A Note From Chairperson Sandra A. Cook:

Thank you for all your support so far this year! Virginia Organizing leaders have been spending our 20th anniversary year building more power, ensuring that directly affected people were active to create change in our communities, our state, and our nation. I am especially proud of our work on restoration of civil rights, raising our visibility through 20th anniversary proclamations across Virginia, and our local and statewide campaigns to ban the criminal history box on job applications. We have accomplished a lot this year and there is much to be proud of! I hope you will join me at our Grassroots Gathering this year to celebrate what we have done in 20 years and participate in more power-building organizing. The Gathering will be held October 9-11, with lots of opportunities to learn and participate. To register or learn more, visit the Grassroots Gathering event page at http://www.gg2015.eventbrite.com. I look forward to a great rest of 2015 with you and hope to see you in October.

Sandra A. Cook
Virginia Organizing is building power as we celebrate 20 years of grassroots organizing.

☑ Leaders have been active this year in local and state-wide campaigns to ban the criminal history box on job applications and have participated in Dismantling Racism workshops and #BlackLivesMatter rallies.

☑ The Fredericksburg Chapter celebrated the installation of a more diverse history mural in the Spotsylvania County Board Room and the Harrisonburg Chapter convinced City Council to focus on diversity in hiring practices for local government jobs.

☑ In South Hampton Roads, the Chapter finished up two years of “Light the Way to Immigration Reform” vigils, which resulted in U.S. Rep. Scott Rigell urging the House of Representatives to take up immigration reform.

☑ Chapters across the state celebrated the 5th anniversary of the Affordable Care Act in March and celebrated again when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of subsidies in June.

☑ Several Chapters began new local campaigns, including addressing access to healthy food and stopping the school-to-prison pipeline.

☑ Chapters are working on climate change, Medicaid expansion, and removal of the Confederate flag from government property.

Virginia Organizing leaders learned new skills like how to meet with others in their communities one-to-one, how to do a community power analysis, and how to develop a campaign strategy. A total of 2,381 people attended 197 leadership development workshops. Because 2015 is Virginia Organizing’s 20th anniversary, leaders also learned what it took to petition local governments for proclamations to mark it.

These are just a few of the many skills that Virginia Organizing leaders are learning in the process of building more power.