

# MINIMIZING BARRIERS TO LICENSURE

SECURING THE FUTURE OF ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY ADMINISTRATORS

September 2024



**VALA**

VIRGINIA ASSISTED LIVING ASSOCIATION

"VIRGINIA'S UNIFIED VOICE FOR ASSISTED LIVING"

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Virginia Assisted Living Association (VALA) represents assisted living communities throughout Virginia with varying resident capacities, organizational structures, and funding resources. With the aging population, Virginia has an ongoing need to prioritize assisted living as a viable long-term care housing and assistance option. VALA seeks to create partnerships and alliances supporting seniors and their caregivers and advocates for solutions to improve their well-being and care, including improving the continuum of workforce pathways and opportunities to better support long-term care housing providers. In addition to providing resources for Virginia's assisted living providers and the general public, VALA serves as the Virginia state affiliate of Argentum, the leading national trade association serving senior living communities in the United States. Argentum has released several reports and whitepapers on the current trends and future needs of the workforce within senior living communities. VALA's development of this whitepaper serves to supplement available data and to share recommendations to better prioritize and preserve assisted living as a long-term care housing option for Virginia's aging population.

For the purposes of this paper, VALA brings its focus and attention specifically to Virginia's assisted living administrator-in-training (AIT) program that is regulated by Virginia's Board of Long-Term Care Administrators with an examination administration partnership with the National Association of Long-Term Care Administrator Boards (NAB). The requirement for an assisted living facility (ALF) to have a licensed administrator is regulated by the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS). This whitepaper will primarily identify barriers to obtaining licensure as an assisted living facility administrator (ALFA), which includes the requirement to pass the Residential Care/Assisted Living (RC/AL) competency exam administered by NAB (NAB exam). Because assisted living communities are regulated by state agencies and not at the federal level, **there is staunch support for individuals interested in becoming an ALFA to not be required to pass an examination based on national practices or nursing home regulations to achieve licensure.**

The exclusion of a state-based examination as an option to obtain assisted living administrator licensure in Virginia has short and long-term implications, from the potential loss of newly certified ALFAs to other states to the growing need to fill leadership roles as current administrators retire or change professions. **VALA proposes the inclusion of a state specific examination as an option for assisted living administrator licensure, allowing the ALFA candidate to decide which option works best for them and their career goals.** This is **not** a recommendation to eliminate the NAB examination; rather, it would create another avenue of accessibility for those who want to enter the assisted living administration field and focus their employment in Virginia. **Additionally, VALA would support NAB to administer a licensure examination based on state standards,** which is currently utilized by ten (10) states.

For the Commonwealth of Virginia to serve as a leading example in successfully recruiting and retaining talented ALFAs, it is imperative to consider additional barriers to licensure and practice. Other barriers that exist and deter licensure of ALFAs include the exclusion of specified ALFs in being an AIT training facilities, the exclusion of individuals from entering the AIT program, and the substantial number of AIT hours required in comparison to other states. In consultation with individuals and businesses operating in multiple states, VALA often hears concerns about how Virginia is possibly the most difficult state for an individual to become a licensed ALFA. We encourage every public policy maker and stakeholder to review these barriers thoroughly to consider how Virginia's AIT regulations and guidelines can be improved to support and empower assisted living facilities to recruit and retain passionate and qualified assisted living facility administrators. ***It is crucial for Virginia to ensure the administrative needs of an ALF are sufficiently met to best care for Virginia's aging population.*** Expanding credentialing options would strengthen Virginia's career options and workforce expansion opportunities by developing and maintaining a continual pipeline of talent.

## WHY ASSISTED LIVING ADMINISTRATORS MATTER

With Virginia having approximately 560 licensed ALFs with a capacity to serve more than 38,000 residents, it is important to have assisted living as a sustainable long-term care housing option. The U.S. population aged 65 and older will grow from 55 million in 2020 to 80+ million by 2040. More than two-thirds of people will need some form of long-term care in their lifetime. There are not nearly enough caregivers, nor assisted living facility administrators, to meet the growing needs of seniors. For the first time in U.S. history, older adults are projected to outnumber children by 2034. Looking ahead at the long-term care challenges in Virginia by reviewing data from Argentum and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, it is projected that an additional 2,000 individuals will be needed by 2040 to fill management jobs within senior care sectors.

When assessing and evaluating assisted living facilities, it must be noted that leadership serves as the core component to ensure efficient operation of every segment of the community. Every licensed assisted living facility in Virginia must have an administrator. ALFAs are the backbone in managing the organizational operation (including admissions, activities, dietary, maintenance, transportation, and resident discharges) and serve as liaisons between stakeholders which includes residents, family members, employees, owners, community partners, and regulatory agencies. The ALFA role is unique in that while most of the jobs in the assisted living community are singularly focused (i.e., nurses address medical care and concerns, dietary staff focus on meal services, housekeeping maintains community cleanliness), ALFAs must be “jacks and jills of all trades.” ALFAs assist in navigating the interactions of all staff members within a community to best support the needs and interests of the residents. To accomplish this comprehensive level of skill, ALFAs must possess a high degree of proficiency in all the areas they oversee. This proficiency is achieved through training and practice. In addition to the technical and practical skills learned, ALFAs must also be knowledgeable in interpersonal engagement, person-centric communication, and conflict resolution.

Many ALFAs come from varying backgrounds with differing reasons for entering the senior living industry as a profession, and the best ALFAs embody strong compassion in serving others. Many ALFAs start in entry level professions within the assisted living field and are mentored into dynamic leaders. Being able to mentor interested candidates who possess leadership potential along with a passion for caring for others expands the professional pipeline to ensure continuity of quality care and operation for ALFs. Admission into the AIT program should not exclude individuals without secondary education credits or management experience, as the program is required to educate AITs on skills and traits needed to be a successful administrator. Without a pipeline of individuals to become ALFAs, some licensed ALFs may be forced to close due to a shortage of administrators. The closure of ALFs will jeopardize this long-term care housing option for Virginia’s aging population, resulting in inappropriate placement into restrictive or unsafe care settings, as well as unnecessary waiting lists that could be effectively reduced by including ALFs as a solution.

## VIRGINIA’S AIT PROGRAM

Virginia’s AIT program is regulated by the Virginia Board of Long-Term Care Administrators as part of the [Regulations Governing the Practice of Assisted Living Facility Administrators](#). To be qualified for initial licensure as an assisted living facility administrator, an applicant shall hold a high school diploma or general education diploma (GED) and one the following qualifications as detailed in [18VAC95-30-100](#).

- Administrator-in-training (AIT) program
- Certificate program
- Degree and practical experience

In addition to the route of licensure based on education and training, under [18VAC95-30-120](#), individuals may apply for licensure by endorsement or credentials. Individuals applying for licensure by endorsement or credentials are required to have successfully passed the NAB exam. The Board may require individuals applying for licensure by endorsement or credentials to also complete an administrator-in-training program.

1. **Endorsement** (For administrators possessing a current, unrestricted license, certificate, or registration from another state or the District of Columbia)
2. **Credentials** (For individuals applying from a jurisdiction that does not have such a requirement)

## **ACCESSIBILITY OF PRECEPTORS & TRAINING FACILITIES IMPACT SUCCESS OF AN AIT**

In Virginia, training of ALF AITs must be supervised by a preceptor that is registered or recognized by Virginia or similar licensing board in another jurisdiction. Many individuals interested in completing the AIT program have difficulty securing a preceptor to supervise their training. The Board of Long-Term Care Administrators maintains a listing of contact information for registered preceptors who have volunteered to have their information shared in a public directory, but most of the individuals on the list are not accessible to serve as a preceptor for the interested AIT. Some reasons provided by the publicly listed preceptors that can cause this part of the process to be challenging at best and unproductive at worst include but are not limited to the following:

1. The preceptor may be required by the employer to only provide precepting supervision to current staff of their employer or through partnerships with secondary institutions.
2. The preceptor is already supervising two (2) AITs (maximum number allowed by Virginia regulations)
3. There might not be any preceptors available within the local jurisdiction of the prospective AIT, forcing the prospective AIT to relocate outside of Virginia for training.
4. The preceptor may not have the time capacity to develop a training curriculum or to oversee training an AIT due to other commitments, such as work constraints, family responsibilities, or medical conditions.
5. The preceptor may have retired or left the profession and is not now affiliated with a training facility.
6. The preceptor may charge an exorbitant fee to supervise an AIT, a fee that is cost prohibitive for most interested AITs.
7. The preceptor is concerned about having to teach AIT federal requirements and practices to help AITs pass the NAB exam.

Length of employment serves as another barrier experienced by individuals interested in serving as a preceptor. Virginia requires preceptors to be employed full time as an administrator in a training facility for a minimum of two of the past four years immediately prior to registration or be a regional administrator with on-site supervisory responsibilities for a training facility. According to the Healthcare Workforce Data Center (HWDC), nearly 39% of ALFAs had a tenure of two years or less in 2023 and 2022, compared to 36% in 2022. Having a location tenure requirement limits the availability of experienced administrators to serve as preceptors.

Some individuals have interpreted the regulations to restrict the use of contracted preceptors. The regulation states the preceptor shall “be employed full time as an administrator in a training facility.” Some highly qualified licensed preceptors interested in serving as a consultant preceptor have not been “employed” in an ALF in the timeframe listed, especially because of the COVID pandemic.

Additionally, prohibiting AIT training from occurring in all licensed ALFs exacerbates the workforce shortage and burdens newer and smaller ALFs, significantly restricting business operations, training opportunities, and potentially long-term care housing choices for citizens. Restrictions for training facilities pertain to resident capacity, licensure classification, and ownership length. The inability to train in an ALF with a licensed capacity of fewer than 20 residents discriminates against 153 licensed ALFs, which excludes nearly 1/3 of all licensed ALFs from training administrators. With the decrease in available workforce and the increase in

employment competition, it is crucial for the continued existence and operation of ALFs to be able to train staff onsite, including administrators. The regulation creates an unfair advantage of larger, older ALFs to recruit, train, and retain staff. The current regulation denies employees of restricted ALFs the opportunity to receive onsite training that would be specific to their employer. With the current exclusion, excluded providers must send the employee offsite to a location which may not be near the AIT’s home and/or place of employment. The impact on the restricted providers is the loss of workforce while the employee is offsite training elsewhere, as well as a substantial fiscal impact of having to pay for the actual training facility while still paying the employee’s wages. The restricted provider must also be aware of the risk of the other facility hiring the AIT, resulting in another burden to fill that position again. In contrast, Virginia’s nursing homes do not have the same restrictions on capacity size or licensure classification, which allows nursing homes with fewer than 20 residents to serve as training facilities for nursing home AITs.

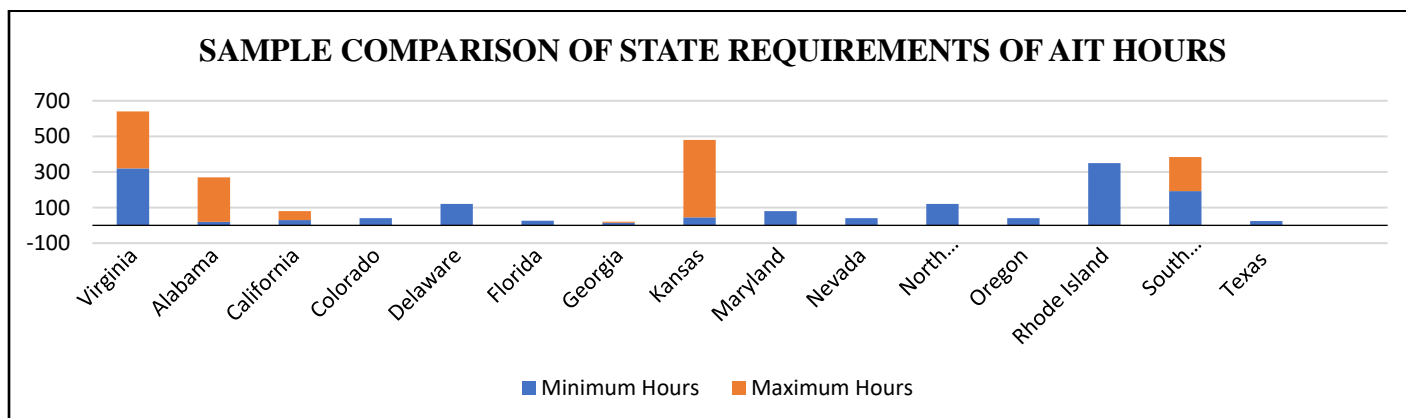
## EXCESSIVE TIME DOES NOT NECESSARILY EQUATE TO INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

The ALF AIT program requires 320 – 640 hours of continuous training to be completed within 24 months, except for individuals serving as an acting administrator, who must complete the program within 150 days. The number of required hours vary based on the education and professional experience for each candidate (reference the matrix linked below for full details).

[www.dhp.virginia.gov/media/dhpweb/docs/ltc/forms/ALFA\\_Education\\_Experience\\_Matrix.pdf](http://www.dhp.virginia.gov/media/dhpweb/docs/ltc/forms/ALFA_Education_Experience_Matrix.pdf)

A comprehensive review of the training hours and examination prerequisites for becoming an assisted living facility administrator reveals that Virginia’s requirements to become a licensed assisted living facility administrator are extensive and rigid when compared to other states. This review was conducted by VALA in collaboration with the Virginia-based law firm of Woods Rogers Vandeventer Black PLC. The initial review compared credentialing requirements of 36 states, and a supplementary review included data from the remaining 14 states. The data was provided by a multitude of sources, including each state’s credentialing agencies. The primary objectives of this initiative were to document the requirements of each state’s administrator-in-training program and to evaluate Virginia’s existing AIT standards in comparison to other states. ***The data supports concerns expressed by current and prospective administrators and assisted living facility providers that Virginia’s current licensure requirements create significant barriers to entry and deters individuals from other states in choosing Virginia as a place to work.***

The review recognized the terminology of care settings and employment classifications varied amongst the states, as each state regulates assisted living facilities and similar entities differently, and each state requires varying formats for training of ALFAs. Even with the variances, the review was able to compare long-term care settings and their administration that were similar to Virginia’s ALFs. Removing the outliers of the least and the greatest number of hours required for training yielded an average of 180-hours training requirement.



Source: Review of state regulations and industry stakeholder associations.

The comprehensive review revealed an overwhelming majority of states do not require licensure examinations to serve as an assisted living facility administrator. In Virginia, assisted living administrators are required to successfully pass the NAB exam prior to licensure. According to the Candidate Handbook for the NAB exam, the NAB exam is developed to cover all domains of practice within long term care administration. The NAB exam required for ALFA licensure consists of two parts: the NAB National Core of Knowledge Exam for Long Term Care Administrators (CORE) and the NAB National Residential Care/Assisted Living Administrators Line of Service (LOS) Examination Program. According to the Candidate Handbook, the Core exam is developed with an intention for the candidate “to demonstrate a mastery of the foundation of skills and knowledge for all lines of service across the senior living and health services continuum.” NAB states the RC/AL exam is specific to resident care/assisted living administrators.

## MEMORIZING NATIONAL PRACTICES DOES NOT NECESSARILY EQUATE TO STATE REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

The NAB exam is not based on state regulations and sometimes includes questions inconsistent with Virginia’s regulations. As part of the program, the AIT receives training from preceptors to comply with Virginia’s regulations for operating a licensed assisted living facility. In preparation for taking the NAB exam, AITs must study national guidelines, regulations, and practices. Having to learn and understand state regulations to effectively do their job and then memorize national standards of practice to pass the NAB exam creates undue stress on the AIT. NAB provides recommended study materials for AITs to pass the NAB exam; however, a substantial amount of the material is directly related to the administration of nursing homes and other health care settings. In the past, some of the questions asked on the RC/AL LOS examination started with, “You are a skilled nursing administrator and...” AITs should be able to convey competency on an exam directly relevant to the job requiring the exam, which in this case is to operate an assisted living facility not a nursing home.

### NAB EXAMINATION PASS RATES COMPARISON

#### NAB Exam Scores: 2022

Exam	# Taken – VA	% Pass – VA	# Taken – Natl	% Pass – Natl
<b>CORE</b>	*	75.2%	*	85.6%
<b>RC/AL</b>	*	63.8%	*	49.5%

#### NAB Exam Scores: 2021

Exam	# Taken – VA	% Pass – VA	# Taken – Natl	% Pass – Natl
<b>CORE</b>	134	77.6%	2500	83.3%
<b>RC/AL</b>	82	53.7%	655	61.7%

#### NAB Exam Scores: 2020

Exam	# Taken – VA	% Pass – VA	# Taken – Natl	% Pass – Natl
<b>CORE</b>	128	79.7%	2313	86.6%
<b>RC/AL</b>	94	57.4%	558	65.6%

#### NAB Exam Scores: 2019

Exam	# Taken – VA	% Pass – VA	# Taken – Natl	% Pass – Natl
<b>CORE</b>	*	85%	*	88%
<b>RC/AL</b>	*	72%	*	75%

\*Data not provided

Source: Virginia Board of Long-Term Care Administrators and NAB

The cost of the national exam and study materials can be cost-prohibitive for many individuals who must pay the expenditures with personal funds. This financial restriction will result in the loss of compassionate and outstanding administrators who cannot afford to take the NAB exam, especially if they need to take it multiple times to achieve a passing score. In 2019, the Board of Long-Term Care Administrators shared data stating that between 2015 and 2018 nearly 24% of the individuals’ issued licenses had taken the NAB exam multiple times, with nearly 47% of those individuals having taken the NAB exam three or more times.

**Potential Costs to Become an ALF AIT in Virginia**

\$215	VA Board of Long-Term Care Administrators ALF AIT Program Application
\$135	NAB Study Guide
\$ 60	NAB Core Practice Exam (\$100 for two)
\$ 25	NAB RC/AL Practice Exam (per form)
\$1,250	NAB Recommended References for the Core & RC/AL Exams
\$415	NAB Exam (RC/AL & Core) *
<u>\$315</u>	VA Board of Long-Term Care Administrators Licensure Application
\$2,415	
	*\$310 NAB Core Exam (If taken separately due to failing exam portion)
	*\$185 NAB RC/AL Exam (If taken separately due to failing exam portion)

*Source: Virginia Administrative Code, NAB Recommended References, & Amazon*

The next highest occurring outcome of the comprehensive review was the requirement for state-specific examinations. ***Based on this outcome, if Virginia desires to be competitive with other states in the recruitment and retention of assisted living facility administrators, then it should include an option for a state-specific examination.*** NAB offers state examination administration programs, which allows the state to have an examination based on state regulations and practices. The participating state would be required to prepare the examination questions and applicable study materials. Currently, ten (10) states utilize NAB to administer a state-based examination. Some states requiring passage of a state-based examination use other administration methods which could be offered by the state regulatory authority or stakeholder associations.

Creation of a state-based examination to serve as an option for licensure in Virginia has been requested by many industry professionals and stakeholders. Providing a state-based exam would also meet the recommendations of previous and current Virginia administrations to maintain that regulations do not create unnecessary barriers to entry and as well as the regulations provide an appropriate balance between ensuring quality professionals and allowing an adequate pool of such professionals. Statements were shared that in addition to minimizing costs of creating a state exam, the utilization of the NAB exam was originally to allow for portability of licensure for administrators to be able to work in other states that also required the NAB exam. Prioritizing a national portability examination can result in encouraging professionals to leave Virginia, which is in direct contrast to Virginia Works’ initiative “Compete to Win.”

It is recommended that Virginia allow AIT applicants to choose whether to take a state-based or a national exam. The feasibility and equity of offering such an option is supported by details from assisted living related reports, quantitative data, and research insights. The takeaway from this endeavor emphasizes potential benefits to Virginia, from increasing and retaining assisted living administrators to strengthening the state’s economy through a fully engaged workforce. ***Virginia could utilize the expertise of secondary institutions, stakeholder associations, and other entities and workforce grant programs to share the costs to create a state-based examination relevant to the practice of assisted living administrators operating in Virginia.***

The research done on AIT programs throughout the United States share one common point of increased accessibility does not equate to lessened quality of care. Virginia needs to improve the accessibility of administrator licensure, and one way to achieve this is to offer the alternative examination option of a state-based exam. Listed below is a sampling of the additional benefits and motivations for AITs and preceptors in having a state specific examination for ALFAs. Having an option of the state-based exam would:

1. Provide an alternate path for qualification for licensure that could be accomplished in a timelier and more cost-effective manner. An ALFA who wants to stay and work in Virginia could utilize this path and become licensed in a shorter period of time, with significant reduction in time spent studying and out of pocket expenses on extra study materials.
2. Serve as a motivator for staff and management within the communities who may have been hesitant in becoming an AIT as they are comfortable complying with Virginia regulations but may have been intimidated in having to learn federal regulations and practices.
3. Alleviate concerns of preceptors having to train AITs on federal requirements and practices to help them prepare for the NAB exam.
4. Increase likelihood for regulatory compliance by not having the AIT study regulations and policies that are contradictory to Virginia regulations, which then can be confused when put into practice.
5. Potentially serve as an opportunity for revenue generation within the Commonwealth if the state-based examination were administered by a state agency or a Virginia-based entity.

**SUSTAINED OPERATIONS REQUIRES CONTINUED WORKFORCE PIPELINES**

The Virginia Department of Health Professions’ HWDC administers the Assisted Living Facility Administrator Workforce Survey annually during the license renewal process. The 2024 data represents responses submitted by 77% of the licensed ALFAs in the state and 95% of renewing practitioners. This survey has been capturing the nuances and specifics of assisted living administrator data in Virginia since 2013. During this 11-year span, the survey has been updated and expanded to include data points pertinent to the industry. For example, in 2019, the survey began tracking the educational debt obligation of ALFAs and highlighting the number of administrators 40 years old and older. It is noted the data acquired for each year highlights the input of ALFAs who completed the survey; thus, the survey is not all inclusive of every licensed ALFA in Virginia. As part of the 2024 survey, “the HWDC estimates 633 ALFAs participated in Virginia’s workforce during the survey time period, which is defined as those who worked at least a portion of the year in the state or who live in the state and intend to return to work in the profession at some point in the future.”

**COMPARISONS OF VIRGINIA LICENSURE COUNTS**

Period	ALFA	ALF AIT	ALFA Preceptor	Period	Licensed ALFs with VDSS
Q3-2024	679	101	220	May 2024	561
Q4-2023	611	129	208	Sept 2023	565
Q4-2022	623	108	194	October 2022	568
December 2020	672	97	197	November 2021	571
December 2019	671	105	213	October 2018	572
December 2018	660	102	215	September 2017	565
December 2017	624	118	211	July 2016	553
December 2015	627	116	204	January 2015	541
December 2014	646	107	198	July 2014	544
December 2013	617	81	180	September 2013	544

Source: Virginia Board of Long-Term Care Administrators and VDSS



Beginning in 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic wreaked havoc on assisted living facilities, exacerbating workforce issues that were already experiencing workforce shortages. Increased state and federal mandates with little to no funding caused many assisted living communities to close or limit new resident admissions, resulting in the loss of housing and care options for families and the decrease of employment opportunities. Assisted living administrators were no exception, leaving for reasons that included career changes, retirement, and burnout.

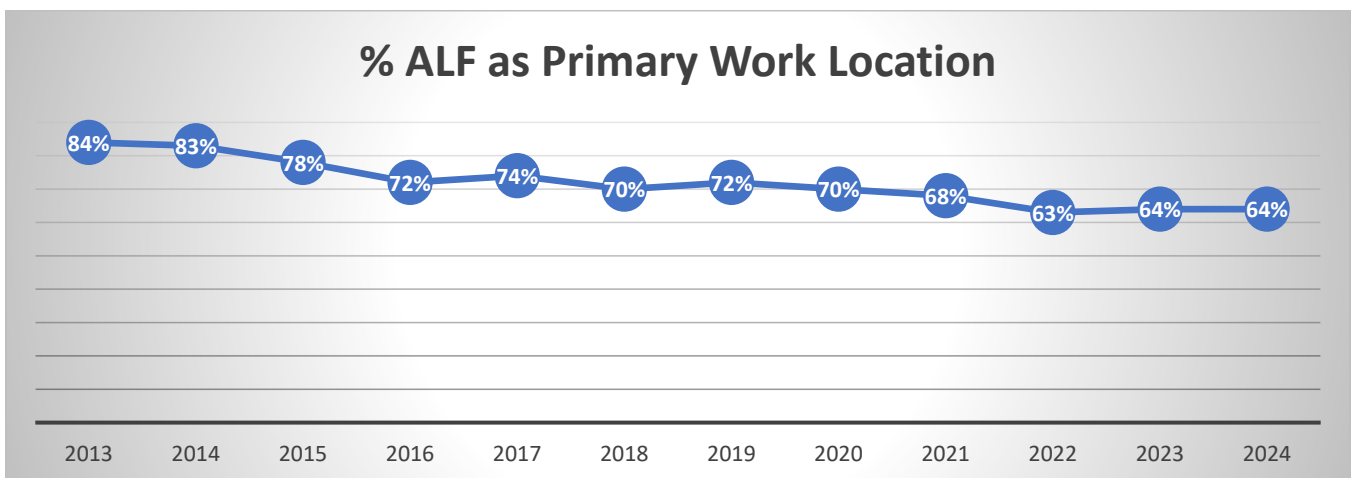
ALFAs are an integral part of the long-term care (LTC) workforce that is projected to experience continued workforce shortages. This shortage is expected as the result of the country’s rapidly aging population, specifically the aging “baby boomers” (born between 1946 and 1964) who make up a considerable proportion of the ALFA workforce. As an example: 40% of Virginia’s ALFA workforce are aged 55 and over. Most of this demographic is expected to retire within the next two decades (20 years), leading researchers to project a severe shortage of ALFAs in that period. Currently, about one in every twenty ALFAs intends to retire within two years, with over 25% of Virginia’s ALFA workforce planning to retire within the next 10 years.

According to the HWDC reports, the percentage of ALFA licenses not renewed each year is generally greater than the percentage of new licenses. This percentage difference highlights the labor shortage of assisted living administrators and can be attributed to several factors, which include, but are not limited to:

- Burnout due to current responsibilities as ALFA
- Burnout due to having to fulfil employment duties of other jobs within the ALF that have vacancies
- Barriers to licensure of individuals from other states
- Relocation of qualified persons to neighboring states
- Transition of employment industry by current ALFAs
- Health or family restrictions limiting work hours
- Dissatisfaction of interactions with licensing inspectors
- Burden of complying with excessive and unnecessary regulations

Period	ALFA License NOT Renewed	New ALFA Licensees
2024	14%	11%
2023	14%	11%
2022	14%	7%
2021	10%	7%
2020	10%	8%
2019	11%	10%
2018	8%	9%
2017	12%	8%
2016	10%	8%

With the increasing demands on ALFAs, both professionally and personally, the percentage of licensed ALFAs working in an ALF as their primary location has been steadily decreasing. The HWDC shows the percentage declining from 84% in 2013 to 64% in 2024. These alarming numbers of an increasing number of licensees working in other industries or retired show Virginia is unable to count on them to help fill all current vacancies.



Source: Virginia Healthcare Workforce Data Center

## CHALLENGES: THE EVOLVING SENIOR LIVING LANDSCAPE

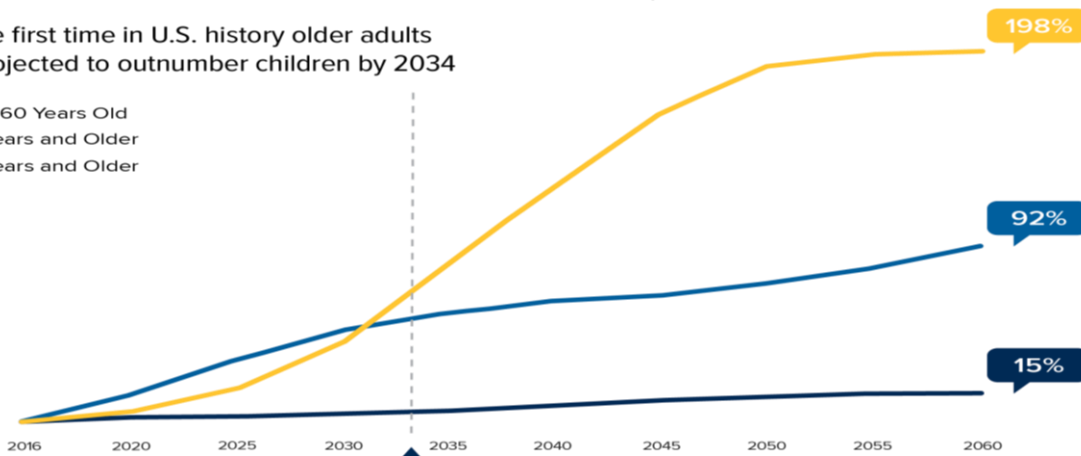
To add to this concern, many of the baby boomers leaving the workforce will join the demographic needing long-term care housing. This steadily increasing shift upward of the senior demographic has been referred to as the “Silver Tsunami” in current media and literature. Rather than use what could be perceived as an ageist metaphor, VALA prefers to refer to this situation for what it is: a steadily growing misalignment and divide between resources, workforce, and seniors.

A major public policy concern in the long-term care field is the potential burden an aging society will place on the caregiving system. This concern involves the challenge of assuring sufficient resources and service systems are available in the future, when the elderly population will be twice what it is today. Much of this growth will be prompted by the aging baby boomers, who in 2030 will be aged 66 to 84 and will number 61 million people, and those born prior to 1946 will number nine million people in 2030. The baby boomer generation is likely to live longer than previous generations due to improvements in health care and medical advancements that have increased life expectancy. Many baby boomers will outlive family and friends that may have been providing support and care. The population between the ages of 55 and 64 will decrease much faster than any other age group as a result of lower birth rates that began in the 1970s. Health care providers and senior support services will be affected by these shifts in demographics.

### PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH BY AGE GROUP, 2016 TO 2060

For the first time in U.S. history older adults are projected to outnumber children by 2034

- 18 to 60 Years Old
- 65 Years and Older
- 85 Years and Older



Source: Argentum

The age distribution graphics listed below show the percentage of senior Virginian 65 and over is increasing from 12% in 2010, 16% in 2020, to 19% by 2030. Seniors in Virginia will also make up the largest portion of the Commonwealth's overall population growth. 53% of the population growth between 2010 and 2030 can be attributed to the senior demographic.

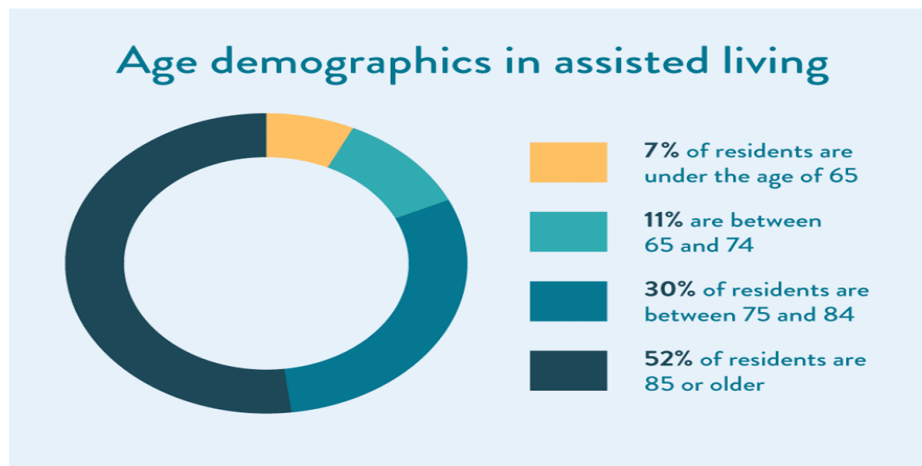
### AGE COMPARISONS IN 20 YEARS



Source: University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service

## AGING IN PLACE: A NEW VISION

The traditional definition of aging in place alludes to seniors spending their remaining years in their own, private homes, an image many would perceive as ideal to spend the remaining years of one's life. However, with research documenting factors such as the increase of seniors living with disabilities, limitations on meeting daily activities of daily living, and social isolation as healthcare concerns, it would do well to **expand the aging in place meaning to include safety and engagement as factors to support holistic aging in place options, which include assisted living.** Based on the information shared throughout this paper, it can be expected for the numbers in the below infographic to continue increasing, even in the under age 65 category, as this category consists of residents with neurocognitive disorders, neurodevelopmental disabilities, and other conditions requiring caregiving assistance. Being able to effectively manage physical and mental conditions is fundamental for quality of life for seniors. Having accessible assisted living communities is crucial to supporting Virginia's aging population, and Virginia needs licensed administrators to oversee the assisted living communities.



Source: A Place For Mom

## NEW HORIZONS: THE ABILITY TO TRAIN ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY ADMINISTRATORS

In addition to AIT licensure requirements, other factors impacting ALFA recruitment, retention, and the overall ALF industry must be considered. The projected growth of the combined senior living industry is more than 4 million jobs by 2040, a 42% increase compared to the 2021 workforce. Total employment in the industry is expected to approach 8.3 million by this time. The home health and personal care aide occupation is expected to represent the largest in the economy by 2032. **This data strengthens the senior living industry's need for a well-trained and engaged workforce, including administrators, emphasizing the need to reduce and eliminate barriers to training, credentialing, and employment.**



The U.S. population age 65 and older will grow from **55 million in 2020 to 80+ million by 2040.**



More than two-thirds of people will need some form of long-term care in their lifetime, and **two-in-five will need care for two or more years.**



Medicare and Medicaid generally do not cover long-term care costs, **which may exceed \$100,000 per year.**



There are not nearly enough caregivers to meet the growing needs of our seniors, **more than 20 million workers are needed by 2040.**

Source: Argentum

## CONCLUSION

To better support and prepare Virginia's assisted living facility workforce to best care for Virginia's aging population, VALA has several recommendations that are not unprecedented and that have proven successful in other locations:

- Allow successful completion of a **state-based examination** to be a qualifier for assisted living administrator licensure: This viable option allows the ALFA candidate to decide which option works best for them and their career goals. This option would not replace the NAB examination; rather, it would create another avenue of accessibility for those who want to enter the assisted living administration field in Virginia with a focus on Virginia's specific regulatory compliance needs.
- Allow **preceptors to train more than two AITs**, especially if the AITs are located in the same training facility
- Allow **all licensed ALFs** that require a licensed assisted living facility administrator to **serve as a training facility** without exclusion due to capacity size
- Allow individuals to serve as **preceptors even if not currently "employed"** by a training facility.
- **Allow anyone to enter into the AIT program** regardless of previous managerial experience. The AIT program can train someone to be an effective manager.

As the country continues to move into an unprecedented period of growth and longevity in the senior demographic, intersectional challenges such as the steadily decreasing birthrate, the rise of aging adults living with disabilities, and the inflation of long-term care housing costs are part of a reality that impacts every generation, for now, and the future. By implementing a proactive approach of minimizing and eliminating workforce barriers through the addition of viable options such as those bulleted above, *Virginia can serve as a leader in best practices, expanding avenues of access to fulfill workforce needs*, lending our efforts to supporting a holistic model of assisted living through increasing pathways to assisted living administrator roles.

## RESOURCES

*Assisted Living State Regulatory Review*. National Center for Assisted Living (2023 Edition)  
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