



Annual **Report** 2021



**virginia
interfaith
center**

FOR PUBLIC POLICY

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2021

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** These staff members served for a portion of 2021 before transitioning off the team. VICPP remains grateful for their lasting contributions.*

Welcome

The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy

is a remarkable organization, combining a faith-filled vision of justice and the beloved community with practical tools and strategic organizing. As our director Kim Bobo says,

we seek to marry the prophetic and the possible.

This report shows the organization's strong track record, its broad educational and engagement programs, and its diversity of leadership at the staff, board, and volunteer levels. Virginia Interfaith Center is a respected statewide voice for justice particularly on poverty and equity issues, with its witness team at the capitol and its grassroots advocates in every district in the Commonwealth.

One of the major accomplishments for the Board of Directors was leading a planning process that resulted in a strategic plan for 2022-2026. A copy can be found on our website.

If you are not already engaged or not a donor, we hope you will join us by getting more involved and contributing to support the work. Thank you.



*Julie Swanson
Board Chair*



*Anthony L. Fludd
Board Vice-Chair*

Justice at the General Assembly

The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy (VICPP) dedicates the first part of the year to direct advocacy with the General Assembly while it is in session.

In 2021, VICPP converted its annual Day for All People flagship event to a week of online virtual advocacy, drawing more than 350 participants. A new College Day of Action engaged 65 young people. During the remaining months of the year, VICPP then shifts focus to program work and education around issues for the next year's General Assembly.



LaKeisha Cook (VICPP) leads a rally calling for the abolition of the death penalty in Virginia.

Accomplishments in the 2021 General Assembly

Abolition of the Death Penalty.

Virginia became the first state in the south to abolish the death penalty. VICPP mobilized religious leaders, especially African American leaders, linking the death penalty with Virginia's terrible lynching history. VICPP partnered with Virginians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty.

Heat Stress Standard.

VICPP joined the Legal Aid Justice Center in advocating a heat stress standard for workers. The Administration agreed to have the Safety and Health Codes board take up consideration of the standard. (The proposed standard was not ultimately agreed to in 2022.)

Prenatal Health Care for undocumented women.

VICPP led a budget campaign to get prenatal health care for 7,000 undocumented women. Because of federal financing for certain health care programs, Virginia was able to expand coverage and save money.

Justice at the General Assembly

Paid Sick Days for home care workers.

Although VICPP has been seeking a paid sick day standard for all workers, the bill that passed provides up to five paid sick days for 30,000 home care workers – a good down-payment on the broader bill. VICPP staffs the Paid Sick Day Coalition.

Environmental Justice progress.

VICPP's partner, Virginia Interfaith Power and Light, led successful efforts to declare "Water is a Human Right," outlining the importance of clean, safe, affordable drinking water, and a study to Equitably Modernize Public Transit.



Kim Bobo (VICPP), key legislators, and fellow advocates join Gov. Northam at the Paid Sick Days Bill Signing Ceremony and press conference at the Capitol on June 1, 2021.

Salim Khalfani (VICPP) leads a mock solitary confinement cell immersive experience outside Centenary United Methodist Church in Richmond.



Policy Work Preparing for the 2022 General Assembly

Limiting Excessive Use of Solitary Confinement.

VICPP worked with the Virginia Coalition on Solitary Confinement to educate faith communities on the issue. In the fall, several groups around the Commonwealth held mock solitary confinement cell events to raise awareness about the issues.



Outside Peace Lutheran Church in Alexandria, advocate Cris Nasser sits in a mock cell to educate about the inhumane practice of solitary confinement.

Justice at the General Assembly

Preparing for the 2022 General Assembly (cont.)



A young advocate helps her parents place flyers on vehicles in a Richmond parking lot during the statewide Paid Sick Days Grocery Store Day of Action in Nov.

Paid Sick Days.

VICPP continued bringing new groups into the Paid Sick Day Coalition and meeting with legislators on key committees. The Coalition worked with legislators to develop bills that would have a chance at passing.

Affordable Housing.

VICPP worked with both the Virginia Poverty Law Center and the Virginia Housing Alliance to support affordable housing proposals in the budget.

Unconscious Bias Training Standard.

VICPP built the PUSH maternal health coalition, now consisting of nearly 30 statewide organizations, mostly health advocates, to advocate policy change to eliminate the racial disparities of maternal mortality, infant mortality, and pregnancy loss in Virginia, and work with legislators on setting an unconscious bias training standard for health care professionals.

Ayesha Gilani Taylor (VICPP) affixes a microphone onto Del. Guzman for a PUSH PSA film shoot.



Dora Muhammad (VICPP) interviews Stephanie Spencer (Urban Baby Beginnings founder).



Education and Program Work

Living Wage Certification Program

The Virginia Living Wage Certification programs continued to certify new employers throughout 2021. Local highlights include certifying the Commonwealth's first public school system in Harrisonburg-Rockingham in mid-2021. Along with strong local representation in Charlottesville, Northern Virginia, Richmond, and Harrisonburg-Rockingham, a statewide certification program was launched that allows employers throughout the Commonwealth to become certified. As a member of the Living Wage Network – a multi-state network of living wage certifying programs – Virginia Living Wage participated in a Nationwide Living Wage Week hosted by national partners, Living Wage for Us. Richmond's



An SEIU Virginia 512 member and her son show their support for providing all Virginians a living wage.

local steering committee and partners, the Richmond Office of Community Wealth Building, were invited to speak on a panel about the importance of government collaboration in strengthening living wage certification programs.

Wage Theft

Over the last few years, VICPP worked hard in the General Assembly to expand worker protections against wage theft. In 2021, VICPP shifted gears to focus on informing workers about their new protections. VICPP established relationships with lawyers throughout the Commonwealth, and launched a new bilingual website (wagetheftva.org) that has resources for workers.

Workers can also submit a complaint and receive a follow-up call from the VICPP team. After creating the website, VICPP made three presentations to faith communities and appeared on two radio shows to talk about the resource in Spanish. Last year, VICPP connected with 11 workers, some of whom have gotten their stolen wages returned, and some of whom are still in the process of doing so.

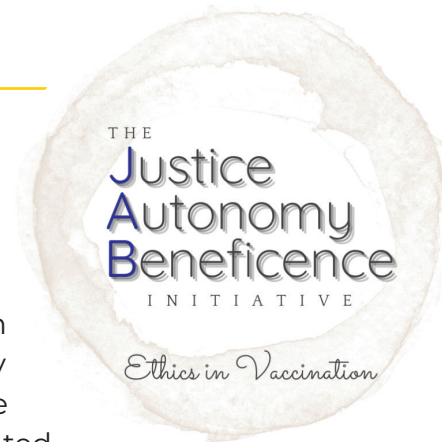
Education and Program Work

JAB Initiative

Since the first spike of COVID-19 cases in Virginia occurred in 2020, VICPP has served as a clearinghouse of information and resources, particularly focused on communities of color facing barriers to equitable access and accurate guidance. After one year and a half in collaboration and partnership with state-level working groups and agencies on educational materials and vaccination rollout, the Commonwealth, like many other states, faced challenges in overcoming the barriers to vaccine delivery to communities of color. VICPP designed an educational initiative to address the historical roots of the mistrust of the medical community in Black and Brown communities that were exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through funding by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as part of a national Vaccine Equity and Access Program run by Community Catalyst, VICPP was able to scale up the initiative to focus on two COVID-19 infection hotspots that had resulted in the CDC conducting door-to-door case studies – Prince William County and the Hampton Roads region. VICPP's initiative elevates three principles of ethics in health care – Justice, Autonomy and Beneficence (JAB) – to foster congregational and community dialogue, ground relationship-

building with health departments committed to building trustworthy health care settings, and equip faith leaders as health equity advocates. The initiative has engaged an estimated 100 advocates and 20 congregations across these two regions in 2021 through its JAB Talk series, and it is poised to extend statewide with the development of a PSA (Public Service Announcement) film series, brochure, and social media campaign in 2022.



Racial Equity

In 2021, VICPP began external racial equity work, focusing primarily on the internal systems and structures of congregations. For this purpose, VICPP developed a variety of educational programming. VICPP established racial equity working groups within each regional chapter to connect members with others interested in the program's focus areas. VICPP convened three racial equity roundtable discussions focused on helping congregations foster internal dialogue, ecclesiastic reparations, and preserving ancestral Black and Native graves. A four-part series, Faith, Race & Truth delved into the historic and contemporary impacts of white supremacy on faith institutions within

communities of color through virtual chats with leaders from within the impacted communities.

This yearlong public dialogue centered the responsibility of faith institutions today to address and redress the role of the church in the U.S. boarding school system and upholding the Doctrine of Discovery to justify the violence of white supremacy, and how this violence manifests today

in hate crimes in the community, particularly against houses of worship. VICPP established relationships with restorative justice and congressional leaders, in order to create a commission to address the historic and contemporary violence of white supremacy in Virginia, and advanced a bipartisan effort to establish a national Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies.

Central Virginia Sanctuary Network (CVSN) —



Advocates at a CVSN march highlight CVSN core values.

CVSN volunteers provide transportation and accompaniment services for local and regional immigration appointments, for asylum-seeking families without access to driver's licenses or cars. During the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, CVSN deftly pivoted to a micro-grants model to continue to assist families with the cost of private transportation. CVSN also provides care packages and orientation to asylum seekers being released from regional detention centers who may be traveling to other points in the U.S. to reunite with their families.

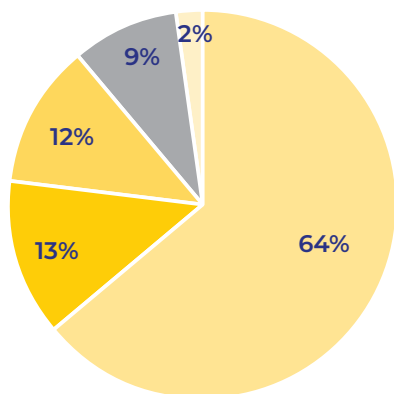
According to the Migration Policy Institute, Virginia is one of the top five destinations for Central American refugees after they cross the border, with a community of nearly 300,000 in the Alexandria/Arlington/D.C.

region alone. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has a large presence in Central Virginia, with two facilities in Greater Richmond and two detention centers within an hour and a half of the city, including the highly controversial for-profit facilities in Farmville and Caroline county.

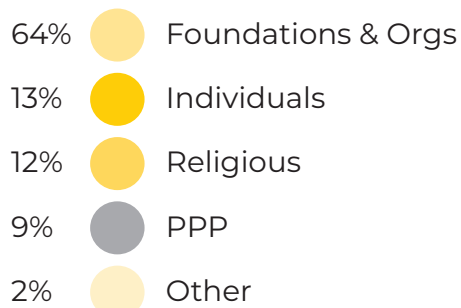
Families supported by CVSN are referred via Sacred Heart Center's Family Protection Project, low-cost immigration attorneys in Richmond and Charlottesville, the Capital Area Immigrants' Rights (CAIR) Coalition and via word-of-mouth.

In early 2021, CVSN launched a successful fundraiser and secured funding as an integral part of the JAB initiative in late 2021, allowing them to continue to serve over 150 families and individuals in the Central Virginia area and have 105 active volunteers.

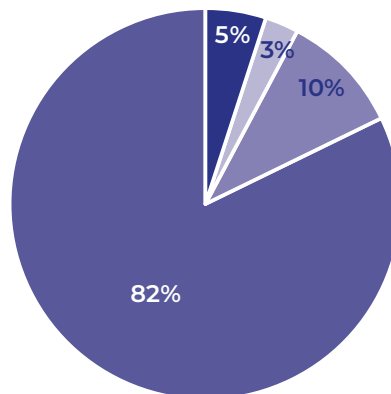
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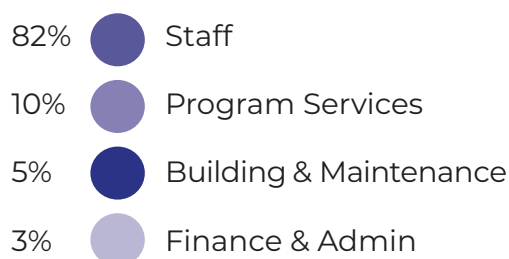
2020 Income*



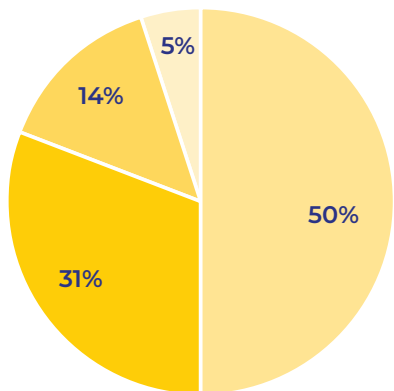
*Audited 2020 income (includes VAIPL) total: \$1,239,435



2020 Expenses*



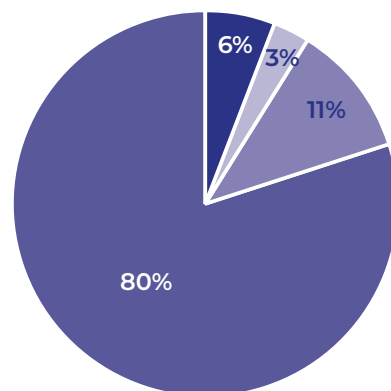
*Audited 2020 expenses (includes VAIPL) total: \$ 910,870



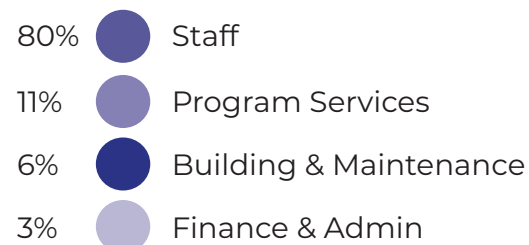
2021 Income**



** 2021 (unaudited) income (includes VAIPL through 4/21) total: \$765,522



2021 Expenses**



** 2021 (unaudited) expenses (includes VAIPL through 4/21) total: \$796,114

VICPP

Funding

VICPP receives the bulk of its support from foundations, religious sources, and individuals. The following pages list the many financial supporters of the work.

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* Virginia Interfaith Power and Light designated grants

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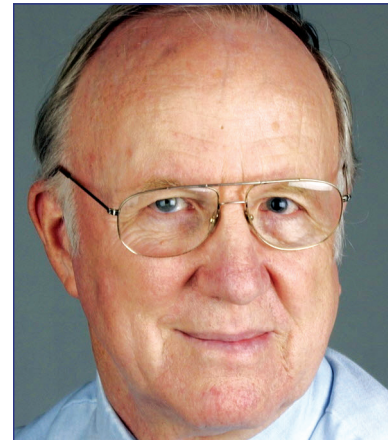
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In Memoriam

Rev. Canon John Fletcher Lowe, Jr.

The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy recognizes the life and work of original founding member, former executive director from 1997 to 2004, board member, chapter leader, and long-time leader, volunteer, teacher, and friend to all – the late Reverend Canon John Fletcher Lowe, Jr., and his bride, the equally devoted social justice advocate, Mrs. Mary Frances Lowe. The VICPP family lost a faithful justice warrior in late August, 2021, when Rev. Lowe passed in his sleep a few months shy of his 90th birthday.



Rev. Lowe spent his life devoted to the pursuit of equity and justice for all people. Even in his passing, our dear friend continued his commitment to VICPP's work. Mary Frances delivered a contribution from Rev. Lowe's estate to VICPP headquarters.

Rev. Lowe was honored by the Virginia General Assembly on what would have been his 90th birthday, Friday, March 11, 2022. Senator Jennifer McClellan read Senate Joint Resolution No. 88 (available to view on the VICPP website) expressing gratitude for his work and legacy. His widow, Mary Frances (pictured below), was in the G.A. gallery to hear the resolution and receive a standing ovation from the Senators. May his legacy and example continue to inspire and teach us all.



Donate to VICPP, an organization that has been doing impactful work for forty years.

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The greatest impact cannot be made alone. Get involved with VICPP and be a part of the mission to advocate for a more just and sustainable world, starting in our own communities.

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