



# 2020 VICTORIES

OUR WORK  
DURING COVID-19:  
**RESPOND,  
REBUILD, &  
RESTRUCTURE**



## We need your help to build a more powerful VOICE in 2021.

Please make a donation today at [www.voice-iaf.org](http://www.voice-iaf.org). You can also mail a check to VOICE: 4444 Arlington Blvd., Arlington, VA 22204.



## HOUSING

**Worked with key state officials to create and pass a VA State Eviction Moratorium.** Virginia is only one of ten states to pass an eviction moratorium that is better than the federal CDC eviction moratorium. This potentially impacts more than 500,000 mostly Black and Brown low-income renters.

**Before the state eviction moratorium was passed, VOICE organized & created the political space for a temporary eviction moratorium.** VOICE leaders met with key state officials, U.S. Senators, Attorney General Mark Herring, and Supreme Court Chief Justice Donald W. Lemons.

**Worked with the VA Attorney General to stop illegal evictions.** Landlords were still sending threatening eviction letters even during the eviction moratorium. VOICE leaders worked to stop this in individual buildings and by working with the VA Attorney General who sent a letter to the national association of apartment owners.

**Trained 100+ VOICE leaders, school allies and others on how to get out the word about Virginia's existing rent relief funds.** VOICE members are coordinating an effort to make sure tenants, landlords, employers of low-wage workers, school staff, and more know about the existing state rent relief for tenants and landlords.

**Organized to create the political space for \$80M+ dollars for state rent relief for tenants and landlords.**

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**Earlier this year VOICE led the fight to increase the threshold for felony larceny (theft) from \$500, one of the lowest rates in the country, to \$1,000.** Previously, thousands of people every year in Virginia who committed these kinds of low-level, nonviolent offenses were given lifetime felonies, which often doomed people to low-wage employment and blocked from obtaining housing.

**Made permanent last year's victory that returned driving rights to 627,000 Virginians whose licenses were suspended solely for unpaid court debt.** This was one of the most powerful victories in recent Virginia history in terms of the immediate economic impact on the poorest residents and people of color in the state.



## First-ever Public Defender office in Prince William County.

Prince William County is home to over 500,000 people, is politically purple, and is the only county in Virginia that is majority people of color. Policies like the lack of a Public Defender office were deeply implanted in the county. The campaign to create the office was conceived of and led from start to finish by a group of African-American clergy and everyday citizens from their churches who were sick of being treated like second class citizens. The campaign was highlighted in an excellent editorial in the Washington Post that breaks down the issue and highlights two of the key VOICE leaders in the campaign.



## 3M & PPE

**Spearhead effort led by AG Herring to get 19 state (and DC) attorneys general to write and release a public letter to the CEO of 3M, Mike Roman, asking him to do more to end price gouging on the company's N95 masks and get those masks to the frontline workers who need them most.**

Twelve institutional investors in 3M, with combined assets of more than \$13 billion, wrote a similar letter to the 3M CEO and board. The signers are religious and philanthropic investors, mostly Presbyterian and Roman Catholic funds with whom Metro IAF has partnered on gun safety and affordable housing.

## TENANT ORGANIZING UPDATES

**Alexandria.** In public housing in Alexandria VOICE tenant and clergy leaders reached an agreement with the public housing authority that there would be no evictions until at least March 2021. This may be the only agreement of its kind, and was organized by VOICE public housing tenants who have a strong record of organizing and doing effective non-partisan Get-Out-the-Vote work.

**Arlington.** VOICE Arlington cautiously celebrates landlord AHC's commitment of at least \$1M to make needed repairs plus changing the management company. In addition, Arlington County Board Members agreed to track the progress in bi-weekly meetings with VOICE and AHC.

**Fairfax.** Fairfax County public housing tenants in Gum Springs, along with members from neighboring Bethlehem Baptist have started organizing together. Tenants reported a history of repair neglect and serious issues with mold. Next steps: Doing building wide inspection by VOICE tenant team to get a fuller story and identify new tenant leaders.

## STATEWIDE EXPANSION

VOICE began allying with a new potential affiliate in the Shenandoah Valley, named Faith in Action, which consists of 26 member institutions in the city of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. VOICE is currently supporting FIA's campaign to build an even stronger base of organized power in the Valley.

