



Equal Rights for All

Democratic Participation

Civic Engagement

Statewide Campaign Committees

Multi-issue

Staff

Immigration Issues

Social Justice

Building Grassroots Power

Diversity

Community Analysis

Environmental Issues

Redistricting

Crossing Barriers

Tax Reform Campaign

Leadership Institute

Dismantling Racism Workshops

Direct Action

Annual Organizing Plan

Sexual Orientation Issues



Internship Program

Racial Profiling Campaign

Voter Registration

Health Care Reform

2010 Annual Report

Joint Plans of Work

Community Organizing

Leadership Development

Social Justice Bowl

VOP Chapters

Grassroots Fundraising

State Governing Board

Statewide

Budget/Revenue Workshops

Power Analysis

Financial Reform

Giving Voice to the Voiceless

Community Jobs Campaign

Living Wage Campaign

Affordable Housing

Media

Predatory Lending Campaign

Strategic Relationships

Virginia Civic Engagement Table

Voter Guides



Virginia Organizing is a statewide grassroots organization dedicated to challenging injustice by empowering people in local communities to address issues that affect the quality of their lives. As a non-partisan organization, Virginia Organizing especially encourages the participation of those who have traditionally had little or no voice in our society. By building relationships with diverse individuals and groups throughout the state, Virginia Organizing strives to get them to work together, democratically and non-violently, for change.

Virginia Organizing 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, age, ability 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.

703 Concord Avenue, Charlottesville, VA 22903
(434) 984-4655 • (434) 984-2803 fax
www.virginia-organizing.org

Dear Friend,

On August 7, 2010, we celebrated our 15th anniversary in Richmond, where we made a big announcement: Virginia Organizing Project is now known as Virginia Organizing!



We want our name to reflect our mission, which is long-term change in Virginia, so dropping the word “Project” from our name reflects our permanence. Make no mistake about it, we are in this for the long haul! The name changes, but not the work. The logo changes, but not the people.

The name change was part of a branding/positioning process generously donated by Hairpin Communications. After extensive surveying and research, they concluded that Virginia Organizing is solid in its mission and identity, and that people identify us with tenacity, integrity and justice.

Virginia Organizing is pleased to present this 2010 Annual Report with highlights of the hard work our grassroots leaders and organizers carry out every day. (We can only give you a partial list because the full list of accomplishments and activities for 2010 is so long!)

Thank you for talking with your friends and neighbors, writing letters, making phone calls and speaking out publicly on issues of concern in your community!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandra A. Cook". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sandra Cook
Chairperson

EXPANDED CAPACITY

We hired two organizers, one to work in Danville and Southside Virginia, and the other to organize a small business alliance in Virginia.

We purchased an old appliance store in Martinsville for an office. No, we don't have deep pockets — we got it for \$48,000 — a reflection of a sad economy there. We hold community meetings in the building and do phone banking as we establish a more permanent presence on the Southside of Virginia.

Virginia Organizing was the lead organization in Virginia working with Health Care for America Now to achieve historic health care reform. We continue to hear accolades for the effectiveness of Virginia Organizing in this campaign.



EXPANDED ORGANIZING

In addition to our 13 local chapters, we have six active college chapters. Here are just two examples of their work:

- The Virginia Organizing Chapter at the College of William and Mary registered more than 300 students in time for the Williamsburg City Council elections and participated in an anti-discrimination rally to oppose the Attorney General's letter suggesting the repeal of non-discrimination policies at colleges and universities.
- Students in a University of Virginia Multicultural Education class learned about the legislative process and made more than 10,000 phone calls to encourage people to contact members of Congress on health care reform, while also targeting state legislative districts to find more people who want to be active in their community and asking questions about state budget/revenue issues.

EXPANDED LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Our commitment to leadership development steadfastly continued with workshops and trainings on Sexual Orientation and Oppression, Dismantling Racism and Community Organizing — 86 leadership training sessions in all, with a total of 901 participants.

EXPANDED ISSUE CAMPAIGNS

Virginia Organizing worked on many local, state and national campaigns in 2010. A few highlights:

Local:

Virginia Organizing worked with the Providence Mobile Home Park Community to achieve an incredible victory for affordable housing when the Chesapeake City Council voted unanimously to

turn down the rezoning application that would have allowed the applicant to displace 170 families and build condo units on the property.

Thanks to the work of Virginia Organizing and allied organizations, every jurisdiction west of I-81 in southwest Virginia now has a drug court (there was only one in the region two years ago).

Virginia Organizing worked with the Mayfield Civic Association on preventing rail cars carrying hazardous waste from parking in residential areas of Fredericksburg.

Virginia Organizing joined with the Human Rights Commission of Virginia Beach to draft a resolution, then adopted by the City Council, that states, “The City of Virginia Beach strives to continue to provide an environment that is welcoming and protects human rights of all in our community.”

State:

We held Bake Sales for the Budget across the state to send the message that a cuts-only approach to the budget shortfall is irresponsible. We presented both an over-sized and an actual check to the Governor’s office for \$921.01.

Virginia Organizing’s new Balance Virginia campaign was established to get Virginians involved in budget and revenue issues. Budget/revenue workshops were held in Martinsville, Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Charlottesville, Chesapeake, Falls Church and Fredericksburg, calling attention to Virginia’s regressive tax structure.



Virginia Organizing and allied organizations met with the Secretary of the Commonwealth to discuss how to improve the system to restore voting rights for former felons.

National:

In addition to health care reform, we celebrated a victory with the signing of the financial reform bill to hold big financial firms accountable for their actions.

Virginia Organizing helped organize a Local Jobs for America Act briefing with the Center for Community Change and members of Congress in Washington, D.C., to move job creation front and center on their agenda.

We joined the March 21 Immigration/Jobs Rally in D.C., bringing seven buses from Tidewater, one from Martinsville and one from Charlottesville.

EXPANDED CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The Virginia Civic Engagement Table, a coalition of 25 non-partisan groups across the state which Virginia Organizing helped establish, held a leadership training for 100 representatives of partner organizations. Virginia Organizing leaders and staff played key roles as speakers and trainers.

Hundreds of Virginia Organizing supporters distributed 3,725 get-out-the-vote door hangers, knocked on 2,530 doors and made 13,293 voter mobilization calls.

EXPANDED THE WORK OF 46 OTHER GROUPS

Having 46 groups enter into a Joint Plan of Work with Virginia Organizing gives each group more time and resources to work on their social justice and environmental missions, where Virginia Organizing provides bookkeeping, payroll, insurance and auditing services. By working cooperatively with a Joint Plan of Work, no one group is isolated and we can borrow and share power to be more effective.

EXPANDED GENERAL ASSEMBLY PRESENCE

Virginia Organizing grassroots leaders and staff had a nearly daily presence at the General Assembly, in 2010, working on a wide range of issues:

- Budget
- Predatory Lending
- Water-Damaged Vehicle Resale
- Redistricting
- Restoration of Voting Rights
- Verified Voting
- Non-Discrimination in the Workplace
- Law Enforcement
- Immigration
- TANF Benefits



VIRGINIA ORGANIZING BY THE NUMBERS IN 2010

- 1,008 new people got active
- 982 community leaders learned a new skill
- 901 people participated in 86 leadership training sessions
- 38 interns worked with Virginia Organizing
- 128 groups received consultations from Virginia Organizing staff
- 294 letters to the editor, op-eds and radio spots went out statewide
- 1,212 one-to-one meetings were held between the organizers and people new to Virginia Organizing
- 106 constituent/legislator meetings were held
- 1,551 people participated in 90 direct actions
- 1,266 people took part in 62 community forums
- 11,095 phone banking calls were made on consumer finance reform, health care, jobs and unemployment

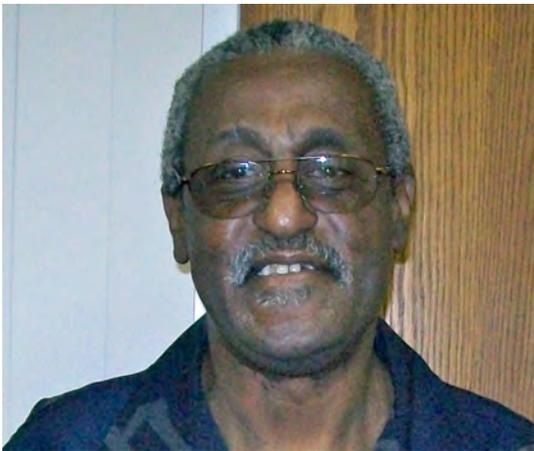
VIRGINIA ORGANIZING LEADERS SPEAK OUT



Ken Ehrental: “Sometimes I fear we cannot see the forest through the trees. The forest is that people in this country need good paying jobs. With good jobs you alleviate so many of the other problems in society.”



Deborah Gentry: “I just try to relate to people one on one and let them know how they can make their voices heard. They are just frustrated and I was too before I got involved.”



Ernest Williams: “I work with Virginia Organizing because it gets to the heart of things and gets in the trenches...Someone has to speak up or they will ignore us.



Donna Sequeira: “At the end of the day, I believe that my faith calls me to work toward disrupting systems of oppression and building a more just world. Virginia Organizing gives me the opportunity to live out that call. ”



*We held our 7th Social Justice Bowl
to honor community leaders.*



Isabel Castillo: “One of my main reasons I started working on this issue is because I have family members and friends who cannot speak up. There are thousands of kids out there who would benefit from the Dream Act. Putting your life at risk by telling your story is not easy, but if we as undocumented youth don’t take our stories to the forefront of the movement, no one will.”

VIRGINIA ORGANIZING STATE GOVERNING BOARD

*Sandra Cook, Chairperson
Ladelle McWhorter, Vice-Chairperson
Thomasine Wilson, Secretary
Janice “Jay” Johnson, Treasurer*

*Gabrielle Brown
Jason Guard
Denise Smith
Janie Williams*

VIRGINIA ORGANIZING STAFF — 2010

*Sally Bastian
Nik Belanger
Julie Blust
Harold Folley
Ben Greenberg
Cynthia Hurst
Brian Johns
Chad Martin*

*Michele Mattioli
Laura Ramirez
Emily Riehl
Kevin Simowitz
Teresa Stanley
Joe Szakos
Ben Thacker-Gwaltney
Cathy Woodson*
