



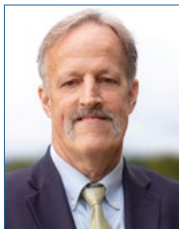
VPLC

Virginia Poverty
Law Center

2023-2024

Impact Report





**A MESSAGE FROM
JAY SPEER,
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR**

Justice for ALL Virginians

Friends of VPLC,

This past year brought both progress and ongoing challenges. From safeguarding tenants from eviction to expanding legal resources for families in crisis and strengthening consumer protections, we've witnessed the power of advocacy and civil legal education to transform lives. Yet, the fight is far from over.

Since 1978, Virginia Poverty Law Center (VPLC) has worked to dismantle the systemic barriers that trap Virginians in poverty. Economic instability, the worsening affordable housing crisis, and inequities in healthcare access continue to threaten communities across the state—issues deeply rooted in systems that perpetuate poverty and limit access to justice.

Real change happens when people are equipped with the tools and knowledge to advocate for themselves and their communities. Through civil legal education, policy advocacy, and, when necessary, litigation, VPLC empowers Virginians to navigate complex systems, understand their rights, and work for lasting solutions. However, legal education isn't enough without strong laws to protect these rights. That's why VPLC works tirelessly to create and defend laws that safeguard the rights of lower-income Virginians.

VPLC's work thrives because of supporters and community partners like you, who share a deep commitment to justice. The following pages highlight a few of the successes and impacts achieved for Virginians last year. But the work doesn't stop here. Let's continue rolling up our sleeves and working together for the change we know is possible.

To continue supporting the fight for justice, consider signing up for our newsletter and staying involved in VPLC's efforts. Together, we can make a lasting impact.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'JS' with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Jay Speer, Executive Director
Virginia Poverty Law Center

POVERTY IS A POLICY CHOICE.

Let's stop choosing it.



Our Mission

To fight poverty through advocacy, education, and litigation while promoting economic and social justice for all Virginians.

About Us

Virginia Poverty Law Center (VPLC) is a statewide organization committed to breaking the cycle of poverty for individuals and families across Virginia. Since its founding, VPLC has been a voice for low-income Virginians, advocating for systemic change and providing vital legal resources to empower communities.

Our team works tirelessly to ensure fairness, equity, and access to justice for all Virginians, focusing on issues that most affect those struggling to make ends meet.

Online Self-Help Resources

Eviction Defense Center
evictiondefensecenter.org

Enroll Virginia
enrollva.org

SNAP Calculator
vplc.org/snap-calculator

No Fault Divorce Tool
valegalaid.org/divorce

Helplines for Virginians

VPLC General Helpline
800.868.8752

Enroll Virginia (Health Coverage)
888.392.5132

Predatory Loans 866.830.4501

Senior Legal Help 844.802.5910

SNAP 866.753.7627

Utilities 804.313.9363

Legislative Advocacy

Significant Results & Statewide Outreach

Issue	Action	Why it Matters
Housing	House Bill (HB)73 requires automatic expungement of tenant's eviction records once a case is dismissed, protecting low-income renters	30,108 eviction cases were dismissed in 2023
Utility Shutoffs	HB906 prevents all electric, gas, and water utilities from shutoffs for nonpayment during extreme cold weather and before an account is 60 days in arrears	The 920,500 Virginians living in poverty, as well as the 1.4 million households living just above the poverty line and barely making ends meet
Consumer Protections for Medical Debt	HB1370 prohibits medical debt from being reported to credit bureaus	More than 500,000 have medical bills beyond their capacity to immediately pay
Economic Justice & Unemployment Benefits	HB14 and HB1261 provide protection for unemployment benefits	19,000 Virginians were receiving unemployment benefits during the fiscal year
Language Access	VPLC's Center for Family Advocacy led a coalition that secured \$4 million in VA's budget bill for language access services across all state agencies	549,430 households in Virginia do not use English as their primary language
Manufactured Housing	VPLC's Center for Housing Mobile Home Community Task Force creates educational tools and training materials	350,000 people live in Virginia's mobile home communities
Tenant Advocacy	VPLC led a coalition advocating for legislation that ensures automatic expungement of eviction records for dismissed cases, while also educating lawmakers on the issue	In 2023 alone, there were 30,108 eviction dismissals. Expunging these records will remove unnecessary barriers, helping individuals secure safe and affordable housing
Family & Child Welfare	VPLC's Center for Family Advocacy fights to improve protections for victims of abuse, expand rights for youth in care, preserve family connections, and prevent harms to families and children	Every year, 20% of children in foster care age out of the system without a permanent family, putting them at high risk of poor life outcomes. Many could have been reunited with family if their families had better support

Direct Services to Low-Income Virginians

BY THE NUMBERS

VPLC's Eviction Defense Center (EDC) was launched to provide self-help tools to Virginians facing court orders to move from their rental homes. The EDC is scalable, with a **capacity** to serve up to **100,000** Virginians annually

\$100 million

saved from borrowers through passage of the Fairness in Lending Act, which now includes "earned wage access" predatory payday advances

\$6.5 million

saved through Enroll Virginia through federal health insurance premium tax credits

30,000

eviction cases were dismissed and expunged from renters' records due to the passage of a new law, creating a fresh start for those in need

3,431

individuals determined their eligibility for food assistance through the SNAP* calculator

489

Virginians attained food assistance through the SNAP helpline

442

seniors & loved ones assisted with financial exploitation, abuse, Medicaid eligibility, social security

211

cases opened in the LA VIDA** program

202

formal Visa petitions and Violence Against Women Act self-petitions

700+

number of times VPLC's Self-Help Fee Waiver tool for court fees was used

16,137

vulnerable Virginians enrolled in healthcare coverage through Enroll Virginia

VPLC received a **\$1 million** Mackenzie Scott Yield Grant to upgrade infrastructure and technology, expanding access to assistance and legal information for low-income Virginians

*SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

**LA VIDA: Legal Assistance to Victim-Immigrant of Domestic Abuse

2024 Annual Statewide Legal Aid Conference

The Conference was held in Williamsburg, Virginia and was attended by **560 legal professionals in 44 expert-led sessions, totaling 43.5 CLE hours** of the latest information in poverty law. We are deeply grateful to the following sponsors for their unwavering support of Virginia's legal aid community and their generous contributions to this essential conference.

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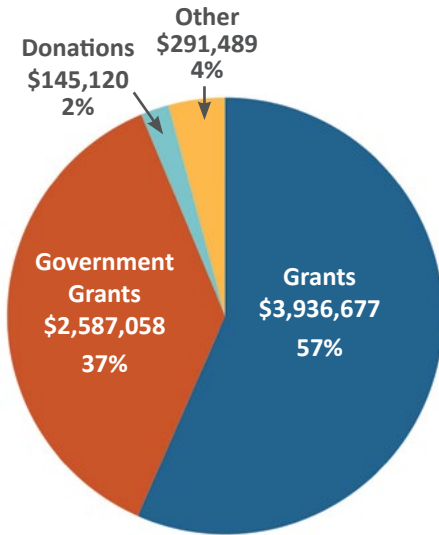
The 2024 Annual Statewide Legal Aid Conference was also financially assisted by a generous grant from the Virginia Law Foundation. The Virginia Law Foundation promotes through philanthropy the rule of law, access to justice, and law-related education.

FY24 Financials

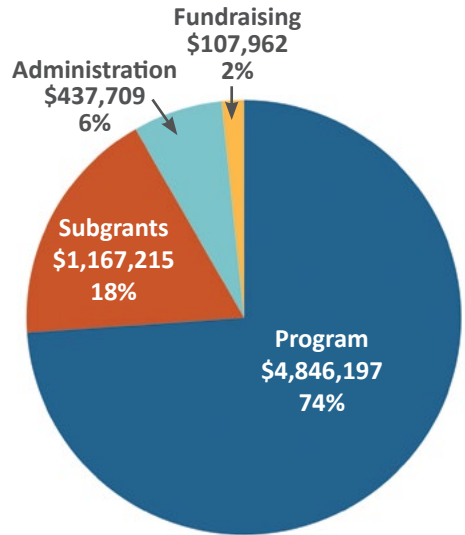
July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

Audited FY 23-24 financials are available online at www.vplc.org.

Revenue



Expenses



Leadership

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Chief Finance Officer

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Ezra Halstead

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