

INTRODUCED: March 10, 2026

AN ORDINANCE No. 2026-055

To amend City Code § 2-1213, concerning the employee first-time homebuyer’s assistance program, for the purpose of expanding the program to include employees of the School Board of the City of Richmond as authorized by Code of Virginia, §15.2-958.2(A).

Patron – Mayor Avula

Approved as to form and legality
by the City Attorney

PUBLIC HEARING: MAR 23 2026 AT 6 P.M.

THE CITY OF RICHMOND HEREBY ORDAINS:

§ 1. That Section 2-1213 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020) be and is hereby **amended** and reordained as follows:

Sec. 2-1213. Employee First-Time Homebuyer's Assistance program.

Subject to the appropriation of funds by the City Council, the Chief Administrative Officer may establish a program to provide financial incentives in the form of down payment assistance and closing costs assistance to City employees and employees of the School Board of the City of Richmond who are first-time homebuyers to purchase their primary residence within the corporate

AYES: _____ NOES: _____ ABSTAIN: _____

ADOPTED: _____ REJECTED: _____ STRICKEN: _____

City limits. Neither individual grants nor lifetime cumulative grants shall exceed the maximum amounts per employee specified in Code of Virginia, § 15.2-958.2. The program shall be administered in accordance with the Code of Virginia, § 15.2-958.2. The Chief Administrative Officer is hereby authorized to promulgate such regulations, in conformance with applicable law, as necessary to ensure the integrity of the employee first-time homebuyer's assistance program.

§ 2. This ordinance shall be in force and effect upon adoption.

DATE: February 13, 2026

TO: The Honorable Members of City Council

THROUGH: The Honorable Dr. Danny Avula, Mayor

THROUGH: Odie Donald II, Chief Administrative Officer

THROUGH: Tanikia Jackson, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Finance & Administration

THROUGH: Letitia Shelton, Director of Finance

THROUGH: Meghan K. Brown, Director, Budget & Strategic Planning

THROUGH: Trinija D. Martin, Director, Human Resources

FROM: Paulette Giambalvo, Division Chief, Benefits and Wellness

RE: Employee First-Time Homebuyers Assistance Program Expansion to Employees of the Richmond School Board

ORD. OR RES. No. _____

PURPOSE: To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to amend Ord. No. 2023-257, adopted October 10, 2023, which repealed City Code § 2-1209 and amended ch. 2, art. VI, div. 1 by adding therein a new section numbered 2-1213, to amend § 2-1213 to change the Program description to include employees of the Richmond School Board as authorized by Code of Virginia, §15.2-958.2.A.

BACKGROUND: In FY24, the City of Richmond obligated \$1.3 M of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to a contract with HOME to establish an Employee First-Time Homebuyer's Program as set forth in Ordinance No. 2023-258. The Program offers up to \$25,000 to qualifying employees to purchase their first market-rate property in the City. The grant can be used for the down payment, closing costs on a property that will become a primary residence, or applied directly to the purchase transaction. ARPA funds are available until expended through December 31, 2026. The purpose of the program was both a recruitment/retention tool and as an economic upward mobility tool for city employees as affordable housing became increasingly scarce in the city limits. There were many stipulations to the contract¹ and while over 300 employees showed initial interest, as of December 2025, only four employees benefited from the assistance, leaving an unspent amount of approximately \$1.2 M.

The Human Resources (HR) Department has conducted multiple rounds of awareness campaigns since program inception and recently completed another targeted outreach campaign which attracted 30 more interested employees. Of the original 127 employees that applied to the program, 81 met the minimum criteria and 46 did not. Of those 46 ineligible applicants, 41 were denied because they were

¹ <https://homeofva.org/get-help/homeownership/richmond-employees/>

subject to collections. Of the 81 eligible applicants 47 completed homebuyer education, 21 submitted the documents to meet with a HUD-certified housing counselor and received counseling, seven had funds reserved, four closed on a home and one person is pending closing. Of the 16 employees who applied in October 2025, 13 scheduled classes in January 2026, but the city does not know how many have completed the classes or desire to move to the next step.

The city has held subsequent meetings with HOME (the contractor), the city attorney's office and the city's procurement office to explore all options to increase the rate of spending under this ARPA category and have determined that expanding eligibility to Richmond School Board employees, along with other administrative changes, could support more first-time homebuyers while complying with state code. The option to expand eligible recipients to Richmond School Board employees is permitted under the Virginia Code and ARPA Guidance. HOME is supportive of this expansion, which requires a new ordinance and contract amendment to expand the opportunity to all Richmond School Board employees.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: The city held several public participation sessions while developing the ARPA spend plan; once the plan was codified, HR and HOME heavily promoted the program to employees to garner interest.

FISCAL IMPACT: There is no negative fiscal impact.

BUDGET AMENDMENT NECESSARY: No.

REVENUE TO CITY: No.

DESIRED EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon Adoption.

REQUESTED INTRODUCTION DATE: March 10, 2026

CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING DATE: March 23, 2026

REQUESTED AGENDA: Consent Agenda.

RECOMMENDED COUNCIL COMMITTEE: Finance and Economic Development Subcommittee.

CONSIDERATION BY OTHER GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES: None.

AFFECTED AGENCIES: The Department of Human Resources, the Department of Budget and Strategic Planning, the Department of Finance.

RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING ORD. OR RES.: Ord. 2023-258

ATTACHMENTS: None.

STAFF: Megan Quinn, Senior Manager Office of Budget & Strategic Planning

Paulette Giambalvo, Division Chief of Benefits and Wellness, Department of Human Resources