

Independent

The adopted 2002-04 budget for Independent agencies results in an increase of \$673,690 GF and \$33.5 million NGF. This funding supports a number of programs and initiatives ranging from educating consumers about choices regarding retail electricity providers in a competitive market to a host of administrative enhancements at the Virginia Retirement System that are intended to benefit members.

The general fund increase includes 1) \$250,000 to the Virginia Retirement System for the Volunteer Firefighters and Rescue Squad Workers' Service Award Program (VOLSAP) and 2) \$423,690 GF to establish the Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy as an independent entity.

- **State Corporation Commission**
 - ***Consumer Education Program.*** Provides \$6.7 million NGF the first year and \$6.8 million NGF the second year to initiate an education program to assist consumers in making decisions regarding energy providers in a competitive retail electric market.
- **State Lottery Department**
 - ***Ticket Printing Authority.*** Provides \$2.4 million NGF in each year to enable the department to meet the increased cost of printing instant scratch lottery tickets.
 - ***Use of Lottery Proceeds.*** Adds language that allows the Lottery to inform the public of the purposes of the Lottery Proceeds Fund, established pursuant to Article X, Section 7-A, Constitution of Virginia.
- **Virginia College Savings Plan**
 - ***Administrative Costs of New Programs.*** Provides \$186,412 NGF the first year and \$382,145 NGF the second year for administrative costs of new programs.
 - ***Across-the-Board Reductions.*** Includes a reduction of \$206,045 NGF the first year and \$298,259 NGF the second year as part of the general 7 and 8 percent across-the-board reductions. Savings realized will go to reduce the cost of the program to contract holders.

- **Virginia Retirement System**
 - ***Quarterly Payments to the VRS.*** Adds language that changes the schedule used to pay the Virginia Retirement System for retirement contributions, Virginia Sickness and Disability Program premiums and Retiree Health Care Credit premiums from a monthly basis to a quarterly basis.
 - ***Actuarial Valuations.*** Deletes language that required annual VRS retirement valuation studies.
 - ***Additional Retirement Service Credit.*** Adds language that allows additional individuals to receive service credit for part-time employment in the legislative branch, upon the approval of the Joint Rules Committee.
 - ***HJR 49 Retirement Study Costs.*** Provides \$100,000 NGF each year for actuarial and legal services in support of the House Joint Resolution 49 VRS study.
 - ***Volunteer Firefighters and Rescue Squad Workers' Service Award Program (VOLSAP).*** Provides \$250,000 GF the second year for administrative costs and to provide a supplemental contribution for the program, as provided in Chapter 664, 1999 Acts of Assembly.
 - ***Base Budget Adjustment.*** Adds \$1.6 million NGF each year to provide funding to maintain services.
 - ***Benefit Communications Program.*** Provides \$400,000 NGF the first year and 11.0 FTE positions and \$514,000 NGF the second year to improve communications-related programs for VRS' various benefit programs.
 - ***Retirement Processing Activities.*** Provides \$646,000 NGF the first year and 5.0 FTE positions and \$720,000 NGF the second year to provide better and timelier services to prospective retirees.
 - ***VRS Technology Infrastructure.*** Provides \$2.2 million NGF the first year and 2.0 FTE positions and \$2.4 million NGF the second year to provide upgrades to the agency's technology infrastructure.
- **Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy**
 - ***Establish the Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy.*** Establishes a new independent human rights agency, contingent

upon passage of House Bill 9. The initial budget is \$211,733 GF and \$1,980,341 NGF the first year with 25.00 FTE positions and \$211,957 GF and \$1,980,341 NGF the second year with 25.00 FTE positions.