The City of Virginia Beach was chartered as a municipal corporation by the General Assembly of Virginia on January 1, 1963. The city operates under a Council-Manager form of government. The 11 member City Council is the City's legislative body. The City Manager is appointed by Council and acts as Chief Executive Officer and, through City staff, the City Manager implements policies established by Council.

Virginia Beach has 248.3 square miles of land and 58.5 square miles of water. As of FY 2017-18, there was a population of 454,448 residents of which 300,697 are registered voters. Excluding on-base military housing, the City has 184,348 residences/homes.