

2005 Tax Rates

**Virginia's Cities, Counties,
and Selected Towns**

24th Annual Edition

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and
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**In Cooperation
with
The Virginia Association of Counties
and
The Virginia Municipal League**



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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

This is the twenty-fourth edition of *Tax Rates in Virginia's Cities, Counties, and Selected Towns*. This comprehensive guide to local taxes in Virginia prepared by the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service is based on information gathered in the spring, summer, and early fall of 2005. The study includes all of Virginia's 39 independent cities and 95 counties and 147 of the 189 incorporated towns, covering 90 percent of the commonwealth's town population. In addition to survey data, the study includes information from two Department of Taxation studies, *2005 Legislative Summary* and *The 2003 Assessment/Sales Ratio Study*, and from the Auditor of Public Accounts' *Comparative Report of Local Government Revenues and Expenditures, Year Ended June 30, 2004*.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The study is separated into 25 sections. We have reprinted as Section 1 the Department of Taxation's information on 2005 state legislation affecting local taxation, which also is available on the department's website: http://www.tax.virginia.gov/Web_PDFs/2005LegislativeSummary.pdf.

Sections 2 through 25 cover specific taxes and service charges. Most of the data came from a detailed questionnaire sent to all cities, counties, and incorporated towns (see Appendix A for a facsimile of the document). Appendix B provides a listing of names and phone numbers of respondents and non-respondents to the questionnaire and the local government web address if one was provided. Web information is increasingly available for Virginia local governments. This year, 36 (92 percent) of the cities reported a web site. Among the counties, 84 (88 percent) reported a web site. Also, 77 (52 percent) of the 147 responding towns have a web site. Additional information on state and local government finance is available on the Cooper Center's VaStat website: http://www.coopercenter.org/econ/VASTAT/government_finance.php. Most of the information at the site is for Virginia, but there are also national links and

links for other states. The Schmidt Enterprises, LLC link is particularly useful for finding information for other states. Appendix C shows the percentage share of total local taxes represented by each specific tax. Information is provided for each city and county and for each incorporated town with a population exceeding 2,500.

STYLE NOTES

If a table shows, for a particular locality, a different tax than reported in the previous edition, this usually means that the tax has been changed. However, there is always the remote possibility that in one or both years the response was inaccurate or that we made an error.

In the tables in this study, three dots (...) are used to show there was no response and "N/A" is used to indicate "not applicable." Readers may use the phone list in Appendix B to call local officials in order to obtain clarification and additional detail.

STUDY PERSONNEL

John L. Knapp, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus and Senior Research Economist in the Business and Economics Section, was the project director. In this capacity he designed and edited the publication and was responsible for final approval of the entire content. Stephen C. Kulp, Research Specialist in the Business and Economics Section, was responsible for all day-to-day work on the project. He refined the new database, administered the survey, translated the results into tables, checked relevant code sections, and made appropriate changes in the text. William M. Shobe, the Research Director for Business and Economics, read the full manuscript and provided valuable suggestions for improvement. Student research assistant James J. Jenkins assisted Kulp with mailing, follow-up, layout, and other aspects of the work. He also assisted Knapp with the editing. His input was a major reason for the timely release of the study. The Cooper Center Publications Division aided in formatting the publication. Jayne E. Weber designed the cover and

consulted on the layout and formatting of the book. David J. Borszich converted the chapter sections from PageMaker to InDesign and assisted with the proofreading. Cooper Center employee Albert W. Spengler, who authored this study for a number of years prior to 1991, laid the foundation for the study when it was his responsibility.

The questionnaire was reviewed by William J. White, Department of Taxation; Ellen R. Davenport, Virginia Association of Counties; Joann Draughn, Virginia Economic Development Partnership; and John H. Bowman, Professor Emeritus, Virginia Commonwealth University. The strong support for this publication by the Virginia Association of Counties and the Virginia Municipal League adds to its acceptance as a basic reference on Virginia local taxes.

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FINAL COMMENTS

We are grateful to the many local officials throughout the Commonwealth who supplied the survey information presented in this study. We thank them for their willingness to provide information and their patience in answering follow-up questions. Excellent response rates of 100 percent for the cities and counties and 78 percent for the towns could not have been achieved without their cooperation.

Please let us hear from you if you have corrections or suggestions for possible changes or additions to future editions. Our email addresses and phone numbers are listed below.



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