021*

Agenda

- Welcome
- Overview VDEM
- Overview of VEST Bureau
- Overview VEST
- Question & Answer

Welcome

- Where are you from? / Sector you represent
 - Local Government 🙌
 - Private Sector 👍
 - State / Federal Government ❤️
 - Non-Governmental Organization 🎉



VDEM History & Reorganization

Origins

- 1942: Office of Civilian Defense established by the General Assembly.
- 1950: Reestablished with new name, Office of Civil Defense.
- 1973: Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Act established the Virginia Office of Emergency Services.
- 1979: FEMA established by President Carter.
- 2000: Renamed the Virginia Department of Emergency Management.

July 2015 – Jan. 2017 phased 18-month reorganization

- Phase I: Designated & trained all staff as emergency managers.
- Phase II: Realign 12 divisions into two integrated bureaus.
- Phase III: Open regional offices and decentralize.

VDEM Key Takeaways



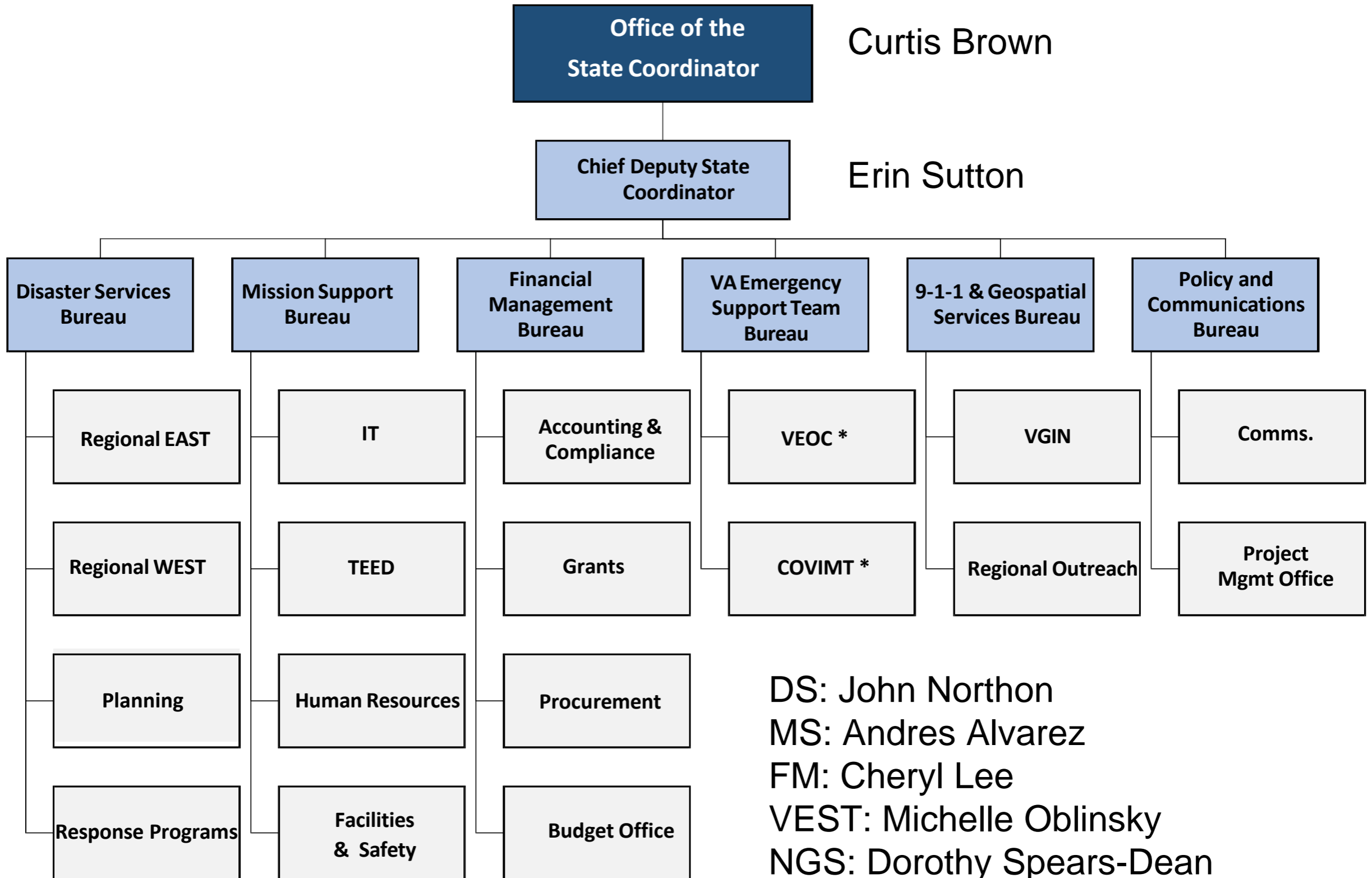
- Governor is the director of emergency management by code.
- VDEM supports 139 local government emergency management coordinators; most are part-time or one-person offices. All disasters start and end at the local level.
- Emergency management programs (local and state) are heavily reliant on federal grant funds. There is no dedicated emergency management revenue stream in Virginia, unlike other high-risk states.
- Response coordination is government-centric, recovery from disasters is community- and business-centric. Recovery from a large disaster may take years.
- Change of philosophy since Hurricane Katrina: lean forward and don't wait for failure before acting. We will be seldom-criticized for over-responding, we may be highly criticized for being slow or under-responding.

VDEM Today

- VDEM
 - Responsible for Comprehensive System for Emergency Management in VA
 - Coordinate State Agency Response and Recovery efforts in VA (thru VEST)
 - Lead for EIGHT Emergency Support Functions
 - Support additional THREE Emergency Support Functions
- SIX Bureaus (reorganization July 1, 2020)
 - Mission Support & Disaster Services – Original 2 Bureaus following 2015 Reorg
 - Financial Management – former Division in MS
 - VEST – former Division reporting to State Coordinator
 - Policy and Communications – former Division reporting to State Coordinator
 - 9-1-1 and Geospatial Services – transfer from VITA












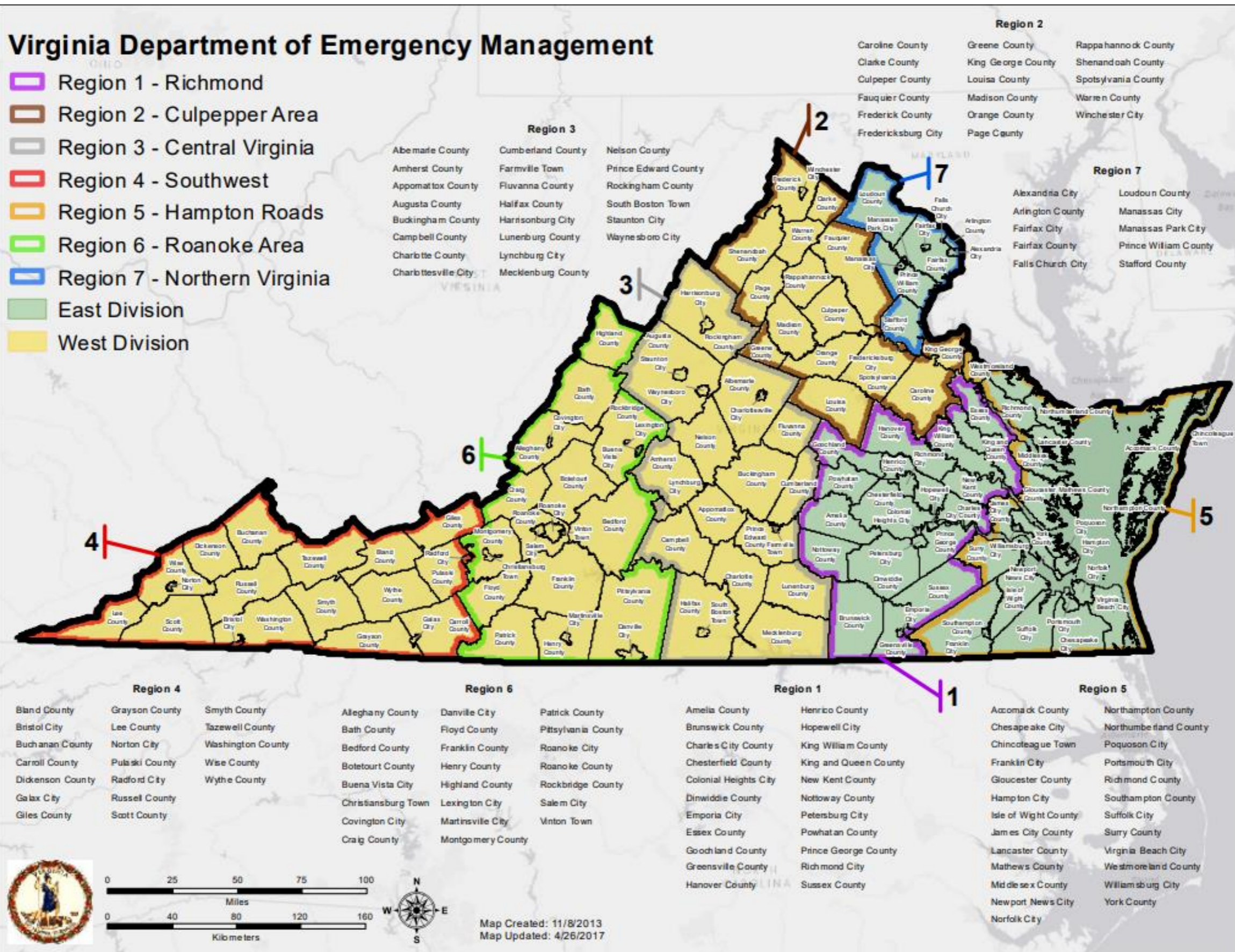
Virginia Department of Emergency Management
Org Chart – April 2021



DS: John Northon
MS: Andres Alvarez
FM: Cheryl Lee
VEST: Michelle Oblinsky
NGS: Dorothy Spears-Dean
P&C: Dillon Taylor

Virginia Department of Emergency Management

-  Region 1 - Richmond
-  Region 2 - Culpepper Area
-  Region 3 - Central Virginia
-  Region 4 - Southwest
-  Region 5 - Hampton Roads
-  Region 6 - Roanoke Area
-  Region 7 - Northern Virginia
-  East Division
-  West Division



- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p>Region 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bland County Bristol City Buchanan County Carroll County Dickenson County Galax City Giles County Grayson County Lee County Norton City Pulaski County Radford City Russell County Scott County Smyth County Tazewell County Washington County Wise County Wythe County | <p>Region 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alleghany County Bath County Bedford County Botetourt County Buena Vista City Christiansburg Town Covington City Craig County Danville City Floyd County Franklin County Henry County Highland County Lexington City Martinsville City Montgomery County Patrick County Pittsylvania County Roanoke City Roanoke County Rockbridge County Salem City Vinton Town | <p>Region 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amelia County Brunswick County Charles City County Chesterfield County Colonial Heights City Dinwiddie County Emporia City Essex County Goodland County Greensville County Hanover County Henrico County Hopewell City King William County King and Queen County New Kent County Nottoway County Petersburg City Powhatan County Prince George County Richmond City Sussex County | <p>Region 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accomack County Chesapeake City Chincoteague Town Franklin City Gloucester County Hampton City Isle of Wight County James City County Lancaster County Mathews County Middlesex County Newport News City Norfolk City Northampton County Northumberland County Poquoson City Portsmouth City Richmond County Southampton County Suffolk City Surry County Virginia Beach City Westmoreland County Williamsburg City York County |
|--|---|---|--|



0 25 50 75 100
Miles

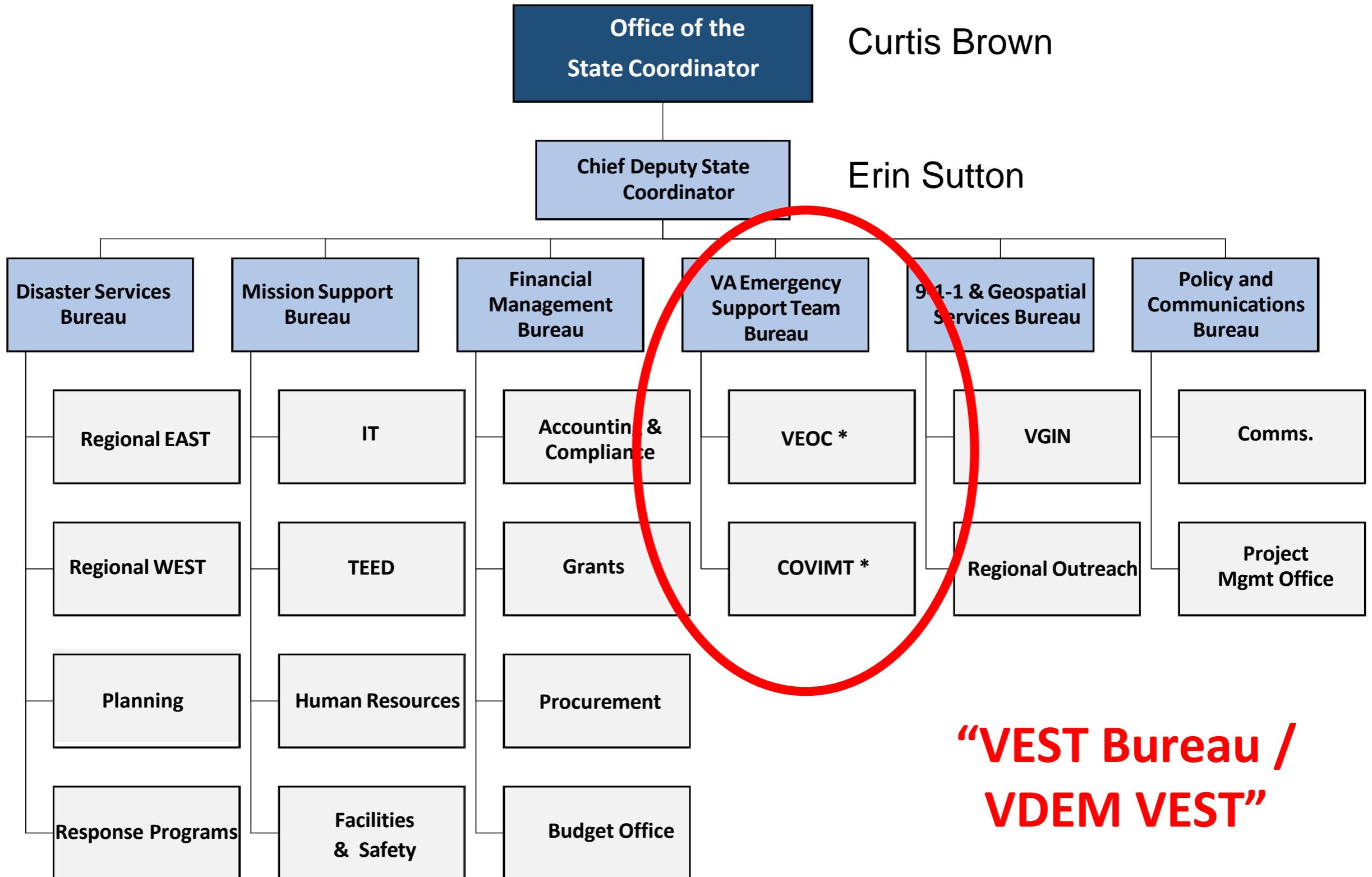
0 40 80 120 160
Kilometers



Map Created: 11/8/2013
Map Updated: 4/26/2017



Virginia Department of Emergency Management
Org Chart – April 2021



**“VEST Bureau /
VDEM VEST”**

* Not Division; Function

VEST Bureau

- One of 6 Bureaus in VDEM (7 employees)
- Responsible for the day-to-day relationship building with state agencies
 - Similar to Regional Staff (localities)
 - Similar to Locality EM (county departments)
- Responsible for overall readiness of the Virginia Emergency Operations Center

How?

- VEST Bureau coordinates / facilitates
 - Relationship building (internal and external)
 - Dot connecting
 - Collaboration
 - Coordination
 - Cooperation
- All VDEM Employees are Emergency Managers

Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (COVEOP)

- Framework for how the Commonwealth supports local governments, individuals, and businesses
- Improves capability to respond to and recover from disasters
- Emergency Management = Whole of Government responsibility
- Promulgated by Governor every 4 years
- Roles and responsibilities of all Executive Branch State Agencies
- Identifies command and control
- Emergency Support Function responsibilities
- <https://www.vaemergency.gov/agency/planning/>

Executive Order 41

- Directs Emergency Preparedness for All Executive Branch State Agencies:
 - VEST Liaison Officer (VLO)
 - Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC)
 - Public Information Officer (PIO)
- VLO Responsibilities:
 - Maintenance of agency employee roster
 - Provide VEST staffing support
 - Agency Support Plans
 - Oversight of disaster related costs
 - Coordinate disaster-related information
 - Agency's NIMS compliance

Virginia Emergency Support Team

- 300+ Trained Members – 100+ State Agencies, Non-profit entities, and private sector partners
- Operationalize the Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (COVEOP)
- Coordinate and support overall activities related to disaster response and recovery in support of local governments.
- Core management & administrative functions
- Information sharing upward (State Leadership), laterally (State Agencies/Local Governments) & downward (individual citizen).
- Bi-monthly Training and Exercise
- VESTEX & VOPEX



Benefits of the VEST

Widespread Stakeholders add a Layer of Complexity

Supporting **256 Vital Stakeholders**



118 State Agencies



38 Cities



95 Counties



5 Towns

A Coordinated Approach allows for



**Faster
Communication**



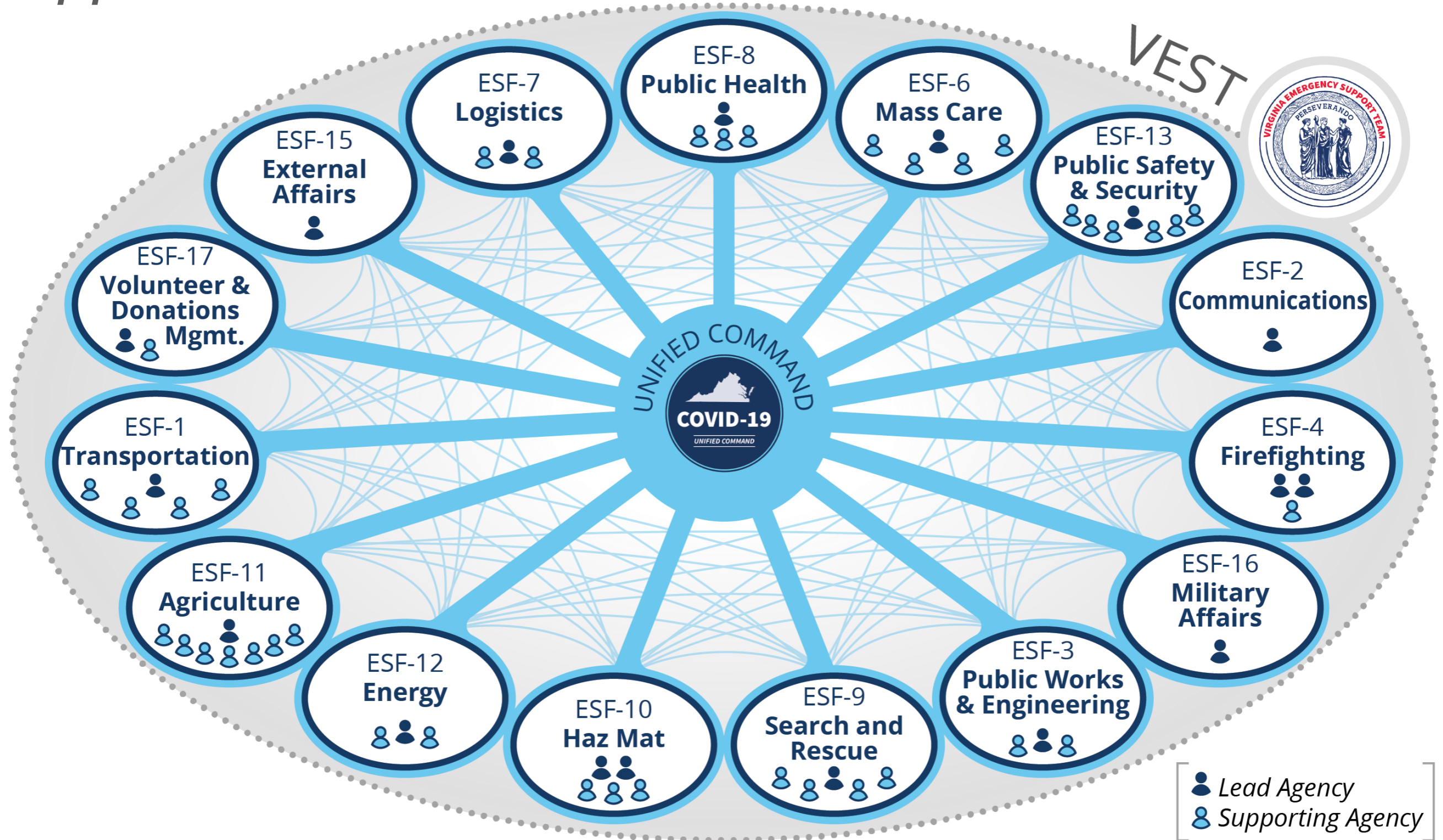
**Greater
Adaptability**



**More
Responsiveness**

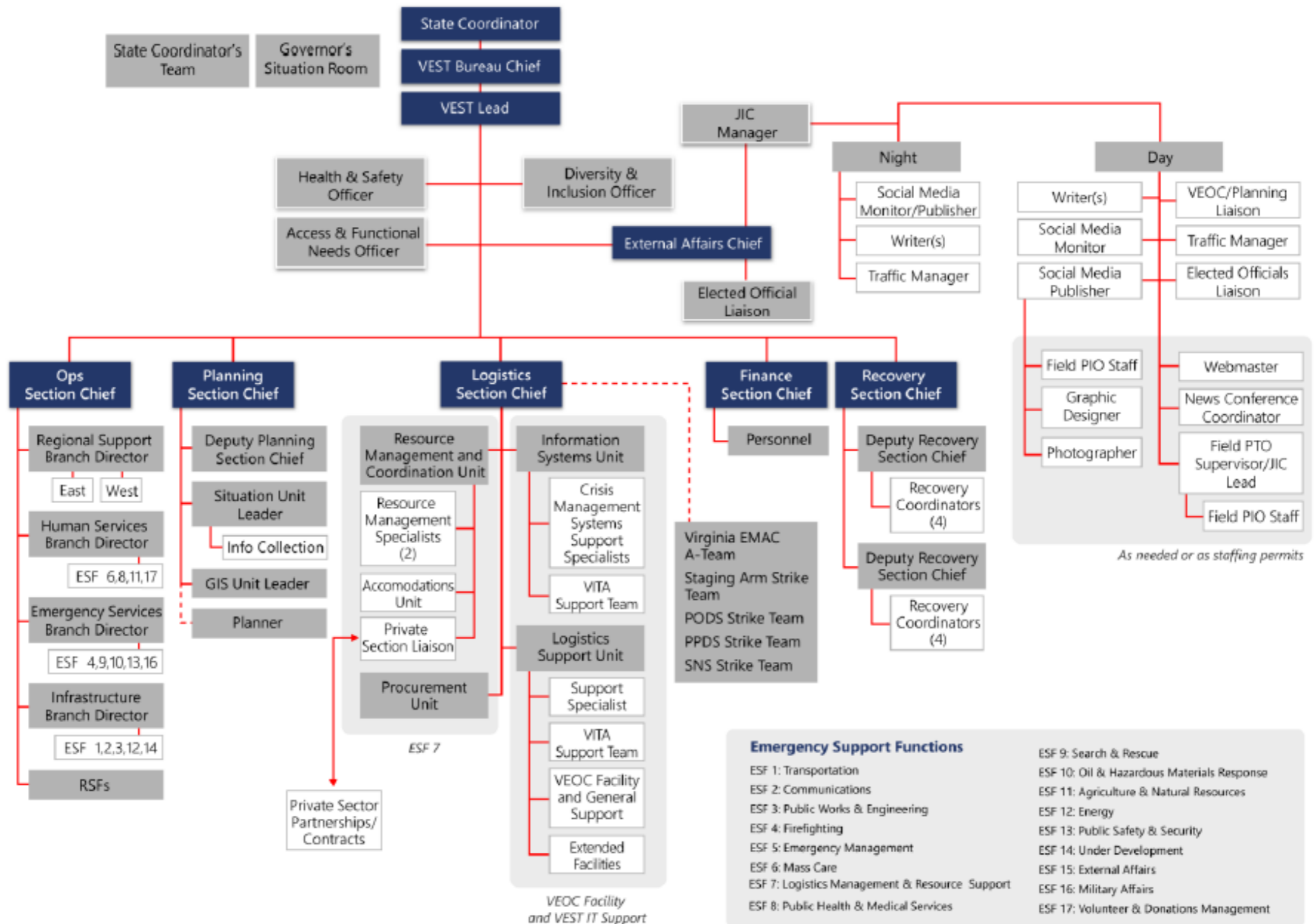
In Service to These Stakeholders

Complexity requires a coordinated, resilient approach



EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTION	LEAD STATE AGENCY	SUPPORTING AGENCIES	
ESF 1 - TRANSPORTATION	Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chesapeake Bay Bridge – Tunnel District (CBBT) - Department of Aviation (DOAV) - Department of General Services (DGS) - Department of Military Affairs (DMA) - Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy (DMME) - Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) - Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) - Virginia State Police (VSP) - Virginia Port Authority (VPA) - Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF)
ESF 2 - COMMUNICATIONS	Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA) Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) - Department of Military Affairs (DMA) - Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) - Virginia Department of Health (VDH) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES) - Virginia State Police (VSP) - Other State Agencies with Communications Assets
ESF 3 - PUBLIC WORKS & ENGINEERING	Virginia Department of Health (VDH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of General Services (DGS) - Professional Engineers Emergency Response Team (PERT) - Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy (DMME) - Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) - Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) - Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) - Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) - Virginia Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (VAWARN) - Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) - Department of Historic Resources (DHR)
ESF 4 - FIREFIGHTING	Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFFP) Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) - Department of Military Affairs (DMA) - Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) - Department of Corrections (DOC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) - Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) - Virginia State Police (VSP) - Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy (DMME)
ESF 6 - MASS CARE, EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE, HOUSING & HUMAN SERVICES	Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) - Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) - Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) - Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) - Department of General Services (DGS) - Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) - Department of Military Affairs (DMA) - Office of the Attorney General (OAG) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Virginia Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (VICF) - Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA) - Virginia State Police (VSP) - Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VA/OAD) - Virginia Department of Health (VDH) - Virginia Public Institutions of Higher Education - Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) - Virginia Department of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH)
ESF 7 - LOGISTICS & RESOURCE SUPPORT	Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of Corrections (DOC) - Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) - Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFFP) - Department of General Services (DGS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VDEM Disaster Service Contractors - Private Sector Partnerships - All other state agencies not listed when applicable
ESF 8 - PUBLIC HEALTH	Virginia Department of Health (VDH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) - Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) - Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) - Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) - Department of General Services (DGS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of Military Affairs (DMA) - Department of Social Services (VDSS) - Virginia State Police (VSP) - Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VA/OAD) - Department of Health Professions (DHP)
ESF 9 - SEARCH & RESCUE	Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) - Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFFP) - Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) - Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) - Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Virginia State Police (VSP) - Department of Military Affairs (DMA) - Civil Air Patrol (CAP) - Virginia Search and Rescue Council Organizations
ESF 10 - OIL & HAZARDOUS MATERIALS	Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Virginia Department of Health (VDH) - Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy (DMME)
ESF 11 - AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES	Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) - Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) - Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) - Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) - Department of General Services (DGS) - Virginia Department of Health (VDH) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of Historic Resources (DHR) - Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) - Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) - Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) - Library of Virginia (LVA) - Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE)
ESF 12 - ENERGY	Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) - State Corporation Commission (SCC) - Virginia Electric Cooperatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dominion Virginia Power - Appalachian Power Company (APCO)
ESF 13 - PUBLIC SAFETY & SECURITY	Virginia State Police (VSP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) - Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) - Department of Corrections (DOC) - Department of Forestry (VDOF) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) - Department of Military Affairs (DMA) - Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) - Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)
ESF 15 - EXTERNAL AFFAIRS	Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All Agencies of the Commonwealth of Virginia 	
ESF 16 - MILITARY AFFAIRS	Department of Military Affairs (DMA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joint Force Headquarters – Virginia - Joint Force Headquarters – Joint Operations Center (JFHQ-JOC) - Virginia Army National Guard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Virginia Air National Guard - Virginia Defense Force - 34th Civil Support Team (CST) CBRNE Response Force Package
ESF 17 - VOLUNTEER & DONATIONS MANAGEMENT	Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VA/OAD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adventist Community Services (ACS)

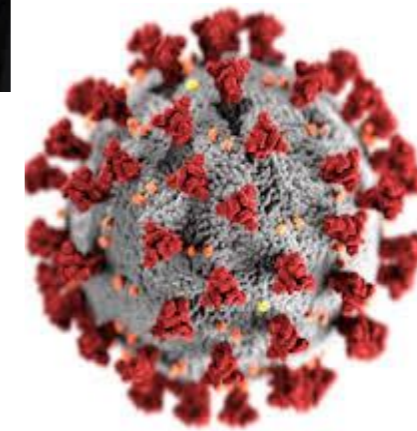
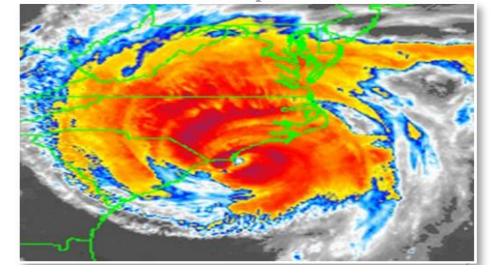
Typical VEST Structure



- Emergency Support Functions**
- ESF 1: Transportation
 - ESF 2: Communications
 - ESF 3: Public Works & Engineering
 - ESF 4: Firefighting
 - ESF 5: Emergency Management
 - ESF 6: Mass Care
 - ESF 7: Logistics Management & Resource Support
 - ESF 8: Public Health & Medical Services
 - ESF 9: Search & Rescue
 - ESF 10: Oil & Hazardous Materials Response
 - ESF 11: Agriculture & Natural Resources
 - ESF 12: Energy
 - ESF 13: Public Safety & Security
 - ESF 14: Under Development
 - ESF 15: External Affairs
 - ESF 16: Military Affairs
 - ESF 17: Volunteer & Donations Management

2020 Historic Year (All Hazards)

- Special Events (Lobby Day)
- Regional Emergencies-
Flooding/Tornados
- COVID-19
- First Amendment/Protest
Events
- Hurricane Isaias
- Elections
- December Winter Storm



Ongoing Response to COVID-19

2020 Historic Responses

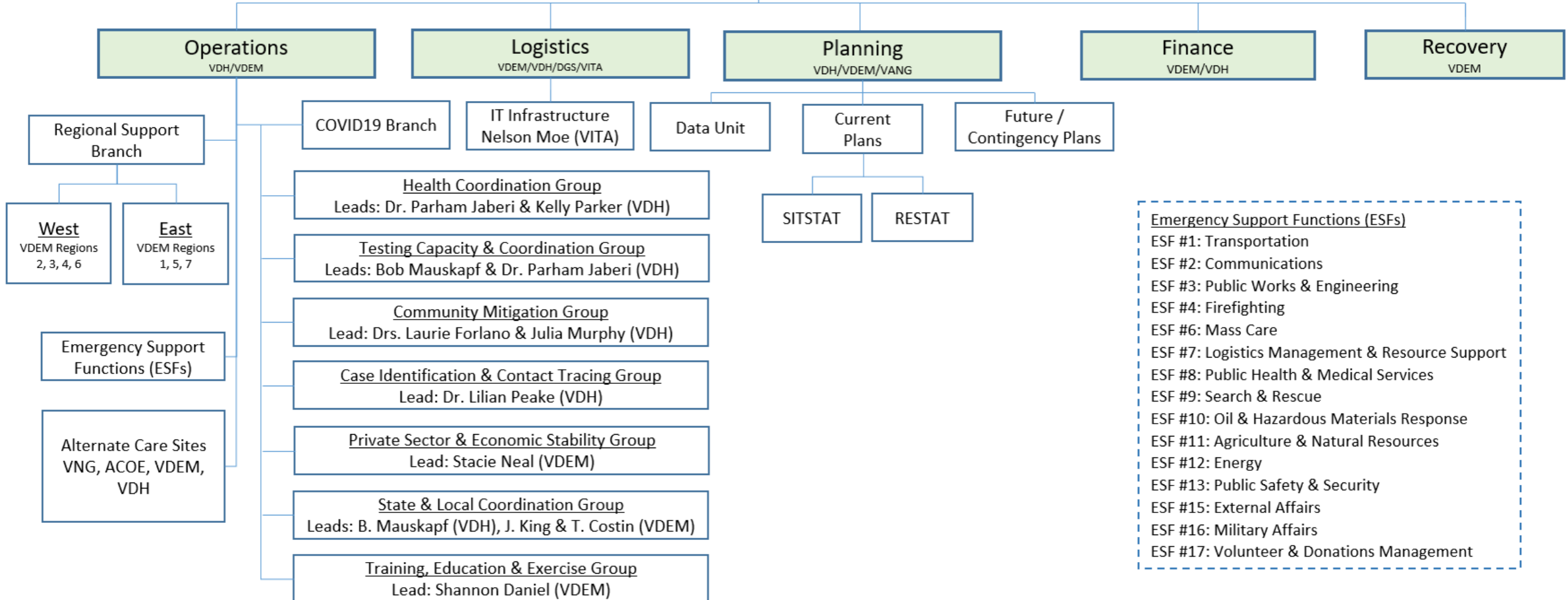
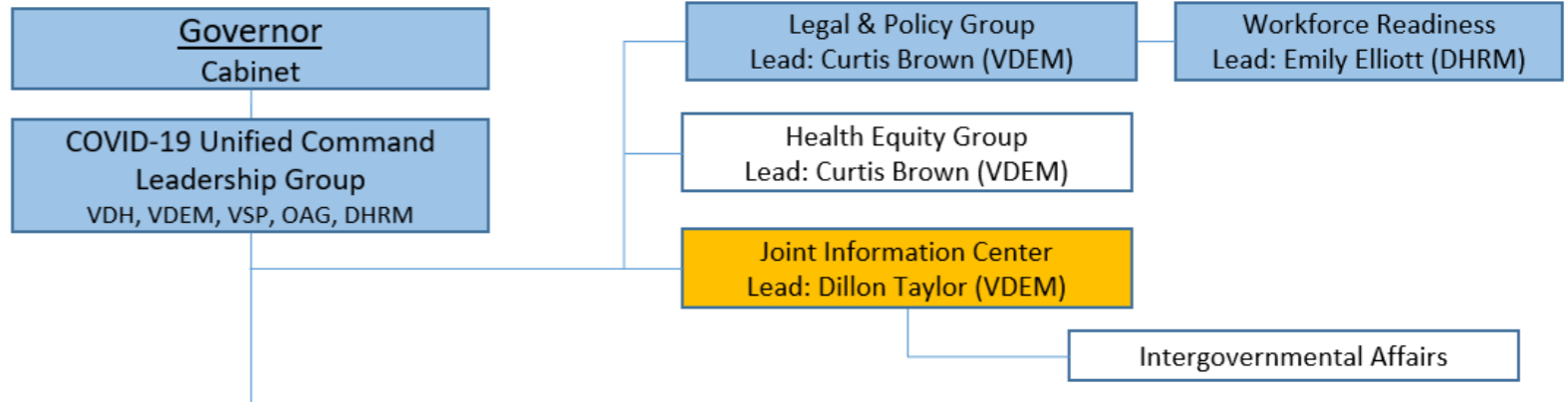
- 2020 Activated for 2 simultaneous events for total 99 days
COVID/First Amendment, COVID/Elections, COVID/Winter Weather
- 10 Major Events/Activations:
 - Lobby Day 1/20
 - R4 Severe Weather/Flooding 2/6
 - COVID19 - 481 days (as of 6/15/21)
 - First Amendment - 92 days
 - Isaias - 4 days
 - Elections - 5 days
 - Winter Weather - (Dec 2020) 1+ days
 - January 6th (Capitol Invasion/DC EMAC)
 - Lobby Day/Inauguration - 3+ days activated (Jan 18-21)
 - Winter Weather/Ice Storm (Jan 31 & Feb 11-26)

Initial COVID Response

- March 16, 2020 – July 31, 2020
 - Quickly realized need for additional Command and Control Staffing
 - Initial Activation of Commonwealth of Virginia Incident Management Team
 - Mostly Virtual
 - Eight State Agencies / 123 individuals
 - 78 COVID Sit Reps
 - 40 COVID Storyboards
 - 19 COVID ICS-201
 - Unprecedented LOGS response (PPE)

Initial COVID Response

COVID-19 Unified Command
March 18, 2020



- Emergency Support Functions (ESFs)**
- ESF #1: Transportation
 - ESF #2: Communications
 - ESF #3: Public Works & Engineering
 - ESF #4: Firefighting
 - ESF #6: Mass Care
 - ESF #7: Logistics Management & Resource Support
 - ESF #8: Public Health & Medical Services
 - ESF #9: Search & Rescue
 - ESF #10: Oil & Hazardous Materials Response
 - ESF #11: Agriculture & Natural Resources
 - ESF #12: Energy
 - ESF #13: Public Safety & Security
 - ESF #15: External Affairs
 - ESF #16: Military Affairs
 - ESF #17: Volunteer & Donations Management

Commonwealth of Virginia Incident Management Team

- New team (2020) – currently represented by core group of 5 agencies & under development
 - Virginia Department Of Forestry
 - Virginia Department of Fire Programs
 - Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation
 - Virginia Department of Emergency Management
 - Virginia Defense Force
- First utilized for COVID response – support and facilitate the EOC processes behind the scenes
 - Information collection
 - Documentation – Incident Support Plan

Initial COVID Response

- Key Takeaways
 - Implemented MS Teams VEST-wide
 - Implemented weekly calls with Regional and VEST members
 - Equity as a driver for response
 - Private Sector Program

Hurricane Isaias

- July 31– August 4, 2020
 - One of 3 Simultaneous Events - COVID, Civil Unrest & Isaias
 - First fully virtual hurricane activation
 - Implemented changed processes

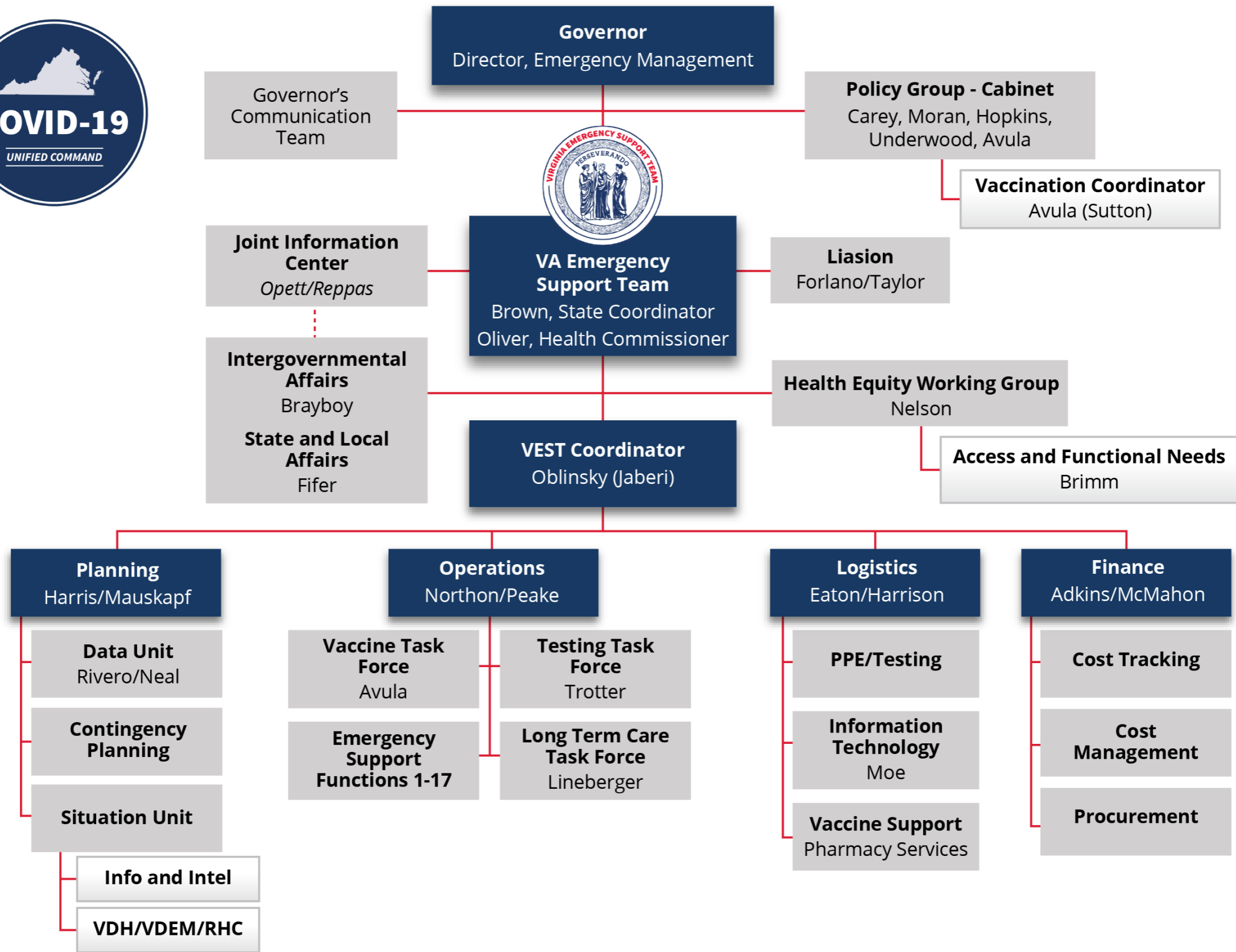
2021 Historic Responses

- 2021 US Capitol Event / Lobby Day / Inauguration / Lexington Events
 - Month-long event / support to DC
- 2021 Activated for 2 simultaneous events for 11 days (COVID-19 Vaccination / February Ice Storm)

2021 COVID Vaccination

- VEST Unified Command re-established (February)
- VDEM & VDH coordination through VEST Unified Command
 - VEST brings Whole of Government Response
- Daily Command & General Staff meetings
 - Weekly Incident Support Plan / Unified Objectives
- Continued focus on on testing of COVID-19 and its variants.
- Equity as a driver – groundbreaking / national best practice





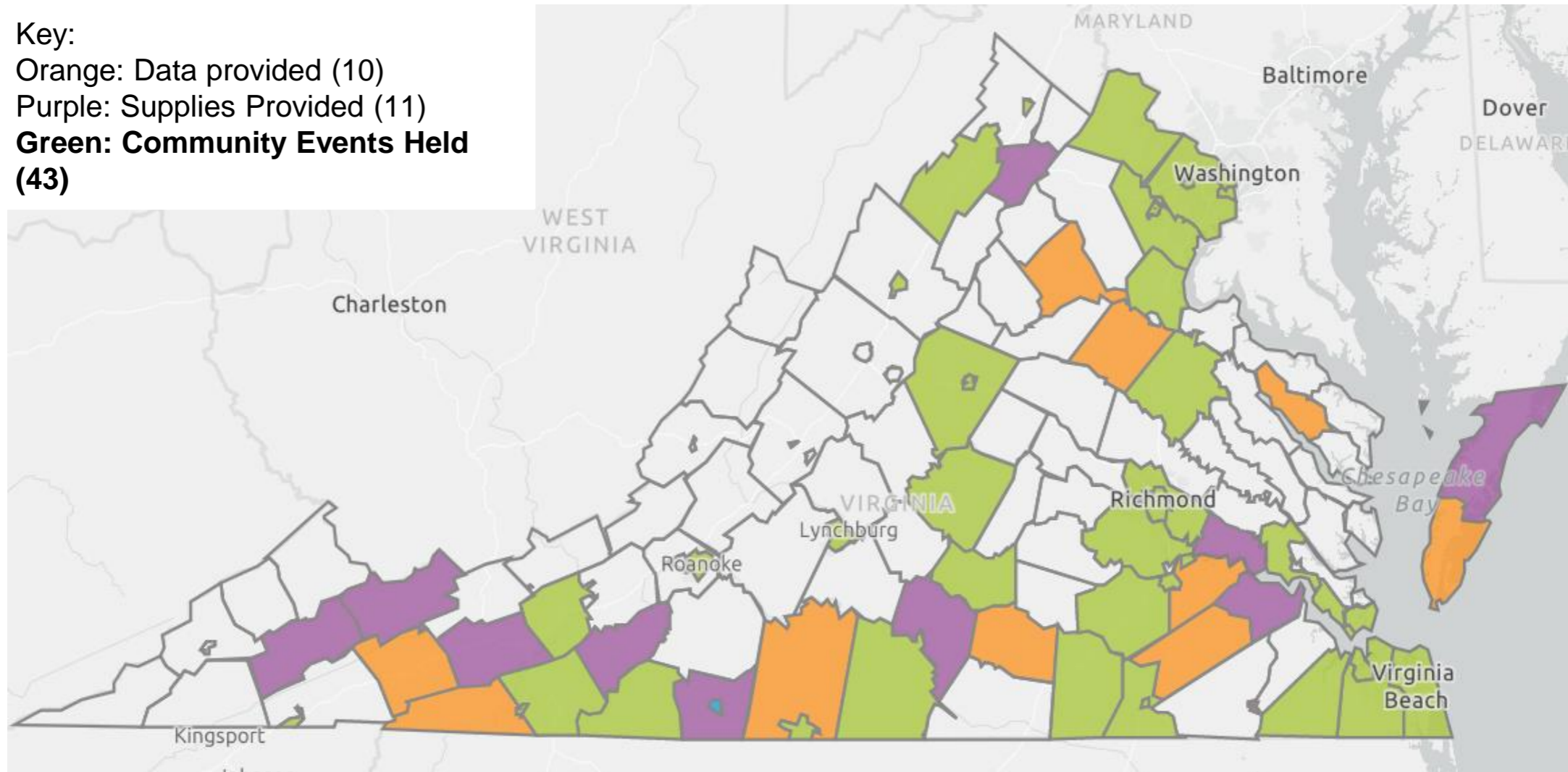
Health Equity Pilot Program

Key:

Orange: Data provided (10)

Purple: Supplies Provided (11)

Green: Community Events Held (43)



Localities Identified for Participation	Localities Committed to Program	Local Govs hosting Comm. Engagement Events	Masks Distributed	Bottles of Hand Sanitizer Distributed
71	65	43	793,400	671,400



Questions?

Michelle Tilley Oblinsky, CEM, VaPEM

Michelle.Oblinsky@VDEM.Virginia.gov