



News from the Grassroots

November 2025 Issue 155

We are continually thankful for each of you building power with us!



Richmond Housing Win!

Our Richmond Area Chapter celebrated a win this month for their campaign to urge Richmond City Council to adopt the Residential Rental Inspection Program (RRIP). After three years of organizing for an RRIP ordinance (ORD. 2025-161), rounds of revisions, voting, and eventual approval by City Council, the chapter is thrilled to see this stepping stone pave the way for more housing protections for tenants.

The rental inspection program will hold Richmond landlords accountable and protect residents against negligent landlord practices. The new process will give city officials more power to enforce code violations against landlords leaving their tenants in particularly unsafe and unreasonable conditions.



Chapter members shared their hopes for the impact of the program.

"Implementing a rental property inspection program in our city is a crucial step towards ensuring safe, healthy, and dignified living conditions for all residents," said chapter member Carol Hollenbeck. "This is a matter of basic human dignity and public health...an investment in our collective future."

They also shared how the program will ease concerns about personal investments and safety.

"This program will help ensure my family's investment is up to code, and that other nearby properties are as well, since they also affect the value of our property. My neighbor is so close that if a fire were to start, due to poor maintenance for example, it seems likely that our building would be damaged as well. An inspection would ensure, among other things, that my neighbor has working smoke detectors and safely maintained appliances," said chapter leader Paul Fleisher.

Way to go, Richmond Area Chapter and Richmond Housing Justice Collective!

Gender Justice Workshop on the Peninsula

Our Newport News/Hampton Chapter had a great Gender Justice: LGBTQ+ Workshop in Newport News this month. The workshop focused on core concepts surrounding gender, dismantling the patriarchy, and how to get involved with our gender justice work in Virginia. The 101-level workshop set the stage for continued conversations about gender justice with the chapter and larger community.

Immigration Work Across the State

Our chapters have been continually holding actions to protect our immigrant communities and push back against ICE presence in Virginia.

Our Williamsburg Area Chapter has been active in getting the community involved through protests, film screenings, community conversations, and providing resources to local immigrant communities. The chapter's most recent protest was held in response to ICE's detention of multiple local residents and the ongoing threat that the agency poses.

Check out coverage of the protest by [13NewsNow](#) and [Wavy](#).



The Williamsburg Area chapter was also featured in [another article by 13NewsNow](#) covering ICE presence on the eastern part of the state, immigrant rights, and resources for what to do if confronted by ICE agents. Raegan Collier, a Williamsburg Chapter leader, was quoted providing information about proper protocol learned from our Know Your Rights workshop.

Similarly, our Fredericksburg Chapter has actively been working with members of immigrant communities and working to ensure that residents are informed about their rights. Most recently, the chapter worked with the University of Mary Washington to compile and publish stories from directly affected individuals who were willing to share their experiences.

Led by Fredericksburg chapter leader and Mary Washington professor Eric Bonds, researchers met with five people from three different families with "mixed immigration statuses" from Spotsylvania and Stafford counties. They spoke about their experiences as immigrants and how they dealt with feelings of seclusion and stress, while maintaining perseverance and hope for their families.

Read more about their stories in the [FXBG Advance](#).

More Community Listening Sessions

After last month's successful Waynesboro listening session, other chapters are following suit and holding community listening sessions to discuss recent issues and how they are impacting residents across Virginia.



Our Halifax/South Boston Chapter held a listening session ahead of its monthly chapter meeting with a total of 50 people in attendance. Directly affected residents participated by sharing powerful stories and expressing concerns about federal cuts to health care and food assistance, immigration challenges, and child care needs.

One resident shared about a loved one who has had difficulties paying for essential medications that were paid by Medicaid/Medicare. She stated that the program initially paid for "her diabetes [medication], but now they want her to pay \$70 out of pocket just for the sensors."

She also said that her loved one "continues to get letters in the mail - because she's also a cancer patient - saying that they will no longer pay for her cancer medicine either. So, we went to the doctor the other day and they did something to get it where they could pay for it. Then she was given another letter saying that they weren't going to pay for it either."



Our Albemarle/Charlottesville Chapter also held a Community Voices Listening Session event, where residents gathered to discuss the federal funding cuts and general community concerns. The session had 34 people in attendance and also featured stories from community members about their experiences.

Affordable Energy Event in the NRV

Our New River Valley Chapter, in partnership with Appalachian Voices, co-hosted a "Keeping the Lights On: Affordable Energy for Our Communities" event in Christiansburg. The event featured organizations and government agencies that provided resources for bill assistance, such as the Percentage of Income Payment Program, and making homes weatherized and more energy efficient. Attendees could also learn about how to access solar energy. Participants had an opportunity to network and attendees were given actionable steps to make homes more comfortable, safe, and affordable.

Organizations and agencies that provided resources at the event included Virginia Energy, the Department of Social Services, the New River Health District, Solar United Neighbors, the Town of Christiansburg's Home Repair program, WeCheck Energy, and Baseline Solar.

Upcoming Event:

Tenant Advisory Council Zoom

In partnership with the Allies for Housing Action (AHA) coalition, we invite you to join us on December 4 at 6 p.m. for a Tenant Advisory Council meeting on Zoom.

The AHA coalition is a statewide collective of organizations to empower tenants and allies to advocate for fair, high-quality, and affordable housing. This first meeting will cover the coalition's legislative priorities and advocacy work, and attendees will have an opportunity to share their personal stories and experiences.

AHA! We believe in

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY **HEALTHY HOUSING** **HOUSING STABILITY** **HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT!**

How YOU can get involved

Tenant Advisory Council: Join together with other tenants to share stories and experiences that directly impact and inform the legislative priorities of AHA. The first meeting will be held December 4, 2025 at 6PM on Zoom. Register at [\[link\]](#) or contact [\[link\]](#) for more information.

Tenant Day of Action: This day-long event brings housing justice organizations, organizers, tenants, and allies to the General Assembly in Richmond to meet with elected officials to lobby for important policies that build a Commonwealth where all Virginians can access fair, high-quality, and affordable housing of their choice. For more information and to attend, contact Allies for Housing Action [\[link\]](#)

Need a call? Take action! Join your neighbor! [Alliesforhousingaction@gmail.com](#)

[Register](#)

Leader of the Month

LaToya Preston - Martinsville Chapter



LaToya is an active member of the Martinsville Chapter, attending meetings and acting as a leader for other chapter members. She has been a loyal promoter and attendee of chapter events, ensuring that other chapter members attend meetings and events.

LaToya is currently working on the chapter's expungement clinic and affordable housing campaign in Martinsville. She has also been very instrumental in serving in certain roles during forums about mental health issues, both for the community and the organization. Thank you for building power with us, LaToya!

Don't forget:

We are redesigning our website and would like to hear from you!

We ask that you take a few minutes to complete an online survey and share your thoughts. Your input is invaluable as we consider improvements to our website, and we want to redesign it in a way that allows you to engage with us how you would like and need. Note: Your responses will be anonymous.

[Take the Survey](#)

Last but not least, as we reminisce on the past 30 years of Virginia Organizing, we also want to take this opportunity to look to the future. That is why we are asking you to share your hopes and dreams for the next 30 years with us! Tell us what you want the future of Virginia and Virginia Organizing to look like!

Submit your hopes for the next 30 years!

[Share here!](#)

Bonus Content

Here are a few quick shots of our organizing staff at a training this month. We have a great time when we get together!



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Local Chapters and Areas Served:

Charlottesville/Albemarle County, Danville, Eastern Shore, Fredericksburg Area, Harrisonburg/Rockingham County, Halifax County, Lee County, Lynchburg, Martinsville/Henry County, New River Valley, Newport News/Hampton, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Richmond Area, Suffolk, Waynesboro, Wise County, Wythe County

