

# VOICE for justice 2019

## BUILDING POWER AT THE LOCAL AND STATE LEVEL

**Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement (VOICE)** is a multi-faith, nonpartisan people's power organization comprised of 52 member institutions representing more than 180,000 families in Arlington, Fairfax, and Prince William counties and the city of Alexandria. VOICE is supported primarily by membership dues and individual donations.

**Help move VOICE to the next level by donating!** Donate now at [www.voice-iaf.org](http://www.voice-iaf.org). or mail a check to VOICE: 4444 Arlington Blvd., Arlington, VA 22204.



**In 2019, VOICE held three separate candidate accountability actions with state, county, and municipal candidates** from Prince William, Fairfax, Arlington, and Alexandria between May and October with a total turnout of 1,700 VOICE leaders, winning commitments to:

- **Create a Public Defender office** in Prince William, the first county that is majority people of color in Virginia.
- Increase **local investments in affordable housing by tens of millions** in Fairfax, Arlington and Alexandria.
- Expand **after-school and Head Start/pre-k education** in Prince William, Fairfax, Arlington, and Alexandria.

**VOICE launched its Nonpartisan Get-Out-the-Vote work** in 2017 at VOICE's Gubernatorial Accountability Action **attended by 1,565 VOICE leaders** at Patriot HS in Prince William County—the *largest assembly of the election season* with both gubernatorial candidates—three times larger than the second-largest assembly.

**Since 2017, VOICE has had 1,332 election volunteers** knock on their neighbors' doors in Virginia's 2017, 2018, and 2019 elections. In 2019, VOICE once again secured major results through its nonpartisan GOTV work in low voter turnout swing districts. This year, VOICE

leaders strategically focused on Prince William County as it was key to who would control power in the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates. Each



year, VOICE leaders have significantly increased voter turnout over other similar precincts. For example, this year in the 51st District— overall turnout was 49%, but in two of the precincts VOICE worked, turnout increased by 100.6% and 82.68%.

**VOICE's state work has produced the following victories** at the state level over the last two years:

- **Won driver's license restoration for 627,000 VA residents** with unpaid court debt/fees/fines.
- **Increased Virginia's felony larceny level to \$500** from \$250, the lowest in the nation. VOICE will push to raise the felony level to \$2,500 in 2020 to match the threshold in Texas.
- **Secured \$154 million** in dedicated annual funding for capital improvements for WMATA, part of \$500 million total in annual dedicated funds from VA, DC, and MD to revitalize the Washington regions bus and rail system.
- **Secured a down payment of \$12.5 million** towards the \$90 million needed to raise the school counselor-to-student ratio to 1:250. The ratio in many elementary schools is now 1:500. Gov. Northam committed the full \$90M over three years in his budget that VOICE requested.
- **Expanded Virginia's Affordable Housing Fund** to \$11 million.



VOICE is affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), the nation's first and largest network of multi-faith citizen organizations, which has seven decades of experience winning tough battles across the nation. VOICE is one of 23 Metro IAF organizations in MA, CT, NY, NJ, MD, DC, VA, NC, OH, IL, and WI.