Dear friends,

As I reflect on the work we accomplished last fiscal year, I'm struck by how quickly the needs of low-income Virginians changed because of the pandemic and how rapidly VPLC's staff responded to the changing landscape. That work would not be possible without financial investment from supporters like you.

Conversations around equity can't be had without including the voices of low-income Virginians, and VPLC ensures that decision-makers throughout the Commonwealth consider these voices. As you'll see in the pages that follow, your support this past fiscal year had enormous impact for people across the state. Because of your investment, we made it easier for Virginians to stay stably housed and keep their families safe and healthy. We protected people's pocketbooks and, for some, put more money into those pocketbooks while also addressing longtime systemic racial inequities in our institutions.

Thank you for embarking on this journey with us. While there is still much ground to cover, we are further down the road than we were last year. Together, we can continue breaking down the systemic barriers that keep low-income Virginians in poverty.

Sincerely,

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
IMPACT

VPLC acted immediately when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, sharing information about tenants’ rights and holding virtual "Know Your Rights" sessions with state legislators for constituents across the state.

RAPID RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC

VPLC acted immediately when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, sharing information about tenants’ rights and holding virtual "Know Your Rights" sessions with state legislators for constituents across the state.

LOST RIGHTS, RECLAIMED

During the 2020 Virginia General Assembly, we successfully advocated for new housing laws that create a fairer relationship between landlords and tenants in Virginia.

- Fees are limited on late rent payments.
- Landlords are required to provide tenants with a statement of their rights and responsibilities when their lease begins and legal aid contact information on termination notices.
- Housing discrimination against people based on their source of income (i.e., housing choice vouchers) is prohibited.
- Public housing authorities are required to notify residents of intent to demolish or sell a public housing community at least twelve months in advance.

Calls to our Eviction Legal Helpline tripled during the pandemic. Our attorneys answered roughly 75 calls per month.
VPLC’s Legal Assistance to Victim-Immigrants of Domestic Abuse (LA VIDA) program helps undocumented immigrant victims of domestic and sexual violence file visa applications to obtain legal status in the U.S.

Applying for legal status in the U.S. often takes years. LA VIDA helps clients navigate this complicated, multi-step process every step of the way.

During the 2020 Virginia General Assembly, we successfully advocated for a new law allowing low-income Virginians to have court fees waived in civil matters and helped pass a law creating the Office of the Children’s Ombudsman. This new office will be responsible for investigating and reviewing actions of child care agencies.
For over 20 years Virginia banned people with drug convictions from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), disproportionately affecting communities of color. After years of advocacy, both bans were fully repealed. 

This will help over 2,000 families.

**15% INCREASE IN TANF CASH BENEFIT**
This fiscal year we secured the largest ever TANF cash benefit increase in Virginia’s history for over 34,000 Virginians.

**HEALTHCARE**

After years of effort, we successfully advocated for new laws expanding access to healthcare.

“I can't even begin to thank you and your Enroll Virginia! team enough for how available you all have made yourselves for Rapid Response when I've come calling... You all truly impact lives for the better.”
— Mark Brickey, Virginia Employment Commission

- Medicaid coverage for legal permanent residents and other immigrants.
- Ban on surprise bills for emergency and out-of-network care in in-network facilities.
- Medicare enrollees of all ages have access to MediGap health insurance to help cover out-of-pocket medical costs.

VPLC’s Jill Hanken and Salaam Bhatti celebrate legislative victories with fellow advocates.
After nearly 20 years of legislative battles against predatory lending, the Virginia General Assembly finally brought fairness to small loans in Virginia. There will be no more payday lending in Virginia, and borrowers will now have access to fairer loans that will save them at least $100 million per year in fees and interest.

“Watching Governor Northam sign the Fairness in Lending Act at Wesley Memorial was the culmination of a long, hard, excruciating legislative battle that finally released the burden of unfair, exorbitant interest rates from the backs of low-income borrowers.”

— Pastor Rodney Hunter, Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church

NO MORE PAYDAY LENDING IN VIRGINIA

PROTECTING VIRGINIANS’ POCKETBOOKS

VPLC made strides to lower Virginians’ energy bills this fiscal year.

- Created a program for qualifying families to limit electric utility bills to no more than 6% of their income through a combination of energy efficiency measures and bill assistance.
- Limited Dominion Energy Virginia’s ability to overcharge their customers.
2019 LEGAL AID CONFERENCE

The 2019 Annual Statewide Legal Aid Conference was held at the Hotel Madison & Shenandoah Valley Conference Center in Harrisonburg, VA.

351 ATTENDEES
76 EXPERTS
43 SESSIONS

“The Legal Aid Conference is a highlight every year. It gives you all the tools you need to help advocate for Virginia’s most vulnerable.”
— Kristi Kelly, Kelly Guzzo P.L.C.

2019 ANNUAL STATEWIDE LEGAL AID CONFERENCE SPONSORS

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Virginia Law Foundation

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FINANCIALS

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FY20 financials are unaudited. Audited financials will be available at vplc.org by March 2021.
FY20 STAFF LEADERSHIP

James "Jay" Speer, Esq.
Executive Director &
Director of the Center for Economic Justice

Jill Hanken, Esq.
Director of the Center for Healthy Communities

Susheela Varky, Esq.
Director of the Center for Family Advocacy

Dana Wiggins
Director of the Center for Outreach

Ann Voss
Director of Administration

Toni Maxey
Director of Development

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FY20 CORPORATE & FOUNDATION FUNDERS

The Rusty and Gayle Boleman Foundation
Legal Services Corporation of Virginia
The Food Research and Action Center
The Pew Charitable Trusts
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The Energy Foundation
Energy Efficiency for All
Equal Justice Works
Potomac Foundation
Many individual donors

VPLC HELPLINES

ENROLL VIRGINIA! HEALTH INSURANCE HELPLINE: 888-392-5132
EVICTION LEGAL HELPLINE: 833-NOEVICT (833-663-8428)
PREDATORY LOAN HELPLINE: 866-830-4501
SENIOR LEGAL HELPLINE: 844-802-5910

LEARN MORE
vplc.org/signup