



*Virginia Latino Advisory Board
2021-2022 Annual Report
August 2022*



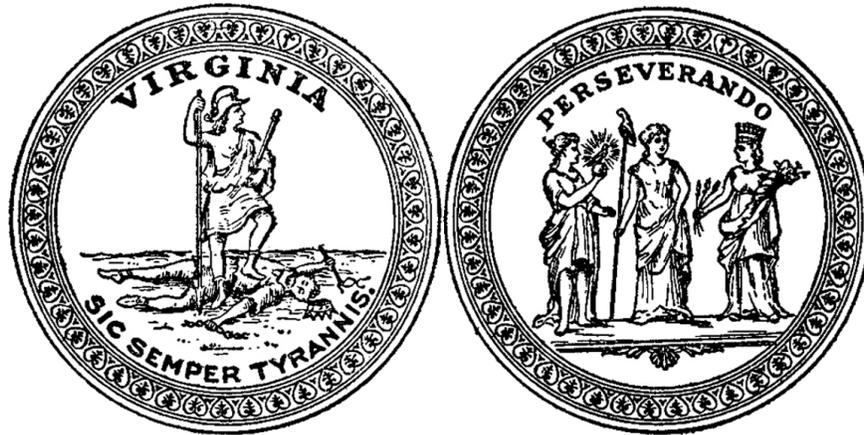
VIRGINIA
LATINO
ADVISORY
BOARD

VIRGINIA LATINO ADVISORY BOARD

2021-2022 Annual Report

August 2022

Last Updated: 10/11/22



This report is directed to Governor Youngkin and his administration, and it is compiled by the 21 members of the Virginia Latino Advisory Board.

The document is open to the public and pages 3-4 have a summary of all recommendations.

Though comprehensive, this report is not an exhaustive list of all issues impacting Latinos in Virginia.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
General Recommendations	3
Civic engagement & Social Justice	3
Business & Workforce	3
Education & Career Training	3
Health	4
Housing	4
2022 Virginia Latino Advisory Board Members	5
Officers	5
Committee Chairs	5
Current Members	5
Former Members (served through June 30th 2022)	5
Letter from the Chair	6
About the Virginia Latino Advisory Board	7
Overview of Latinos in Virginia	8
Latino Growth in Census Data	9
VLAB Activities in 2022	14
2022 VLAB Listening Sessions	16
VLAB Statements in 2022	17
Recommended Action	18
General Recommendations	18
Civic Engagement & Social Justice	19
Business & Workforce	21
Education & Career Training	24
Health	26
Housing	29
Conclusion	40
Appendices of 2022 Annual Report	40

Executive Summary

Latinos live, work, study, and contribute to their communities throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. More than 1 in 10 Virginia residents is Latino, with that number estimated to grow to nearly 1.6 million by 2030. 2022 marked a positive turning point in many aspects that impacted the Latino workforce, health, education, and housing. Still, challenges persist and VLAB is honored to present these recommendations to Governor Youngkin to further advance these endeavors for all Virginians.

General Recommendations

Advocate for Latino representation in all positions across the Commonwealth to be representative of the Latino population in Virginia, including elected and appointed officials, senior positions, and beyond.

Expand access to support, initiatives, information, and resources, and to the Latino communities across Virginia, particularly to the newly immigrated.

Designate a Latino Community Liaison at the Governor's Office.

Civic engagement & Social Justice

Commit state revenue to fully implement recommendations from the recently completed language access study for all state government.

Work with the Virginia Department of Elections, local registrars, and community partners to identify and address barriers to voting in Virginia.

Guarantee the right to vote for all citizens in Virginia.

Maintain and expand protections under the Virginia Values Act to guarantee protection against discrimination from Latinx LGBTQ people across Virginia.

Business & Workforce

Maintain Virginia's trajectory towards having a 15\$/hour minimum wage and remove the exemption for farm workers.

Revise the opportunity and enterprise zones.

Provide DPOR's Board of Contractors licensing exam in Spanish.

Provide state funding to the Virginia Small Business Development Center.

Create a state surety bond system.

Education & Career Training

Designated one proposed Lab School to serve ELL students.

Increase Latino representation in faculty and senior administrative leadership in higher educational institutions throughout the Commonwealth.

Follow-up "Our Commitment to Virginian: High Expectations and Excellence for all Students" report from the Virginia Department of Education and the Secretary of Education with next steps on how to reduce the disparities outlined.

Pilot an Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Grant to promote enrollment across public institutions within the Commonwealth similar to the HBCU grant initiatives.

Support VDOEs new History and Social Sciences Standards of Learning and incorporation of performance based assessments.

Health

Perform a health literacy assessment of the Latino community and of healthcare providers, and use culturally and linguistically appropriate services.

Increase representation of Latinos in the healthcare workforce.

Examine, explain, and mitigate the challenges of access to affordable and quality health care including mental health by the Latino/x community in Virginia.

Advocate for 2021 recommendations with the Boards of Psychology, Social Work, and Counseling by attending a regulatory meeting.

Housing

Develop a robust, statewide, state-funded rental voucher program.

Increase funding of the Virginia Housing Trust Fund (VHTF).

Identify Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)'s Virginia Individual Development Accounts (VIDA) intermediaries for all our geographic regions

Require that all VIDA intermediaries retain Spanish fluent staff or can readily access Spanish language interpretation and translation services.

Expand the DHCD's Homeownership Down Payment Assistance language access

Support the development of new programs to guarantee fixed low rate mortgages to low and very low income first time home buyers and subsidize their origination fees.

Implement the recommendations published in the HB854 Statewide Housing Study.

Study the ability of the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation to prevent pernicious racial and ethnic discrimination.

Expedite the Department of Social Services' establishment of the work group delineated by the Code, Va. Code § 63.2-806(2), to create recommendations facilitating the ability of homeless youth.

Prioritize the Board of Social Services' creation of the regulations expected by the Code of Virginia, Va. Code § 63.2-806(1)(E)

Acknowledge, study, and propose measures to ensure effective access of housing and supportive services—including medical care—to children who are English Language Learners

Expand tenant based rental assistance to youth aging out of the foster care system and the reallocation of state funds within its tenant based rental assistance to ensure housing stability to a more significant number of promising, college-bound youth aging out of our foster care system.

Create a state funded grants program to remediate mold, lead paint, or asbestos insulation or to fumigate severely infested units/buildings where households with incomes below the area's AMI reside.

Create grants to fund events, programs, or positions focusing upon housing conditions litigation, mediation, or advice, within the nine regional legal aid programs overseen by the Legal Services Corporation of Virginia.

All recommendations are expanded upon on pages 18-39 of the full report.

2022 Virginia Latino Advisory Board Members

Officers

Lyon Sanchezconcha
Dr. Joshua DeSilva
Eduardo Zelaya

Chair – *Richmond*
Vice Chair – *Arlington*
Secretary – *Arlington*

Committee Chairs

Diana Patterson
Yahusef Medina
Dr. Sergio Rimola
Walewska Watkins

Business & Workforce Committee – *Winchester*
Education & Career Training Committee – *Charlottesville*
Health Committee – *Herndon*
Housing Committee – *Ashburn*

Current Members

Juan Espinoza
Cecilia Williams
Karina Kline-Gabel
Paul Berry
C. Alex Guzman
Rodrigo Soto
Astrid Gamez
Ana Metzger
Jo-Ann Chase
Emilio Revilla
Wendy Clavijo
Jennifer Kelley
Rev. Jonathan Avendano
Juan Vega

Education & Career Training – *Blacksburg*
Health – *Fairfax*
Education & Career Training – *Harrisonburg*
Chair Emeritus, Education & Career Training – *Reston*
Housing – *Richmond*
Housing – *Springfield*
Health – *Reston**
Business & Workforce – *Midlothian**
Health – *Brambleton**
Business & Workforce – *Glen Allen**
Housing – *Vienna**
Business & Workforce – *Moseley**
Education & Career Training – *Sterling**
Business & Workforce – *Roanoke**

**Term began on July 1st, 2022*

Former Members (served through June 30th 2022)

Aida Pacheco
Gloria Peña Rockhold
Edgar Aranda-Yanoc
Carmen Romero
Diana Brown
Manuel Leiva
Dr. Max Luna
Lourdes Morales

Chair Emeritus, Civic Engagement & Social Justice – *Mechanicsville*
Civic Engagement & Social Justice – *Charlottesville*
Business & Workforce – *Arlington*
Housing – *Arlington*
Education & Career Training – *Virginia Beach*
Business & Workforce – *Leesburg*
Health – *Charlottesville*
Business & Workforce – *Arlington*

Letter from the Chair

August 26, 2022

Governor Youngkin,

First, I wish to thank you for the opportunity to lead the Virginia Latino Advisory Board. I would also like to congratulate you on your resounding success as Virginia's 74th Governor. Since you were sworn in, we have celebrated a decline in the unemployment rate, thousands of new jobs created, and a state budget that promises tax-relief to Virginians and more funding for education.

When you ceremoniously signed the state budget, I joined you on-stage, and I can never forget the words that you shared: "We work for you. We have been elected to govern and to make Virginia a better place to live, work and raise a family for all Virginians." All Virginians include the nearly 11% of Latinos who reside in the state, it includes the Latino corporate leader bringing diversity to the board room, and it includes the recently immigrated family hoping to make Virginia their new home for a shot of the American Dream.

Latinos are Virginia's fastest growing population and an invaluable part of its electorate, and the Virginia Latino Advisory Board is honored to represent this constituency. We do not take that responsibility lightly, and we feel charged with advocating for, among all things, more representation and expanded access. We hope to see more Latinos in influential places across the Commonwealth, and we hope to extend all initiatives and resources that are available to every Latino community member who needs it. Before you lies a series of both legislative priorities and administrative recommendations carefully crafted for you and your team to consider.

As we approach Hispanic Heritage Month, I reflect on an influential paper published in 2005 in which Tara Yosso describes observed assets of Latinos in the form of cultural wealth. This includes things like high and hopeful future aspirations, grit, resistance to social inequality, strong familial and communal ties and the ability to comfortably traverse different social contexts. We are known hard workers, and the Spirit of Latinos is woven into the fabric of the Spirit of Virginia.

We present our recommendations for the greatest collaborative potential, and we as a collective force will continue to do what we do best, and what is inscribed in the back of the Virginia State Seal: "Perseverando."

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lyons Sanchezconcha". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and "S".

Lyons Sanchezconcha

About the Virginia Latino Advisory Board

The Virginia Latino Advisory Board (VLAB) was established in 2005 to advise the Governor of Virginia on issues of Latino interest so that his administration can best serve the Latino constituents of Virginia. VLAB envisions a Virginia that includes and advances the Latino community by promoting greater opportunities while acknowledging the contributions of the diverse cultural heritage to the Commonwealth. VLAB has the power and duty to:

- Advise the Governor regarding the development of economic, professional, cultural, educational, and governmental links between the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Latino community in Virginia, and Latin America;
- Undertake studies, symposiums, research, and factual reports to gather information to formulate and present recommendations to the Governor relative to issues of concern and importance to the Latino community in the Commonwealth; and,
- Advise the Governor as needed regarding any statutory, regulatory, or other issues of importance to the Latino community in the Commonwealth.

VLAB conducts its work through four committees: Business & Workforce, Education and Career Training, Health, and Housing.

The Business & Workforce Committee examines the role of Latinos and Latino-owned businesses in Virginia's economy and suggests policies that will increase the economic prosperity of Virginia's Latino community. The Committee works with Latino entrepreneurs, business owners and leaders across Virginia to promote the Latino community's important role in Virginia's labor force and business community.

The Education and Career Training examines the importance of education and career development in supporting Latino communities across Virginia. By working with early childhood, K-12 systems, higher education, and workforce development agencies in all regions of the Commonwealth, the committee works to promote greater educational attainment and equity, and stronger pathways to economic opportunity.

The Health Committee examines the health of Latino communities across Virginia and works to craft recommendations and policies that are sensitive to the needs and concerns of those communities. By working with health providers, and federal, state, and local partners, the committee promotes policies and practices that address the need to increase the numbers of insured Latinos and to encourage health and wellness.

The Housing Committee examines the lack of affordable housing and high level of home evictions within Latino communities in the Commonwealth. The committee works to identify recommendations to increase the supply and availability of affordable housing; to prevent and reduce evictions; and to improve communication for seeking assistance and support.

The former "Civic Engagement & Social Justice Committee," examined strategies for strengthening relationships between Latino communities and all Virginians and promoted practices that are central to civic participation, including voting and voter registration, leadership, and service on state boards and commissions. The committee also works with community partners to improve communication among Latino communities and state government and to raise awareness about issues of importance to Latino communities. In 2022, this committee was transitioned to serve as a "work-group" in efforts to grow the other committees, to utilize this work group to lead collaborative efforts with the to four other Constituency Boards in Virginia, and because its work was already woven into the fabric all other committees and everything that VLAB does.

Overview of Latinos in Virginia

Latinos¹ can trace their heritage in Virginia back 500 years, almost a full century before the first colonists landed in Jamestown in 1607. These pioneers entered the Chesapeake Bay in 1525,² leaving a permanent mark of diversity and cultural patrimony in the Commonwealth that continues in 2021. The incredible accomplishments and progress the community has made in industry, the arts, and culturally is a combination of the social and intellectual contributions that bridge centuries of Latino presence in Virginia.

The Latino community of the Commonwealth contributes in significant ways to the economic and social well-being of modern Virginia. Since 2010 the community has witnessed a 32.1% increase, and the 2020 Decennial Census now counts Latinos as 10.6% of the population, or more than 908,000 individuals.³ We concentrate in Northern Virginia, the Tidewater region, and the Richmond Metropolitan area. *The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis* estimates that by 2030 Latinos will represent 17.2% of Virginia's population, numbering over 1,600,000 residents, and accounting for 79% of Virginia's growth.⁴ Since

Latinos in Virginia are diverse in origin, live in every part of the state, and skew younger compared to the rest of the population. Salvadoran, Mexican, and Puerto Rican heritage accounts for over half of Latinos in Virginia, with countries in the Caribbean, and South and Central America accounting for the remainder. With a median age of 29⁵ and 22% under the age of 18,⁶ Virginia has a large and young Latino population.

The Latino community of Virginia is composed of multiple unique subgroups and represents every point along the spectrum of the immigration experience: some communities are older with multiple decades of accumulated presence, while others are newer. The subgroups "differ in their lifestyles, health beliefs, and health practices."⁷ Over half (54.2%) are bilingual, and more than a quarter (27.7%) only speak English. An estimated 120,000 or 17.3% speak Spanish and limited or no English. In addition, Portuguese, and indigenous languages of South and Central America are the native languages of a smaller percentage of Virginia's Latinos.⁸

Latino Virginians are a force behind the economy and leading in various fields all across the Commonwealth. Yet, while many celebrate the American Dream, there are various issues to address in order to make this dream more achievable for all Latinos in the Commonwealth. This report hopes to outline recommendations in the fields of Education, Business, Healthcare, Housing, and more to continue doing what our community does best, and what is inscribed on the back of the Virginia State Seal, "Perseverando."

¹ The terms Latino or Latinx refers to people, of all genders, whose heritage originates from Latin America. The term Hispanic refers to people of Spanish or Spanish-speaking Latin American heritage. The terms are not interchangeable. In this report, the terms Latino or Latinx will be used unless the term Hispanic was the term used when data were collected.

² Peck, D. "Lucas Vásquez de Ayllón's Doomed Colony of San Miguel de Gualdape", *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol 85. No. 2 pg. 189. Also see <https://www.virginia.org/hispanicsandlatinosinvirginia>

³ <https://demographics.coopercenter.org/census2020>

⁴ Page 7

https://www.vlab.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/vlab/documents/vlab-meetings/LatinoVirginiansSept2018_final.pdf

⁵ <https://www.edexcelencia.org/research/latino-college-completion/virginia>

⁶ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/VA/RHI725219>

⁷ https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dch/programs/healthycommunitiesprogram/tools/pdf/hispanic_latinos_insight.pdf

⁸ Goren, L. and Mejia, F. Stitches in the Economic Fabric: Latino Virginians and the State Economy. The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis. Accessed at

https://www.vlab.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/vlab/documents/vlab-meetings/LatinoVirginiansSept2018_final.pdf

Latino Growth in Census Data

Latinos remain one of Virginia's fastest growing populations and data from the recent Census show the growth of the Latino population in the last 10 years broken up by each jurisdiction in Virginia.

2020 Census Count by Hispanic Origin (Virginia Localities)

Data Source: United States Census Bureau, Census 2010 and 2020

Data formatted and posted at <http://demographics.coopercenter.org> by the UVA Weldon Cooper Center, Demographics Research Group

Jurisdiction	Decennial Census Count, April 1, 2010			Decennial Census Count, April 1, 2020			04/01/2010 - 04/01/2020	
	Total Population	Hispanic Population		Total Population	Hispanic Population		Hispanic Change	
		Total	(%)		Total	(%)	Total	(%)
Virginia	8,001,024	631,825	7.9%	8,631,393	908,749	10.5%	276,924	43.8%
Accomack County	33,164	2,850	8.6%	33,413	3,430	10.3%	580	20.4%
Albemarle County	98,970	5,417	5.5%	112,395	8,453	7.5%	3,036	56.0%
Alleghany County	16,250	176	1.1%	15,223	178	1.2%	2	1.1%
Amelia County	12,690	290	2.3%	13,265	425	3.2%	135	46.6%
Amherst County	32,353	625	1.9%	31,307	838	2.7%	213	34.1%
Appomattox County	14,973	167	1.1%	16,119	344	2.1%	177	106.0%
Arlington County	207,627	31,382	15.1%	238,643	37,362	15.7%	5,980	19.1%
Augusta County	73,750	1,525	2.1%	77,487	2,728	3.5%	1,203	78.9%
Bath County	4,731	101	2.1%	4,209	73	1.7%	-28	-27.7%
Bedford County	68,676	1,090	1.6%	79,462	2,055	2.6%	965	88.5%
Bland County	6,824	39	0.6%	6,270	60	1.0%	21	53.8%
Botetourt County	33,148	356	1.1%	33,596	776	2.3%	420	118.0%
Brunswick County	17,434	298	1.7%	15,849	387	2.4%	89	29.9%
Buchanan County	24,098	95	0.4%	20,355	177	0.9%	82	86.3%
Buckingham County	17,146	288	1.7%	16,824	413	2.5%	125	43.4%
Campbell County	54,842	918	1.7%	55,696	1,815	3.3%	897	97.7%
Caroline County	28,545	959	3.4%	30,887	1,968	6.4%	1,009	105.2%
Carroll County	30,042	776	2.6%	29,155	1,042	3.6%	266	34.3%
Charles City County	7,256	88	1.2%	6,773	101	1.5%	13	14.8%
Charlotte County	12,586	240	1.9%	11,529	253	2.2%	13	5.4%
Chesterfield County	316,236	22,864	7.2%	364,548	40,236	11.0%	17,372	76.0%

Jurisdiction	Decennial Census Count, April 1, 2010			Decennial Census Count, April 1, 2020			04/01/2010 - 04/01/2020	
	Total Population	Hispanic Population		Total Population	Hispanic Population		Hispanic Change	
		Total	(%)		Total	(%)	Total	(%)
Clarke County	14,034	490	3.5%	14,783	887	6.0%	397	81.0%
Craig County	5,190	36	0.7%	4,892	53	1.1%	17	47.2%
Culpeper County	46,689	4,157	8.9%	52,552	7,509	14.3%	3,352	80.6%
Cumberland County	10,052	181	1.8%	9,675	241	2.5%	60	33.1%
Dickenson County	15,903	86	0.5%	14,124	83	0.6%	-3	-3.5%
Dinwiddie County	28,001	674	2.4%	27,947	1,128	4.0%	454	67.4%
Essex County	11,151	349	3.1%	10,599	369	3.5%	20	5.7%
Fairfax County	1,081,726	168,482	15.6%	1,150,309	199,234	17.3%	30,752	18.3%
Fauquier County	65,203	4,178	6.4%	72,972	7,793	10.7%	3,615	86.5%
Floyd County	15,279	412	2.7%	15,476	487	3.1%	75	18.2%
Fluvanna County	25,691	760	3.0%	27,249	1,107	4.1%	347	45.7%
Franklin County	56,159	1,424	2.5%	54,477	1,955	3.6%	531	37.3%
Frederick County	78,305	5,168	6.6%	91,419	9,990	10.9%	4,822	93.3%
Giles County	17,286	209	1.2%	16,787	244	1.5%	35	16.7%
Gloucester County	36,858	935	2.5%	38,711	1,410	3.6%	475	50.8%
Goochland County	21,717	455	2.1%	24,727	862	3.5%	407	89.5%
Grayson County	15,533	416	2.7%	15,333	596	3.9%	180	43.3%
Greene County	18,403	781	4.2%	20,552	1,330	6.5%	549	70.3%
Greensville County	12,243	173	1.4%	11,391	276	2.4%	103	59.5%
Halifax County	36,241	587	1.6%	34,022	760	2.2%	173	29.5%
Hanover County	99,863	2,116	2.1%	109,979	3,938	3.6%	1,822	86.1%
Henrico County	306,935	15,001	4.9%	334,389	22,085	6.6%	7,084	47.2%
Henry County	54,151	2,545	4.7%	50,948	3,301	6.5%	756	29.7%
Highland County	2,321	18	0.8%	2,232	35	1.6%	17	94.4%
Isle of Wight County	35,270	658	1.9%	38,606	1,199	3.1%	541	82.2%
James City County	67,009	3,024	4.5%	78,254	5,199	6.6%	2,175	71.9%
King and Queen County	6,945	184	2.6%	6,608	182	2.8%	-2	-1.1%
King George County	23,584	790	3.3%	26,723	1,582	5.9%	792	100.3%

Jurisdiction	Decennial Census Count, April 1, 2010			Decennial Census Count, April 1, 2020			04/01/2010 - 04/01/2020	
	Total Population	Hispanic Population		Total Population	Hispanic Population		Hispanic Change	
		Total	(%)		Total	(%)	Total	(%)
King William County	15,935	324	2.0%	17,810	476	2.7%	152	46.9%
Lancaster County	11,391	118	1.0%	10,919	125	1.1%	7	5.9%
Lee County	25,587	406	1.6%	22,173	476	2.1%	70	17.2%
Loudoun County	312,311	38,576	12.4%	420,959	59,744	14.2%	21,168	54.9%
Louisa County	33,153	762	2.3%	37,596	1,365	3.6%	603	79.1%
Lunenburg County	12,914	470	3.6%	11,936	589	4.9%	119	25.3%
Madison County	13,308	236	1.8%	13,837	441	3.2%	205	86.9%
Mathews County	8,978	104	1.2%	8,533	197	2.3%	93	89.4%
Mecklenburg County	32,727	806	2.5%	30,319	821	2.7%	15	1.9%
Middlesex County	10,959	166	1.5%	10,625	259	2.4%	93	56.0%
Montgomery County	94,392	2,536	2.7%	99,721	4,651	4.7%	2,115	83.4%
Nelson County	15,020	459	3.1%	14,775	663	4.5%	204	44.4%
New Kent County	18,429	390	2.1%	22,945	731	3.2%	341	87.4%
Northampton County	12,389	874	7.1%	12,282	1,068	8.7%	194	22.2%
Northumberland County	12,330	382	3.1%	11,839	351	3.0%	-31	-8.1%
Nottoway County	15,853	609	3.8%	15,642	773	4.9%	164	26.9%
Orange County	33,481	1,139	3.4%	36,254	2,171	6.0%	1,032	90.6%
Page County	24,042	373	1.6%	23,709	497	2.1%	124	33.2%
Patrick County	18,490	444	2.4%	17,608	567	3.2%	123	27.7%
Pittsylvania County	63,506	1,332	2.1%	60,501	1,712	2.8%	380	28.5%
Powhatan County	28,046	502	1.8%	30,333	792	2.6%	290	57.8%
Prince Edward County	23,368	525	2.2%	21,849	1,088	5.0%	563	107.2%
Prince George County	35,725	2,058	5.8%	43,010	4,344	10.1%	2,286	111.1%
Prince William County	402,002	81,460	20.3%	482,204	121,524	25.2%	40,064	49.2%
Pulaski County	34,872	432	1.2%	33,800	704	2.1%	272	63.0%
Rappahannock County	7,373	228	3.1%	7,348	289	3.9%	61	26.8%
Richmond County	9,254	510	5.5%	8,923	597	6.7%	87	17.1%
Roanoke County	92,376	1,951	2.1%	96,929	3,507	3.6%	1,556	79.8%

Jurisdiction	Decennial Census Count, April 1, 2010			Decennial Census Count, April 1, 2020			04/01/2010 - 04/01/2020	
	Total Population	Hispanic Population		Total Population	Hispanic Population		Hispanic Change	
		Total	(%)		Total	(%)	Total	(%)
Rockbridge County	22,307	296	1.3%	22,650	513	2.3%	217	73.3%
Rockingham County	76,314	4,076	5.3%	83,757	7,093	8.5%	3,017	74.0%
Russell County	28,897	275	1.0%	25,781	168	0.7%	-107	-38.9%
Scott County	23,177	234	1.0%	21,576	255	1.2%	21	9.0%
Shenandoah County	41,993	2,577	6.1%	44,186	3,726	8.4%	1,149	44.6%
Smyth County	32,208	527	1.6%	29,800	558	1.9%	31	5.9%
Southampton County	18,570	203	1.1%	17,996	332	1.8%	129	63.5%
Spotsylvania County	122,397	9,278	7.6%	140,032	16,654	11.9%	7,376	79.5%
Stafford County	128,961	11,875	9.2%	156,927	23,646	15.1%	11,771	99.1%
Surry County	7,058	86	1.2%	6,561	149	2.3%	63	73.3%
Sussex County	12,087	268	2.2%	10,829	306	2.8%	38	14.2%
Tazewell County	45,078	296	0.7%	40,429	507	1.3%	211	71.3%
Warren County	37,575	1,318	3.5%	40,727	2,413	5.9%	1,095	83.1%
Washington County	54,876	724	1.3%	53,935	891	1.7%	167	23.1%
Westmoreland County	17,454	1,002	5.7%	18,477	1,049	5.7%	47	4.7%
Wise County	41,452	471	1.1%	36,130	452	1.3%	-19	-4.0%
Wythe County	29,235	280	1.0%	28,290	355	1.3%	75	26.8%
York County	65,464	2,892	4.4%	70,045	5,136	7.3%	2,244	77.6%
Alexandria city	139,966	22,524	16.1%	159,467	29,372	18.4%	6,848	30.4%
Bristol city	17,835	221	1.2%	17,219	455	2.6%	234	105.9%
Buena Vista city	6,650	103	1.5%	6,641	229	3.4%	126	122.3%
Charlottesville city	43,475	2,223	5.1%	46,553	3,207	6.9%	984	44.3%
Chesapeake city	222,209	9,706	4.4%	249,422	17,824	7.1%	8,118	83.6%
Colonial Heights city	17,411	674	3.9%	18,170	1,276	7.0%	602	89.3%
Covington city	5,961	92	1.5%	5,737	179	3.1%	87	94.6%
Danville city	43,055	1,245	2.9%	42,590	2,074	4.9%	829	66.6%
Emporia city	5,927	262	4.4%	5,766	345	6.0%	83	31.7%
Fairfax city	22,565	3,556	15.8%	24,146	4,278	17.7%	722	20.3%

Jurisdiction	Decennial Census Count, April 1, 2010			Decennial Census Count, April 1, 2020			04/01/2010 - 04/01/2020	
	Total Population	Hispanic Population		Total Population	Hispanic Population		Hispanic Change	
		Total	(%)		Total	(%)	Total	(%)
Falls Church city	12,332	1,109	9.0%	14,658	1,529	10.4%	420	37.9%
Franklin city	8,582	141	1.6%	8,180	218	2.7%	77	54.6%
Fredericksburg city	24,286	2,607	10.7%	27,982	3,472	12.4%	865	33.2%
Galax city	7,042	989	14.0%	6,720	1,061	15.8%	72	7.3%
Hampton city	137,436	6,241	4.5%	137,148	8,411	6.1%	2,170	34.8%
Harrisonburg city	48,914	7,665	15.7%	51,814	12,045	23.2%	4,380	57.1%
Hopewell city	22,591	1,480	6.6%	23,033	1,889	8.2%	409	27.6%
Lexington city	7,042	271	3.8%	7,320	335	4.6%	64	23.6%
Lynchburg city	75,568	2,300	3.0%	79,009	3,880	4.9%	1,580	68.7%
Manassas city	37,821	11,876	31.4%	42,772	18,345	42.9%	6,469	54.5%
Manassas Park city	14,273	4,645	32.5%	17,219	7,799	45.3%	3,154	67.9%
Martinsville city	13,821	552	4.0%	13,485	1,025	7.6%	473	85.7%
Newport News city	180,719	13,590	7.5%	186,247	19,288	10.4%	5,698	41.9%
Norfolk city	242,803	16,144	6.6%	238,005	23,130	9.7%	6,986	43.3%
Norton city	3,958	68	1.7%	3,687	81	2.2%	13	19.1%
Petersburg city	32,420	1,216	3.8%	33,458	1,970	5.9%	754	62.0%
Poquoson city	12,150	221	1.8%	12,460	463	3.7%	242	109.5%
Portsmouth city	95,535	2,919	3.1%	97,915	4,413	4.5%	1,494	51.2%
Radford city	16,408	385	2.3%	16,070	765	4.8%	380	98.7%
Richmond city	204,214	12,803	6.3%	226,610	23,747	10.5%	10,944	85.5%
Roanoke city	97,032	5,345	5.5%	100,011	8,484	8.5%	3,139	58.7%
Salem city	24,802	601	2.4%	25,346	1,088	4.3%	487	81.0%
Staunton city	23,746	513	2.2%	25,750	1,088	4.2%	575	112.1%
Suffolk city	84,585	2,415	2.9%	94,324	4,252	4.5%	1,837	76.1%
Virginia Beach city	437,994	28,987	6.6%	459,470	40,404	8.8%	11,417	39.4%
Waynesboro city	21,006	1,337	6.4%	22,196	1,945	8.8%	608	45.5%
Williamsburg city	14,068	941	6.7%	15,425	1,215	7.9%	274	29.1%
Winchester city	26,203	4,041	15.4%	28,120	5,494	19.5%	1,453	36.0%

VLAB Activities in 2022

In the year since its last Annual Report, VLAB members have engaged in several initiatives, events, and successes in partnership with Governor Youngkin's administration. Collaborative links between the Office of the Governor, his Executive staff, the General Assembly, and VLAB continue to advance solutions for the well-being of all Virginia residents.

VLAB members represent every geographic region in Virginia where they maintain strong ties to their communities, engaging in activities that propel Latino cultural, economic, and social issues forward. VLAB's highlights from 2021-2022 include:

- Rev. Jonathan Avendano delivered the benediction at Governor Youngkin's Inauguration.
- Lyons Sanchezconcha attended a Listen & Learn meeting with Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer at Northern Virginia Community College to discuss low Latino enrollment trends.
- Ana Metzger, Astrid Gamez, and Lyons Sanchezconcha attend a Latino Business Owners community forum with Governor Youngkin at, Latina-owned, The Wooden Spoon in Richmond Virginia.
- Lyons Sanchezconcha attends Richmond FAFSA Block Party initiative by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia to increase FAFSA completion with Deputy Secretary of Education Sarah Spota.
- Alex Guzman, Dr. Joshua DeSilva, Edgar Aranda-Yanoc, Diana Brown, Rodrigo Soto, Lourdes Morales, Lyons Sanchezconcha, and Dr. Sergio Rimola facilitated a Community Listening Session in Arlington to make space to hear issues and concerns related to the Latino community.
- Paul Berry participated as an editor in the Virginia Department of Education's 7-year review and revisions of the Standards of Learning.
- Karina Kline-Gabel was announced President of the Virginia Latino Higher Education Network (VALHEN) which helps hundreds of Latino student leaders pursue their educational and career goals.
- Lyons Sanchezconcha joined a reception at the Governor's Mansion for the Virginia Council on Women's STEAM-H Essay Writing contest; scholarship recipients were honored alongside the Governor and First Lady of Virginia.
- Paul Berry Chaired the Fairfax County Redistricting Committee
- Chair Lyons Sanchezconcha attends a roundtable conversation with Secretary of the Commonwealth, Kay Cole James and fellow Chairs of the Virginia Asian Advisory Board, the Virginia LGBTQ+ Advisory Board, and the Virginia African American Advisory Board.
- Paul Berry is named the Chairman's Community Champion 2022 by Volunteer Fairfax for his work in the county over the past year.
- Lyons Sanchezconcha attends an LGBTQ Reception held at the Virginia State Capitol in celebration of Pride Month, and hosted by Governor Youngkin and members of his cabinet.
- Chair Lyons Sanchezconcha joined Governor Younkin on stage in Richmond as he ceremonially signed the Virginia State Budget, which delivers on his promise to provide tax relief for Virginian families, increase funding for law enforcement, and support the development of lab schools, among other key initiatives of his Day One Game Plan.

- Gloria Peña Rockhold, Dr. Joshua DeSilva, Dr. Max Luna, and Lyons Sanchezconcha facilitate a Community Listening Session in Charlottesville with local Latino-serving community organizations to make space to hear issues and concerns related to the Latino community.
- Jo-Ann Chase is appointed to serve on the Virginia Commonwealth Council on Aging.
- Juan Espinoza helped lead the Hispanic College Institute (HCI) in coordination with VALHEN to provide a 4 day long summer program for nearly 200 Latino students across the Commonwealth.
- Lyons Sanchezconcha, joins the Transfer Action Committee with the State Council on Higher Education for Virginia to help Virginia Community Colleges and Public Universities develop new transfer partnerships to serve all students in accessing college across the Commonwealth.
- Cecilia Williams, Walewska Watkins, Dr. Joshua DeSilve, Paul Berry, Dr. Sergio Rimola, Lyons Sanchezconcha, Rodrigo Soto, Astrid Gamez, and Carmen Romero attended a Latin American Town Hall conversation with US Senator Mark Warner in Arlington to discuss issues impacting Virginia's Latino Community.
- Dr. Max Luna is a panelist for virtual presentation titled "Covid 19: Estado de la pandemia y vacunación para niños" alongside Iniciativa de Salud Latina UVA and Sin Barreras Charlottesville.
- Dr. Sergio Rimola is featured in an article titled "Virginia Latinos Encouraged to Keep Getting Vaccinated for COVID-19" through the National Hispanic Medical Association.
- Lyons Sanchezconcha celebrated 10 community members who completed the City of Richmond's Office of Immigrant and Refugee Engagement's second Latino Entrepreneurship Academy.
- Karina Kline-Gabel is awarded the Purple Star Award for service and volunteerism at JMU.
- VLAB Board Members facilitate a Community Listening Session in Roanoke alongside Latinas Network and Casa Latina to hear issues and concerns related to the Latino community.
- VLAB Board Members facilitate a Community Listening Session in Richmond alongside Radio Poder to hear issues and concerns related to the Latino community.*
- Emilio Revilla, Karina Kline-Gabel, and Lyons Sanchezconcha attend the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Hispanic Heritage Month Gala*
- Jonathan Avendano attends the National Hispanic Pastor's Alliance Conference and Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration in Washington, D.C.*
- Dr. Sergio Rimola joins the Latinos on the Fast Track Leadership Institute Summit in Washington, D.C. with the National Hispanic Medical Association*
- Celebrating 2022 Hispanic Heritage Month with the Governor and First Lady in Richmond.*
- VLAB Board Members facilitate a Community Listening Session in Woodbridge alongside CASA to hear issues and concerns related to the Latino community.*

*scheduled to take place after report approval on August 26, 2022

2022 VLAB Listening Sessions

The Virginia Latino Advisory Board is constantly looking at ways to hear directly from the Latino community that it represents across the commonwealth, three community listening sessions were held in which VLAB members could hear, first hand, of issues and concerns facing the Latino constituency.

The Listening Sessions were often hosted in partnerships with regional or state-wide, Latino-service organizations and held in public spaces, like Churches that donated the use of their space. These events are an opportunity to shed light on issues of representation and access to resources and information.

They were strategically scheduled the night before the Full Board Meetings for maximum attendance from board members. There were three listening sessions held, in Arlington, Charlottesville, Roanoke, and Richmond, and the full notes are attached as appendices to the end of this report.

Arlington, VA - 5/12/22

Charlottesville, VA - 6/23/22

Roanoke, VA - 8/25/22

Richmond, VA - 10/10/22*

Woodbridge, VA - 12/15/22*

In efforts to create a conversational, intimate environment, like “un cafecito” setting, community listening sessions were not live streamed, recorded, or made available for remote participation. Fliers were made and distributed through all platforms to increase participation and to also have region-based conversations. Notes were taken, and summarized in meeting minutes.

Listening Session notes are attached as Appendix B to this report.

VLAB Meeting agenda and minutes are attached as Appendix A to this report.

*scheduled to take place after report approval on August 26, 2022

VLAB Statements in 2022

In the year since its last Annual Report, VLAB has collectively signed on to publicly address specific matters related to the Latino Communities. The Board will only write statements in response to items mentioned in previous reports or significant events, such as the inauguration of our new Governor. Below are the four statements, in summary, on behalf of the Virginia Latino Advisory Board in this year:

VLAB Letter to Governor Youngkin

Chair Lyons Sanchezconcha, co-authored by Chair Emeritus, Paul Berry and with the help of Board member Walewska Watkins, crafted a congratulatory greeting to Governor Youngkin as he was sworn in as Virginia's 74th Governor. The letter serves as a way to summarize the Virginia Latino Advisory Board's role in advising his administration, reference the importance of Latino representation as appointments are being made, and invite the Governor to the VLAB's first meeting of the year.

VLAB Letter to General Assembly Budget Conferees

Civic Engagement & Social Justice work group lead, Rodrigo Soto, drafted a statement in support of language access legislation for the General Assembly budget approval. The letter, addressed to the budget conferees, advocated for policy that was in line with VLAB's 2021 annual report recommendation to increase funding for language access across the state of Virginia.

VLAB Letter on Violence Crime Task Force and Latino Needs

Governor Youngkin announced the creation of a Violent Crimes Prevention Task Force⁹, and Vice Chair, Dr. Joshua DeSilva, responded with wanting to have Latino representation and involvement in the work being done due to the issue's involvement with impact on the Latino community of Virginia. The letter was edited to be directed towards Secretary of Safety and Homeland Security, Robert Mosier.

VLAB Letter to Boards of Psychology, Social Work, and Counseling

Pursuant to a 2021 annual report committee recommendation, Vice Chair and health committee member, Dr. Joshua DeSilva, drafted a statement to the Virginia Boards of Psychology, Social Work, and Counseling to advocate for regulations that ensure mental health service providers are adequately experienced in serving diverse populations. Vice Chair, Dr. Joshua DeSilva received a response and is invited to attend their next regulatory meeting to speak on the matter. The Office of New Americans Advisory Board, of which Chair Lyons Sanchezconcha is an ex-officio member of, voted to approve a motion to draft a similar letter wishing to act in addressing health disparities.

The full letters are included as Appendix D at the end of this report.

⁹ <https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/news-releases/2022/may/name-933182-en.html>

Recommended Action

General Recommendations

Advocate for Latino representation in all positions across the Commonwealth to be representative of the Latino population in Virginia, including elected and appointed officials, senior positions, and beyond.

Expand access to support, initiatives, information, and resources, and to the Latino communities across Virginia, particularly to the newly immigrated.

Designate a Latino Community Liaison at the Governor's Office.

Recommendations and Narrative

Advocate for Latino representation in all positions across the Commonwealth

Across party lines and in all regions of Virginia, more Latino representation is needed. Attorney General Jason Miyares is the first person elected into the role with Latino descent, and we need to see more of that. Considering Virginia's demographics, in order to be truly representative of the Latino population, there should be 10 or 11 state delegates who are Latino, there are only 2. This representation needs to expand into leadership all across state departments and agencies as well as state boards and commission¹⁰. Furthermore, Latino representation in spaces where it is not representative of the population needs to continue onto Virginia's doctors, lawyers, educators, and more. Initiatives and advocacy that increase Latino representation must be a part of decision making going forward.

Expand access to support, initiatives, information, and resources, and to the Latino communities across Virginia, particularly to the newly immigrated.

Due largely in part to not having information available in the language a person speaks, resources often do not reach parts of the Latino community. There must be a strong effort to assess every piece of information, initiative, or support for its accessibility. It is imperative that any effort that is meant for the public good meet the community where they are at, rather than expect the community to come to it. Every time that a public service or good is designed to be easier for someone who received a college education or only speaks English is excluding another group of people, and that lack of access will further divide communities by disadvantaging a group. Accessing Latino communities, particularly newly immigrated families, need to be included in the design and implementation of all support, initiatives, information, and resources especially if it's provided by a state department.

Designate a Latino Community Liaison at the Governor's Office.

Designating a Latino outreach role is as important in an election as it is once elected to govern. All governments should always strive to improve their constituency outreach and take all measures to be of

¹⁰

<https://www.virginiamercury.com/2022/07/12/public-transit-governing-boards-dont-look-like-their-riders-a-new-study-could-fix-that/>

the people, by the people, and for the people. Having one contact to do solely Latino outreach is difficult and not something any prior Governor has done. Typically a person who identifies as Latino will serve that duty in addition to serving in another role. This recommendation challenges this administration to be the first to change this. With four wonderful Latinos on the staff already, there is space for more. A contact with Latino leaders state-wide and someone who can send communications to the Latino electorate is a crucial step in ensuring that the Latino perspective is included in decision-making. VLAB hopes to promote that the Governor's Office have a Director of Latino and Hispanic Outreach.

Civic Engagement & Social Justice

Codify a permanent position for the Director of Latino and Hispanic Outreach

Commit state revenue to fully implement recommendations from the recently completed language access study for all state government

Work with the Virginia Department of Elections, local registrars, and community partners to identify and address barriers to voting in Virginia.

Guarantee the right to vote for all US Citizens in Virginia

Maintain and expand protections under the Virginia Values Act to guarantee protection against discrimination from Latinx LGBTQ people across Virginia.

Recommendations and Narrative

Across Virginia, Latino communities continue to struggle with recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing economic pressures, the impacts of discriminatory policy decisions, and more. Increasing civic engagement for Latino people is critical to addressing these problems so that our community is able to work directly with policy makers, share their personal experiences, and take part of the process at all levels of government that are necessary to changing policies in Virginia.

Like many of the committees in VLAB, our recommendations come with specific funding requests. Budgets are moral documents, and how we generate and distribute funds are moral decisions. For another year in a row, Virginia will end with a record revenue surplus. These resources could be distributed to many of VLAB's priorities and address historic underinvestment in Latino communities over many decades. Over the past few legislative sessions, much of the surplus has been committed to constitutionally required deposits into Virginia's revenue reserves. Additionally, it is important to note that much of this surplus was unplanned, and it is likely we will not see these record revenues as we approach a fiscal cliff with the ending of federal investments through the American Rescue Plan Act and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. It is our hope that, when considering the funding recommendations from our committee, and all committees in VLAB, the Governor works with his colleagues to raise the necessary new and sustainable revenues needed to invest in our priorities so that all Latino families can thrive.

Commit state revenues to fully implement recommendations from the recently completed language access study for all state government

The 2021 report on improving language access in Virginia, commissioned by the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, highlighted key policy decisions needed to provide meaningful access to state services and information for all Virginia residents. The recently approved budget only partially funded the \$11.9 million recommended in the report. We note that the 2019 report found the following key issues across state agencies:

- Lack of dedicated staff committed to improving internal processes and resources necessary to ensure Limited English Proficient (LEP) Virginia residents are able to communicate with agencies that provide direct or referral services.
- Need for contracting with reliable businesses that can provide the necessary written translations for materials that agencies provide to the public.
- Need for internal review processes and quality controls for agencies to continually assess how they are providing services to LEP residents across Virginia.
- Funding for necessary staff, equipment, and materials needed to provide high quality services in multiple languages across all state government.

Fully funding these recommendations is critical to ensuring everyone in Virginia is able to be provided information in their primary language, improve access to services, and help our immigrant friends and neighbors more fully participate in our respective communities.

Work with the Virginia Department of Elections, local registrars, and community partners to identify and address barriers to voting in Virginia.

While progress has been made in improving access to the ballot box through policies like no-excuse absentee voting, funding to expand mail-in ballots for those who desire to vote by mail every election, and more, there should be on-going analysis by state leaders and local governments to assess barriers to voting for Latino voters across Virginia. Some barriers that have been discussed in previous VLAB meetings include:

- Ensuring all election materials are translated and meet the needs of local communities. Currently, Census data is used to assess language needs in localities. One recommendation could be to lower these thresholds to be better than current federal requirements and ensure more languages are covered. Funding for these resources should be provided by the state government to localities, who have limited revenue raising authority in Virginia.
- Working with community stakeholders to increase education and awareness about Virginia's frequent elections. While voting is generally higher on Presidential election years, it is critical that Latino families have their voices heard at every local, state, and federal election.

Guarantee the right to vote for all US Citizens in Virginia

All citizens in Virginia deserve the right to vote. Unfortunately, laws that have disproportionately impacted communities of color have taken this right away. Felony disenfranchisement is a policy decision that must be fixed. Legislative efforts this year to provide guaranteed protections for all citizens to have

the right to vote failed¹¹. Increasing civic engagement for all includes improving the current process for people who have had their rights taken away. The current processes in place, which is through Gubernatorial restoration of rights or through the courts, places an undue burden on people formerly incarcerated. These rights should be automatically restored once someone has served their time.

Maintain and expand protections under the Virginia Values Act to guarantee protection against discrimination from Latinx LGBTQ people across Virginia and to repeal the Marshall-Newman amendment.

LGBTQ Latinx people across Virginia deserve to live and work without fear of being discriminated against. Threats from the federal court system mean that it will be up to state governments to guarantee LGBTQ people can have strong protections against discrimination in the work place and public accommodations. We hope the Governor vetoes any bills aimed at weakening the current protections guaranteed under the recently passed Virginia Values Act and works with lawmakers to build on these protections so that all LGBTQ people can thrive.

While same-sex marriage is currently the law of the land, threats to that by the federal court system means it is now more important than ever to repeal the outdated, both in law and public opinion, Marshall-Newman amendment from the Virginia Constitution that defines marriage as only between one man and one woman.

Business & Workforce

Maintain Virginia's trajectory towards having a 15\$/hour minimum wage and remove the exemption for farm workers.

Revise the opportunity and enterprise zones.

Provide DPOR's Board of Contractors licensing exam in Spanish.

Provide state funding to the Virginia Small Business Development Center.

Create a state surety bond system.

Recommendations and Narrative

Maintain Virginia's trajectory towards having a 15\$/hour minimum wage and remove the exemption for farm workers.

Virginia is set to increase its minimum wage to \$12/hour on January 1, 2023. The General Assembly and Governor will need to approve the increases of \$13.50 on Jan. 1, 2025, and \$15.00 on Jan. 1, 2026 through re-enactment legislation during an upcoming regular or special legislative session.

During the 2020 legislative session, lawmakers thoughtfully put Virginia on a path to \$15/hour. Should lawmakers fail to properly re-enact the legislation for the final two increases of the minimum wage in

¹¹ <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?221+sum+SJ1>

2025 and 2026, the Commissioner of Labor and Industry will set inflation increases based on data from the United States Average Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is published by the U.S. Department of Labor.¹²

Current law exempts farm workers from the state minimum wage. Previously, the Virginia Latino Advisory Board recommended removing this exemption from law and we continue to support removing this exemption to ensure this part of our workforce is not left out of our economic recovery.

Revise the opportunity and enterprise zones

Opportunity Zones are a federal economic development and community development tax benefit established as part of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act available to investors with capital gains designed to encourage long-term private investment in low-income urban, suburban and rural census tracts. The zones were nominated by each governor in the spring of 2018 and are comprised of low-income census tracts. Zones were eligible for nomination based on 2015 and 2016 American Community Survey data. Virginia had 901 eligible census tracts, and per the Tax and Jobs Act, each state was only able to nominate 25 percent or 212 tracts, and could have up to 5 percent or 11 as contiguous tracts. Virginia nominated the maximum number of census tracts allotted. The designations are permanent until Dec. 31, 2028.¹³ The Virginia Enterprise Zone (VEZ) program is a partnership between state and local government that encourages job creation and private investment. VEZ accomplishes this by designating Enterprise Zones throughout the state and providing two grant-based incentives, the Job Creation Grant (JCG) and the Real Property Investment Grant (RPIG), to qualified investors and job creators within those zones, while the locality provides local incentives.¹⁴

- a. Since they were established in 2017, Virginia's footprint has changed, shifting or developing many areas into or out of economic disadvantages, particularly post-pandemic.
- b. Tax incentives for breweries in VA have helped increase the industry's footprint in the Commonwealth, and offering similar tax incentives to low-income areas or technology industries would incentivize economic growth in those areas as well.

Provide DPOR's Board of Contractors licensing exam in Spanish

Currently, DPOR allows certified institutions to provide the required pre-license course in other languages, but the exam is only available in English. Per DPOR, as long as building codes are only written in English, so will the test, as the exam references the building codes.

- a. VA is estimated to have 82,371 construction businesses out of a total of 783,977, a little over 10%.¹⁵
- b. Construction is one of the top industries among Hispanic-owned businesses.¹⁶

¹² <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?201+ful+CHAP1242&201+ful+CHAP1242>

¹³ <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/opportunity-zones-oz>

¹⁴ <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/vez>

¹⁵ <https://cdn.advocacy.sba.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/30143731/Small-Business-Economic-Profile-VA.pdf>

¹⁶

<https://www.oneparkfinancial.com/blog/top-hispanic-owned-companies-business-owners-are-winning-big#:~:text=According%20to%202020%20State%20of,than%20a%20set%20of%20statistics.>

- c. The lack of opportunity and accessibility to becoming licensed prevents many business owners from being compliant and obtaining a license. This in turn causes liability for the consumer, the business, and money lost in applications, licenses, and tax revenue for Virginia.

Provide state funding to the Virginia Small Business Development Center

The Virginia SBDC is an organization of 27 local Small Business Development Center offices across Virginia providing professional business advising, training, and business resources to help grow and strengthen Virginia businesses. Thousands of business owners and managers received one-on-one advising every year, and twice as many business owners attended a training program offered by a local SBDC. SBDC professionals assist with business planning, marketing, financial analysis, access to capital, business start-up and other specialized services as requested. And companies report successes and impact as a result of their SBDC relationship. The Virginia SBDC Network is the most extensive business development program in the Commonwealth. The Network is a partnership between the U.S. Small Business Administration, George Mason University and premier local host organizations throughout Virginia. These vital partners include universities, community colleges, chambers of commerce, municipalities, economic development organizations, and private companies.¹⁷

- a. Currently the VASBDC receives federal grants that must be matched by the local municipalities to provide the funding.
- b. SBDC assistance directly benefits VA through education about compliance and economic development through small business support.
- c. Of 27 SBDCs in VA, only four have “some type of bilingual assistance,”
- d. With the bilingual program launched in the Laurel Ridge Small Business Development Center (which serves Winchester City and counties of Frederick, Clarke, Fauquier, Shenandoah, and Warren), we were able to go from 3 Hispanic clients served to 110 and counting in the last 2 years. This has allowed the LRSBDC to help businesses be compliant, registering many with the SCC, helping them obtain correct licenses, properly register, and start their business, and operate more effectively for more business retention and tax revenue.

Create a state surety bond system

Surety bonds¹⁸ are currently required for a VA Lottery¹⁹ license and two classes of Contractor’s licenses. In order to obtain the bond, the individual must have a valid SSN²⁰, which prevents many Hispanic-owned businesses (where construction and retail are strong industries) from obtaining the licenses. In lieu of the license, the individual may submit the cash deposit (VA Lottery) or financial statements proving the equity of the company (contractor), but it is difficult for many to have the available funds. If the state creates a bonding system, the funds could accrue interest with time (as does the escrow at the VA Lottery when the individual submits the cash deposit). The state could choose

¹⁷ <https://www.virginiasbdc.org/about-us/>

¹⁸ <https://www.suretybonds.com/edu/faqs>

¹⁹

<https://www.valottery.com/-/media/Images/Retailer-Center/Virginia-Lottery-Retailer-ManualFINAL720.ashx?la=en&hash=C50CC0E902ADDEC651CCC44C6EC2BF42A3ABF0C9> (see page 21- “Bonding”)

²⁰ <https://alphasurety.com/surety-bond-info/why-do-you-need-my-social-security-number/>

whether the individual keeps the interest earned or if the state can keep it as operating cost of the bonding system. By doing so, we will allow more businesses to be properly licensed and incentivize the economy through additional tax and license revenue.

Education & Career Training

Designate one proposed Lab School to serve ELL Students.

Increase Latino representation in faculty and senior administrative leadership in higher educational institutions throughout the Commonwealth.

Follow-up “Our Commitment to Virginians: High Expectations and Excellence for all Students” report from the Virginia Department of Education and the Secretary of Education with next steps on how to reduce the disparities outlined.

Pilot an Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Grant to promote enrollment across public institutions within the Commonwealth similar to the HBCU grant initiatives.

Support VDOEs new History and Social Sciences Standards of Learning and incorporation of performance based assessments.

Recommendations and Narrative

Dedicate one proposed Lab School to serve ELL Students.

Governor Youngkin’s new budget includes funding for ten (10) new lab schools²¹, and seeing that more than 10% of the Commonwealth is Latino, one of these laboratory schools should focus on the Latino student population with the highest need (and performance disparity), the ELL population. Within the ELL population, a focus on Students with Limited and Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) should be prioritized. The school can have this focus, but similar recruitment processes as Code RVA, in Richmond. A location in one of the highly populated Latino areas can include Arlington, Fairfax, North Chesterfield, Harrisonburg, North Fredericksburg, or Roanoke.

Increase Latino representation in faculty and administrative leadership in higher educational institutions throughout the Commonwealth.

Increasing Latino faculty and administrative leadership would help make institutions of higher education representative of the students that they serve. Racial and ethnic representation helps students feel a sense of belonging and would help with student retainment. College enrollment among Latino communities is down across the state²², and increasing the amount of bi-lingual and bi-cultural professionals who can build trust with the students can help combat this and keep students engaged.

While other initiatives might help with increasing Latino college enrollment, the focus must shift to hiring a representative team so that students can see themselves in those roles as well. Strategies can include promoting from within, having bilingual/bicultural preferred positions, offering a stipend or

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https://richmond.com/news/local/education/virginia-state-virginia-union-universities-intend-to-open-lab-schools/article_983dbbf4-d106-5f86-864a-f3d999da7eae.html

²² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2021/01/31/latino-college-enrollment-pandemic/>

higher salary for being bilingual/bicultural, recruiting foreign-trained professionals to transfer their credentials, and building pathways for students to follow a path in their career choice.

Follow-up “Our Commitment to Virginias: High Expectations and Excellence for all Students” report from VDOE and the Secretary of Education with next steps on how to reduce the disparities outlined.

In May of 2022, a press release²³ was held to discuss a new report²⁴ from the Virginia Department of Education and Secretary of Education detailing areas of improvement in Virginia’s public education. This report looked at National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) tests, which Virginia scores among the top ten states in the nation, and SOL scores, which through different criteria shows a 75% pass rate in fourth grade reading. The conversation revolved around the fear that in recent years, there has been a growing disparity in the educational performance of black and brown students in Virginia.

The Virginia Latino Advisory Board urges that the conversation shift towards what actionable steps will be taken to address these disparities. Particularly when considering the learning loss that occurred due to the interruptions from the COVID-19 Pandemic, it is paramount that steps be taken to ensure that all students are performing at the standards outlined by the state. When making changes in response to the findings of this report, Latino student performance should take priority.

Pilot an Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Grant to promote enrollment across public institutions within the Commonwealth similar to the HBCU grant initiatives.

The Governor’s proposed budget²⁵, features an Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) scholarship to help make college more attainable for students attending these institutions of higher education. Whereas Marymount University was the first state of Virginia to be recognized as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), and other institutes such as, Virginia Commonwealth University (Public, Richmond), George Mason University (Public - Fairfax), and Virginia Union University (Private - Richmond) are approaching HSI recognition, the Virginia Latino Advisory Board recommends the administration consider the formation of an HSI scholarship to increase college attainment among the Latino community to Hispanic Serving Institution across the Commonwealth.

Support VDOEs new History and Social Sciences Standards of Learning and incorporation of performance based assessments.

The Virginia Department of Education has conducted a revision and review process²⁶ for the History and Social Studies Standards of Learning and it will present them to the Board of Education²⁷ for the first review. The Virginia Latino Advisory Board supports the proposed recommendations that highlights performance based assessments as being central to student development and achievement,

²³ <https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/news-releases/2022/may/name-933341-en.html>

²⁴ https://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/our-commitment-to-virginians.pdf

²⁵ <https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/news-releases/2022/june/name-935061-en.html>

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<https://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2022/07-jul/hss-standards-review-process-coverage-presentation.pdf>

²⁷ <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2022/07-jul/item-k.pdf>

particularly for Latino and ELL students²⁸. Traditional assessments can further expand racial disparities and can create an achievement gap that impacts minority communities including Latino students²⁹. Performance-based assessments are particularly beneficial for ELL students because it grades them based upon how well they worked through the problem/question. For students that do not have a command of the English language, traditional assessments are unnecessarily harsh because it is essentially all or nothing, multiple choice/true or false, etc. does not allow the student to SHOW their understanding of the problem/question. To raise Latino student achievement, VLAB recommends a varied assessment model centered primarily on performance tasks and including traditional assessments as well³⁰.

Health

Perform a health literacy assessment of the Latino community and of healthcare providers, and use culturally and linguistically appropriate services.

Increase representation of Latinos in the healthcare workforce.

Examine, explain, and mitigate the challenges of access to affordable and quality health care including mental health by the Latino/x community in Virginia.

Advocate for 2021 recommendations with the Boards of Psychology, Social Work, and Counseling by attending a regulatory meeting.

Recommendations and Narrative

Perform a health literacy assessment of the Latino community and of healthcare providers, and use culturally and linguistically appropriate services

Health literacy is a cultural, cognitive, and social skill that determines the motivation and ability of individuals to gain access to, understand, and use health related information.³¹

- Only 10% of adults have the skills needed to use everyday health information.
- Only 4% of Latinos are health literacy proficient, 31% intermediate, 25% basic.
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) is not included in these national assessments.

For these reasons, there needs to be more research and a better understanding of health literacy in Virginia, particularly with its Latino and immigrant community.

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (or CLAS) is a way to improve the quality of services provided to all individuals, which will help reduce health disparities and achieve health equity. CLAS is about respect and responsiveness. These standards prioritize respect for the whole individual and accordingly respond to the individual's health needs and preferences.

²⁸ https://www.unidosus.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/IB_22_Professional_Development.pdf

²⁹ <https://doi.org/10.1177/0160597615603750>;

<https://schoolquality.virginia.gov/divisions/richmond-city-public-schools#desktopTabs-2>

³⁰

<https://www.annenberginstitute.org/publications/performance-assessment-fostering-learning-teachers-and-students-vue-46>

³¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/learn/index.html>

The National CLAS Standards are a set of fifteen action steps intended to advance health equity, improve quality, and help eliminate health care disparities by providing a blueprint for individuals and health care organizations to implement culturally and linguistically appropriate communications and services.³²

Recommendations:

- A) Perform a health literacy assessment of the Latino population in Virginia in areas of high concentrations of Latinos (Northern Virginia, Richmond, Delmarva Peninsula, Winchester, Etc.). This assessment should follow the CLAS Standards (Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services).
- B) Perform an assessment of the Virginia health workforce on their knowledge and understanding of health literacy of their patient population. EX: Do patients have the skills to understand their prescriptions? Do they understand what Diabetes is?
- C) Perform an assessment of knowledge, understanding and health literacy skills of trained medical interpreters. We need to train the trainers.
- D) Train the health workforce for technical assistance and capacity building depending upon gaps and needs that have been identified in the assessment. Teach members of the local health departments about Health Literacy. Develop culturally tailored interventions.
- E) Hire and train health literacy navigators to implement work with the community.
- F) Contact the Virginia Health Department, Office of Health Equity, Division of Multicultural Health, and Community Engagement, CLAS and Health Literacy Programs.

Increase representation of Latinos in the healthcare workforce, including doctors, nurses, healthcare educators, mental health professionals, and more.

USA census data shows that Latinos account for 18.9% of the US population.³³ According to the Association of American Medical Colleges data: 6% of physicians identified as Latino, 5% Black, 56% White, 17% Asian, 16% other.³⁴

In Virginia Latinos represent 10.6% of the population,³⁵ but only 4% of physicians and 3% of nurses identified as Latino. Comparatively, 65% of doctors and 61% of nurses are White, 7% of doctors and 19% of nurses are Black, and 19% of doctors and 7% of nurses are Asian.³⁶

There is a lack of Latino representation in the healthcare workforce to address the broad array of preferences and needs of culturally diverse populations to address health disparities. Access to linguistically and culturally competent healthcare delivery is limited in part by the lack of diversity in the healthcare workforce. Cultural and language concordant care improves patient outcomes.

³² <https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/clas>

³³ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/RHI725221>

³⁴

<https://www.aamc.org/data-reports/workforce/interactive-data/figure-18-percentage-all-active-physicians-race/ethnicity-2018#:~:text=Among%20active%20physicians%2C%2056.2%25%20identified,subgroup%20after%20White%20and%20Asian.>

³⁵ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/VA>

³⁶

<https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/PublicResources/HealthcareWorkforceDataCenter/Dashboards/GenderandRacialEthnicDiversity/>

Recommendations:

- A) Work with Virginia Health Workforce Development Authority.
- B) Create a statewide taskforce to address the disparity in medical and mental health educational programs in Virginia.
- C) Partner with state institutions of higher education (e.g., UVA, VCU, ODU, JMU, VT, Etc.) to discuss benchmarks.
- D) Increase the number of slots in International Medical Graduate (IMG) residency programs for Latino physicians in Virginia. IMGs can be increased through the J-1 Visa Sponsorship Program in return for a commitment to practice medicine in underserved areas in Virginia.³⁷
- E) Develop initiatives for Middle and High School, minority students to motivate them to pursue healthcare careers
- F) Start a pilot program like the GEMS program: Georgetown Experimental Medical Studies A one-year, non-degree, post- baccalaureate. GEMS participants complete classes from the actual first-year medical school curriculum. This is one of the few programs specifically providing opportunities for disadvantaged students.³⁸

Examine, explain, and mitigate the challenges of access to quality and affordable health care, including mental health, by the Latino community in Virginia.

COVID-19 exposed significant social and health disparities among Latinos with stark differences in the proportion of infections, hospitalization, and deaths.³⁹ The Latino community was one of the communities that benefited the most from the Affordable Care Act and expansion of Medicaid in Virginia. However, there is an exceedingly high rate of uninsured Latinos remaining, including children, foreign-born members of this community.⁴⁰

We ask the Governor's administration to examine this situation in more detail and support mechanisms to mitigate this health disparity. The result of addressing this problem is not only important basic human rights, but also contributes to a healthier Latinx workforce, increased productivity, and a decrease in medical expenses in Virginia.

Advocate for the 2021 Recommendation with the Board of Psychology, Social Work, and Counseling by attending a regulatory meeting.

This is following up on the health committee's prior recommendation on VLAB's 2021 report to advocate for continued education in diverse populations for mental health providers. VLAB Vice Chair and Health Committee Member, Dr. Joshua DeSilva will attend a regulatory meeting with the Virginia Board of Psychology, Social Work, and Counseling to advocate for a requirement for providers to have experience with diverse communities. This objective can be reached by modeling similar initiatives in Washington DC and other neighboring, governing bodies. Requiring a diversity continuing education credit would ensure that providers are updating their knowledge annually and would ensure cultural competence in

³⁷ <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/health-equity/conrad-30-waiver-program-overview/>

³⁸ <https://som.georgetown.edu/diversityequityandinclusion/gems/>

³⁹ <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/category/covid-19/race/>

⁴⁰ <https://www.vhcf.org/data/>

working with Virginians of color in psychotherapy. The Board will continue to advocate for culturally responsive care in the mental health field for Latino and new immigrant populations.

Housing

Develop a robust, statewide, state-funded rental voucher program similar to the federally funded Housing Choice Voucher Program.

Increase funding of the Virginia Housing Trust Fund (VHTF).

Identify Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)'s Virginia Individual Development Accounts (VIDA) intermediaries for all our geographic regions

Require that all VIDA intermediaries retain Spanish fluent staff or can readily access Spanish language interpretation and translation services.

Expand the DHCD's Homeownership Down Payment Assistance and allocate funding to inform and educate qualified Spanish-speaking homebuyers

Support the development of new programs to guarantee fixed low rate mortgages to low and very low income first time home buyers and subsidize their origination fees.

Implement the recommendations published in the Virginia Housing Development Authority and Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's HB854 Statewide Housing Study.

Study the ability of the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation—through the Real Estate Appraiser Board— and/or other relevant professional regulatory bodies to create and enforce standards of study, duty, and accountability applicable to real estate appraisers to prevent pernicious racial and ethnic discrimination.

Expedite the Department of Social Services' establishment of the work group delineated by the Code, Va. Code § 63.2-806(2), to create recommendations facilitating the ability of homeless youth who lack an adult guardian to access housing and related services

Prioritize the Board of Social Services' creation of the regulations expected by the Code of Virginia, Va. Code § 63.2-806(1)(E) (on facilitating the ability of homeless youth who lack an adult guardian to access housing and related services)

Acknowledge, study, and propose measures to ensure effective access of housing and supportive services—including medical care—to children who are English Language Learners

Expand tenant based rental assistance to youth aging out of the foster care system and the re-allocation of state funds within its tenant based rental assistance to ensure housing stability to a more significant number of promising, college-bound youth aging out of our foster care system.

Create a state funded grants program—administered by VDHCD or the counties using a portal and human infrastructure similar to that developed for rental assistance application during the COVID-19—to remediate mold, lead paint, or asbestos insulation or to fumigate severely infested units/buildings where households with incomes below the area's AMI reside. pandemic.

Create grants to fund events, programs, or positions focusing upon housing conditions litigation, mediation, or advice, within the nine regional legal aid programs overseen by the Legal Services Corporation of Virginia.

Recommendations and Narrative

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commonwealth of Virginia led the nation with its eviction prevention measures. Landlords and tenants benefitted from the state and county programs

that prevented the eviction of hundreds of thousands of households, disbursing more than \$713 million.⁴¹

These achievements stood in stark contrast to Virginia’s pre-pandemic days when five of its metropolitan areas—Richmond, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, and Chesapeake—lead the nation in eviction filings and proceedings.⁴² Unfortunately, the sun has set on the legal landscape that facilitated the deceleration of eviction proceedings, the prevention of homelessness among low-income tenants, and the infusion of financial stability among landlords.

Despite this setback, however, Virginia’s Executive Branch will continue its efforts to “make eviction rare, brief and humane.”⁴³ It will do so through the eviction reduction strategies of the Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (VERP).⁴⁴ Specifically, the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD) will implement this coordinated systems strategy by selecting—after a competitive process—well established community organizations that can identify households in need of resource stability and implement eviction prevention services before a summons for unlawful detainer issues.⁴⁵

Following lifetimes of experience, years of professional development, and months of research and discussions with Virginia’s Latino community and its advocates, the Committee has drafted the recommendations below as expected under the Code of Virginia § 2.2-2460(A).

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND FAIR HOUSING

Affordable housing is one that a household can obtain by spending 30 percent or less of its income.⁴⁶ Low income households that spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs are considered “cost burdened” and unstable.⁴⁷ These households generally experience greater likelihood and more frequent episodes of food insecurity, economic hardship, emotional crises, reduced academic performance, delayed medical care, increased hospitalization, and evictions or foreclosures leading to homelessness.⁴⁸

⁴¹ VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (VDHCD), Virginia Rent Relief Program (RRP), <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/rmrp> (last accessed July 19, 2022).

⁴²

VDHCD, Addressing Evictions Before, During, and After COVID-19 (January 2021), p. 5 and 7-11, available at <https://dhcd.virginia.gov/sites/default/files/Docx/verp/evictions-report.pdf> (last accessed July 19, 2022).

⁴³ VDHCD, Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (VERP) 2.0 Program Guidelines and Application Instructions 2022, p. 8, available at <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/sites/default/files/Docx/verp/verp-program-guidelines.pdf> (Last accessed July 19, 2022)

⁴⁴

Id., at p. 14.

⁴⁵

Id.

⁴⁶ U.S. DEPT. OF HOUS. AND URBAN DEV., Glossary of Terms to Affordable Housing, available at <https://archives.hud.gov/local/nv/goodstories/2006-04-06glos.cfm#:~:text=Affordable%20Housing%3A%20Affordable%20housing%20is,Reference%3A%20www.hud.gov> (last accessed on May 16, 2022).

⁴⁷ JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT AND REVIEW COMMISSION (JLARC), Affordable Housing in Virginia, 1-2 (December 13, 2021), available at <http://jlarc.virginia.gov/pdfs/reports/Rpt559.pdf> (last accessed on May 16, 2022).

⁴⁸ JLARC, Affordable Housing in Virginia, at 1-2. See also VDHCD, Addressing Evictions Before, During, and After COVID-19, p. 6.

Approximately 29 percent of all Virginian households are housing-cost burdened, with almost half of them spending at least 50 percent of their income on housing costs.⁴⁹ This should come as no surprise since “**Virginia has the largest gap between its minimum wage and the bare minimum needed to support a family of four.**”⁵⁰ It should, however, disproportionately alarm the Latino community because while it represents only about 15% of the workforce, it represents close to 25% of those who earn at or below the minimum wage.⁵¹

Safe, affordable rentals are simply unattainable to those earning only the minimum wage in the Commonwealth. To afford a two bedroom rental that meets the minimum housing quality standards of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and rents at the average fair market price, a minimum wage earner in Virginia must work **103 hours per week** (or two and a half full time jobs). With only one full time job, a Virginia worker would need to earn at least \$24.41 per hour.⁵² Indeed, the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development recently reported that “*tenants working hourly jobs making less than \$15/hour find it particularly difficult to find an affordable rental[.]*”⁵³

Our cost burdened households are more likely to live in Northern and Central Virginia or in the Hampton Roads area.⁵⁴ They tend to have lower incomes, are more likely to be renters, and are more likely to be Black or Hispanic (50 percent of Hispanic or Latino tenant households are rent cost burdened and 31 percent of Hispanic or Latino homeowners are mortgage cost burdened).⁵⁵

New affordable housing is needed throughout the Commonwealth, with experts estimating that it has a shortage of at least 200,000 units to meet the needs of very low income (income between 31 and 50 percent of median income) and extremely low income (income at or below 30 percent of median

⁴⁹ JLARC, Affordable Housing in Virginia, at 7.

⁵⁰

COMMISSION TO EXAMINE RACIAL AND ECONOMIC INEQUITY IN VIRGINIA LAW, Identifying Virginia’s Racially Discriminatory Laws and Inequitable Economic Policies, January 6, 2022.

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LEAGUE OF UNITED LATIN AMERICAN CITIZENS, Latinos and the Minimum Wage, available at <http://civilrightsdocs.info/pdf/minimumwage/latinos-minimum-wage.pdf> (last accessed July 16, 2022). See also VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, Virginia Socio-Demographic Characteristics, available at https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/10/2017/02/DEMOGRAPHICS_FINAL.pdf (last accessed July 16, 2022)(African American and Hispanic/Latino households have significantly lower incomes than others).

⁵²

See NATIONAL LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION, Out of Reach: The High Cost of Housing, available at https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/2021/Out-of-Reach_2021.pdf (Last accessed July 16, 2022). See also NATIONAL LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION, How Much Do You Need to Earn to Afford a Modest Apartment in Your State?, <https://reports.nlihc.org/oor> (Last accessed July 16, 2022).

⁵³

VDHCD, Addressing Evictions Before, During, and After COVID-19, p. 11.

⁵⁴ Id., at 14.

⁵⁵ Id., at 14 (Hispanic and Black household incomes are between \$14,000 and \$29,000 lower, respectively, than the median income for non-Hispanic white households [\$80,000]. Similarly, the median income of tenant households is about \$50,000, whereas the homeowner household median income is \$43,000 higher.)

See VIRGINIA HOUS. DEV. AUTHO. AND VIRGINIA DEP’T OF HOUS. AND COMTY. DEV., “HB854 Statewide Housing Study: Current Efforts, Future Needs, New Strategies,” p. 190 & 207, available at <https://dmz1.dhcd.virginia.gov/HB854/pdf/hb854-full-report-print.pdf> (last accessed May 18, 2022).

income) families.⁵⁶ Indeed, according to a joint study by the Virginia Housing Development Authority (Virginia Housing) and the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development even homes affordable to those near Virginia’s average median income (AMI) “are becoming hard to find.”⁵⁷

Families with incomes below the AMI are often priced out or housing-cost burdened even in rental units subsidized through state or federal programs, because many such programs set rents at 50 or 60 percent of median income.⁵⁸ Though these renters may qualify for federal or state funded rental assistance, the need for assistance outpaces the availability, leading to average waits of almost 3 years before receipt of some types of assistance. Currently, more than 45,000 Virginia renters receive federally funded Housing Choice Voucher Program benefits, which unfortunately reach only about 12 percent of the low and extremely low income households that need them.⁵⁹

In the past, the VLAB’s Housing Committee supported a study by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) on the development of a statewide rental voucher program similar to the federally funded Housing Choice Voucher Program. Having now reviewed the finished study, **the Housing Committee supports JLARC’s suggestion for the development of such a program targeting Virginia’s extremely low income (income at or below 30 percent of median income) households.**

Affordability, however, must move beyond the rental market into homeownership. As of 2020, less than 50 percent of Hispanic/Latino households in Virginia own their home compared to 74% of non-Hispanic/Latino, white households.⁶⁰ In 2021, only households making almost 100 percent of Virginia’s median income (around \$76,398, according to Census Data) could afford to buy a home sold at the state’s median price for that year (above \$300,000).⁶¹ Since the median household incomes for Latino families is \$66,000 and more than half of Latino workers earn at or below the minimum wage, this possibility remains elusive.⁶²

⁵⁶ JLARC, Affordable Housing in Virginia, at 20. See also VIRGINIA HOUSING ET AL., “HB854 Statewide Housing Study,” at p. 188 (57 percent of extremely low income homeowners are housing cost-burdened.)

⁵⁷ VIRGINIA HOUSING ET AL., “HB854 Statewide Housing Study,” at p. 185.

⁵⁸ JLARC, Affordable Housing in Virginia, at 22.

⁵⁹ VIRGINIA HOUSING ET AL., “HB854 Statewide Housing Study,” at p. 214.

⁶⁰ Dr. Lisa Sturtevant, VIRGINIA ASS’N OF REALTORS, “The Hispanic Population is a Growing and Important Segment of Virginia’s Home-Buying Population,” <https://virginiarealtors.org/2021/09/30/the-hispanic-population-is-a-growing-and-important-segment-of-virginias-home-buying-population/> (last accessed May 17, 2022).

See also NATIONAL ASS’N OF HISPANIC REAL ESTATE PROF’L, 2021 State of Hispanic Homeownership Report, available at <https://nahrep.org/downloads/2021-state-of-hispanic-homeownership-report.pdf> (last accessed on May 17, 2022).

⁶¹ JLARC, Affordable Housing in Virginia, at 25. See U.S. Census, Quick Facts, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/VA/AFN120212> (last accessed May 16, 2022).

The HB 854 Statewide Housing Study found that the median home price in Virginia as of January 2022 was above \$300,000. VIRGINIA HOUSING ET. AL, “HB854 Statewide Housing Study,” p. 184. According to the Virginia Association of Realtors, the median price of a home in Virginia increased 9% between 2021 and 2022. VIRGINIA ASS’N OF REALTORS, “2021 Was a Record-Breaking Year for Virginia’s Housing Market,” available at <https://virginiarealtors.org/2022/01/20/2021-was-a-record-breaking-year-for-virginias-housing-market/> (last accessed May 19, 2022).

⁶² JLARC, Affordable Housing in Virginia, at 14. See also THE COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE, “Raising the Wage in Virginia Will Benefit Working Families,” available at

As median home prices rise without a similar increase in Latino wages, growing our rates of homeownership—and amassing the transgenerational wealth accumulation it fosters— will become impossible absent strategic leadership.⁶³ It is hence that our committee continues to **RECOMMEND increased funding of the Virginia Housing Trust Fund (VHTF)**, which creates and preserves affordable housing, particularly in ways that foster increases in homeownership by Virginians of Latino descent.⁶⁴

In addition to increasing the stock of affordable housing for lower income Virginians of Latino descent, the Commonwealth should increase the funding, geographic reach, and language access for programs that cover down payment and closing costs for first time homebuyers. Due to their lower incomes and transgenerational poverty, first time homebuyers of color—whether Latino/Hispanic or Black—often experience greater difficulty in accumulating the savings needed for these.⁶⁵

Previous VLAB’s reports lauded the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)’s Virginia Individual Development Accounts (VIDA) program but decried the limited geographical reach of its intermediaries. The VIDA program identifies individuals within established income brackets to receive up to \$4,000 in matching funds on their savings for the down payment on a home. VIDA intermediaries recruit, determine, and verify candidates’ eligibility. The current list of VIDA intermediaries, however, leaves significant geographic portions of the Commonwealth underserved and it is not clear to what extent their recruitment efforts target the Latino community. **VLAB thus RECOMMENDS identifying VIDA intermediaries for all our geographic regions and requiring that all VIDA intermediaries retain Spanish fluent staff or can readily access Spanish language interpretation and translation services.**

Similarly, VLAB reasserts its **RECOMMENDATION to deliberately expand the DHCD’s Homeownership Down Payment Assistance, additionally advocating for funding tailored to inform and educate qualified Spanish-speaking homebuyers**—especially very low income families—about its existence and requirements. This payment assistance program provides grants of up to 15 percent of the purchase price and up to \$2,500 in closing costs to certain first time home buyers.⁶⁶

<https://thecommonwealthinstitute.org/research/raising-the-wage-in-virginia-will-benefit-working-families/> (last accessed May 16, 2022).

⁶³ Rakesh Kochhar and Rakesh Kochhar, PEW RESEARCH CENTER, *Latinos’ Incomes Higher Than Before Great Recession, but U.S.-Born Latinos Yet to Recover*, available at <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2019/03/Pew-Research-Center-Latino-Incomes-Report-2019-03-07.pdf> (2019) (last accessed May 16, 2022)(U.S.-born Latinos’ incomes in 2017 were 6% less than in 2007 and have yet to recover following the Great Recession).

⁶⁴ This recommendation was included in the COMMISSION TO EXAMINE RACIAL AND ECONOMIC INEQUITY IN VIRGINIA LAW’s report *Identifying Virginia’s Racially Discriminatory Laws and Inequitable Economic Policies*, issued on January 6, 2022. The same is available at <https://www.law.virginia.edu/system/files/news/2022/2022-report.pdf> (last accessed July 16, 2022).

⁶⁵ JOINT CENTER FOR HOUSING STUDIES OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY, “The State of the Nation’s Housing 2021,” p. 3, available at https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/reports/files/Harvard_JCHS_State_Nations_Housing_2021.pdf (Last accessed May 18, 2022). See also Benjamin Ward, JOINT CENTER FOR HOUSING STUDIES OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY, “Designing a Nationwide Downpayment Assistance Program,” available at https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/research/files/harvard_jchs_downpayment_assistance_ward_2021.pdf (Last accessed May 18, 2022)(recommendations on the design of down payment programs that, nationwide, can could help “as many as 1.0 million Black renters and 470,000 Hispanic renters buy homes.”)

⁶⁶ VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, *Homeownership Down Payment Assistance Program (DPA)*, <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/dpa> (Last accessed May 18, 2022).

We additionally **RECOMMEND** that the Administration consider the potential for cooperation between the Commonwealth and the federal government to establish a newly proposed **program or programs to guarantee fixed low rate mortgages to low and very low income first time home buyers and subsidize their origination fees.**

Purchasing power alone, however, cannot guarantee Latinos access to housing in our neighborhoods of choice absent deliberate measures to eradicate pernicious ethnic and racial discrimination against Latinos by landlords, real estate agents, and mortgage lenders.⁶⁷ Latinos face adverse treatment in the rental and home sales market and face higher rejection rates and less favorable mortgage terms than non-Latino whites with similar credit characteristics.⁶⁸

Discrimination persists despite its clear prohibitions in Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (known as the Fair Housing Act) and in our Commonwealth's own Fair Housing Law, Va. Code § 36-96.1. Data gathered directly from financial institutions through the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act shows that even higher income Hispanics experience discrimination when obtaining or refinancing a mortgage or a home improvement loan.⁶⁹ It is, therefore, no surprise that in their joint study in statewide housing needs the Virginia Housing and the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development found that "*Homeowners of color are uncommon in Virginia.*"⁷⁰

The Committee applauds the Commonwealth's recognition that the widespread racial disparities in housing currently observed are the result of discriminatory public policies and laws (along with private acts of discrimination). The Committee further congratulates our Executive Branch for recognizing its role in redlining practices and racist deed restrictions as well as its complicity and facilitation of discriminatory property appraisals, race-based federal mortgage programs, and other predatory lending programs.⁷¹

To move past awareness, the Committee **RECOMMENDS implementation of the recommendations published in the HB854 Statewide Housing Study** along with other common sense

⁶⁷ THE COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE, "We're in This Together: African-American and Immigrant Communities Share Challenges, Policy Solutions," available at http://www.thecommonwealthinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/in_this_together_FINAL_v2.pdf#page=8 (last accessed May 17, 2022).

⁶⁸ THE COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE, "We're in This Together," at p. 9. See VIRGINIA HOUSING ET AL., "HB854 Statewide Housing Study," at p. 192.

⁶⁹ FEDERAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS EXAMINATION COUNCIL, *Press Release: FFIEC Announces Availability of 2019 Data on Mortgage Lending* (June 24, 2020), available at ffiec.gov/press/pr062420_2.htm (last accessed May 17, 2022) ("Black and Hispanic-White applicants experienced higher denial rates for first lien, 1-4 family, site-built, owner-occupied conventional home purchase loans than non-Hispanic-White applicants[.]")

See also CENTER FOR RESPONSIBLE LENDING, "New HMDA Data Shows Mortgage Market Continues to Exclude Black and Latino Borrowers," available at <https://www.responsiblelending.org/media/new-hmda-data-shows-mortgage-market-continues-exclude-black-and-latin-o-borrowers> (last accessed May 17, 2022).

⁷⁰ VIRGINIA HOUSING ET AL., "HB854 Statewide Housing Study," at p. 177.

⁷¹ *Id.*, at p. 400.

investment practices into formerly redlined and segregated neighborhoods that prioritize minority lead and owned organizations.

Additionally, the Committee **RECOMMENDS** studying the ability of the **Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation—through the Real Estate Appraiser Board—** and/or other relevant professional regulatory bodies **to create and enforce standards of study, duty, and accountability applicable to real estate appraisers** that can help identify and discourage the production of inaccurate valuations based on racial or ethnic discrimination. It should also consider how it can implement other recommendations from the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council’s report of its study on the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice.⁷²

CHILDREN AND HOUSING INSECURITY OR INSTABILITY

The most recent Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development’s Five Year Consolidated Action Plan defines *housing instability* by reference to “[s]ubstandard housing or housing with one or more housing problems including cost burden[.]”⁷³ The Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines a similar concept—*housing insecurity*—to include the inability to afford rent, mortgage, or utilities payments; the inability to afford housing that is safe and habitable; and the outright loss of housing through foreclosures and evictions.⁷⁴

A residential eviction occurs when the Sheriff’s Office expels tenants from a housing unit following a judicial process known in Virginia as an unlawful detainer.⁷⁵ Evictions can come about based on a foreclosure proceeding (when the former owner becomes a tenant at sufferance), the expiration of a lease, a tenant’s misconduct, or on a tenant’s failure to pay. According to the Eviction Lab—a research authority on evictions in the United States affiliated to Princeton University—, the most common reason for evictions is the tenant’s failure to pay.⁷⁶

⁷² See, generally, FEDERAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS EXAMINATION COUNCIL, “Identifying Bias and Barriers, Promoting Equity: An Analysis of the USPAP and Appraisal Qualifications Criteria,” pp. 75-79 available at https://nationalfairhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/2022-01-18-NFHA-et-al-Analysis-of-Appraisal-Standards-and-Appraiser-Criteria_FINAL.pdf (Last accessed May 19, 2022).

⁷³ VIRGINIA DEP’T OF HOUS. AND COM’Y DEV., Five Year Consolidated Action Plan (2018-2023), p. 43 available at <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/sites/default/files/Docx/consolidated-plan/2018-2023-consolidated-plan.pdf> (Last accessed May 30, 2022).

⁷⁴ Shawn Bucholtz, U.S. DEP’T OF HOUS. AND URB. DEV., OFFICE OF POLICY DEV. AND RESEARCH, “Measuring Housing Insecurity in the American Housing Survey,” available at <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr-edge-frm-asst-sec-111918.html> (Last accessed May 25, 2022).

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In the Commonwealth, residential landlord-tenant relations are governed by the VIRGINIA RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD TENANT ACT, found at Va. Code § 55.1-1200 et seq.

⁷⁶ Allison Bovell-Ammon, et al., Housing Is Health: A Renewed Call for Federal Housing Investments in Affordable Housing for Families With Children, ACADEMIC PEDIATRICS 21:19–23 (2021), available at <https://childrenshealthwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/PIIS1876285920303855.pdf> (Last accessed May 27, 2022). According to the private research firm Statista about to 77.3% of evictions are based on failure to pay rent. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/785742/main-reasons-for-eviction-threats-usa/> (last accessed on March 9, 2021).

Unsurprisingly, low-income families are the ones who most frequently face evictions,⁷⁷ which concerns VLAB since at least 1 out of every 6 Latinos in Virginia (16.67%) lives in a family with income below the poverty line.⁷⁸ To this concern, one must add studies that show that —whether based on financial factors, a tenant’s conduct, or a landlord’s bias⁷⁹—Hispanic tenants face an increased risk of eviction filings.⁸⁰

Regardless of ethnicity or national origin, however, the simple fact of residing in Virginia places individuals at a heightened risk of eviction, as 5 out of the 10 cities in the US with the highest eviction rates are in Virginia.⁸¹ Sadly, it is households with children that appear most vulnerable to housing discrimination and insecurity.⁸²

77

Matthew Desmond and Carl Gershenson, “Who gets evicted? Assessing individual, neighborhood, and network factors,” *SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH* 1-16 (2016), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2016.08.017>, available at https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mdesmond/files/desmondgershenson.ssr_2016.pdf (last accessed May 26, 2022).

78

Laura Goren and Michael Cassidy, *THE COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE, A Closer Look: The Contributions of Hispanic and Latino Immigrants to Virginia’s Economy*, p. 3, available at http://www.thecommonwealthinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/closer_look_latino_hispanic_FINAL.pdf (last accessed March 17, 2021).

⁷⁹ Matthew Desmond et al., “Evicting Children” at 304 (citing Lempert, Richard, and Kiyoshi Ikeda. 1970. “Evictions from Public Housing: Effects of Independent Review.” *AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW* 35:852-60).

⁸⁰ Deena Greenberg, Carl Gershenson, and Matthew Desmond, *Discrimination in Evictions: Empirical Evidence and Legal Challenges*, 51 *HARVARD CIVIL RIGHTS-CIVIL LIBERTIES LAW REVIEW* 115, 121 (2016), available at https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mdesmond/files/greenberg_et_al_.pdf (last accessed on March 18, 2021); Peter Hepburn, Renee Louis, and Matthew Desmond, *Racial and Gender Disparities among Evicted Americans*, *SOCIOLOGICAL SCIENCE*, Vol. 7, pp. 649-662 (2020), available at https://sociologicalscience.com/download/vol-7/december/SocSci_v7_649to662.pdf (last accessed March 17, 2021)(“The average Latinx eviction filing rate was 3.6 percent, significantly higher than the observed rate for white renters[.]”); Matthew Desmond, *INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON POVERTY, Unaffordable America: Poverty, Housing, and Eviction*, p. 3, available at <https://www.irp.wisc.edu/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/FF22-2015.pdf> (last accessed March 17, 2021)(“The rate of involuntary mobility for all forced move [i.e., evictions] was significantly higher for Hispanic renters, compared to white and black renters.”); Matthew Desmond & Tracey Shollenberger, *Forced Displacement From Rental Housing: Prevalence and Neighborhood Consequences*, *DEMOGRAPHY* 52:1751–1772 (2015), available at <https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mdesmond/files/desmondshollenberger.demography.2015.pdf> (last accessed March 17, 2021)(same); Matthew Desmond, Carl Gershenson, and Barbara Kiviat, *Forced Relocation and Residential Instability among Urban Renters*, *SOCIAL SERVICE REVIEW* Vol. 89, pp. 227-262 (June 2015), available at https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mdesmond/files/desmond.etal_2015.forcedrelation.ssr_2.pdf (last accessed March 17, 2021)(same).

⁸¹ These cities are Richmond, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, and Chesapeake. According to census data, Hispanics or Latinos make up 7.3% of Richmond’s population, 6.2% of Hampton’s, 9% of Newport News’, 8% of Norfolk’s, and 6.2% of Chesapeake’s.

82

Matthew Desmond (Harvard University) et al., “Evicting Children,” *SOCIAL FORCES* 92(1) 303–327 (2013), available at https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mdesmond/files/social_forces-2013-desmond-303-27.pdf (Last accessed May 25, 2022); Barbara Shelly, *THE HECHINGER REPORT*, “Children will bear the brunt of a looming eviction crisis” (2020), <https://hechingerreport.org/children-will-bear-the-brunt-of-a-looming-eviction-crisis/> (last accessed May 25, 2022); Ian Lundberg and Louis Donnelly, “A Research Note on the Prevalence of Housing Eviction Among Children Born in U.S. Cities” (2020), available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6358494/> (last accessed May 25, 2022).

Somewhere between 14 and 25 percent of U.S. children have or will experience at least one eviction before the age of 15. Ian Lundberg and Louis Donnelly, *A Research Note on the Prevalence of Housing Eviction Among Children Born in U.S. Cities* (2020), available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6358494/> (last accessed May 25, 2022).

A large number of U.S. studies demonstrates a link between housing instability and a deterioration in children’s health through increased likelihood of malnutrition and infant mortality; physical leading to hospitalization and interventions by child protective services; depression and risk of suicide; and transgenerational poverty.⁸³ Analyses also show that evictions increase children’s school truancy and encounters with school disciplinary authorities; decrease their literacy, completion of schoolwork, and standardized test scores; increase their drop-out rates and, in older children, increase their likelihood of confrontations with law enforcement and arrest rates.⁸⁴

In addition to these alarming human costs, experts estimate that—in a ten-year period—children’s housing instability in all its forms costs the United States economy \$111 billion in avoidable health and education expenses.⁸⁵ To its share of such costs, Virginia must add the costs of emergency shelter programs, which some studies suggest average at more than \$4,800 per family per month.⁸⁶

VLAB’s concern for Virginia’s children experiencing housing instability is not academic or merely based upon studies and statistics. Our Housing Committee has received first-hand and expert testimony on the physical and mental health consequences these children face. The Commonwealth’s failure to guarantee that each worker receives a living wage—one which allows families to afford adequate shelter, food, and other necessities—along with its failure to otherwise create or incentivize a sufficient stock of affordable housing has forced vulnerable families—especially female-headed households with children—into unsafe subletting arrangements. See Appendix C-A; Appendix C-B. Children’s safety should not be contingent on their parents’ wages.

Preventing childhood homelessness and its trauma should therefore be both a fiscal and a moral imperative. VLAB’s Housing Committee celebrates the recent enactment of HB 717, codified at Va. Code

A study commissioned by HUD, for example, showed that even financially qualified households with children experience some form of discrimination during their housing search, including by being denied information, over the phone, about rental units available at their preferred rental payment rent. HUD PD&R, Future Directions for Research on Discrimination Against Families with Children in Rental Housing Markets, available at <https://www.huduser.gov/PORTAL/sites/default/files/pdf/HDSFamiliesFutureEssay.pdf> (last accessed May 26, 2022).

⁸³ Hoke, Morgan K. and Courtney E. Boen, The Health Impacts of Eviction: Evidence from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health, SOCIAL SCIENCE & MEDICINE 273:113742 (2021); Matthew Desmond at al., “Evicting Children” at 303; Megan E. Hatch & Jinhee Yun, “Losing Your Home Is Bad for Your Health: Short- and Medium-Term Health Effects of Eviction on Young Adults,” HOUSING POLICY DEBATE, 1-21, 1 (2020), available at https://www.nlihc.org/sites/default/files/MEMO_Health_Effects_of_Eviction_on_Young_Adults.pdf (Last accessed May 27, 2022)(“Housing instability, which can be caused by evictions among other factors, can lead to risky health behaviors as well as decreased adult and child mental and physical health.”)

⁸⁴ Megan E. Hatch & Jinhee Yun, Losing Your Home Is Bad for Your Health, at 3.

⁸⁵ Allison Bovell-Ammon, et al., Housing Is Health: A Renewed Call for Federal Housing Investments in Affordable Housing for Families With Children, ACADEMIC PEDIATRICS 21:19–23 (2021)(citing Población, A., “Stable Homes Make Healthy Families,” Children’s Watch, available at <https://childrenshealthwatch.org/stablehomeshealthyfamilies/#:~:text=Through%20the%20What%20IF%20Project,them%20to%20reach%20their%20potential>. (Last accessed May 27, 2022)(methodology available at https://childrenshealthwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/Cost-of-unstable-housing_Methods-only.pdf)(last accessed May 27, 2022).

⁸⁶ Daniel Gubbs et al., U.S. DEP’T OF HOUS. AND URB. DEV., OFFICE OF POLICY DEV. AND RESEARCH, Family Options Study Short-Term Impacts of Housing and Services Interventions for Homeless Families, p. xxvii, available at https://www.huduser.gov/portal/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/FamilyOptionsStudy_final.pdf (last accessed May 30, 2022).

§ 63.2-806 et al., as an acknowledgement of our homeless youth crisis and an effort to empower homeless minors to find housing and related services solutions to their trauma.

The Committee **RECOMMENDS** that the Board of Social Services **prioritize the creation of the regulations** expected by the Code of Virginia, Va. Code § 63.2-806(1)(E). The Committee expects and **RECOMMENDS** that the Department of Social Services similarly **expedite** the establishment of the work group delineated by the Code, Va. Code § 63.2-806(2), for the creation of the above mentioned regulations.

The Committee **RECOMMENDS** that both the Board and the work group acknowledge, study, and propose measures to ensure **effective access** of housing and supportive services—including medical care—to children **who are English Language Learners** and/or who communicate through sign language or assistive technology (or who are otherwise disabled). These measures must include the **systemic provision of interpreters** and, to the extent children are expected to negotiate housing accommodations as adults, the guaranteed access to **licensed legal counsel for these minors both before and during the process of negotiating housing benefits or contractual agreements.**

In addition, while the Committee commends the DHDC’s Five Year Consolidated Action Plan for its commitment to allocate a small portion of tenant based rental assistance to youth aging out of the foster care system in two of our jurisdictions with higher homelessness rates, it believes that Virginia should aspire to lift more youth out of homelessness during a period of their life critical to the attainment of higher education. Accordingly, **it RECOMMENDS the expansion of this program and the allocation of state funds within tenant based rental assistance to ensure housing stability to a more significant number of promising, college-bound youth aging out of our foster care system.**

CHILDREN’S HEALTH AND HOUSING CONDITIONS

Epidemiological and public health studies have shown that low income households experience higher rates of age adjusted disease and mortality rates than middle and higher income households.⁸⁷ While myriad factors converge to result in excessive disease and deaths within our impoverished, low income communities, the housing conditions that they are forced to endure —lead, asbestos, mold, pests, and inaccessibility to healthy food sources, *inter alia*—have been recognized as a major factor influencing their health.⁸⁸

Children who live in low income neighborhoods face a heightened risk and a disproportionate harm from exposures to lead, asbestos, mold, and pests because they are most likely to live in aging and dilapidated housing, built before 1978 and thus covered in lead paint or outfitted with lead pipes, and least likely to garner government attention and protection through required remediation.⁸⁹ Political inaction to prevent these avoidable exposures condemns low income children to a lifetime of irreversible

⁸⁷ John W. Lynch, PhD, MPH, et al., Income Inequality and Mortality in Metropolitan Areas of the United States, American Journal of Public Health Vol. 88, No. 7, pp. 1074-1080 (1998), available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1508263/pdf/amjph00019-0072.pdf> (Last accessed July 16, 2022).

⁸⁸ Xavier Bonnefoy, Inadequate Housing and Health: an Overview, INT. J. ENVIRONMENT AND POLLUTION, VOL. 30, NOS. 3/4, 2007, available at https://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/121832/E90676.pdf (last accessed July 17, 2022).

⁸⁹ Health Management Associates, Potential Medicaid Strategies to Improve Services to Children at Risk of Lead Exposure (2020), available at <https://www.greenandhealthyhomes.org/wp-content/uploads/HMA-GHHI-Potential-Medical-Strategies-to-Improve-Services-to-Children-at-Risk-of-Lead-Exposure.pdf> (Last accessed July 17, 2022).

damage to their brains and nervous and respiratory systems.⁹⁰ In turn, these biological harms compounded by the emotional toll that financial and social deprivation impose on children from low income families generally result in lower literacy scores and thus exacerbate the achievement gap between them and higher income children.⁹¹

Neither the complex legislative schemes found in the Virginia Residential Landlord Tenant Act nor the complex building and construction codes occasionally enforced by local authorities have eliminated substandard living conditions for a significant number of low income households. Low income tenants remain unversed in the intricacies of Virginia's Tenant's Assertions or remedy by repair provisions and few would know where to find them or how to lodge a complaint with their local code compliance agency. Even fewer could afford an attorney to litigate these matters on their behalf or otherwise obtain representation from legal aid organizations, which often prioritize eviction prevention based on grant restrictions upon their work.

Given the Administration stated policy preferences for the legal status quo, the Housing Committee **RECOMMENDS** the creation of a state funded **grants program to remediate mold, lead paint, or asbestos insulation or to fumigate severely infested units/buildings** where households with incomes below the area's AMI reside. These grants could be administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development or by the counties, using a portal and human infrastructure similar to that developed for rental assistance application during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Simultaneously, the Committee **RECOMMENDS** that the Administration simultaneously create legal education and/or representation **grants to fund events, programs, or positions** focusing upon housing conditions litigation, mediation, or advice, within the nine regional legal aid programs overseen by the **Legal Services Corporation of Virginia**.

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See, e.g., World Health Organization, Lead Poisoning, <https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/lead-poisoning-and-health> (Last accessed July 17, 2022); Marie Luckowitsch, Central Nervous System Mold Infections in Children with Hematological Malignancies: Advances in Diagnosis and Treatment, Journal of Fungi, Vol. 7, No. 3 (2021)(fungal infections can affect lungs, liver, kidney, bones, and central nervous system, leaving significant and permanent neurological damage), available at <https://www.mdpi.com/2309-608X/7/3/168/htm>, (last accessed July 17, 2022); Sofie Dalsgaard et al., Cancer Incidence and Risk of Multiple Cancers after Environmental Asbestos Exposure in Childhood—A Long-Term Register-Based Cohort Study, INT. J. ENVIRON. RES. PUBLIC HEALTH, Vol. 19, 268 (2022)(increased cancer risk for children regularly exposed to asbestos); Khansa Ahmad et al., Association of Poor Housing Conditions with COVID-19 Incidence and Mortality Across US Counties (2020), available at <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0241327> (Last accessed July 17, 2022) (emphasizing the alarming rate of COVID-19 morbidity and mortality among households living in poor housing conditions, regardless of race, ethnicity, or educational attainment).

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Claudia Coulton et al., MacArthur Foundation, Housing Crisis Leaves Lasting Imprint on Children in Cleveland, available at https://www.macfound.org/media/files/hhm_brief_housing_crisis_children_in_cleveland.pdf (last accessed July 17, 2022).

Conclusion

The Virginia Latino Advisory Board wishes to thank Governor Youngkin, the Office of the Governor, his Cabinet, the Deputy Secretaries, and all administration staff that have worked on behalf of Latinos in the Commonwealth to make this 2021-2022 Annual Report possible. The recommendations of this report reflect the insight, dedication, and commitment of many hard-working public servants that partnered with VLAB to examine the most urgent health, social, education, economic, and cultural issues affecting Latinos in Virginia. The work of the board throughout the entire year would not have been possible without their support, collaboration, and thoughtfulness. A special thanks goes to Suzanne Holland, Fernando Espinoza, Carmen Williams, Michael Perez, Christian Hernandez, Justin Bell, and CJ Sailor.

VLAB also wishes to thank the many organizations, Latino leaders, community advocates, and elected officials that took part in the crafting of this Annual Report, and the board's work throughout the year. These individuals and groups participated in VLAB meetings and shared the conversation that drives solutions. CASA Virginia, Edu-Futuro, VACIR, Radio Poder, LULAC, VLLC, Sacred Heart Center, VACOLAO, Sin Barreras, Casa Latina, the Virginia AFL-CIO, and many others all contribute to the vibrancy of Latino community in the Commonwealth and are valued partners to VLAB.

VLAB looks forward to a continuation of this joint effort to implement stronger Latino worker protections, help entrepreneurs innovate and grow their businesses, improve public school student outcomes, welcome new immigrants and undocumented individuals to Virginia, keep families safe in their homes from eviction, and continue to expand access to affordable health care. These recommendations are respectfully submitted in the spirit of virtue, liberty, steadfastness, and renewal.

Appendices of 2022 Annual Report

Additional documents referenced in the report are listed below and attached to the end of this report.

Appendix A - Meeting Agendas & Minutes

Appendix B - Listening Session Notes

Appendix C - Housing Appendices

Appendix D - Statements