

## **Appendix A. Statewide Information and Advocacy Resources**

Virginia's disability information services and advocacy programs are diverse and multilayered. They may operate independently or as a part of a larger agency or organization. Some of these resources and initiatives have been described in the most appropriate chapters of this *Assessment*. Others with statewide reach are included here.

Most government agencies and nongovernmental organizations have information on their websites that contain lists of helpful documents and web links to sources of further assistance. Many agencies and organizations also provide printed copies of documents in response to written, telephone, or e-mail requests. Some, but not all, provide their materials in foreign languages. Organizations receiving state and federal funding are required to provide information in alternate formats for individuals with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations to access the material.

The information below is not all-inclusive. Only organizations that have a statewide office or presence are listed, and the focus is on organizations that work with or provide information to people with developmental disabilities and their families. Website addresses and phone numbers were current as of June of 2014. For further information on these agencies or organizations and their programs, readers are encouraged to contact them directly.

### **2-1-1 VIRGINIA**

<https://211.getcare.com/211provider/consumer/index211.do>

Standard phone: dial 211

Relay users: dial 711, then 211

Videophone users: 1 (800) 230-6977

By dialing 211 or visiting 2-1-1 Virginia's interactive website, anyone can use this free information and referral service. Trained professionals respond to calls and e-mail inquiries submitted via the website with information on available services and suggested resources from a large database of health and human services in Virginia. Referrals are confidential, and the website includes a link to information on eligibility for benefits available through the Virginia Department of Social Services. Government agencies, community-based nonprofit organizations, and businesses that provide health and human services for the citizens of Virginia are encouraged to list their services on this site.

### **American Civil Liberties Union of Virginia (ACLU)**

<http://www.acluva.org>

(804) 644-8022

This private, nonprofit affiliate of the national ACLU promotes the civil liberties and civil rights of all residents through litigation, public education, and other activities. Issues relevant to

individuals with disabilities include, but are not limited to, free speech, religious rights, access to government, due process and criminal justice, privacy rights, and students' rights.

### **The Arc of Virginia**

<http://www.thearcofva.org>

(804) 649-8481

This nonprofit organization advocates on behalf of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families for changes in state policies. It promotes the creation of individualized, community-based supports that enable people with disabilities to lead productive lives. The Arc of Virginia's 26 chapters across the State each provide a variety of services and supports for individuals with disabilities and their families appropriate to their communities' needs. Together with the statewide organization, they offer service providers training and technical assistance regarding strategies that enhance family involvement and share families' perspectives with Virginia's policymakers. The Arc of Virginia has launched a program called New Path (<http://new-path.thearcofva.org/>) that helps families navigate through the early intervention services system when their children are newly diagnosed as having a disability. The program provides linkages to other families, services, and supports.

### **Assistive Technology Loan Fund**

<http://www.atlfa.org>

1 (866) 835-5976

Voice/TTY: (804) 662-9000

This quasi-state agency offers financial services to assist individuals who might not otherwise be eligible to borrow funds for assistive technology they need. Their mission is to provide alternative funding resources for Virginians with disabilities to help them obtain the needed assistive technology. Any Virginian with a disability can apply for a loan with this organization, regardless of income and no matter how small a loan he or she might need. Credit history, current income, and existing debt will determine if an application can be approved. This organization makes many loans for modified vehicles, hearing aids, and more.

### **Autism Society of America (ASA)**

Central Virginia chapter: <http://www.asacv.org>

(804) 257-0192

Northern Virginia chapter: <http://www.asanv.org>

(703)-495-8444

Tidewater chapter: <http://www.tidewaterasa.org>

(757) 461-4474

The Autism Society of America has several chapters in Virginia. While there is no state chapter, local chapters have a strong, statewide presence. All three chapters share information with individuals, families, and professionals on treatment, education, research, and advocacy.

They hold support meetings, training, and other events, and they undertake legislative advocacy.

### **Brain Injury Association of Virginia (BIAV)**

<http://www.biav.net>

1 (800) 444-6443

This nonprofit organization works to support individuals with brain injuries and their families and to prevent brain injuries in Virginia. The BIAV also works with service providers and advocates and provides outreach to those affected by brain injuries. This organization maintains an extensive clearinghouse of brain injury information and makes referrals for information and services. Further, they offer training and recreation programs for individuals with brain injury and their families and provide a toll-free Family Help Line through the number listed above.

### **Centers for Independent Living (CILs)**

<http://www.vadrs.org/cbs/cilslisting.htm>

(804) 662-7000

The federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, authorizes CILs to provide services and advocacy that promote the leadership, independence, and productivity of people with significant disabilities. CILs are nonprofit, non-residential places of action and coalition building where persons with disabilities develop the skills necessary to make decisions and choices about their own lives. CIL staff members work with individuals and local communities to remove barriers to independence and to ensure equal opportunities for persons with disabilities. All CILs provide the core services of advocacy for individuals and for system change, information and referrals, peer counseling, and training in independent living. Other services offered by CILs vary and may include, but are not limited to: disability awareness outreach, information on accessibility, educational and housing advocacy, nursing facility transition services, and general disability information and referrals. Additional information on CILs appears in the **Centers for Independent Living and Related Services** section of the **Community Living Supports** chapter of this *Assessment*. To contact a CIL in a specific location, call the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services at the number listed above or use the local phone numbers provided on its CILs website.

### **Cerebral Palsy of Virginia**

<http://www.cerebralpalsyofvirginia.org>

(757) 497-7474

This nonprofit organization serves children and adults with cerebral palsy and other developmental disabilities such as Down's syndrome, intellectual disabilities, autism, muscular dystrophy, and learning disabilities, as well as those who have vision, hearing, or speech impairments. It advocates on behalf of individuals and their families and provides programs and services to help them attain maximum independence and inclusion in their communities. Guidance is provided on the availability of adaptive toys, assistive technology, computer

software, books, and other resources that are available for loan, allowing individuals to test and use these items in their home to ensure their effectiveness before making a purchase.

### **Commonwealth Autism Service (CAS)**

<http://www.autismva.org>

1 (800) 649-8481

This organization provides leadership and a statewide system of services to maximize the potential of Virginians with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) through regional service networks. It provides services to children with ASD and their families, and to adults and older Virginians with ASD. CAS promotes best practices for treatment and for state policy changes that improve service access and availability. CAS provides ongoing support for families as well as technical assistance and training, including an annual conference. It has developed and implemented a model of instructional support for students with ASD in classrooms across the State and, most recently, created a model for transitioning graduating seniors with ASD to higher education.

### **The disAbility Law Center of Virginia (dLCV)**

<http://disabilitylawva.org>

1 (800) 552-3962

The dLCV is Virginia's Protection and Advocacy System and also operates the Client Assistance Program in Virginia. Formerly the Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy, the dLCV became an independent nonprofit in October of 2013. The dLCV operates a variety of federally funded and administered programs, including those authorized by the federal Developmental Disabilities and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (DD Act). Its mission is to

*protect and advance the legal, human, and civil rights of persons with disabilities;  
combat and prevent abuse, neglect, and discrimination; and promote  
independence, choice, and self-determination by persons with disabilities.*

Because dLCV has limited resources, priorities and goals for its activities are set annually by its governing board. All individuals who contact dLCV requesting assistance receive information or referrals. However, only individuals with problems targeted by the Center's goals and priorities may be eligible for advocacy or legal assistance.

### **Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) of Virginia**

<http://www.phonehome.org>

(804) 354-0641

Located in Richmond, HOME is certified by both the Virginia Real Estate Board and the Virginia Fair Housing Board to provide fair housing classes covering topics such as money management, tenant's rights, purchasing a home, fair housing reasonable accommodations, and home modifications. Courses are offered to the general public periodically throughout the year and can also be arranged for a company or other group on request. HOME also helps

income-eligible Virginians afford home purchases by providing financial assistance to cover closing costs and down payments.

### **Learning Disabilities Association of Virginia (LDAV)**

<http://www.ldavirginia.org/>

e-mail: [info@ldavirginia.org](mailto:info@ldavirginia.org)

This statewide organization seeks to support and encourage individuals with learning disabilities, family members of individuals with learning disabilities, and the professionals who serve them to improve public awareness and promote lifelong career options. LDAV supports research on prevention and early detection to ensure educators adequately accommodate those with learning disabilities. The LDAV also encourages families to be rigorously involved in the education of their loved ones to improve life success. This organization does not have a phone but can be contacted at the email address above.

### **The Legal Aid Justice Center**

<http://www.justice4all.org>

1 (800) 763-7323 (clients only)

(434) 977-0553

This legal aid center is based in Charlottesville and performs significant work in the area of disability. Its Civil Advocacy Program addresses legal issues in housing, public benefits, employment, consumer protection, and the rights of the elderly, new immigrants to Virginia, and individuals with disabilities. Its JustChildren program works to ensure that young people have access to the services and supports necessary for them to live successfully in their communities. The Center provides direct legal services for families with children from birth to age 18 through its offices in Charlottesville, Richmond, and Petersburg. Legal representation is provided in matters concerning appropriate education services for children with disabilities, necessary treatment services for children with psychiatric concerns, and services and supports required for children involved with the juvenile courts to remain in their communities. The JustChildren program also engages in community education and works with other statewide advocacy efforts that involve foster care, and/or the juvenile justice system. Telephone numbers for the regional offices and program contact names and numbers are listed on the website.

### **Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program**

<http://www.elderrightsva.org>

1 (800) 552-3402

The national Older Americans Act requires all states to provide advocacy services for older persons receiving long-term care. The Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) contracts with 25 local Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) to provide these services through the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. The State ombudsman, who has expertise in both long-term care and advocacy, coordinates and supports designated local ombudsmen who

complete a certification curriculum and then identify, investigate, and resolve complaints made by or on behalf of older persons.

### **March of Dimes**

<http://www.marchofdimes.com>

(804) 968-4120

This nonprofit organization's Virginia chapter has five offices in Virginia with two located in Glen Allen and one each in Chesapeake, Harrisonburg, and Roanoke. It conducts research, community outreach, education, and advocacy to improve the lives of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth, and infant mortality through education and outreach to families of young children.

### **Medicaid Waiver Technical Assistance Center (MWTAC)**

<http://www.endependence.org> (Click on "Services," then "Medicaid Advocacy.")

1 (866) 323-1088

This center provides materials and workshops for individuals with disabilities and their families, including detailed information about accessing Virginia's Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waivers. This independent, voluntary network of individuals and representatives of organizations across the State have expertise and training in Medicaid HCBS Waivers.

### **Medical Home Plus**

<http://www.medhomeplus.org>

(804) 330-5030

This nonprofit organization facilitates family, professional, and community partnerships to support a more transparent service delivery system. It works with individuals with special health care needs and their family members to help individuals with disabilities remain in their own homes. Its website includes information for medical professionals and offers a family resource center that details laws related to children with disabilities and provides information on financing a child's needs and planning for a child's education and future needs. The organization also offers referral resources, preventative services, and information regarding diagnosis-specific conditions such as autism.

### **Mental Health America of Virginia (MHAV)**

<http://www.mhav.org>

1 (866) 400-6428

This nonprofit organization promotes mental health, develops services to prevent mental illness, and works to ensure that children and adults with mental illness receive proper care and treatment. It advocates for public and private sector policies, services, and financing to ensure adequate and appropriate detection, treatment, and rehabilitation for those with mental illness

as well as for housing and other supports. It raises public awareness of mental illness in order to eliminate the stigma that deters some individuals from seeking help when they need it.

**Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA)**

<http://www.mda.org>

(804) 285-2961

This association focuses on research to find cures and effective treatments for neuromuscular diseases that affect more than a million Americans. Its national website contains information and educational resources for families, including a zip-code-based locator to find local offices that can direct Virginians to other community and governmental organizations for assistance. Service providers listed on their website include state agencies and organizations especially for parents and other disability-related resources specific to Virginia. To contact the Virginia headquarters, call the number above.

**National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Virginia**

<http://www.namivirginia.org>

Informational HelpLine (not a crisis line): 1 (888) 486-8264

Main office: (804) 285-8264

This organization provides information and support for those with mental illness, including youth and their family members, adults, veterans, and seniors. It maintains a help line for information on mental illness and makes referrals to local self-help groups that provide support, share additional information on community services, and advocate on behalf of individuals with mental illness and their families. NAMI of Virginia's Richmond office is responsible for state-level policy and legislative advocacy.

**Office of the Attorney General of Virginia, Division of Human Rights**

[http://www.ag.virginia.gov/Programs%20and%20Resources/Human\\_Rights/index.html](http://www.ag.virginia.gov/Programs%20and%20Resources/Human_Rights/index.html)

(804) 786-2071

This Division was formerly a separate agency called the Human Rights Council of Virginia. Effective July 1, 2012, its functions transferred to the Office of Attorney General's Division of Human Rights, pursuant to HB 1291 and SB 678. In addition to promoting public awareness of human rights for all citizens of the Commonwealth, the Division has authority to investigate complaints under state statute as well as under Title VII of the federal Human Rights Act of 1964 (as amended), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act. It has jurisdiction in specified matters relating to public accommodations, including educational institutions, real estate transactions, and employment. The Division also investigates certain computer crimes, bullying, gang prevention, elder abuse and neglect, and Medicaid fraud. It receives and reviews discrimination complaints in these areas and uses mediation, conducts investigations, and renders determinations.

**Parent Education Advocacy Training Center (PEATC)**

<http://www.peatc.org>

1 (800) 869-6782

Voice or TTY: (703) 923-0010

Funded by a grant from the US Department of Education, PEATC is Virginia's parent education, support, training, and information center. PEATC works collaboratively with families, schools, and service professionals to increase opportunities to improve education as well as personal success in school and community life. It offers disability information development and training curricula for families and professionals that are experience based, and research tested. The Center also provides information on Virginia's Comprehensive Services Act (for at-risk youth and families), foster care, transition services, and other areas of interest to families.

### **Parents of Autistic Children (POAC)**

<http://www.poac-nova.org>

(703) 391-2251

This organization became statewide in 2007. It serves as a clearinghouse for research-based instructional materials and methodologies for students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). POAC also advocates for the use of certain methodologies in public and private schools and provides training to enable successful implementation of programs that support students with ASD.

### **Partnership for People with Disabilities (PPD)**

<http://www.vcu.edu/partnership>

TTY: 1 (800) 828-1120

(804)-828-3876

The Partnership, as it is commonly known, is located at Virginia Commonwealth University and is Virginia's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCED). As the UCED, it is authorized by the federal Developmental Disabilities and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (DD Act). It operates more than 30 state- and federally funded programs that are staffed by more than 100 professionals and students who provide support for children with disabilities and their families as well as adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities (ID/DD). Its activities are diverse and include but are not limited to: advocacy on issues affecting individuals with disabilities and their families; promotion of changes to related state policies; training; and development of resources for families and professionals. Early intervention, education, health, and self-advocacy are among the many topics that those activities address. The Partnership maintains an interdisciplinary approach in all its activities. Its collaborators include disability service providers, elementary and secondary schools and school divisions, higher education, state and local agencies, and professional organizations. The Partnership operates a number of programs. The two listed below may be of particular interest.

### **SeniorNavigator**

<http://www.SeniorNavigator.org>

1 (866) 393-0957

(804) 525-7728



This nonprofit organization focuses on information dissemination and service referrals for elderly individuals and those with disabilities, helping people to “navigate” the services system. Over the last several years, SeniorNavigator has located physical sites throughout Virginia and expanded content through the disAbilityNavigator and VirginiaNavigator links on its website. Individuals seeking assistance can access more than 27,000 health and community support resources for seniors and adults with disabilities and for their families and caregivers. Access to this information is available online or in person through a statewide network of over 750 community-based SeniorNavigator and VirginiaNavigator Centers. These Centers throughout Virginia are operated in partnership with local and regional governmental and nongovernmental organizations. Services can be located by zip code.

### **Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS)**

<http://www.vats.org>

(757) 309-1079

This statewide program, authorized and funded by the federal Assistive Technology Act of 2004 (as amended), is administered by the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). VATS promotes public awareness and provides training and technical assistance regarding the availability and use of assistive technology for people with disabilities. Staff at its central and three regional offices demonstrates or assists with training on specific devices, provides information on equipment sources, and coordinates an equipment exchange program and statewide network of recycling programs. Staff members also provide information on low-interest loans that make devices more affordable.

### **Virginia Association of Area Agencies on Aging (VAAAA)**

<http://www.vaaaa.org>

(804) 644-2804

This nonprofit organization supports information sharing, training, and other educational activities for and by the State’s 25 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) in their work on behalf of older Virginians and their families. It also serves as the AAAs’ liaison with the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and other state and national public and private organizations working on aging issues.

### **The Virginia Association of Centers for Independent Living (VACIL)**

<http://www.vacil.org>

Voice or TTY: (540) 342-1231

This association provides guidance and policy support for the Commonwealth’s CILs, and represents them before the General Assembly on issues of importance. VACIL advocates for the inclusion and integration of individuals with disabilities in communities. VACIL also supports the improvement and expansion of the number of community-based, consumer-controlled CILs. VACIL posts a map on its website with the locations of 21 independent living centers in Virginia and the municipalities they support.

### **Virginia Association of Community Rehabilitation Programs (vaACCSES)**

<http://www.vaACCSES.org>

1 (877) 877-2777

(571) 339-1305

Organizational members of this association provide employment, day support, training, and other support services for people with disabilities. vaACCSES advocates on public policy areas of interest to its members and provides educational resources and training for them, other service providers, individuals with disabilities, and their families. Training topics include work incentives for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries. vaACCSES is also a Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) project under the federal Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act, providing benefits counseling to individuals who wish to work but need to maintain public benefits such as Medicaid.

### **Virginia Association of Community Services Boards (VACSB)**

<http://www.vacsb.org>

(804) 330-3141

As the statewide organization for Virginia's network of 39 local Community Services Boards (CSBs) and one Behavioral Health Authority (BHA), the VACSB represents those local service providers on matters of state and federal public policy. VACSB advocates for legislation, seeks funding, and advocates for policy change. It provides public education and promotes the improvement and expansion of an accessible, affordable, statewide public system for providing prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation services for individuals with mental illness, intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities and/or substance abuse disorders. The VACSB website offers e-learning opportunities, conference information, legislative updates, and links to other resources and services for individuals with disabilities and their families.

### **Virginia Association for Parents of Children with Visual impairments (VAAPVi)**

<http://www.vaapvi.org/>

(804) 938-1624

This association is a statewide organization that supports families, professionals, and the community to meet the needs of children who are blind or visually impaired. Often the children VAAPVi serves have multiple disabilities. VAAPVi is a state affiliate of VAAPVi, the National Association for Parents of Children with Visual impairments.

### **Virginia Commonwealth University Autism Center for Excellence (VCU-ACE)**

<http://www.vcuautismcenter.org>

1 (855) 711-6987

TTY: (804) 828-2494

This is a university-based, professional development, and technical assistance and educational research center for autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The VCU-ACE provides services to individuals with autism spectrum disorders and

promotes the use of evidence-based practices in schools and the community. The Center is a collaborative effort of the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Rehabilitation and Research Training Center (RRTC), the VCU School of Education, and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). It brings together experts and practitioners from a variety of fields to support its multidisciplinary approach. One of its first major initiatives has been to assist with the VDOE's work to improve the responsiveness and quality of programming provided for students with ASD by selected local school divisions across the Commonwealth. The Autism Center for Excellence provides online course registration related to ASD coursework, paraprofessional training opportunities, a calendar of trainings available, newsletters that are archived online, and web links to research that supports individuals with ASD.

**Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) Office of Human Rights (OHR)**

<http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/OHR-default.htm>

(804) 786-2008

This office fulfills the Code of Virginia (§ 37.1-84.1) requirement for protection of the legal and human rights of individuals with mental illness, intellectual disabilities, and substance abuse disorders who receive services in facilities or programs operated, licensed, or funded by that agency. OHR is charged with monitoring compliance with state human rights regulations, promoting the basic precepts of human dignity, advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities, and managing the human rights dispute resolution program, including local human rights committees.

**Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)**

<http://wp.vcu.edu/vcuofi/files/2012/09/PRC-Guidebook-Jan2011.pdf>

(703) 923-0010

Parent Resource Centers (PRCs) are located in most but not all school divisions. Drawing on a variety of state and community resources, they are local sources of referral and assistance. The PRCs provide workshops on special education issues for parents and educators. Out of 134 school divisions in Virginia, 49 operate PRCs for parents and families of children receiving special education services. Virginia's PRCs vary significantly in the way they are staffed and in their hours and months of operation. The PRC model promoted by the VDOE includes both a parent and a teacher working as a team throughout the school year to help parents access resources, understand service options, navigate the services system for their children, and to act as a link between families and schools. A *Guidebook for Parent Resource Centers* is available through the Virginia Commonwealth University's website using the above link.

**The Center for Family Involvement**

<http://www.centerforfamilyinvolvement.org/>

1 (877) 567-1122

TTY: 1 (800) 828-1120

The Center for Family Involvement partners with the Virginia departments of Education and Health, the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau, the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, and others in supporting a variety of activities to strengthen family involvement. The Center works with families to increase their skills as advocates, mentors, and leaders so that families, children, and young adults with disabilities can lead the lives they want.

### **Virginia Leadership Excellence in Neurodevelopment Disabilities(Va-Lend)**

<http://www.vcu.edu/partnership/valend/>

(804) 828-0073

Va-LEND is an interdisciplinary leadership-training program funded through a grant from the US Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration. The grant supports an interdisciplinary training program to prepare health professionals and related disciplines in the field of childhood disabilities for leadership and advocacy roles. Va-LEND also provides continuing education, community training, and consultation/technical assistance.

### **Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Ombudsman Program**

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/resolving\\_disputes/ombudsman/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/resolving_disputes/ombudsman/index.shtml)

1 (800) 422-2083

The VDOE ombudsman acts as a source of information and referral, answers individuals' questions, and assists in the resolution of concerns and issues. The program serves as a resource for parents in non-legal special education matters and does not provide direct advocacy. No formal complaint forms or documentation are involved. The interests and rights of all parties involved are taken into account in considering any given instance or concern. The ombudsman's role is neutral as an independent advocate for a fair process, encouraging all parties to resolve differences at the lowest organizational level possible. Through appropriate informal or formal dispute resolution processes, there is a focus on listening and providing information, discussing issues and options, and making referrals to other services, including mediation.

### **Virginia Easy Access**

<http://www.easyaccess.virginia.gov>

1 (800) 552-3402

(804) 662-9333

This website is an interactive, online gateway to information on public and private long-term services and supports for older adults and adults with disabilities. It was developed by the Commonwealth of Virginia, VirginiaNavigator, and 2-1-1 Virginia as a part of the State's "No Wrong Door" initiative. The program is administered by the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services. The website provides three different search functions that allow users to access the extensive VirginiaNavigator database of service providers and other resources. The resources include those related to community supports, emergency preparedness, finances, housing, transportation, legal rights, veterans' issues, and other topics. Telephone and e-mail support for the website is provided by 2-1-1 Virginia. VirginiaNavigator and 2-1-1 Virginia

are two interrelated and complementary resources described as in their respective listings in this appendix.

### **Virginia Fair Housing Office**

<http://www.dpor.virginia.gov/FairHousing/>

1 (888) 551-3247

(804) 367-8530

Details on discrimination prohibited by fair housing laws and of the processes for investigating and resolving complaints under those laws may be found in the **Community Housing** chapter of this *Assessment*. In addition to its role in these processes, the Fair Housing Office provides free training for state and local officials, housing providers, and individuals.

### **Virginia Housing Search**

<http://www.virginiahousingsearch.com>

1 (877) 428-8844

(704) 334-8722

This housing locator service, launched by the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA) in 2009, provides detailed information about rental properties and home ownership opportunities and helps people find housing that best fits their needs. It can be accessed at no cost, 24-hours-per-day online or by calling its bilingual call center Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, using the toll-free (877) number above. Individuals can search for rental housing using a wide variety of criteria and special, accessible mapping features. The listings provide detailed information on each available unit. The service also provides links to housing resources and helpful tools for renters such as an affordability calculator, rental checklist, and information on renters' rights and responsibilities.

### **Virginia Legal Aid**

<http://www.valegalaid.org>

1 (866) 534-5243

Free or low-cost legal services are provided for individuals with low incomes on matters such as immigration, health care, family and domestic violence, elder law, debt and consumer issues, criminal defense, employment, education, benefits, and housing. In addition, the website offers educational materials and referrals on topics including but not limited to debtor's rights, elder law, and eligibility for social and other services. Legal aid programs are located in nine offices in the state of Virginia. The website contains an electronic listing of all offices in Virginia, though not all services are available at all offices.

### **Virginia Organization of Consumers Asserting Leadership (VOCAL)**

<http://www.vocalvirginia.org>

(804) 343-1777

Initially formed to address mental health and mental illness concerns, VOCAL is increasingly involved in providing services for individuals with multiple disabilities, including intellectual disabilities. The VOCAL Network is a statewide coalition of individuals with disabilities and their families united to provide a voice for individual empowerment and to foster a mental health system driven by individuals with disabilities themselves. Coalition partners act as peer mentors and work with other advocacy organizations to protect individual rights and to fight discrimination, encourage the exchange of information, build service system capacity, improve state mental health policies, and increase the well-being of individuals with mental illness, developmental and/or intellectual disabilities, or substance abuse problems.

### **Voices for Virginia's Children**

<http://www.vakids.org>

(804) 649-0184

This statewide research and advocacy organization works on behalf of Virginia's children. It conducts policy analyses and distributes reports on multiple issues. In part, it addresses federal spending trends and tax policies, and information about children living in poverty. VaKids also provides information on domestic and international adoptions, raises awareness of issues, forms coalitions, and organizes grassroots advocacy efforts. Its areas of focus have included improvements to permanent planning for youth in foster care, supports for immigrant families, and improved access to quality preschool education for all children.