

Hot Flashes

May 2026

Fairfax County Retired Employees Association

Message From the Chair

It has been quite a year already weather-wise, hasn't it! We've seen record-high and record-low temperatures in recent weeks. But now we are in May, and hopefully we can put the long-sleeved sweaters away for a while!

As always, our intrepid *Hot Flashes* editor, Chuck Higdon, is looking for information to include, so please take a few minutes to share news of your travels, interesting books you've read, fun websites you've discovered, etc. The thing many members miss most after retiring is chatting with coworkers. This is our chance to chat with each other on a much larger scale! Email Chuck at FCREA99@gmail.com. He'd love to hear from you!

Enjoy your summer! I look forward to catching up with you in person at our annual picnic in September.

Sincerely,
Pam Martin, Chairman
Fairfax County Retired Employees Association

Cost of Living Adjustment

The annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) has been announced for FY 2027. It is **3.0%**. This percentage is applied to your base benefit and any accumulated COLAs from prior years. The new amount will be effective with your July 2026 benefit payment. If you have been retired for less than a year, your COLA will be prorated.

EXAMPLE, retired more than one year:



7/1/2026 COLA = 3.0%

Partial view of pay advice:

Income	Current	YTD Income
Base Amount	2,014.43	10,072.15
Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)	138.62	693.10
Pre-Social Security Benefit	1,007.21	5,036.05

Base Benefit	\$2,014.43
Accumulated COLAs	138.62
	\$2,153.05 Adjusted Gross Subject to COLA

Amount Subject to COLA	\$2,153.05
FY 2026 COLA Percentage	x 3.0%
	\$64.59 Total adjustment amount

The increase (\$64.59) will be added to the current COLA balance. The COLA total, effective with the July benefit payment, will increase from \$138.62 to \$203.21.

For more information about the COLA, please check out our page on the website:
[The 3.0% COLA will be effective 7/1/26 for all three systems. | Retirement Systems](#)

Changes in Tax Withholding

If you need to adjust your tax withholding, please use the following forms:

Federal tax withholding form	2026 Form W-4P
Virginia tax withholding form	Form VA-4P

If you have questions about completing the forms, please contact a tax advisor.

Contact Information

If you have questions about your benefit payment or changes to your direct deposit, please contact your retirement specialist. Please note the division of last names based on the matter you need help with.

Account Updates, Refunds,
Income verification,
Last Name A-K

Christina Storr Barnes

christina.storrarnes@fairfaxcounty.gov
[703.324.4861](tel:703.324.4861)

Account Updates, Refunds, Income verification, Last Name L-Z	Yvonne Ta	yvonne.ta@fairfaxcounty.gov 703.279.8230
Deaths of Retirees, Address Changes Last Name A-K	Brittany Pistolessi	Brittany.Pistolessi@FairfaxCounty.gov 703.877.2887
Deaths of Retirees, Address Changes Last Name L-Z	Maria Foltz	Maria.Foltz@fairfaxcounty.gov 703.279.8202

Fairfax County Police Department News

Operation Skim Scam: Detectives Recover 20 Skimmer Devices in Stores

Detectives from our Financial Crimes Unit, with the assistance of the United States Secret Service (USSS), conducted a countywide skimmer-detection operation at more than 100 locations across Fairfax County, resulting in the recovery of 20 credit card skimming devices. During this operation, detectives and USSS agents searched 287 Point-of-Sale (POS) Terminals, 158 ATMs, and 46 gas pumps. Skimming devices were located at multiple convenience stores, discount stores, and grocery stores throughout Fairfax County and the Town of Herndon.

How to Protect Yourself from Skimming Devices

Credit card skimming devices are often small, discreet, and designed to blend in seamlessly with legitimate card readers. They can be found at ATMs, gas pumps, and even self-checkout machines. Go to this link for some photos of skimmers and tips to help protect yourself from becoming a victim:

[Protect Yourself from Skimmers](#)

Opportunities to Help

Are you passionate about Cardio, Zumba, Tai Chi, Yoga, S.A.I.L., or Line Dance? Fairfax County Senior Centers- under Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS)- are looking for volunteer instructors. Go to

bit.ly/SeniorCtrOpps for the complete list of opportunities, or bit.ly/DFS-VS



to learn more about Volunteer Solutions and their partnership with NCS. Questions? Contact VolunteerSolutions@FairfaxCounty.gov or [703-324-5406](tel:703-324-5406).



The May Financial Refresh: Navigating the Digital Shift

As the Northern Virginia landscape shifts into full bloom, May offers a natural pause to look ahead at the coming months. While we often think of "spring cleaning" in terms of garages and gardens, it is equally rewarding to

apply that same energy to our financial well-being, especially as the tools we use to manage our lives continue to evolve.

For those of us navigating retirement in Fairfax County, staying ahead of the 'digital curve' is one of the best ways to protect our peace of mind. Here are a few ways to refresh your financial house this month:

- **Audit Your 'Digital Footprint':** Financial security today is less about physical ledgers and more about digital vigilance. Take a few minutes this month to audit your banking app settings. Enabling multi-factor authentication and real-time transaction alerts provides immediate visibility into your accounts from anywhere, whether you're at home or traveling this summer.
- **The Annual Beneficiary Check:** It's easy to set and forget, but a quick annual review of your primary and contingent beneficiaries is vital. Ensure your designations across your county-sponsored benefits and private accounts still align with your current wishes. It is a small task that provides immense long-term clarity for your family.
- **Pruning for Purpose:** May is a great time to audit recurring digital subscriptions. Pruning these small expenses can free up funds for more meaningful pursuits, such as supporting local education initiatives or contributing to a Fairfax-based animal rescue during their spring fundraising drives.
- **Partner with Local Expertise:** One of the benefits of living in our area is access to community-centric institutions like **Apple Federal Credit Union**. As they celebrate their 70th anniversary this year, they remain a resource for retirees. Built by educators for the Fairfax community, Apple's "people helping people" philosophy ensures your financial goals are supported by experts who understand the unique needs of public service retirees.

Take Action This May: If it's been a while since you've reviewed your retirement accounts or explored new ways to maximize your savings, reach out to the team at Apple Federal Credit Union. Whether you visit a local branch or explore their digital tools online, now is the perfect time to ensure your financial plan is as healthy as your spring garden. Visit [AppleFCU.org](https://www.AppleFCU.org) to learn more about their anniversary specials

and member benefits.

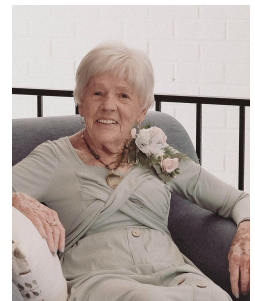


Sad News

James Heberlein passed away in September 2024. James retired as the Director of the Park Authority in December 1997. There was no obituary.

Joyce Proffit Leamon passed peacefully on November 20, 2025, at her home in Annandale, VA. Joyce retired from DOT in 2004.

[Obituary](#)



FCREA

2026 Event
Picnic - September TBD

New Members

- Tania Ebrahimian, Retired from the Library on 4/3/2026
- Wilhelmenia Martin Francis, Retired from Neighborhood & Community Services/School-Aged Child Care on 2/24/26
- Mark Hancock, Retired from Information Technology on 4/6/2016



Membership Application Membership Facts

FCREA Board Members

FCREA retirees are asked to forward news concerning retirees or their family members who are ill or have passed away to Joyce Gerhart: [703-560-4785](tel:703-560-4785) or ggerhart2@verizon.net

Please send address changes to Bobbie Deegan: BobbieDeegan@aol.com, or [301-937-7070](tel:301-937-7070)

FCREA Website

Fairfax County Websites with Retirees Information:

[Retirement Systems](#)

[Retirement Web Member Services](#)

[Retirees Benefits](#)

[HR- Who to Call Contacts](#) (go to [Know Who to Call](#) link)

[Retirees Resource and Video Library](#)

Finally: Data Centers

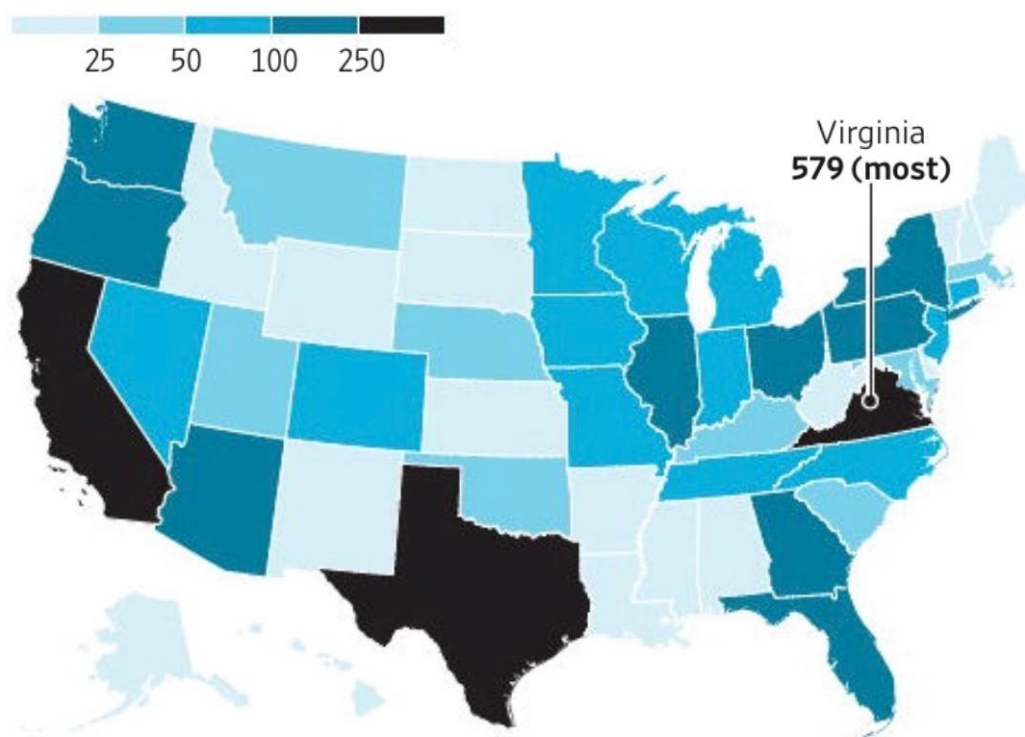
The proliferation of data centers has become a hallmark of modern technological advancement. Their presence yields both positive and negative effects on local communities.

One prominent benefit is that these facilities typically create jobs in the community. Data centers require a range of personnel, from engineers and IT specialists to maintenance staff and support roles, and stimulate ancillary

employment opportunities.

One of the most pressing issues with data centers is their substantial environmental impact. The operation of these facilities requires enormous amounts of energy to power servers and maintain optimal cooling conditions. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), data centers accounted for approximately 1% of global electricity demand in 2020,

Number of data centers by state



Source: Data Center Map

-From the Wall Street Journal, April 8, 2026

[View as Webpage](#)

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