

1111 East Main St.



## A Place for All of Us

Virginia Organizing  
2022 Annual Report





The Fredericksburg Chapter and the Custodial Workers of the Stafford County Schools won a major victory in their campaign to improve working conditions in Stafford Schools.

Chapter members and workers delivered a list of demands to the School Board during its public meeting in September. They wanted an increase in the minimum wage for custodians to \$15 per hour—an increase of \$4 (36%) over the minimum they currently earn. They also demanded that the workers have paid time off, including holidays and other leave, and health, dental, and vision benefits. On November 8, the Board agreed to include these requirements in their contract with a new company.

In addition, the school board agreed that all of the workers involved in this campaign must be hired by the new contractor.

As leader Milton Bratton wrote, “As a member of Virginia Organizing, I hope that the School Board, as representatives of Stafford County, guarantee compliance with this new contract, guarantee healthy labor relations and respect for the workers, and maintain a permanent audit of this new company to prevent the injustices and negligence that were allowed for more than 15 years.”

Newport News/Hampton has been working on housing on the Peninsula. They want the region to build a shelter for unhoused people in the area.

In November they held a demonstration outside the Peninsula Regional Animal Shelter to draw attention to the resources Newport News and Hampton have spent to house animals, even though there is no shelter for people.

Leader Chiquita Hubbard said of her chapter, “We held two rallies for affordable child care, a community housing resource event, attended several Newport News City Council meetings and held rallies for a shelter for the unhoused. I think that Virginia Organizing is one of the best nonprofits out here because we truly care for the people.”





From Chairperson Lily Hungarland:

The housing crisis has been a national problem for many years. Virginia is one of the hardest-hit states because our state government has done so little to address it. During the 2022 General Assembly session, a bipartisan bill that would have allowed localities to sue landlords who let their property deteriorate passed, but Governor Youngkin vetoed it. Even the smallest steps have been blocked again and again.

Virginia Organizing's leaders have organized for solutions to the housing crisis for most of our history. In 2022, several chapters including Danville, Newport News/Hampton, Richmond, Waynesboro, and Wythe County organized local campaigns that would improve tenant rights and provide shelter for the unhoused. At the state level they lobbied for measures such as increasing the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and bills that would increase tenant rights.

We also worked on environmental justice and health care, among other issues. Chapters met with Reps. Luria, McEachin, and Spanberger to ask them to vote for Build Back Better and then the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). They followed up with celebrations of the passage of the IRA, which increased taxes on corporations, made it possible for Medicare to negotiate the prices of prescription medications, extended ACA tax credits, and provided record funding for environmental justice communities and addressing climate change.

We provided administrative support for over 50 partner groups. We also won campaigns for education, broadband, and workers' rights and helped stop the Mountain Valley Pipeline (for now). Many of our 50+ joint plans of work played a huge role in the pipeline victory.

We put a special emphasis on gender justice in 2022. Chapters held roundtable discussions and community outreach events about abortion and reproductive rights. Narissa Rahaman, the Executive Director of Equality Virginia, gave the keynote speech at our Grassroots Gathering. Members submitted hundreds of comments about Governor Youngkin's anti-LGBTQ+ education policies, and the Fredericksburg Chapter worked to block their implementation in Spotsylvania County. Newport News/Hampton held rallies for affordable childcare and a living wage for childcare providers.

In 2022, I became chairperson of Virginia Organizing. I first got involved with Virginia Organizing as a member of the Danville Chapter when I was in high school. I was an intern, joined the board as a 16-year-old, stayed connected as college and jobs moved me around the state, and am now a proud member of our Richmond Chapter. I have seen how Virginia Organizing can change our state for the better.

We also hired a new development director and several new organizers, and the State Governing Board welcomed Wythe County as our newest chapter. New chapters are also developing in Pulaski and Wise County. We are growing every year thanks to you.

Thank you for everything you've given to Virginia Organizing. Please support our work in 2023. Your donations will help make Virginia a place all of us can call home.



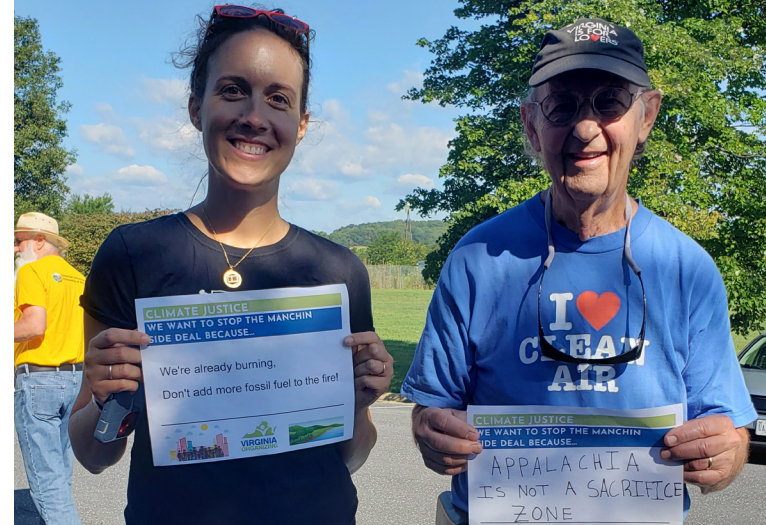
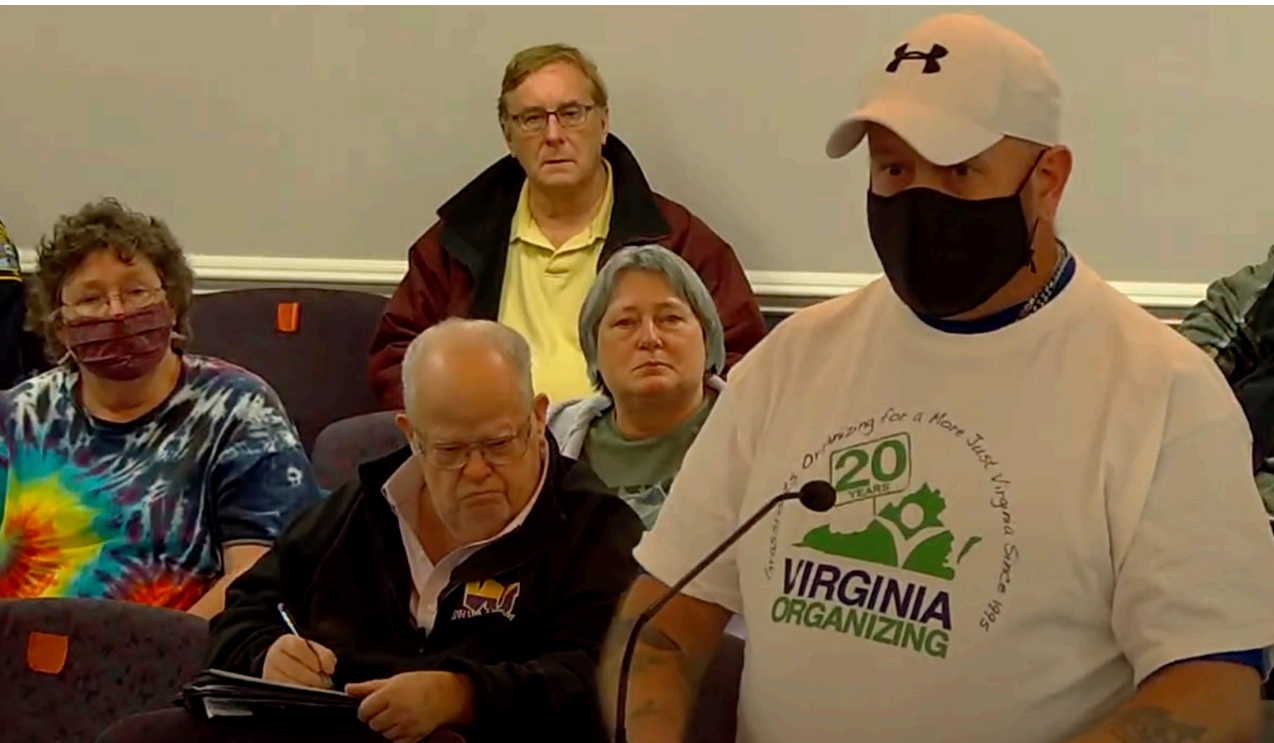
Four members of the State Governing Board met in Richmond to celebrate Ladelle McWhorter's years of service as chairperson. From left to right: Duane Edwards, Tyran Green, Ladelle McWhorter, and Lily Hungarland.





We held our first (since the pandemic) in-person three-day Dismantling Racism workshop in November. It was our first fully bilingual workshop with interpretation from the Virginia Language Justice Collective!

Waynesboro leader Phillip Sorrels spoke to city council in March about the difficulty of finding affordable safe rental housing in the area. Phillip died in September, and the chapter mourned his passing. He was a brave, compassionate, hard-working leader. The chapter continues to push for a rental inspection program, so that landlords will be held accountable for unsafe living conditions.



Harrisonburg/Rockingham County Chapter participated in the StopMVP photo petition drive, one of the many tactics Virginia Organizing used to help stop Sen. Joe Manchin's dirty side deal.



Charlottesville held a tax fairness press conference. TV coverage made the case for higher taxes for the most wealthy.

The Wythe County Chapter held a forum in November so that voters could question local candidates.







The Suffolk Chapter held an action on tax day where they walked through their downtown and thanked business owners for paying their share of taxes — unlike billionaires who pay a lower rate.

Chapters took action throughout the first half of 2022 to demand that Congress pass Build Back Better, and then later the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

Chapter members published letters to the editor in support of the bill.

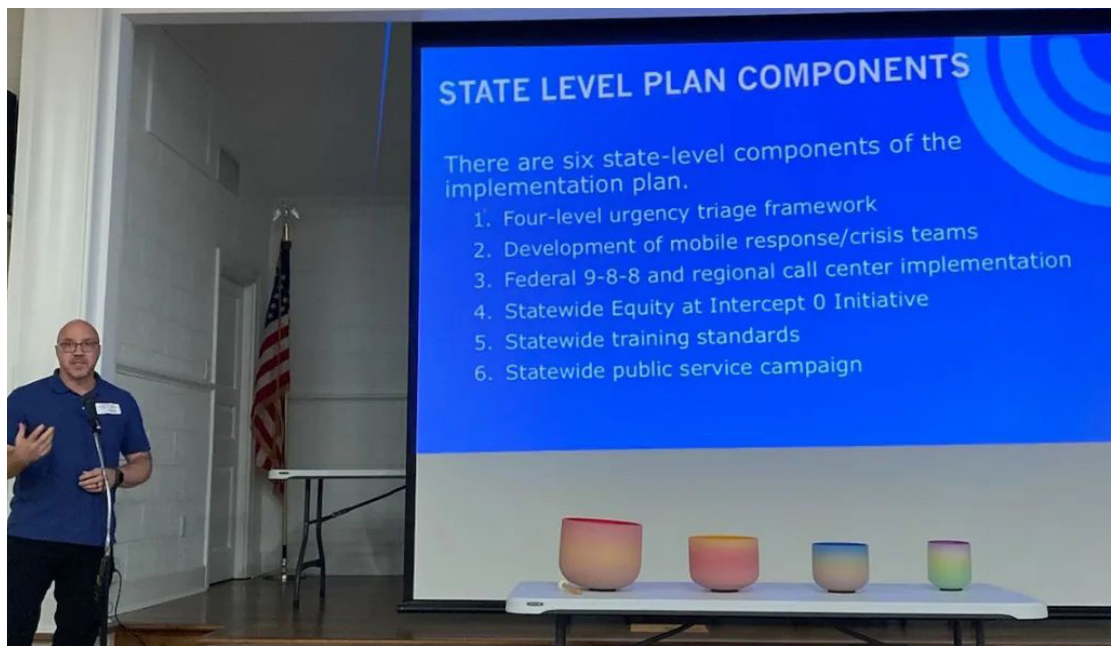
"Those tax dollars could be spent in the black community," leader Cassandra Waters said. "Compared to what I pay in taxes, the super-rich aren't paying their fair share."



The Richmond Chapter won their two-year campaign for a Student, Parent, and Caregiver Bill of Rights! Leader Cynthia Reyes said, "Students and families who speak a language other than English have the right to access the same opportunities as English speakers."

The Norfolk Chapter hosted a rally for health care last winter that Eastern Shore, Newport News/Hampton, Portsmouth, and Suffolk all attended.

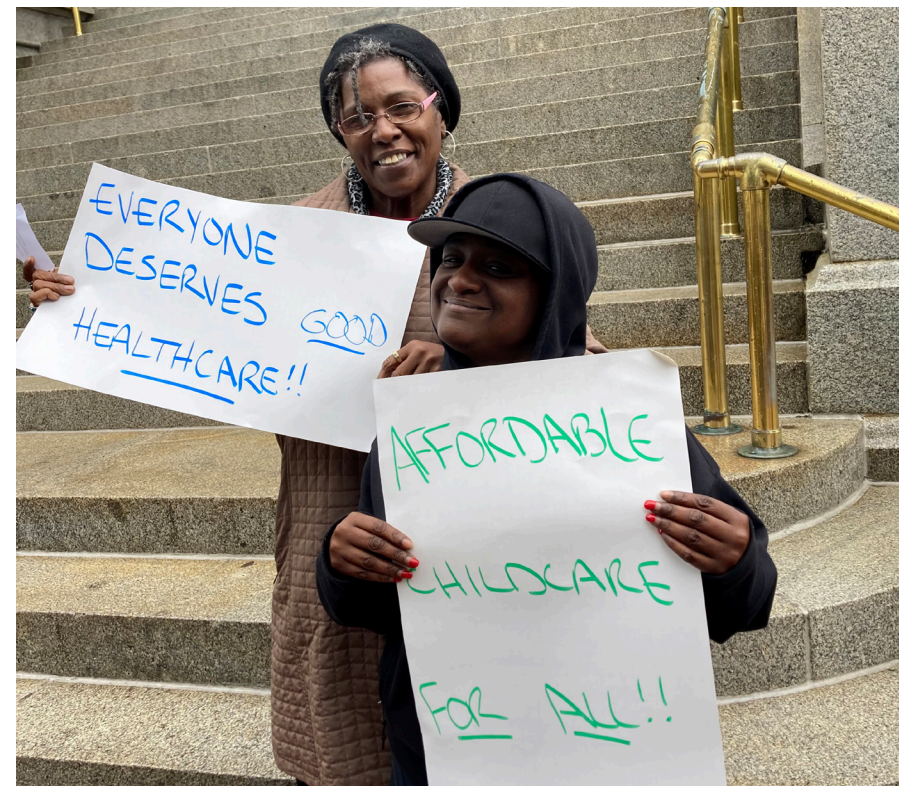
The Portsmouth Chapter held a forum about the benefits of mindfulness training in schools, and they also informed the public of what the Marcus Alert program will do for the city. They won their campaign this winter, and now Coach Jenson Baker has been hired to train students and teachers in mindfulness.



## STATE LEVEL PLAN COMPONENTS

There are six state-level components of the implementation plan.

1. Four-level urgency triage framework
2. Development of mobile response/crisis teams
3. Federal 9-8-8 and regional call center implementation
4. Statewide Equity at Intercept 0 Initiative
5. Statewide training standards
6. Statewide public service campaign





# Building Power across Virginia

**The Norfolk Chapter** won their campaign for better transit for people with disabilities. The chapter began the campaign by asking city council to make several improvements to the way the city's contractor served people with disabilities. Then they expanded to other infrastructure such as sidewalks and bus stops. They also hosted a health care rally and a reproductive rights virtual workshop for all of Hampton Roads.

**The Fredericksburg Chapter** won their campaign to improve the working conditions of Stafford County Public Schools custodial workers. They won an increase in the minimum wage for custodians and paid time off, including holidays and other leave, and health, dental, and vision benefits. The new contract requires the company to hire the workers who spoke out about the oppressive conditions they had to work under during the pandemic.

**The Richmond Chapter** won their campaign to convince the city school board to adopt their Student, Parent, and Caregiver Bill of Rights. The chapter has taken on a new campaign. After canvassing tenants across the city, they began a tenant rights campaign for the residents of Forestbrooke Apartments, who live in dangerously neglected housing. They also held a media conference with Rep. Donald McEachin to thank him for supporting the IRA.

**The Wythe County Chapter** became an official chapter of Virginia Organizing in 2022. They organized the first celebration of Juneteenth in Wytheville's history, as well as a rally for mental health care with the New River Valley Chapter, and a candidate forum.

In **Danville**, members helped defeat an attempt to criminalize homelessness by the city council. They also partnered with grassroots leaders to support a panel discussion about reproductive justice and abortion access in the weeks after the Dobbs decision was released.

In addition to rallies and other actions for tenant rights, **the Waynesboro Chapter** held a community cookout and partnered with the Blue Ridge Abortion Fund so that they could share their services. The cookout built community in Waynesboro and created a safe and brave space for neighbors to discuss civic engagement and reproductive justice in the city.

**The Lee County Chapter** came together with other local groups to stop the building of a private landfill.

**New River Valley** held an education justice forum and Juneteenth events in Montgomery and Pulaski Counties.

**Harrisonburg/Rockingham County Chapter** held their first ever Día de los Muertos celebration.

**The Newport News/Hampton Chapter** held several rallies for affordable childcare and a living wage for childcare providers. They also held a media conference about the need for a shelter for the unhoused on the peninsula and met with city councilors in both Newport News and Hampton.

**The Eastern Shore Chapter** won their "broadband for all" campaign to expand internet access beyond wealthy communities on the shore.

**The Portsmouth Chapter** won their campaign to bring mindfulness to the city's public elementary schools. In the summer the board voted to implement the program, but in the fall the chapter had to continue to work to ensure a mindfulness trainer was hired to get the program started.

**Suffolk** members continued to visit city council and meet with their mayor to call for a Civilian Review Board to provide community oversight to the police department. They also held two events to thank Rep. Elaine Luria for her support for reproductive rights and the Inflation Reduction Act. The picture below was taken at their Women's Equality Cookout.





**104**

letters to the  
editor and op-eds

**731**

new skills learned by  
leaders

**52**

forums and workshops

**69**

meetings with  
legislators and other  
decision-makers

**1025**

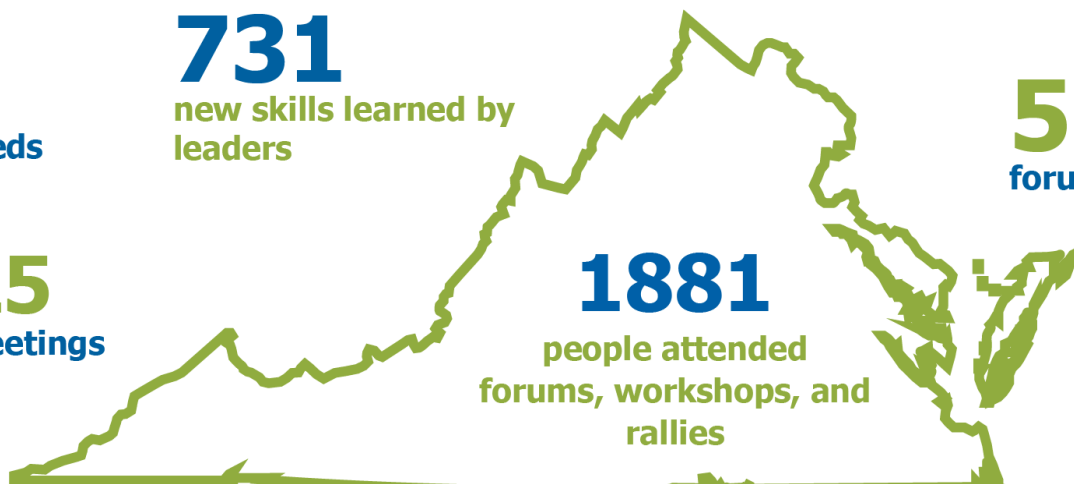
one-to-one meetings

**1881**

people attended  
forums, workshops, and  
rallies

**166**

mentions in the media







**Virginia Organizing**  
703 Concord Avenue  
Charlottesville, VA 22902  
434-984-4655  
[info@virginia-organizing.org](mailto:info@virginia-organizing.org)  
[www.virginia-organizing.org](http://www.virginia-organizing.org)

**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/Hampton, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Pulaski, Richmond Area, Suffolk, Waynesboro, Wise County, Wythe County