# AT VIRGINIA529, TAKING CARE OF PEOPLE EQUALS TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

RICHMOND, Virginia–February 2, 2015–One might imagine that a government institution with nearly $54 billion in assets and 1.4 million customers across the United States might feature bureaucracy and rules and be a generally boring place to work, right?

Not true, say the 95 employees of Virginia529 College Savings Plan (Virginia529), a state agency located in Chesterfield that helps families nationwide save for future higher education expenses.

In fact, Virginia529 sponsors an official FUN committee to host social activities that encourage employees to get to know their colleagues and work together, which ultimately helps them better serve the families who are entrusting the agency with their savings.

“Collaboration, cooperation, and teamwork are not just buzz words … they are real reflections of our daily work experiences,” shared one employee in the annual anonymous survey.

Employee events at Virginia529 include cookie breaks to welcome new staff and a chili cook-off that generates fierce competition. The IT department sponsors an annual cyber security awareness campaign that features food, trivia contests, and an opportunity for employees to safely recycle old personal documents and electronics.

“This organization cares about people. People as future students, customers and employees,” said another survey respondent.

Employees are active participants in the Combined Virginia Campaign (CVC), Virginia government’s equivalent to United Way, the local Christmas Mother fund and Junior Achievement, to name a few, donating thousands of dollars and hundreds of volunteer hours to those and other educational and charitable enterprises.

And by taking care of people, the organization takes care of itself. It continues to lead the United States as the largest 529 college savings plan available. In mid-2014, Virginia529 celebrated a big milestone when its assets under management surpassed $50 billion.

In addition to providing a positive, enjoyable work atmosphere, Virginia529 fosters success through enhancements to programs, administration, technology and education.

Operational improvements in 2014 include decreasing program fees to help participants save more towards their higher education goals and adding new features to its secure online capabilities for increased convenience to customers.

Retaining current staff is a key element in the agency’s business strategy. Another is attracting qualified applicants for new positions, like the 14 added recently in the customer service, information technology and marketing departments.

“To keep up with continuing interest in our programs, we look for ways to make our agency more efficient and increase the self-service online options that families desire,” said Mary Morris, CEO. “But we’re also committed to being appropriately staffed when current and prospective customers need to talk with a real person. In fact, we’re hiring employees in northern Virginia, Roanoke and Hampton Roads to meet requests for outreach in those areas.”

**About Virginia529 College Savings Plan:**
Virginia529 is a 529 college savings plan that offers flexible, affordable, tax-advantaged savings for qualified higher education expenses through its four programs: Virginia529 prePAID SM (prePAID SM), Virginia529 inVEST SM (inVEST SM), CollegeAmerica® and CollegeWealth®. More than $53 billion in assets under management and 2.3 million accounts as of December 31, 2014 make Virginia529 the largest 529 plan available. For more information on Virginia529’s college savings options, visit Virginia529.com or call 1-888-567-0540 to obtain program materials. These include information on Virginia529 programs, investment objectives, risks, charges, expenses and other important information; read and consider them carefully before investing. All investments are subject to risk, including the possible loss of the money you invest.

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