

The Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association is the only unified voice for the restaurant, lodging, travel and hospitality suppliers associations. VRLTA creates value for members by promoting the legislative interests of the industry, networking, educational opportunities, and protecting free enterprise.

***During 2020, VRLTA has worked tirelessly to protect hospitality- and tourism-related businesses from the economic fallout associated with COVID-19, develop resources to assist businesses and individuals, and help position our industries for a strong rebound post-COVID.***



*This year, VRLTA secured many important advocacy victories, including:*

- Working with state government to establish the RebuildVA COVID-19 Relief Grant and favorable eligibility criteria for our industries
- Collaborating with local government organizations including Virginia Municipal League, Virginia Association of Counties, and many localities across Virginia to adopt tax deferrals on property, meals and lodging taxes and enact local economic relief grants for businesses
- Delaying the schedule of minimum wage increases during the reconvened session; Virginia is one of the only states with planned increases that obtained a delay
- Postponing of the increase to regional lodging taxes to be used to finance transportation projects and the law allowing counties to increase these taxes above the current 5% threshold
- Defeating proposed special session legislation that would have treated hotel guests as tenants under Landlord-Tenant law before the current 90-day threshold
- Working with state agencies to allow restaurants to sell unprepared food to consumers



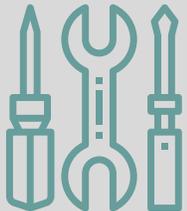
*During the pandemic, VRLTA has worked to offer education and training solutions for members, including:*

- Offering free training for COVID and upskilling to hotel and restaurant employees
- Connecting members with training and resources
- Working with workforce partners to identify opportunities for out-of-work employees
- Creating an industry-specific job board to match workers and employers and offering free listings to members
- Planning a series of webinars to cover relevant topics such as best practices, PPP and other grants, alcohol-to-go, reopening strategies, Department of Labor rules and regulations, and health care solutions

"We are forever grateful to the VRLTA staff for their never-ending efforts in advocating for the tourism industry during this pandemic! They were extremely helpful in relaying important information on the Governor's guidelines and subsequent changes that were taking effect as well as any available grants or loans. They were...amazingly responsive to any of my questions or concerns."

Jennifer Decker, GM  
Hampton Inn Manassas

## Resources & Tools



*VRLTA has worked to be a source of relevant, clear, and concise information, including:*

- *Providing key information via email to help the industry manage and protect their business, assets, and staff, initially on a near-daily basis and now weekly*
- *Developing an online COVID information resource center on the Virginia Is For Restaurant Lovers website ([www.virginiaisforrestaurantlovers.com](http://www.virginiaisforrestaurantlovers.com))*
- *Creating Restaurant & Hospitality Relief Fund to support workers and businesses impacted (over \$60,000 distributed to date)*
- *Developing the Virginia Restaurant Promise, with signage to show consumers that restaurants are meeting the highest standards*
- *Recommending sources for PPE, cleaning supplies, takeout and alcohol-to-go packaging, COVID test kits, and more*
- *Offering access to legislators to share information*

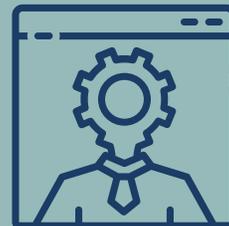
*"VRLTA staff offered important timely leadership throughout the COVID crisis. They provided relevant easy to understand information on rules and regulations directly related to Tourism businesses...Industry partners were grateful to have the information so succinctly and accurately prepared."*

*Jennifer Bell, Tourism Manager, City of Harrisonburg*

*"The impact of COVID-19 on the hospitality industry has been substantial and keeping up with the ongoing changes in CDC guidance and government-issued mandates has been equally as challenging. The VRLTA has eased the process of responding to these challenges through their ongoing Zoom calls and email blasts. These touchpoints...have helped to keep the membership informed of any changes in guidance, potential legislation the VRLTA supports or challenges on behalf of the membership, trends in the ongoing impact of the virus on the industry, and relief options available to impacted hospitality businesses."*

*Brent Jackson, President, Jackson Hotel Management*

## Expertise



*VRLTA has offered expertise and support through our experienced, professional staff, including:*

- *Answering thousands of questions from members and other businesses during the pandemic*
- *Working with the National Restaurant Association, American Hotel and Lodging Association, Asian-American Hotel Owners Association, and other national organizations to ensure that Virginia businesses are represented at the federal level*
- *Offering resources and information to both members and nonmembers during this unprecedented time*
- *Representing the hospitality and tourism industries at the state and local levels with legislators and business groups*
- *Continuing to offer Government Affairs calls to gain updates on the ever-changing rules and regulations*

**For more information or to join, visit [vrlta.org](http://vrlta.org)**