

# VOICE

## VIRGINIANS ORGANIZED FOR INTERFAITH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

[www.voice-iaf.org](http://www.voice-iaf.org)

V.O.I.C.E., founded in 2008, is a broad-based multi-racial, multi-faith, multi-issue, multi-county, strictly non-partisan citizens' power organization dedicated to making change on social justice issues (immigration, affordable housing, healthcare, etc) affecting the lives of low- and middle income residents in 4 Northern Virginia jurisdictions: Prince William, Fairfax, and Arlington counties as well as the City of Alexandria. VOICE is affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF)—the oldest and largest citizens' organizing network in the United States. For more information on the IAF, visit [www.industrialareasfoundation.org](http://www.industrialareasfoundation.org). VOICE's 47 member institutions represent 125,000+ persons:

### Alexandria

Beth El Hebrew  
Ebenezer Baptist  
Grace Episcopal  
Shiloh Baptist  
St. Joseph's RC  
Old Presbyterian  
Trinity UMC

### Arlington

Arlington Presbyterian  
Lomax AME Zion  
Macedonia Baptist  
NOVA Catholic Community  
Our Lady Queen of Peace RC  
Rock Spring UCC\*  
St. Charles RC  
St. Mary's Episcopal  
Unitarian Universalist

### Fairfax

Bethlehem Baptist  
Burke Presbyterian\*  
Dar Al-Hijrah Islamic Center  
Fairfax Presbyterian  
First Christian  
Good Shepherd RC  
Heritage Presbyterian  
Nativity RC  
Rising Hope UMC  
St. Anthony's RC  
St. John Neuman RC  
St. Mark's RC\*  
St. Stephen's UMC  
St. Thomas a Becket RC  
Temple Rodef Shalom  
Voice of Mt. Vernon  
Accotink Unitarian Universalist  
Unitarian Universalist of Fairfax  
Unitarian Universalist of Reston

### Prince William

All Saints RC  
Bull Run Unitarian  
Ebenezer Baptist  
First Baptist Manassas  
First Mt. Zion Baptist  
Mt. Olive Baptist  
Sacred Heart RC  
St. Francis RC  
St. Paul UMC  
St. Thomas UMC-Haymarket\*  
Little Union Baptist\*  
Word Alive International\*

*\*Exploratory*

### VOICE 2010-2011 Organizing Priorities:

**Increase Access to Dental Care for Low-Income Adults:** a) press VA to secure \$5 million in Emergency TANF Funding from Federal Stimulus, b) organize state & local officials to put bi-partisan pressure on NOVA's Federal delegation to extend the TANF Emergency Fund to 2012; c) secure \$125,000 from Prince William County's FY 2011 budget for low-income dental.

**Address Affordable Housing & Homelessness:** a) undertake jurisdictional actions around specific opportunities to preserve and develop affordable housing (e.g. North Hill, Columbia Pike); b) continue to research available public land and incentives for future development of affordable housing; c) analyze and develop foreclosure strategy for Prince William County.

**Organize for Immigration Justice Locally & Nationally:** a) secure meetings with Secretary Napolitano and USCIS Director Alejandro Mayorkas on Immigration Processing Backlog; b) continue Listening Sessions in at least 10 V.O.I.C.E. institutions to develop priorities and seek meetings with VA Congressional Delegation in order to position V.O.I.C.E. to weigh in on comprehensive immigration reform.

**Local Action:** Engage in local action to build core teams, develop leaders, secure local wins that build loyalty to VOICE, & provide opportunities for prospective member institutions to see VOICE in action. Priority opportunities include: a) Arlington Columbia Pike; b) Georgetown South—Manassas; c) Homeless in woods in Dale City/Woodbridge; Fairfax/South Rt. 1 Minority Student Achievement & Affordable Housing.

**Recruit 10 new Institutions to Build VOICE's Power:** Target the following areas/constituencies—A) Fairfax County: Springfield, Annandale, Herndon, Centerville; B) Prince William County: African-American/Immigrant institutions; C) Alexandria: African-American/Immigrant Institutions.

## January—June 2010 Summary Accomplishments

### Dental:

- Organized 300+ leader action in Richmond with 18 Virginia Senate and House leaders including 3 from the budget conference that helped preserve \$9 million+ for the VA dental safety net in the FY 2011 budget, insuring that thousands of low-income children and adults in the Commonwealth will have access to critical dental care services.
- Organized with Virginia Senate and House leaders and pressed the Commonwealth of Virginia to secure \$79 million in TANF Emergency Funds available through the Federal Recovery program, including \$5 million for the Virginia Health Care Foundation to provide emergency dental care to 7,000 low-income Virginia adults who lack it. The Federal government approved the VA Health Care Foundation Emergency Dental Pilot on June 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Secured \$100,000 in renewal funding in FY 2011 budgets from Arlington and Fairfax counties as well as Alexandria City to continue the provision of dental services to 2,000 low-income adults through the Northern Virginia Dental Clinic.
- Organized 150 person public action in Prince William County at a key FY 2011 County Board of Supervisors budget hearing that led to the County Board restoring the proposed 15% cuts to non-profit health and human services providers and the allocation of \$20,000 in new funding for the Prince William Free Health Clinic to provide expanded health services to low-income adults.

### Immigration:

- Secured commitment from Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Assistant Secretary Esther Olavarria to address 200 backlogged immigration applications from VOICE members at Dar Al Hijrah Islamic Center in Falls Church. Ms. Olavarria promised a full accounting on 200 backlog cases and a meeting for VOICE leaders with new US Customs Immigration Services Director USCIS Director Alejandro N. Mayorkas in August 2010.
- Began organizing VOICE members and other allies to press for just and realistic comprehensive immigration reform. Started by building relationships in VOICE institutions with leaders across the divides of culture, religion, ethnicity, race, etc that can so easily polarize the immigration issue. Held 25+ listening sessions between non-citizen immigrants and American citizens at 10 VOICE congregations to build solidarity for comprehensive immigration reform.
- Turned out 1,150 leaders from 14 VOICE congregations to March for America (March 21st)—the national comprehensive immigration reform rally. Held solidarity action on April 25 for 4 undocumented immigrant youth walking from Florida to DC to bring attention to the plight of undocumented students and to demand President Obama issue an executive order to halt the deportation of Dream Act eligible students. 125 leaders from 12 VOICE congregations attended.

### Affordable Housing:

- Identified all foreclosures over recent years in Prince William County, Manassas City and Manassas Park which had the highest foreclosure rate in VA. Working with The Reinvestment Fund from Philadelphia, VOICE linked these foreclosures back to the originating lenders and analyzed the data to identify lenders whose loans failed at the highest rates (e.g., between 2004 and 2008, one lender in Prince William County had a "failure rate" of 16.8%.
- Held 125+ person action to challenge Alexandria Housing and Redevelopment Board of Commissioners and Alexandria City Council to meet VOICE and tenant demands on relocation and redevelopment issues that shortchanged residents financially and treated them with disrespect. Took 5 leaders to Richmond, VA for testimony at Virginia Housing and Development Authority Board Meeting that lead to investigation of ARHA relocation policies & actions.

### Local Action:

- Organized 50 residents in Georgetown South, a 850 townhome community hit hard by the foreclosure crisis, and secured agreement with Manassas City Police Chief to (1) have officers walk beats in Georgetown South, (2) provide incentives (results-based overtime) for officers to spend additional time in Georgetown South, (3) create and promote an anonymous tip line in Spanish for residents to report crimes without fear of being identified by police or criminals.

### Recruitment and Leadership Development:

- Recruited 3 new members: Temple Rodef Shalom, St. Mark's RC, Accotink Unitarian Universalist
- Sent 60+ VOICE leaders to Metro IAF national, regional, and local organizing/leadership training.