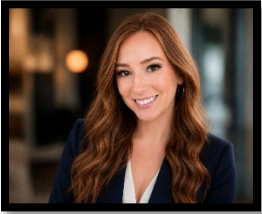


VAPDC June Workshop Event Speakers



Auna Louthian, Project Manager, Mount Rogers Planning District Commission

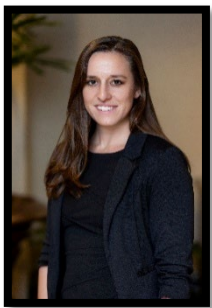
Auna Louthian is a Project Manager at the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission with a strong background in project coordination, grant administration, financial management, and community engagement. She brings experience from both local government and regional nonprofit leadership, with a proven ability to manage complex projects, support strategic initiatives, and build collaborative partnerships across Southwest Virginia. Auna is passionate about public service and dedicated to

strengthening communities through effective planning, communication, and regional collaboration.



Robert Hilt, Area Specialist, USDA Rural Development

Robert Hilt is an Area Specialist for USDA Rural Development working in the Lebanon and Wytheville Area Offices. Robert works with the counties and cities located in the Southwestern portion of Virginia administering the Rural Utilities Service loan and grant funds for both water and sewer utility projects. He also administers Community Facility loan and grant funds for essential community facility projects. Robert has been employed by USDA for forty-two years.



Jemma Sabokrouh, Program Manager, Virginia Tech Center for Economic and Community Engagement (CECE)

Jemma Sabokrouh is the Program Manager for the Virginia Tech Center for Economic and Community Engagement (CECE), where she leads the GO Virginia Region 2 program. She oversees a portfolio of 18 active projects spanning across the New River Valley, Roanoke-Alleghany, and Greater Lynchburg regions. In this role, she supports regional economic growth through initiatives that bring together local government, workforce, education, and industries to address the needs and priorities of the region.

Prior to joining CECE in 2024, Jemma spent 11 years in public education in Florida. She began her career teaching high school biology and math, and earned a Masters degree in Educational Leadership before advancing through roles in administration leading up to serving as a high school assistant principal. The experience in education, leadership, stakeholder engagement, and strategic planning gained from her work in education has had strong application in her program management and support to the GO Virginia Region 2 Council.

Sydney Boggs, Program Director, GO Virginia Region 1

Sydney Boggs serves as program director of GO Virginia Region 1 at the University of Virginia's College at Wise, working to support regional initiatives that strengthen economic opportunities in Southwest Virginia. A native of Pound, Virginia, Boggs earned an associate's degree in accounting from Mountain Empire Community College and a Bachelor of Arts in liberal arts and sciences from UVA Wise. She spent seven years as an educator in the region, which helped shape her collaborative approach to her current work. Boggs is an active member of the Achievable Futures work group for the STRONG Accountable Care Community, a regional coalition of partners working together to create brighter futures for children in Southwest Virginia and Northeast Tennessee.



Kelly Charapich, Planning Grants Specialist' Virginia's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

Kelly Charapich is the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Planning Grant Specialist with Virginia's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). With 9 years' experience at DHCD, she has a passion for project development and identifying multiple partners and funding strategies. Kelly is based in DHCD's Abingdon Field Office but works with localities across the entire

Commonwealth – although as a lifelong Smyth County resident, she has a particular interest in projects serving Southwest Virginia. Outside of the office, Kelly enjoys nature, reading, and writing.



Sara Williams, Southwest Regional Director, Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission

Sara Williams is the Southwest Regional Director at the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission where she manages the operations of the Commission's Southwest Virginia office in Abingdon. Over the past 22 years Sara has managed TRRC grant awards for over 900 projects focused on the economic revitalization of the SWVA region. She holds an MBA from Virginia Tech.



Luke Tate, Community Outreach Regional Manager, Southwest Virginia, Virginia Housing

Luke Tate is the Community Outreach Regional Manager for Southwest Virginia at Virginia Housing. He previously served as a Strategic Housing Officer based in Richmond. He is the primary point of contact for the Rental Predevelopment Loan Fund which provides below-market financing for typical predevelopment expenses.

He joined Virginia Housing in 2018 after working at the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development for over nine years in their Housing Division. In July 2023, he joined the Virginia Association of Housing and Community Development Officials Board of Directors.