



2024 Annual Report





Introducing Rev. Dr. LaKeisha Cook

The Rev. Dr. LaKeisha Cook was appointed executive director of the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy (VICPP) on April 1, 2025. She has more than two decades of experience leading advocacy and faith-based work in nonprofits, government, education, and the African American church. Cook leads VICPP's advocacy, outreach, development, and coalition-building efforts. As a faith-based practitioner and racial equity leader, she brings expertise in program administration, with a policy focus on criminal justice reform. She has spearheaded several successful legislative campaigns for VICPP, including helping lead the coalition that passed a historic bill abolishing the death penalty in Virginia in 2021, making it the first state in the South to end capital punishment.

Before coming to Virginia, Cook worked at First Institutional Baptist Church and for the Kyrene School District in Phoenix, Arizona. She moved back to Richmond in 2011, where she held a variety of leadership roles at St. Paul's Baptist Church. She is a *summa cum laude* graduate of Virginia Union University (VUU), and holds a Bachelor of Arts in sociology with a minor in religious studies, as well as a Master of Divinity from VUU. Cook also earned a master's degree in educational leadership from Northern Arizona University. In 2012, she completed her studies at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, earning a Doctor of Ministry degree as a Gardner C. Taylor Fellow.

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Welcome

What a remarkable year of growth, impact, and transformation this has been for our organization! As we reflect on the accomplishments of 2024, we are filled with gratitude for the incredible strides we have made together in advancing justice and building stronger communities across the commonwealth.

We could not do this work without the support of thousands of volunteer advocates across Virginia, our dedicated and passionate staff, our board of directors, coalition partners, grant funders, and individual donors. We appreciate each and every person and organization that supports our work to advocate for economic, racial, and social justice in Virginia's policies and practices.

In this report, you'll learn about our policy work in the 2024 General Assembly, our civic engagement efforts, and our educational and community programs. We also give thanks to our growing list of donors. If you are a current donor, we thank you. If you would like to support our work, please see the back page for more information.

This year, the Virginia Interfaith Center celebrated multiple legislative victories that will protect vulnerable workers and strengthen our communities. From bolstering child labor protections to increasing funding for community health workers, and from limiting the harmful use of attack dogs in prisons to advancing criminal justice reform, your advocacy made these wins possible.

We are powering our building with the energy of the sun, and we're proud to have installed the first-ever solar panels on our roof. This investment reflects our values of environmental stewardship while reducing operational costs, allowing us to direct more resources toward our mission.

In early 2025, the Virginia Interfaith Center marked a significant leadership transition. After serving as executive director for close to a decade, Kim Bobo left her full-time role. Her visionary leadership firmly established our organization as a national leader in interfaith advocacy. Kim's commitment to worker justice, passion for equity, and generous spirit has left an indelible mark on our movement and the commonwealth we serve.

On April 1, 2025, the board of directors appointed the Rev. Dr. LaKeisha Cook as executive director. She became the organization's 10th executive director and its first African American leader.

As we celebrate these achievements, we're energized by the possibilities that lie ahead. The challenges facing our communities — from economic inequality to housing insecurity to criminal justice reform — require sustained commitment and collaborative action.

Your partnership makes our work possible. Whether through financial contributions, volunteer hours, advocacy efforts, or simply spreading the word about our work, you are an essential part of our success story. Thank you for standing with us, believing in our mission, and investing in the transformative power of faith-based advocacy.

With deep gratitude and continued hope,



Rev. Dr. LaKeisha Cook
Executive Director



Rev. Dr. Anthony Fludd
Board Chair



Fast Facts



Virginia's largest faith-based advocacy organization

25,000+

Members

750+

Faith Communities

Multi-

**Faith, Racial, Generational,
Non-partisan**

10

**Full-time
Staff**

28

**Volunteer Board
Members**

What We Do

VICPP STAFF SPEND HUNDREDS OF HOURS:

- Research social justice issues
- Write legislation and fact sheets
- Meet with legislators and advocacy groups
- Educate the public
- Mobilize the faith community

Statewide Impact

VICPP WORKS WITH:

- Chapters
- Affiliates
- Congregations
- Faith groups
- Judicatories
- Interns and volunteers
- Partners with advocacy groups, legislators and community leaders

Major Victories

IN COALITION WITH ADVOCACY PARTNERS:

- Helped with Medicaid expansion
- Abolished the death penalty

VICPP Helped

- Expand school breakfast programs
- Create a state earned income tax credit
- Limit predatory payday lending
- Remove racist minimum wage exemptions
- Advocate for poverty-reducing budgets

Learn more and get involved:
virginiainterfaithcenter.org

Legislative Accomplishments at the 2024 Virginia General Assembly

1 Health Equity

Unconscious Bias Training for Health Care Professionals

This issue has been a priority for VICPP and the PUSH Coalition for Maternal Health for many years. In 2024, a bill to combat racial disparities in medical care received strong bipartisan support. **Despite this groundswell of support, it was vetoed by Gov. Glenn Youngkin.**

Community Health Workers

A community health worker (CHW) is a frontline public health worker who is a trusted member of the community. Most CHWs connected to local health districts were scheduled to lose their funding in 2024 as federal pandemic support ended. VICPP helped ensure that Virginia **included \$6 million to support local CHWs in its budget.**

Cover All Kids

Another long-standing priority for VICPP and coalition partners is a policy that would allow all children from low-income families to access health insurance, regardless of their immigration status. **Unfortunately, this bill was not included in the final budget.**

2 Criminal Justice Reform

Limiting Use of Attack Dogs in Prisons

Although most prison systems use dogs to locate contraband, Virginia has a history of using attack dogs to “manage” people who are incarcerated. VICPP advocated for a bill to severely limit the scenarios in which dogs can be used in prisons. **It passed with strong bipartisan support and was signed into law by the governor.**

No-cost/Low-cost Communication

People who are incarcerated deserve to speak with their loved ones without paying exorbitant fees. VICPP helped lead a coalition effort on this issue with the Legal Aid Justice Center, the ACLU of Virginia, Sistas for Justice Reform, Social Action Linking Together (SALT), and the Humanization Project. A watered-down bill that significantly reduces the cost of phone calls **passed the legislature and was signed by the governor.**

3 Supporting Working Families

Paid Sick Days

VICPP continued to lead a coalition effort to establish a paid sick day standard for all workers. Although the issue is widely popular with voters and would improve the lives of 1.2 million workers in Virginia, **the bills did not advance to the governor.**

Child Labor

Penalties for child labor violations had not been increased in more than 25 years. VICPP worked to raise these penalties as a deterrent to employers who allow children to work in unsafe conditions. **The bill passed with substantial bipartisan support and was signed into law by the governor.**

Increasing the Minimum Wage

As part of a coalition, VICPP supported legislation to continue increasing Virginia's minimum wage from \$12 to \$15 per hour over the next few years. The bill passed the General Assembly. Despite VICPP mobilizing 400 signatures from faith leaders urging the governor to sign it, **the bill was ultimately vetoed.**

4 Affordable Housing

Faith in Housing for the Commonwealth

After hearing from faith leaders and communities about the challenges of building affordable housing on congregational land, VICPP led the effort on a bill to automatically allow multifamily, affordable housing development on faith-owned land. **The bill was sent to Virginia's Housing Commission for further study.**

Legislative Advocacy

Day for All People

Day for All People is VICPP's annual advocacy day at the General Assembly that brings together people of faith and goodwill from across the Commonwealth. In 2024, more than 300 people came to Richmond to meet with their legislators to ask for their support on justice priorities. Participants also attended skill-building workshops and built relationships that continue to broaden VICPP members' impact.

Community members cross East Grace Street toward the Virginia Capitol during the Day for All People advocacy event in Richmond, Va



Students meet with Delegate Betsy Carr in her office at the General Assembly

Student Day of Action

Virginia Interfaith hosted its annual Student Day of Action, where more than 100 students and young professionals came to the General Assembly to participate in the democratic process. They met with legislators to advocate for policies affecting thousands of Virginians, and attended workshops with experts and community leaders to learn about key issues impacting the Commonwealth.

VICPP partnered with the Black History Museum, the Valentine Museum, and Events on Leigh—a Black woman-owned events and catering business—to create a memorable two days of advocacy, education and engagement. The event featured an evening mocktail party and speakers from the Higher Education in Prison initiative.

Educating Virginians about Policy

Community Events

VICPP facilitates community events to bring together different faith groups in support of efforts such as Get Out the Vote, Interfaith Souls to the Polls, community health fairs, and educational workshops. Staff members speak in churches, mosques, synagogues, schools, prisons, community centers, and civic organizations across Virginia.

“At a time when so many communities face uncertainty and deep challenges, the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy stands as a ***vital voice for justice, compassion, and equity.*** We are proud to support their tireless efforts to bring faith communities together in advocacy for policies that uphold dignity and fairness for all. Their leadership inspires hope and action when it’s needed most.”

Reggie Gordon, Esq.
President and CEO
Richmond Memorial Health Foundation

2024 Reach by the Numbers

In 2024, VICPP engaged more than 37,000 people through social media, staff presentations, and the Weekly Roundup newsletter.



12,700

people saw posts on Facebook



3,235

people saw posts on Instagram



1,116

people watched our YouTube videos



20,072

people received the Weekly Roundup newsletter emails

Workshops

In 2024, VICPP hosted numerous local forums and workshops—both in person and virtual—across the Commonwealth, and created and distributed educational materials to help Virginians better understand policies impacting their lives.

Virtual workshop topics included higher education in prison, dismantling white supremacy, and legislation at the General Assembly. This work expanded VICPP's presence in different regions and among diverse communities, and it nurtured partnerships with community liaisons, increasing grassroots engagement.

VICPP was invited to serve as a community partner at four in-person community health fairs hosted by local faith organizations serving communities with large Muslim, Black and immigrant populations.



Rev. Dr. LaKeisha Cook, VICPP executive director, speaking at a Congregations and Housing workshop in Alexandria

Funding from our grant partners—the Institute for Public Health Innovation and Community Catalyst—was critical to our participation. VICPP created and distributed educational materials on vaccine access, community health workers, workforce opportunities, and access to Medicaid. One-on-one conversations at these events increased our overall grassroots engagement.

6,780 people participated in over 134 presentations

given by VICPP staff (in person and virtual) in cities throughout the Commonwealth





L-R: Chad Dotson, director, Virginia Dept. of Corrections; David Dore, chancellor, Virginia Community College System; Daryl Byers Robinson, former VICPP staff; Rev. Dr. Keith Jones, VICPP board member



Ascendium Higher Education in Prison Grantee Convening:
L-R, VICPP team Kenneth Hunter, Organizer, and Terri Erwin, Director, VCHEP

Higher Education in Prison

Virginia Consensus for Higher Education in Prison Press Conference

On July 1, 2024, the Virginia Consensus for Higher Education in Prison (VCHEP), an initiative of VICPP, hosted a news conference celebrating the first anniversary of the expansion of Pell Grant funding eligibility for incarcerated learners. It also addressed the future of postsecondary education in Virginia's prison system.

The event was held at the Virginia Department of Corrections (VDOC) headquarters, where the VDOC director and the chancellor of Virginia's Community College System voiced their commitment to expanding college access for incarcerated Virginians across the Commonwealth. More than 50 education and correctional leaders attended, including six university presidents, vice presidents, and deans.

Ascendium Grantee Convening

Ascendium Education Philanthropy funds VCHEP's work on higher education in prison. In November 2024, Ascendium brought together grantees—including VCHEP staff members—for a convening in Montgomery, Alabama. Over several days, VCHEP/VICPP staff engaged with fellow grantees, shared insights, and explored innovative strategies for advancing educational equity. The convening fostered a collaborative atmosphere and generated valuable insights into education policy.

Ripple Effects Cause Tidal Waves: The Impact of Education

Education—especially higher education—has the potential to significantly improve the lives of people in prison. At a conference at Christopher Newport University, a VCHEP organizer delivered a compelling speech on the importance of higher education in prison. The event also highlighted how poor treatment and a lack of resources for people who are incarcerated can create ripple effects that impact society after their release.



Members of the PUSH Coalition were formally recognized on the Senate floor by Sen. Maime Locke, during the 2024 General Assembly (Pictured, L-R, top row: Salim Khalfani, former VICPP staff; Rev. Dr. Anthony Fludd, VICPP board president; Rev. Dr. LaKeisha Cook, VICPP co-executive director; Albert R. Walker, III, Richmond Memorial Health Foundation; Galena Varchena, former Birth in Color staff; Emily Moore, senior policy analyst, Voices for Virginia's Children; Kim Bobo, VICPP co-executive director; bottom row: Dora Muhammad, former VICPP staff, Rev. Pat Shipley, VICPP board member and PUSH Coalition Founder; Kathryn Haines, VICPP health equity manager)

Black Maternal Health Equity

Virginia Department of Health data show a connection between the experience of discrimination and adverse birth outcomes for Black women. Since 2020, VICPP has worked with PUSH Coalition allies to pass legislation requiring best-practice bias reduction methods, such as cultural competency and unconscious bias training for health care professionals.

In 2024, VICPP supported a bias reduction bill that passed the House and Senate with significant bipartisan support. Recognition on the Senate floor on Feb. 6 by Sen. Mamie Locke, the lead patron, was a highlight of the work.



Kathryn Haines, VICPP health equity manager, speaking in a House committee hearing on Jan. 12, 2024



CHW Awareness Day 2024: L-R, community health workers Adolfo Bermudez Hurtado, De’Naja Blanchard, Ceda Cosby and VICPP health equity manager, Kathryn Haines (Source: Virginia Community Health Worker Association, Photographer: Randy Mazariegos)

Community Health Workers

Community health workers (CHWs) are frontline public health workers who are trusted members of the community. With an infusion of federal funds during the COVID-19 pandemic, local health districts across Virginia expanded the use of CHWs to address barriers to vaccine access, health literacy, substance abuse, community engagement, and more.

Virginia was set to lose about 60 community health workers from local health districts by July 1, 2024. Using health department documents, VICPP calculated it would take about \$6.4 million to fund the positions at risk. VICPP teamed up with the Virginia Association of Community Health Workers, the Virginia Public Health Association, Virginia Health Catalyst, the Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association, and other allies to advocate for a budget amendment to ensure continued funding. **The amendments passed the General Assembly and were included in the final 2024 budget signed by the governor.**

“The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy is a powerful force for justice in Virginia. Their ability to mobilize a diverse and statewide faith community around racial, social, and economic justice issues makes VICPP an indispensable partner in building a more equitable Commonwealth of Virginia. The Meyer Foundation is proud to be a longtime supporter of their tireless advocacy efforts and transformative impact.”

Edgar Aranda-Yanoc, LLM

The Meyer Foundation

Director, Virginia Partnerships and Strategies

Prenatal and Postpartum Care Access

VICPP led a PUSH Coalition press conference on July 9 to share the results of a 2023 survey, which revealed that more than 95% of calls seeking prenatal care from health care providers accepting Virginia Medicaid managed care organizations did not result in an available appointment.

Our PUSH-ing paid off! In December, Gov. Glenn Youngkin directed the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services to form a working group of Medicaid managed care organizations to ensure that all Medicaid patients receive the prenatal and postpartum care the state is funding.

Affordable Housing

Convening Experts and Allies

After the Faith in Housing bill was sent to Virginia's Housing Commission, VICPP staff convened a brain trust of experts to explore how the state could better support congregations in building affordable housing. Participants included city planners, land use attorneys, nonprofit housing providers, and clergy interested in housing development.

Together, the group outlined several legislative strategies. VICPP led efforts to recruit supporters for a bill that would enable localities to streamline the approval process for congregations developing affordable housing, and supported coalition partners advocating for a statewide zoning bill.

Affordable Housing Workshops

Faith communities are on the front lines of Virginia's housing crisis, and many are interested in using their land to develop affordable housing. In October, VICPP co-hosted three workshops for congregations considering developing affordable housing. In collaboration with the Virginia Episcopal Real Estate Partners and with support from Virginia Housing, these events brought together more than 200 participants. Panel discussions with experienced leaders and clergy focused on discernment, development, and operations.

Delegate Michael Jones (center) welcomes VICPP co-executive directors, Rev. Dr. LaKeisha Cook and Kim Bobo, to Village of Faith Ministries for a Congregations and Housing workshop



Economic Justice

Child Care Assistance

VICPP worked with the Virginia Promise Partnership, a coalition that aims to ensure all Virginia families have access to affordable, quality child care, regardless of income. This effort resulted in significant child care investments in the biennial budget passed in 2024 (fiscal years 2025–26).

Virginia's budget now includes more than \$1.1 billion for early child care and education services, including historic state general fund investments of \$366 million in FY25 and \$461 million in FY26. These investments will ensure that eligible families continue to have access to child care and help communities thrive.

Child Labor Protections

VICPP helped draft and pass a child labor protections bill, which increased penalties for employers who violate child labor laws. As a result of the bill, staff also participated in a state work group to strategize how to inform teen workers of their rights.

VICPP published a report, *The Rise of Child Labor in Virginia*, which highlights a dramatic increase in violations, and offers recommendations for policymakers to strengthen protections for young workers.



Ramón Zepeda Ramos, VICPP economic justice organizer, leads a virtual meeting with coalition members

Living Wage Virginia

VICPP focused on outreach and education to Virginia employers to promote the importance of paying a living wage. Through the On-Up program with Living Wage for US, Virginia employers can access a comprehensive total remuneration model to certify living wage employers.

Employers certified through the new guidelines will receive a dual certification badge that highlights both their Virginia presence and their commitment to a national living wage standard.

Wage Theft

VICPP continued to offer a wage theft hotline in English and Spanish to support workers experiencing unpaid wages. Some workers were able to recover their wages with VICPP's help through phone calls and letters to employers. Most cases were referred to attorneys experienced in wage theft claims.

VICPP also strengthened connections with unions and nonprofit organizations that coordinate wage theft programs to exchange knowledge and best practices. A volunteer helped draft bilingual cards for workers with information about their rights, and contact details for VICPP's hotline and the Carpenters Union. These cards are distributed to workers in industries where wage theft is common.



VICPP
Interfaith
Souls to the
Polls event
at Richmond
City Hall in
October 2024

Civic Engagement

Voter Mobilization

Virginia Interfaith Center brought people of all ages together to get out the vote.

Interfaith Souls to the Polls

VICPP's civic engagement work in 2024 was exciting and impactful for the community. On Sunday, Oct. 27, 2024, VICPP piloted three "Interfaith Souls to the Polls" events at voting locations in Richmond, which **helped double voter turnout at key polling locations**. Virginia Interfaith Center's Get Out the Vote (GOTV) initiative focused on people going directly to the polls after religious services. VICPP offered lunch and provided a DJ to play music, creating a festive atmosphere. The GOTV effort was successfully promoted through many congregations and civic organizations.

Voting data showed that our efforts **increased voter turnout by 50 percent** compared to the last Sunday voting day offered on the same day in Richmond in 2023.

100% Voting Congregations

Working with faith leaders and liaisons, VICPP organized a second year of the 100% voting program, which inspired more than 35 congregations to commit to encouraging all eligible members to vote, and volunteers to write postcards for infrequent voters. There was strong interest from faith communities across Virginia, many of which organized their own outreach efforts. VICPP also created and distributed a toolkit for others to replicate Souls to the Polls GOTV events in their communities.

Candidate Forum

On September 17, 2024, VICPP co-hosted a Candidate Forum for candidates for Virginia's 7th District of the U.S. House of Representatives, Eugene Vindman (D) and Derrick Anderson (R). The election garnered national attention, attracting more than 200 people and many reporters. Virginia Interfaith Center's staff produced marketing flyers and on-site tabling for coalition partners. VICPP also partnered with the Language Justice Collaborative to provide Spanish interpretation services for attendees.



VICPP volunteers at Souls to the Polls in Richmond

Congregational Engagement

One of VICPP's mottos is "All Faiths Believe in Justice," and that is demonstrated through the organization's robust network of congregational liaisons and partners across the Commonwealth. Liaisons serve as a bridge between VICPP and their faith communities, sharing announcements and opportunities for involvement. In 2024, the network grew to more than 200 congregational liaisons.

Congregational partners commit to three things: designating a congregational liaison, contributing financially to VICPP's mission, and partnering with the organization on a few initiatives throughout the year. In 2024, some of our partners' activities included attending Day for All People, hosting workshops on Higher Education in Prison and Writing for Justice, becoming Living Wage Certified, and participating in civic engagement and GOTV efforts. VICPP is grateful for the faith communities that make this expansive work possible.

Regional Dinners

To build stronger relationships with local members, VICPP held five regional celebrations in Blacksburg, Northern Virginia, Richmond, Roanoke, and Williamsburg. These events provided opportunities to connect with local advocates and hear about the impact of VICPP's advocacy at the community level. In addition, they offered a chance to recognize volunteers, congregations, and legislators who have contributed to the organization's mission.



Regional dinner at Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill in Alexandria



L-R: Rev. Dr. Anthony Fludd, VICPP board chair; Hurunnessa Fariad, VICPP board secretary; Rev. Dr. LaKeisha Cook, VICPP executive director, at a regional dinner in Alexandria



VICPP board members Rev. Kelly Bayer-Derrick and Rev. Dr. Kaiya Jennings at a regional dinner in Roanoke

Looking Ahead

VICPP continues to expand its grassroots advocacy across the Commonwealth with initiatives focused on:

- Affordable housing solutions through faith-community partnerships
- Higher education in prison: expanding access and post-release pathways
- Maternal health equity, with stronger state investments and policy support
- Youth engagement through the Student Day of Action, year-round campus outreach, and opportunities for young professionals to plug into the work
- Faith-based mobilization for economic justice, civic engagement, and public witness

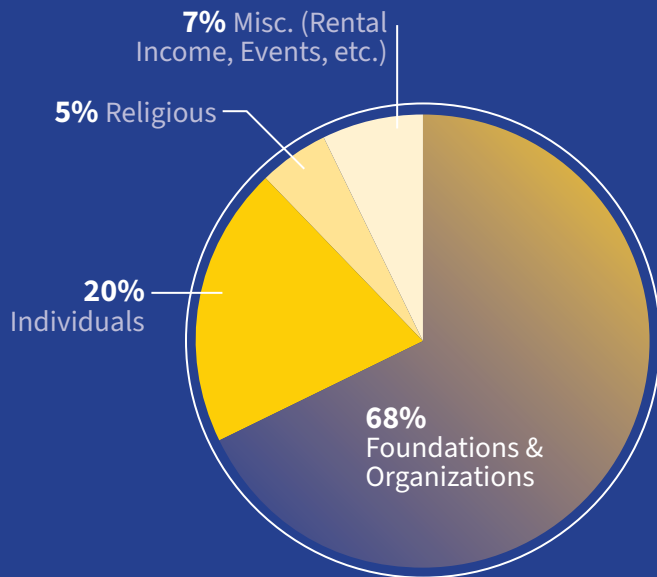


Robert Lester, VICPP's civic engagement coordinator (far right) at a demonstration at the Virginia State Capitol.

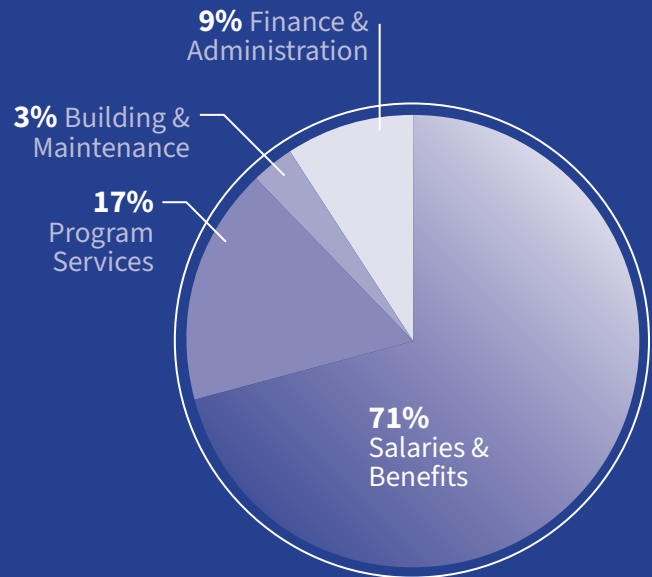
VICPP Financials

VICPP receives most of its support from foundations, religious sources, and individuals. We are grateful to the many financial supporters listed on the following pages:

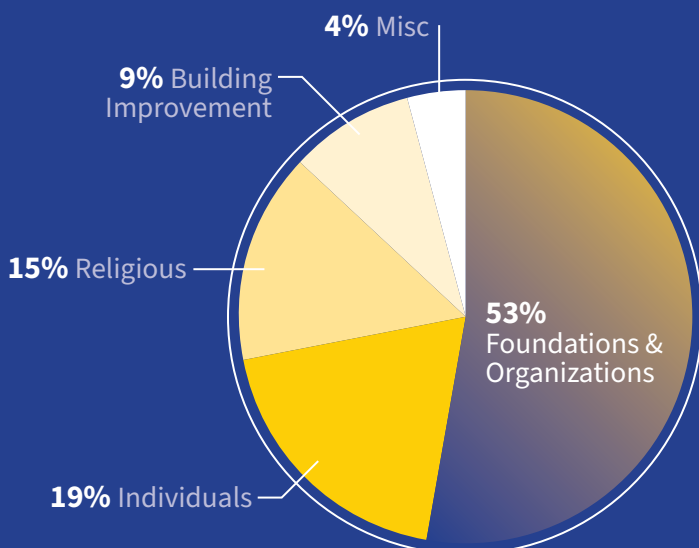
2024 Income Audited Total: \$1,559,038



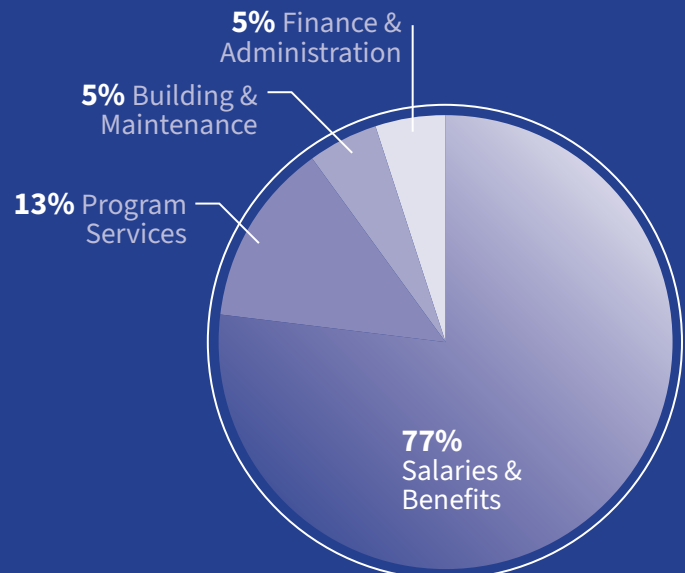
2024 Expenses Audited Total: \$1,234,804



2023 Income Audited Total: \$1,108,443



2023 Expenses Audited Total: \$914,278



Donors and Supporters

Foundation and Organizational Grants

\$300,000 and Above

Ascendium Education Group, Inc.

\$100,000 - \$299,999

Richmond Memorial Health Foundation
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\$50,000 - \$99,999

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\$10,000 - \$24,999

Institute for Public Health Innovation
Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights

\$1,000 - \$4,999

All Americans Vote Foundation
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Denominational Contributions

\$11,000 and Above

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\$1000 - \$9999

Virginia Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church

\$100 - \$999

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Church Of The Resurrection (Northern Virginia)
Congregation Or Ami
Episcopal Church of the Redeemer (Midlothian)
Fifth Street Baptist Church (Richmond)
First Christian Church (Falls Church)
First Congregational Christian UCC (Richmond)
Gayton Kirk Presbyterian Church
Ginter Park Baptist Church
Ginter Park Presbyterian Church

Goose Creek Friends Meeting
Herndon Friends Meeting
Hilton Christian Church
Hopewell Centre Friends Meeting
Immanuel Church on the Hill (Alexandria)
Islamic Center of Virginia
Langley Hill Friends Meeting
Lewinsville Presbyterian Church
Lutheran Church of the Redeemer
(Northern Virginia)
Maury River Friends Meeting
Midlothian Friends Meeting
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St. Stephen Lutheran Church (Williamsburg)
St. Thomas Episcopal Church (Abingdon)
Third St. Bethel A.M.E. (Richmond)
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
(Newport News)
Trinity Presbyterian Church (Arlington)
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Peninsula
Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church
(Richmond)
Williamsburg Baptist Church
Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists



L-R: Sheila Herlihy Hennessee, VICPP director of faith organizing, celebrating UUCNRV with congregation members Sara Dalton and Courtney Roberts.

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and Light

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