

Annual Report 2019

Core Values



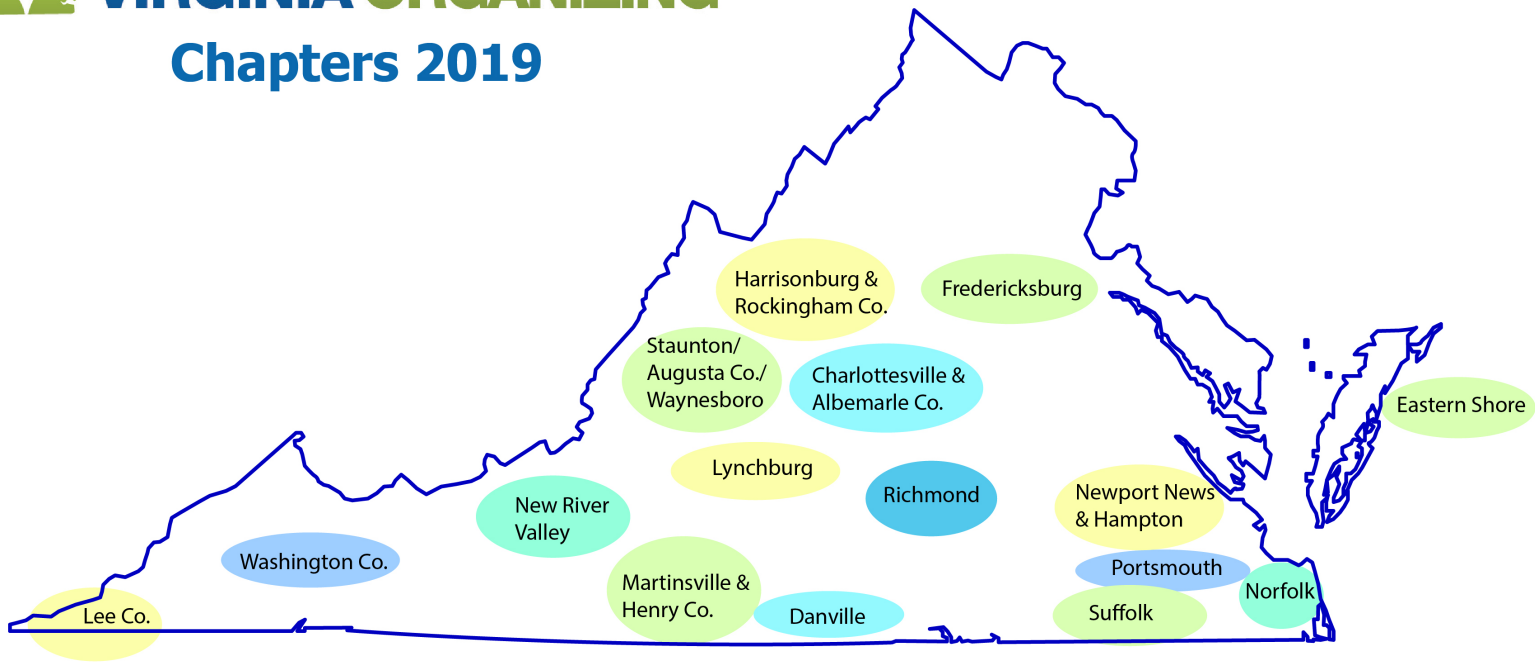


We rallied for lower prescription drug costs all over the Commonwealth. Grassroots leaders from our Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Suffolk chapters gathered outside Senator Mark Warner's Norfolk office to ask for his support.

In Richmond, leaders met with Rep. Abigail Spanberger to discuss the terrible crisis facing people with conditions that require medications that have been subject to price gouging by Big Pharma. NowThis filmed the discussion and it was seen by more than a million viewers.



Chapters 2019



Statement of Beliefs

- We believe that all people should be treated fairly and with dignity in all aspects of life, regardless of race, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, ability, immigration status, or country of origin.
- We believe that every person in the Commonwealth is entitled to a living wage and benefit package that is sufficient to provide the basic necessities of life, including adequate housing, a nutritious diet, proper child care, sound mental and physical health care, and a secure retirement.
- We believe that every person is entitled to an equal educational opportunity.
- We believe that community, economic, social, and environmental policy should be developed with the greatest input from the people it is meant to serve, and that the policies should promote, celebrate and sustain the human and natural resources of Virginia.
- We believe in the elimination of the extremes of wealth and poverty, in a progressive tax system based on the ability to pay, and in making the nation's financial systems, including the Federal Reserve Bank, more responsive to the average citizen's needs.
- We believe that we should enhance and celebrate diversity in our community and in our state.
- We believe that those who have positions of authority in our governmental bodies, law enforcement agencies, and institutions of learning should reflect the diversity of our communities.
- We believe that our public officials should be held accountable for their actions and decisions.
- We believe in the rights of workers, consumers, shareholders, and taxpayers to democratic self-organization.
- We believe in the elimination of the death penalty in all cases because it is fundamentally inhumane, ineffective as a deterrent to crime, and disproportionately and unjustly applied against people of color and those who are economically or educationally disadvantaged.
- We believe that physical and mental health are parts of personal and community well-being; we believe that Virginians have a broad public health and economic interest in ensuring that adequate care is available to low and moderate-income residents.



Clockwise from top left...

1. Harrisonburg leader Eric Olson-Getty
2. Danville DACA rally
3. South Hampton Roads DACA rally (opposite)
4. Harrisonburg DACA and TPS rally
5. Richmond "Know your Rights" workshop



¡CONOCER SUS DERECHOS,
LEVANTAR LA VOZ!

APRENDA SOBRE:

- SUS DERECHOS CON LA MIGRA Y LA POLICIA
- QUE ESTA PASANDO AHORA CON DACA
- COMO PODEMOS ORGANIZAR PARA HACER SEGURA A NUESTRA COMUNIDAD
- COMO SE PUEDE LEVANTAR LA VOZ PARA EL DERECHO A LICENCIAS PARA TODOS
- QUE PASO CON "PUBLIC CHARGE" (CARGO PUBLICO)



Donde: Hispanic Center of Chesterfield, 6721 Jefferson Davis Highway
North Chesterfield, VA 23237
Cuando: Miercoles, 11 de diciembre, 6pm
Quien: ¡Todos estan bienvenidos!

Because you support Virginia Organizing, you know we have chapters all over Virginia, and chapter members decide what campaigns they take on. That means we have a big, diverse organization with leaders working on many different issues, some in local schools and some in the General Assembly and Congress.

What holds us together?

Our core values guide everything we do. (See our Statement of Beliefs on page 3). We want justice, and we know that people who are directly affected by injustice are the ones who understand what they need. So it's not enough for us to see political change or new policy. We seek change not only in our laws but also in who sits at the table and makes those decisions.

We recruit leaders who know first hand why it matters whether education funding goes to school resource officers or restorative justice training. We work at every chapter meeting to teach each other how to be effective, and that's why we celebrate every new skill a member learns, every new one to one conversation, and every donation. It's the only way to build the power we need to make it happen!

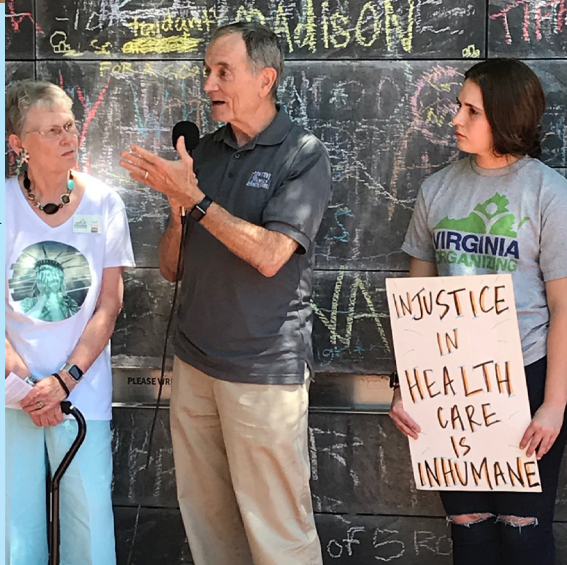
Thank you for being part of this transformative grassroots movement. Your contributions inspire us to keep moving forward. --Del McWhorter, Chairperson

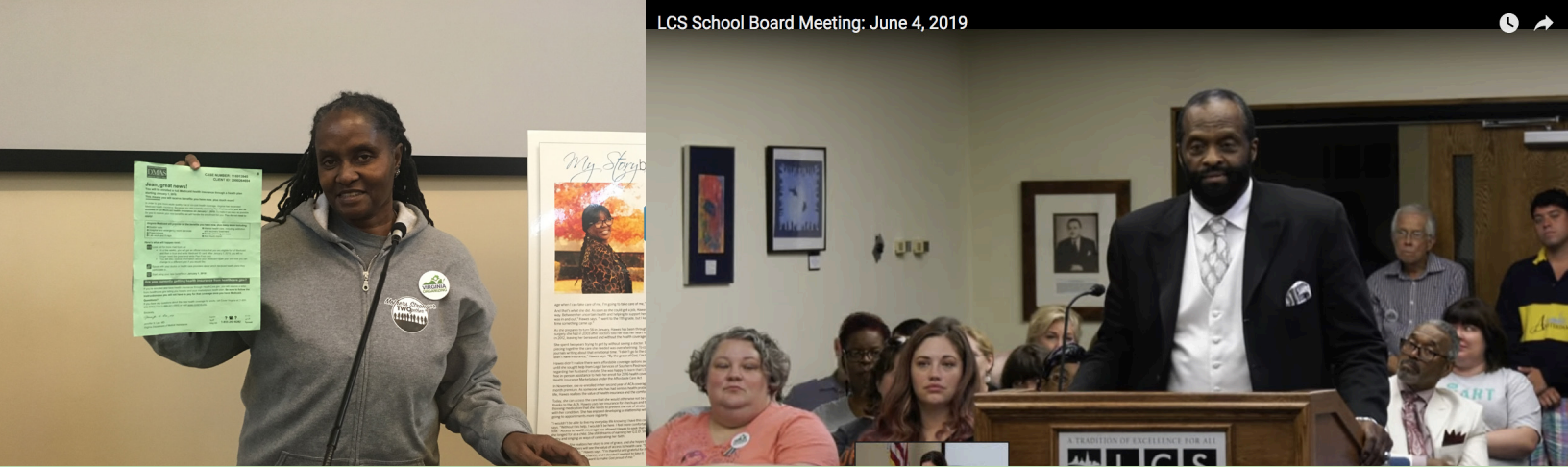




Clockwise from top left...

1. Newport News Transit Campaign leaders at city council
2. Intern Brianna Patillo canvassing in Martinsville
3. ACA rally Charlottesville
4. New River Valley education justice forum in Christiansburg
5. Dismantling Racism three-day workshop talent show





Clockwise from top left...

1. Jean Jackson from Danville holds her Medicaid acceptance form
2. Lynchburg leader Robert Flood speaks at a school board action
2. Tyran Green of Portsmouth presents to a Congressional Staffers briefing on Special Education
3. Fredericksburg affordable housing campaign rally
4. Leader Shirley Edwards speaks at the Regional Grassroots Gathering in Norfolk



Our Work in 2019

1. We held our biggest Grassroots Gathering in years! We also held regional workshops in Norfolk, Abingdon, and Charlottesville. Chapters held forums on education, energy democracy, immigration, and environmental justice.

2. We held dozens of media conferences and rallies on high prescription drug costs, immigration, predatory lending, and the school-to-prison pipeline.

3. We offered internships to 15 people from all around the Commonwealth over the summer. They published letters and op-eds, planned a rally, and visited many chapters. During their visit to the Martinsville Chapter, they canvassed neighborhoods to find out whether residents had high electricity bills and other environmental justice issues they wanted to see change. Many expressed the need to have assistance to weatherize their homes and get solar panels. People want to fight climate change, and they also need to be able to pay their bills!

4. All of our chapters visited their state senators and delegates in district this year, and many also visited their Congressional representatives. They sent leaders to Richmond to attend the General Assembly session, too!

5. In several chapters leaders frequently spoke at school board and city council meetings. Eastern Shore has worked extensively with the school board in Accomack County. Lynchburg, New River Valley, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Southwest have all worked to make changes in their school systems.

6. Leaders from every chapter sent op-eds and letters to the editor to their local newspapers. Many were interviewed by TV reporters at rallies and conferences. We make our views known!





We met with the Governor

After Governor Ralph Northam announced that he was not going to resign, Virginia Organizing called for him to meet with us and take steps to dismantle institutional racism in Virginia. On Friday, May 31, we had our meeting with Governor Northam and several members of his staff.

Board members Del McWhorter, Sandra Cook, Duane Edwards, and Ebony Guy, and Executive Director Brian Johns felt the governor gave us a generous amount of time and listened carefully to everything we said. He apologized to Ebony when she spoke about the pain and anger the revelation of the yearbook picture had caused her.

On the other hand, all of the staff who attended the meeting were white, and Governor Northam did not make any commitments about changing that. Since then Janice Underwood, the promised diversity officer, has started work. We have met with her several times.

We hope the administration will do the following:

1. Governor Northam and his staff should participate in a dismantling racism workshop.
2. He should create a position for an analyst of police profiling data collections in order to promote more equity in law enforcement.
3. He should direct his diversity officer to audit his staff and commission appointees and bring more people of color into these positions.
4. He should intervene in the school-to-prison pipeline by seeking to hire more teachers of color and bringing restorative justice to schools.

Wins in our Chapters

1. The Washington County Chapter won their campaign for education justice. The county schools signed a memorandum of understanding for school resource officers that complies with the new statewide model we helped create.
2. The New River Valley Chapter held large education, immigration, and environmental justice forums, bringing in many new supporters from the Christiansburg area.
3. The Harrisonburg Chapter worked with city law enforcement to protect immigrants. The police chief promised not to cooperate with ICE without a judicial warrant. Both Shenandoah Valley Chapters went up to Washington, D.C. for the national DACA rally.
4. The Eastern Shore Chapter organized for greater diversity in the Accomack County Schools, and the number of teachers of color hired this year is four times what it was in 2018.
5. The Lynchburg Chapter won their campaign to convince the city school board to incorporate many concerns that leaders have raised into the draft strategic plan. The concerns include the achievement gap, school suspensions, and restorative practices training.
6. New chapters have been forming since 2018 in Newport News and Suffolk. Both rallied for better bus service this fall and got the attention of decision-makers. The Suffolk Chapter accomplished their goal of convincing the transit service and City Council to begin work on expanding service.
7. In Charlottesville, UVA finally approved a living wage for most of its workers. We have been part of this living wage coalition for many years.
8. The Portsmouth Chapter has seen steady progress in their long running school-to-prison pipeline campaign. All schools are at least partly accredited, and Portsmouth Public Schools has hired the Family Engagement Officers the chapter suggested. The schools are also implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions with Support (PBIS) with fidelity, which helps to bring down the number of suspensions.
9. Norfolk met with all school board members, held a rally, and held a press conference, calling on Norfolk Public Schools to decrease suspensions.
10. Fredericksburg's affordable housing campaign drove the high rate of evictions in the area into the media. They visited every surrounding county's board of supervisors as well as the Fredericksburg City Council to demand action on the crisis.
11. The newly forming Richmond Chapter started its organizing with a Know your Rights workshop for immigrants. It was well attended and also available via live streaming to hundreds more viewers.
12. Danville leaders went to North Carolina to give a presentation about the benefits of Medicaid expansion.
13. Martinsville held a forum and developed a campaign around environmental justice after canvassing neighborhoods to hear about weatherization, solar power, pollution, and other issues.
14. Lee County organized a well-attended school board forum.
15. The Staunton/Augusta County/Waynesboro Chapter continued to meet with executives at Augusta Health to share direct feedback around communication access concerns and areas for continued improvement.

Leaders learned
1075 new skills

We were
mentioned
in the news
257 times

We held **1306**
one to one
meetings

We recruited **590**
new members

3681 people attended
51 forums, **36** lobby
meetings, and **57** rallies
and media conferences

Leaders submitted **194** letters
and op-eds to newspapers

We held **109** meetings with
other grassroots groups





VIRGINIA
ORGANIZING

PLANE
PROFIT

THIS IS A
CLIMATE
EMERGENCY

VIRGINIA
ORGANIZING

Local Chapters and Areas Served:

Charlottesville/Albemarle County, Danville, Eastern Shore, Harrisonburg/
Rockingham County, Fredericksburg, Lee County, Lynchburg, Martinsville/
Henry County, New River Valley, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth,
Staunton/Augusta County/Waynesboro, Suffolk, Washington County

On Campus: Virginia Highlands Community College, Emory and Henry,
UVA Wise, JMU, EMU, UVA, NSU, ODU, VT, Radford, Virginia Wesleyan,
TCC, UMW

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