



MAXIMIZING  
THE MOMENT

Investing in Power-Building to Advance Racial Justice in Metropolitan Washington, DC



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Photo by: National Korean American Service and Education Consortium (NAKASEC)

Cover photos: No Justice No Pride (*top left*); ONE DC (*top right*); Trabajadores Unidos de Washington, DC (*bottom left*); Restaurant Opportunities Center of Washington, DC (*bottom right*)

# OPENING NOTE

## Community organizing works.

As a group of Washington, DC area funders focused on deepening our understanding of community organizing and promoting it to our funder colleagues as a highly effective, time-tested strategy to advance racial justice, we were looking at the start of 2020 for a way to continue to spread this simple but powerful message.

At that time, not many people had heard of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. And despite years of warnings from scientists about the likelihood that an airborne virus could unleash a deadly global pandemic, fewer still were prepared for the ways the virus would upend every aspect of our lives.

Yet, the COVID-19 pandemic and the multiple crises that have grown out of the pandemic have ended up being an unlikely amplifier of our message. In the tally of such things as who contracts and succumbs to the virus (and now who gets vaccinated), who is forced to choose between feeding their family and keeping their family safe from COVID-19, who can take advantage of virtual school, who suffers at the hands and knees of racist policing, and whose votes are encouraged and whose are suppressed, the pandemic has disproportionately and devastatingly hurt Black, Indigenous, Latino/

a/x, and other communities of color, as well as spur an increase in race-based hate and violence against Asian communities. By shining an unflattering light on these deeply entrenched and racialized inequities the pandemic has brought into clear focus the urgent need for structural change to achieve racial justice.

History has shown that this type of sweeping change – whether it be the push to clean up the environment, provide fair wages and safe working conditions, or expand voting rights – comes from the dogged work of mass movements. A key component of these mass movements? Community organizing.

Organizing puts the people and communities most directly affected by racial injustice at the center of the work. They name the challenges their communities face. They identify the solutions. Trained organizers may help develop their leadership skills in things as granular as how to run a meeting to as grand as how to articulate a vision and strategy for change, but it is community members themselves who lead the charge and build their own power.

This report spells out in more detail why community organizing is such an effective strategy, describes the extraordinary work

and hard-won victories of community organizing groups in the Greater Washington, DC region, and proposes concrete steps funders can take to support and strengthen the community organizing groups and infrastructure around the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia (DMV).

The report also explores some of the unique challenges that community organizing faces in our region, especially in DC, where the more than 700,000 residents of the District of Columbia lack voting representation in Congress.

We invite you to join us as we deepen our knowledge of community organizing and support its essential role in strengthening our democracy and advancing racial justice, as well deepen our understandings of how communities in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia are adapting and responding to a global pandemic, fighting anti-Blackness and oppression in our region to build more equitable systems, and tackling social injustices head on by redefining what it means to thrive in the DMV.

# ORGANIZING



DEMOCRATICALLY-LED

&

LONG-TERM

PROCESS BY WHICH

PEOPLE come TOGETHER

to identify community problems & pursue just solutions



electoral

## VARIOUS MODELS

community

labor

faith-based

digital

movement



TYPICALLY WITH STRATEGIC CAMPAIGNS



DESIGNED to meet a SPECIFIC END



ONE of the MOST ESSENTIAL TENENTS is that it

# BUILDS POWER



# INTRODUCTION

A year into the outbreak of a global pandemic, the resulting health and safety crisis in the United States continues to be especially devastating for people of color, whose infection rates, hospitalizations, and deaths have far outstripped those of the white population. The subsequent recession has plunged 32 million people into unemployment, while the wealth of the country's 647 billionaires grew by almost \$960 billion before the end of November 2020. Countless people across the nation who took to the streets to oppose racial injustice and police brutality, especially those here in DC saw their First Amendment rights disregarded, rather than respected, by a militarized state response.

Yet, against the backdrop of these continuing crises, a powerful counternarrative has emerged. Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests have galvanized millions, with analysts calculating that the movement has become the largest in the history of the United States. It is critical, however, to recognize that the progress made after the most recent series of BLM protests is the culmination of years of invisible investment in and commitment to the strategy of community organizing.

That deliberate groundwork helped prove once again that virtually all large-scale change in this country has come from mass movements, of which organizing is a key strategy.

One of the most essential tenets of organizing is that it builds power. By building power, organizing makes it possible for the people most affected by a problem to develop the solutions. By building power, people who consistently have been denied agency over their circumstances—often because of policies and practices that are racist, sexist, ableist, classist, xenophobic,

homophobic, and transphobic—are able to control and change the systems that affect their lives.

This moment of massive civic engagement was not only built on the foundation of organizing, but it has also helped galvanize the evolution of organizing models. This is particularly evident in the Washington, DC Metropolitan Area, where organizing has historically manifested in ways that are particular to the region.

For the purposes of this paper, we define organizing as “a democratically-led, long-term process by which people are brought together to act in their common self-interest to identify community problems and pursue just solutions.” There are various models and modes of organizing, including community, labor, faith-based, digital, movement, and electoral, and their approaches can vary. Organizing typically involves strategic campaigns designed to achieve a specific end. It is as concerned with developing the leadership of community members and relationship building as it is with winning the campaign.

# UNIQUE CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES OF ORGANIZING IN THE DMV<sup>5</sup>

There are multiple ways the populations, histories, and geographical boundaries of the region have created organizing opportunities that are distinct from those of other areas. A key feature is that there are significant populations of people of color. DC became the first majority Black city in 1957 and was roughly 70% Black by 1980. (Mass serial displacement and gentrification have since cut that number to 46%.) Northern Virginia is home to 68% of the state's immigrant population, which is predominantly from Asia and Latin America, with African and European immigrants each making up 10% of that number. Immigrants comprise 23% of Northern Virginia's population.<sup>6</sup> Collectively, people of color have almost crossed the threshold of being the majority in the region at 49.4% of the population.<sup>7</sup> In Montgomery County, Maryland, people who are Latinx make up 19.1% of the population, Black people 17.8%, and Asians 14.8%.<sup>8</sup> A third of the county's population in 2016 was born outside of the country, with the majority hailing from Latin America (38%) and Asia, followed by 15% from African nations.<sup>9</sup> Maryland's Prince George's County has the largest population of people of color in the region, where Black people make up 64.4% of residents, the Latinx population makes

up 19.5%, Asians make up 4.4%, and the Native American population is at 1.2%.<sup>10</sup> Its immigrant population, at 22%, is less than that of Montgomery County's, with most people migrating from El Salvador (23%), Nigeria (8%), Guatemala (7%), Mexico (6%), and Jamaica (5%).<sup>11</sup>

In contrast to most of the nation, not all of these communities have had full access to self-governance. This is most pronounced for Washington, DC proper, which was established as neither a city nor a state but a "District." Consequently, DC's governance was controlled by Congress for most of its history. While residents successfully fought for the Home Rule Act, giving them the right to elect their own council and mayor in 1973, the act still required (and requires to this day) Congressional approval of any District law. When coupling this disenfranchisement with DC's comparatively small manufacturing industry, it is not surprising that DC has historically had a less robust organizing infrastructure than similar jurisdictions with strong union membership. Even in 2019, despite the federal government being the largest employer in the District and 27% of federal employees being unionized, DC's union membership rate was below the national average.<sup>12</sup>

Nonetheless, the District's long history of community organizing includes successful fights for integration and better funding for neighborhood schools as well as effective tenant organizing efforts.<sup>13</sup> The characteristics distinct to DC also provide opportunities not found elsewhere. With the District government itself created by residents demanding representation, its elected officials have largely been responsive to progressive organizing and activism. Additionally, organizers must contend with only 13 councilmembers and a mayor to win policies, which is a significantly lower threshold than seen in even the smallest state legislatures. Consequently, the District has been among the first jurisdictions to pass worker- and family-friendly legislation, such as paid sick days, paid family leave, and marriage equality.

Effective organizing in neighboring Maryland has also regularly resulted in progressive policies. This is especially true in the counties that are part of the DC Metropolitan Area. Montgomery and Prince George's counties, for example, each allow the public financing of elections, a policy that has been proven to increase the participation of women and people of color both as candidates and as donors. For years,

organizing efforts have led Montgomery County to be at the forefront of promoting the application of racial equity tools for public policies and legislation.

In one example, Impact Silver Spring (MD) has begun convening a network of community organizations and well-networked individuals to build a racial equity movement ecosystem. Their years of work in this arena include helping develop the Montgomery County Council Resolution on Racial Equity in 2018. More recently, they played a key role in the passage of a racial equity bill that will require an assessment of the impact of all proposed legislation on communities of color, as well as mandate that every department and agency in the county develop a plan to address racial disparities.<sup>14</sup>

While organizers in Northern Virginia are typically able to gather support for progressive policies similar to those in DC and the inner Maryland counties, their ability to bring those policies to fruition is more restricted. This is because Virginia is one of 39 states bound by Dillon's Rule, which limits the ability of local governments to exercise authority beyond what is explicitly sanctioned by the state. This means that even efforts to improve conditions specific to Northern Virginia often require the substantial time and energy necessary for statewide campaigns. (Maryland is also bound by Dillon's Rule, but county charters permit Home Rule, which allows them to

operate with more autonomy.<sup>15</sup>) Even hyper-local decisions in Virginia, such as allowing schools to reopen before Labor Day or changing the speed limit for a school zone, require an act by the General Assembly of the state government.<sup>16</sup>

Organizing campaigns in the region thus often need sustained investment and support, sometimes over many years, to be successful. For example, New Virginia Majority (NVM) organized formerly incarcerated men and women for nine years before winning their campaign to restore that community's voting rights, restoring the franchise to nearly 200,000 people.<sup>17</sup> In 2016, these newly re-enfranchised voters not only turned out in exceptional numbers (79% of the 20,000 who registered voted), but they also were critical in giving Democrats control of the executive branch and both chambers of its legislature for the first time since 1993. That victory was so striking, the New York Times ran an opinion piece by NVM's co-executive director the day after the election.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, because of their proximity to the nation's capital, organizing groups in the region can more easily engage in efforts to change federal law and can more easily partner with national organizations fighting for broad-based change. Local groups are increasingly leveraging the resources and experiences of national partners to win campaigns. These partnerships are sometimes with national institutions that

have local affiliates or chapters across the country, such as the Center for Popular Democracy, Working Families Party, People's Action, the Right to the City Alliance, Family Values at Work, and Restaurant Opportunities Center United. However, they can also be with policy or research organizations, such as the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, Demos, and the Brennan Center for Justice. That these unique features of the region can be beneficial is evident from what organizing has achieved over just the last two years.



Photo by: Progressive Maryland

# RACIAL JUSTICE UPRISINGS: THE ROLE OF ORGANIZING

Many of the most recent organizing victories in the region have come from efforts to increase racial justice. One such example is the Black Swan Academy (DC), which empowers Black youth in underserved communities through civic leadership and engagement. They worked with partners to win passage of the Fair Access to School Act, which bans suspensions for minor offenses such as dress codes and reduces the number of days students can be suspended. The law also encourages alternatives to suspensions, such as increased mental supports and restorative justice. The critical nature of this work cannot be overstated in a school district where 92% of school-based arrests are of Black students, Black girls are 30 times more likely to be arrested than white youth of any gender identity, and youth as young as nine-years-old are handcuffed and harassed by police officers.

To win this policy change, Black Swan Academy youth used a wide range of organizing strategies and tactics over the course of several years. These included hosting numerous forums and community events, raising awareness of the issue with stakeholders, meeting with Council members, engaging the media, testifying at



Photo by: Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations (VACOLAO)

public hearings, and more. Moreover, Black Swan Academy youth leaders led advocacy workshops and spoke on panels across the nation, in addition to co-authoring a report, Dress Coded, with the National Women’s Law Center. This should help similar campaigns draw lessons from their experience and, ideally, replicate their success.

Just as organizing made the Fair Access to Schools Act possible, so is it proving critical in developing strategies to address the disproportionate impact the coronavirus has had on Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC).<sup>19</sup>



## COVID 19: ORGANIZING WILL HEAL US

COVID 19 helped bring a new lens to the struggles that millions have faced daily, including inadequate safety nets, social supports, and access to healthcare. It has highlighted how decades of systemic inequities have made the devastation of the pandemic inequitable, as well. Consequently, Black and Indigenous people, who already have the lowest life expectancy in the country, have been hospitalized, along with the Latinx population, at a rate four to five times higher than other races. Moreover, Black people in the United States are more than twice as likely to die from COVID as any other race.<sup>20</sup>

These national trends are no less troubling on the regional level. In Northern Virginia, the Latinx community makes up 17.8% of the total population but represents an astounding 59.8% of COVID cases—more than three times their share of the population. Statewide, Black people make up 18.6% of Virginia’s population, but 32.2% of its COVID deaths. For the first several months of the pandemic, Virginia didn’t collect demographic data beyond, white, Black, or other, and whether people identified as Latinx, so gaps remain in assessing COVID among other races.

Maryland’s numbers are little better, with Black people dying at higher rates than any other population, making up 36.4% of deaths despite only representing 29% of the population. Members of Maryland’s Latinx community make up just over 8% of the population, but they represent 9.8% of COVID deaths, and 17% of COVID cases. Only Marylanders who identify as white or as Asian American/Pacific Islander have case rates and death rates that are lower than their share of the population.<sup>22</sup>

For Black people these disparities are the starkest in the District, where they make up 46% of the population and a stunning 75% of deaths. This leaves DC with the unfortunate distinction of having the highest racial disparity between white and Black people in the nation.<sup>23</sup> The Latinx community has the highest infection rate in the District, as they represent 26% of COVID cases while being only 11% of the population.<sup>24</sup> While the Asian American/Pacific Islander community has a higher rate of mortality than white Americans nationally, uneven data collection and using racial classifications of “other” means they, and Indigenous people, may have infection and death rates that are under-represented.<sup>25,26</sup> In addition

to possible undercounting, the Asian American/Pacific Islander community has also been subjected to racist and xenophobic attacks, with 30% of AAPI respondents to a Washington State University survey reporting an increase in discrimination after the onset of COVID in the US. The survey also found related health issues, with 40% of respondents experiencing an increase in negative health impacts.<sup>27</sup>

During a health crisis of this magnitude, multiple change strategies have roles to play, from traditional service provision to policy advocacy to community organizing. It is organizing, however, that is best suited to balance between meeting immediate and pressing basic needs while simultaneously building power for broad-based change at scale. Organizing is singularly effective in making concrete changes in people’s lives, from living wage laws and paid sick days to ban the box laws and expanding access to Medicaid. But organizing’s aims are also far more profound: People coming together to secure and defend the common good—while collectively shaping the systems and structures that affect their lives—is the surest path to justice, liberation, and transformative social change.



BLACK & LATINX  
communities  
bearing the brunt  
of COVID INFECTION &  
DEATH RATES

ASIAN & PACIFIC  
ISLANDER COMMUNITIES  
subjected to racist &  
xenophobic attacks

SOCIALLY-  
DISTANCED &  
CREATIVE  
strategies

AMPLIFYING  
MUTUAL  
AID

NATIONAL  
CONVERSATIONS  
on

GROUNDING in  
COLLECTIVITY &  
SOLIDARITY

2020

context

COMMUNITY-  
BASED SAFETY

WHITE  
SUPREMACY

SYSTEMIC  
OPPRESSION

BLOATED  
POLICE  
BUDGETS

COALITION BUILDING  
POLITICAL EDUCATION

COMMUNITY  
VISION-  
ING

RACIAL  
JUSTICE  
UPRISINGS

Just as all effective strategies evolve, some groups that have historically focused strictly on organizing are adjusting how they relate to service organizations. This is partly because the pandemic has created opportunities for organizers to build strategic partnerships with traditional service providers as a means of expanding their membership bases. However, many organizing groups are incorporating service provision directly into their work during this period.

This willingness to explore hybrid approaches is invaluable, with COVID-19 increasing the demand on already overburdened support systems while simultaneously intensifying the problems that must be addressed at scale. Community organizations around the country have

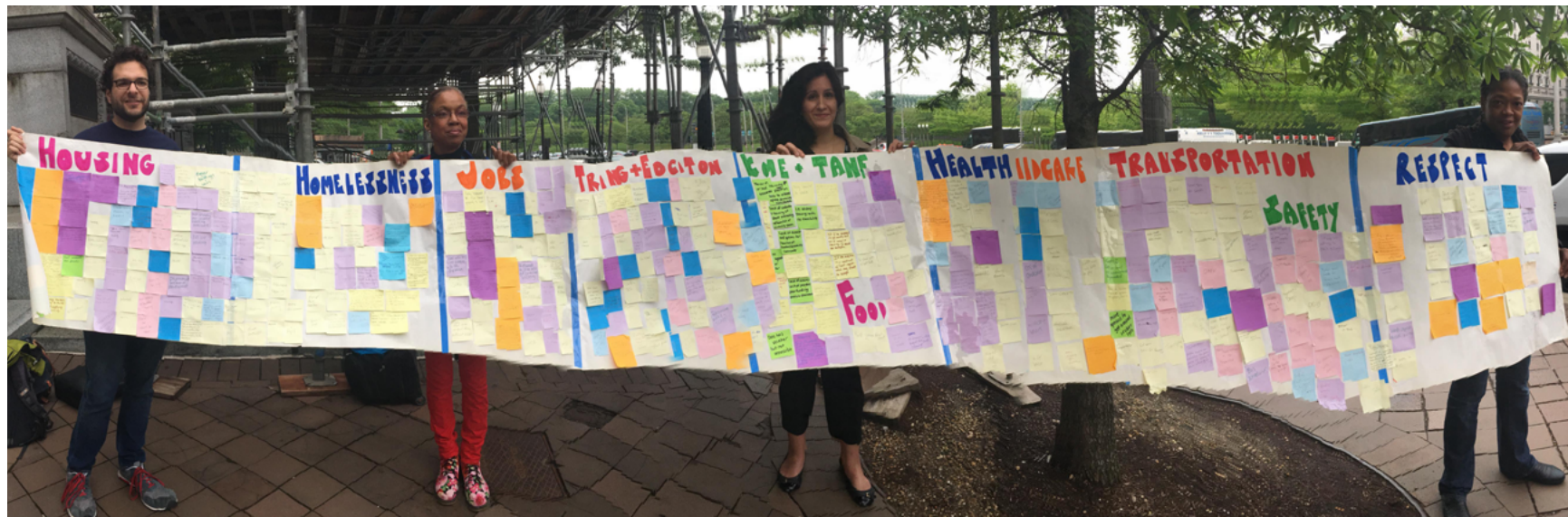
responded by amplifying their mutual aid organizing. Mutual aid is different from traditional service provision because it is grounded in collectivity and in a community taking care of itself. It is a model of solidarity organizing, which practices self-care and healing as well as addressing daily needs. The Black Swan Academy has been providing groceries and hygiene kits to four schools a week and running a support hotline. Tenant organizing groups, like the Latino Economic Development Center (DC), have set up mutual aid centers in the buildings they organize, and DC Mutual Aid is fighting to protect tenants through an eviction moratorium campaign.

Organizers also are continuing to develop new ways to carry out the core functions

of their work. This includes leading socially-distanced protests and ramping up the use of car caravans, which provide a safe and innovative way to protest during the pandemic. Health clinics are teaching patients to take their own blood pressure, and electoral organizers are training members to do remote testimony and virtual Get Out the Vote drives.

Power-building organizations in the DMV have not only been infusing new strategies and mutual aid organizing into their work, but they have been demonstrating how they are uniquely positioned to advance the work so necessary during a period of compounding crises.

Photo by: Bread for the City



# POWER - BUILDING SUCCESSES IN THE REGION

Not only have organizing groups in the region been able to improve living conditions for significant portions of the population, but they have increasingly done so while applying a racial equity lens to an array of issues. They've also been working in close partnership across organizations to coordinate campaign roles and responsibilities. The cross-cutting nature of these issues and partnerships is evident in the small sampling of successes throughout the region shown in the following section. It should be noted that these examples are only from the recent past. Organizing in the region has produced expansive victories and secured hundreds of millions of dollars in critical policy and institutional changes over the years. These efforts have ensured the rights of and created opportunities for area low-wealth communities and communities of color.

## **Community Safety and Wellness**

Justice for Muslims Collective (DC, VA) has made meaningful headway in its efforts to create a narrative in framing Islamophobia as an institutional and systemic form of violence. They were recently successful in their effort to win the inclusion of Islamophobia as a category in DC's updated

sanctuary resolution and in prohibiting the District from collaborating with the federal government to implement registries of immigrants. Their victory is built on their commitment to deep community engagement with their base through raising political consciousness, community empowerment, and organizing, as well as their coalition-building efforts. The group partnered with Casa Ruby, Many Languages-One Voice, and Sanctuary DMV to bring these aims to fruition.

Others in the region also carried out impressive immigrant protection campaigns. CASA (MD, VA) worked with the Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights, Legal Aid Justice Center (VA), and others to defeat bills in the Maryland and Virginia state legislatures that would have outlawed sanctuary cities. African Communities Together (VA) worked with a number of organizations, including those that work beyond the region, like the UndocuBlack Network and the National Day Labor Organizing Network, to secure protections for Liberian Deferred Departure holders. This resulted in a one-year extension, keeping 4,000 Liberians safe from deportation. The group also won a preliminary injunction in

court, which provided continued legal status for 1,040 Sudanese Temporary Protected Status Holders.

Progress in securing community safety and wellness was evident in DC, as well, where over a dozen organizations, including Black Lives Matter DC, Black Swan Academy, Black Youth Project 100, and Stop Police Terror Project DC came together for Defund MPD. This effort was successful in having \$15 million of the police department budget's redirected to community safety efforts. In yet another example, Empower DC won a decades-long anti-gentrification and cultural preservation battle to preserve the historic Alexander Crummel School as a community resource. Their successful changes to the disposition of the school increases the amount of land that will remain public and dedicated to recreation purposes.

## **Economic Justice**

Groups made wide-ranging advancements in economic justice, improving conditions for workers and people in need of affordable housing as the pressure of gentrification continues. African Communities Together (VA) played a lead role in winning minimum wage increases for predominantly Ethiopian

# ORGANIZING Wins\*

\* MOST OFTEN WON IN STRONG COALITIONS!

the NAT'L  
KOREAN AMERICAN  
SERVICE & EDUCATION  
CONSORTIUM

SUCCESSFULLY REVISED  
FAIRFAX CO. POLICIES &  
PROCEDURES governing ARMED  
LAW ENFORCEMENT in PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS



**IDENTITY**  
TRAINED 75 PARENTS  
at 9 DOZEN MONTGOMERY  
COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**LEADERSHIP  
DEVELOPMENT**

**JUSTICE for  
MUSLIMS  
COLLECTIVE**  
GRADUATED A COHORT  
of its JUSTICE for MUSLIMS  
ORGANIZING INSTITUTE

**ONE DC**  
RESTARTED ITS  
POLITICAL  
EDUCATION  
SCHOOL



**EDUCATION**

**TENANTS  
& WORKERS  
UNITED**  
EXPANDED a  
RESTORATIVE  
JUSTICE SCHOOL  
PROGRAM in  
ALEXANDRIA CITY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**AFRICAN  
Communities  
TOGETHER**

MINIMUM WAGE  
increases for a  
PREDOMINANTLY  
ETHIOPIAN WORKFORCE  
at NATIONAL &  
DULLES  
AIRPORTS



**IDENTITY**  
FOUGHT  
MONTGOMERY  
COUNTY POLICIES  
THAT TARGETED  
IMMIGRANT FAMILIES



**ACTION**  
in MONTGOMERY  
\$65 million for  
affordable HOUSING in  
MONTGOMERY county

**CASA &  
JEWS UNITED  
for JUSTICE**

WIN for an INCREASED  
MINIMUM WAGE of \$15  
in MARYLAND

**BREAD for  
the CITY**

IMPROVED CONDITIONS  
for more than 20,000 predominantly  
BLACK DC PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS

**ECONOMIC  
JUSTICE**

A COALITION of DC ORGS

came TOGETHER & got \$15 MILLION  
of the POLICE DEPARTMENT budget  
redirected to COMMUNITY  
SAFETY EFFORTS

**COALITION  
of VA ORGS**  
SUCCESSFULLY PUSHED  
for LEGISLATION that  
ALLOWS the VA DMV to  
ISSUE DRIVER PRIVILEGE  
CARDS to UNDOCUMENTED  
IMMIGRANTS

**JUSTICE for  
MUSLIMS  
COLLECTIVE**

NARRATIVE  
CAMPAIGN on  
ISLAMOPHOBIA

**COMMUNITY  
SAFETY  
WELLNESS**

**AFRICAN  
Communities  
TOGETHER**

SECURED PROTECTIONS  
for LIBERIAN DEFERRED  
DEPARTURE HOLDERS

**EMPOWER DC**

WON a DECADES-LONG  
ANTI-GENTRIFICATION  
& CULTURAL preservation  
BATTLE to PRESERVE the  
HISTORIC ALEXANDER  
CRUMMEL SCHOOL



workforces at National and Dulles airports, affecting an estimated 7,000 workers. Their campaign involved organizing local Ethiopian community leaders, creating awareness of workers' living conditions, gathering petitions, and advocating and educating both elected officials and the airport authority. They were also able to help 600 food and retail workers at the airports form a union, winning life-changing benefits and rights for their contract.

CASA (MD, VA) joined with Progressive Maryland, Jews United for Justice (DC, MD), and others to win an increased minimum wage of \$15 in Maryland, affecting approximately 537,000 workers.<sup>28</sup> Bread for the City (DC) worked with the Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless, DC Fair Budget Coalition, and DC Fiscal Policy Institute to secure nearly \$30 million for public housing repairs, winning improved conditions for the more than 20,000 predominantly Black District public housing residents living in units plagued by horrible conditions, including rat infestations, mold, and holes in the floor. Action in Montgomery (MD) has won \$65 million for affordable housing in Montgomery County for each of the past two years. In the wake of the pandemic, DC Jobs with Justice and DC Tenants Union are collaborating on rent control efforts, and ONE DC, Latino Economic Development Center, Bread for the City, and others are running a Cancel the Rent campaign in the District.

## Education

Identity (MD) works with out-of-school youth and those most at-risk for poor academic and economic outcomes in Montgomery County's Latinx community. The group changed a policy that had been at principals' discretion to ask immigrant parents to sign withdrawal forms in advance, as if their children had already been expelled. Identity also won a change to a new practice of only allowing families to apply for the Free and Reduced Price Meals program online. This created barriers for families without internet access or who are fearful of applying for government benefits electronically. Thanks to their efforts, paper ballots have been reinstated. Training parent activists is among the strategies Identity used to meet these goals, and parents testified at Board of Education meetings, County Council budget hearings, and the superintendent's first Latino Community Forum.

In a clear indication of how few issue areas are truly discrete, groups made notable progress in countering the school-to-prison pipeline, as well. The National Korean American Service and Education Consortium (VA) successfully was able to revise Fairfax County policy and procedures governing armed police officers in the county's public schools. Tenants and Workers United (VA) expanded the restorative justice school program in Alexandria City Public Schools.

## Leadership Development

Groups were no less successful in building the leadership development of their members, a central component of organizing. Identity (MD) has trained roughly 75 parents from approximately a dozen schools, and those parent activists have been testifying at meetings, hearings, and the Superintendent's first Latino Community Forum. ONE DC restarted its political education school, Leadership Education for Action and Power. The Justice for Muslims Collective has graduated a cohort of 10 Muslim leaders as part of its Muslim Women's Organizing Institute, and Action in Montgomery trained over 300 leaders.



Photo by: Justice for Muslims Collective

# COVID-19 & THE CHALLENGES OF ORGANIZING

The successes above are all the more impressive when taken in the context of the challenges organizing groups in the region have been facing. Even before COVID, groups were struggling with the perennial underfunding of organizing outside of major population centers like New York City, Chicago, and the Bay Area. That difficulty is worsened by having only a small pool of funders in the region committed to supporting power-building strategies. Consequently, organizations have had to weigh allocating funds to programmatic work that will bring about meaningful social change with the strategic planning, communications support, and the strong administrative procedures needed to maintain healthy organizations. While organizing teams have accomplished much with their small staffs and limited budgets, that work sometimes comes at the cost of organizers sacrificing a balance between their work and personal lives. The more common that practice, the less sustainable it becomes. The pandemic has only exacerbated these challenges.

As with virtually every other aspect of life, the coronavirus has upended how communities organize. The collective nature of organizing depends on relationships for

success. Whether groups use a recruitment model based on door-knocking or house parties or canvassing, they rely on people connecting to people. Physically-distanced recruitment and member engagement is new to most organizers, and there are only so many tools (especially that don't come with additional costs) that make it possible for organizers and community members to safely engage. Additionally, the pivot to using digital approaches can magnify inequities because of the digital divide, as only those with internet service and a device capable of getting online can participate. Learning how to use these services can be another barrier for residents. Meeting by videoconference has brought some advantages, however, such as keeping members of statewide groups from having to drive hours for a meeting or to interact with legislators.

There were insufficient services to meet the need in the region pre-COVID. Now the disease itself and the attendant job losses have increased the demand for services while also amplifying the need for broad-based change from the municipal to federal levels. As noted above, numerous organizations have responded by incorporating new areas of support work,

such as mutual aid, while not losing sight of the big picture and the need for substantial more public investment into community needs. They must also attend to the threat of austerity measures and reduced state and local program funding for nonprofits.

Unlike other locations that are uncertain about foundation giving, the DC region is particularly disadvantaged by its relatively small foundation community. Fortunately, many of those funders have made impactful changes in the face of the pandemic, simplifying funding cycles and the reporting process, among other supports. This has enabled power-building organizations to adjust more quickly to the changing environment by focusing on strategy development and organizing.

# SEIZING THIS MOMENT

The 2020 racial justice uprisings, coupled with the January 6, 2021 insurrection at the Capitol, have created an extended national conversation about racism for the first time in recent history. Organizations in the region are ready to take advantage of the moment. In DC, the Defund MPD campaign has brought together a Black-led coalition of over 15 organizations that share a common vision of a DC where new and innovative community safety strategies replace jails

and police. Groups have also expanded their use of webinars and podcasts to reach their members as they take advantage of the moment to provide political education that draws connections between white supremacy, policing budgets, and inequitable systems.

Just as organizations can capitalize on the increased energy to fight the systemic oppression of BIPOC, so too can they use the pandemic as a catalyst to secure new

social supports. DC Jobs with Justice, for example, has supported mutual aid efforts while advocating for expanded sick days and funding for workers excluded from government benefits for the unemployed. COVID provides an organizing opportunity to invite community members to reimagine what healthcare should look like, to analyze and assess the current system, highlight its flaws, and fight for something better.

In the meantime, power-building organizations will continue finding ways to support immediate needs. African Communities Together has provided rent assistance and helped tenants in apartment buildings identify strategies to stay safe. Bread for the City has expanded access to COVID-19 testing in its own clinics. Multiple groups have developed new partnerships with direct service providers, churches, and restaurants, and they will continue to build on those relationships after the virus has been managed. They will keep working across race and issue lines, increasing their collective capacity to make change in the region. They will maintain their commitment to an intersectional analysis so that the systemic and structural change they create includes all.

Photo by: UndocuBlack Network





## SEIZING THE INVESTMENTS

Foundations in the region and across the country have realized that business as usual will not suffice during a time of compounding crises. As valuable as that realization has been, it is critical that we as funders retain the flexibility of COVID era grants in our ongoing work once the immediate crisis subsides. That means continuing to provide general operating support and more fluid grant terms. We encourage funders to utilize trust-based philanthropy, which promotes: giving multi-year, unrestricted funding; putting the onus of due diligence on the grantmaker, not the grantseeker; simplifying and streamlining paperwork; being transparent and responsive; soliciting and acting on feedback; and offering support beyond the check.<sup>29</sup> Finally, we would be remiss not to acknowledge that winning a policy change is rarely the final step of a successful campaign. That's because organizers have to be attentive to whether and how these policies are being implemented. We recommend that our funding colleagues keep this in mind before ending grant support for a campaign. Achieving the change we want to see in the world, as organizing has shown us again and again,



Photo by: Identity

will not happen overnight but will require long-term, sustained support.

We believe that these practices strengthen the organizations we support and enable them to do their work most effectively. We are also proud of the power-building work we have supported in the region and the

millions of lives tangibly made better by our partners' campaigns. The current support, however, is not enough. To carry this work to fruition, more regional and national funders must recognize the power of organizing and invest in locations that can demonstrate what is possible.



# CONCLUSION

We support organizing because we know of no other way to upend the long-held power imbalance so that people who have been systematically disenfranchised can begin envisioning and building a better future. We know of no other model that can transform the society we have into one that is just and where everyone has what they need not merely to survive, but to thrive.

**Join us in maximizing this moment.**

MAXIMIZING THE MOMENT



# ENDNOTES

- 1 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/investigations-discovery/hospitalization-death-by-race-ethnicity.html>
- 2 <https://ips-dc.org/billionaire-wealth-vs-community-health/>
- 3 <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/03/us/george-floyd-protests-crowd-size.html>
- 4 <https://www.needmorfund.org/news/2019/01/11/reports/reflections-from-the-field/>
- 5 For the purposes of this report, the metropolitan area includes Washington, DC; Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in Maryland; and Arlington, Fairfax, Loudon, and Prince William Counties in Northern Virginia. It is also referred to as the DMV.
- 6 [https://demographics.coopercenter.org/sites/demographics/files/CensusBrief\\_Immigrants-in-Virginia\\_March2014\\_0.pdf](https://demographics.coopercenter.org/sites/demographics/files/CensusBrief_Immigrants-in-Virginia_March2014_0.pdf)
- 7 <https://www.novaregiondashboard.com/people>
- 8 [https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/QuickStats\\_ACS2016\\_18.02.12.pdf](https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/QuickStats_ACS2016_18.02.12.pdf)
- 9 [https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/lwmc/pages/42/attachments/original/1437676216/FS\\_2014-09\\_Immigrants\\_in\\_Montgomery\\_County.pdf?1437676216](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/lwmc/pages/42/attachments/original/1437676216/FS_2014-09_Immigrants_in_Montgomery_County.pdf?1437676216)
- 10 <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/princegeorgescountymaryland/PST040219>
- 11 [https://d101vc9winf8ln.cloudfront.net/documents/29111/original/Immigrants\\_in\\_Prince\\_George\\_County\\_\\_Maryland\\_2016.pdf?1538149572](https://d101vc9winf8ln.cloudfront.net/documents/29111/original/Immigrants_in_Prince_George_County__Maryland_2016.pdf?1538149572)
- 12 <https://www.govexec.com/management/2019/07/trump-administration-explore-making-it-easier-federal-employees-cancel-union-dues/158380/>
- 13 <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/3f768ca6b-93c4c07ac1e530b01db81dc>
- 14 [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/md-politics/with-unanimous-vote-montgomery-passes-wide-ranging-racial-equity-bill/2019/11/19/7f0a9b0e-0a1d-11ea-8397-a955cd542d00\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/md-politics/with-unanimous-vote-montgomery-passes-wide-ranging-racial-equity-bill/2019/11/19/7f0a9b0e-0a1d-11ea-8397-a955cd542d00_story.html)
- 15 <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/about/history.html>
- 16 <http://www.virginiaplaces.org/government/dillon.html>
- 17 <https://www.npr.org/local/305/2019/11/05/776424641/nearly-200-000-formerly-incarcerated-virginians-can-now-vote-will-they>
- 18 <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/06/opinion/virginia-election-democrats.html>
- 19 This paper recognizes that there are no perfect terms that encapsulate or give adequate space to every race that is not white. BIPOC intentionally centers Black and Indigenous people in recognition that, in the United States, they have been targeted specifically, disproportionately, and repeatedly for systemic injustices, from colonialism, through slavery, and into the present day. For any contexts in this paper in which that does not apply, we will use "people of color" or other terms meant to represent the races that comprise the global majority.
- 20 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/investigations-discovery/hospitalization-death-by-race-ethnicity.html>
- 21 <https://dcist.com/story/20/06/13/virginia-will-expand-racial-covid-19-data-reporting-after-criticism-from-advocates-and-experts/>
- 22 <https://www.marylandmatters.org/covid-19-in-maryland-2/#casebreakdown>
- 23 <https://wjla.com/news/local/covid-19-maintains-deadly-grip-on-black-people-in-dc>
- 24 <https://dcist.com/story/20/08/06/dc-study-coronavirus-test-children-race-disparities/>
- 25 <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/asian-americans-face-high-coronavirus-infection-rates-and-unemployment/>
- 26 <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/covid-19-cases-by-race-ethnicity/?currentTimeframe=0&sort-Model=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>
- 27 <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/11/201102155412.htm>
- 28 <https://www.vox.com/2019/3/28/18285346/maryland-passes-15-minimum-wage>
- 29 <https://thewhitmaninstitute.org/about/trust-based-philanthropy/>

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# ORGANIZING IN THE DMV: GROUP BIOS

## **Bread for the City**

[www.breadforthecity.org](http://www.breadforthecity.org)

The mission of Bread for the City is to help Washington, DC residents living with low income to develop their power to determine the future of their own communities. We provide food, clothing, medical care, and legal and social services to reduce the burden of poverty. We seek justice through community organizing and public advocacy. We work to uproot racism, a major cause of poverty. We are committed to treating our clients with the dignity and respect that all people deserve.

**Jurisdiction(s):** Washington, DC

**Issue Campaigns:** Anti-Black Racism; Food Justice; Health Justice; Housing Justice

## **CASA**

[www.wearecasa.org](http://www.wearecasa.org)

Founded in 1985 in the basement of a church in Takoma Park as a grassroots response to the humanitarian needs of Latin American immigrants in the region, CASA's mission today is to create a more just society by building power and improving the quality of life in working class and immigrant communities.

**Jurisdiction(s):** Washington, DC; Montgomery County; Prince George's County; Arlington County; City of Falls Church; Fairfax County; Prince William County

**Issue Campaigns:** Anti-Black Racism; Children and Youth Rights; Civic Engagement; Community Safety; Defund the Police; Education; Environmental Justice; Food Justice; Health Justice; Housing Justice; Immigrant Justice; Workers' Rights; Workforce Development

## **Collective Action for Safe Spaces**

[www.collectiveactiondc.org](http://www.collectiveactiondc.org)

Collective Action for Safe Spaces is a Black trans, queer, and non-binary-led organization that uses public education, cultural organizing, coalition-building, and advocacy to build community safety. CASS cultivates the greater DC community's capacity to respond directly to patriarchal and state violence through transformative justice and abolitionist frameworks.

**Jurisdiction(s):** Washington, DC; offer workshops and technical assistance to organizations nation-wide

**Issue Campaigns:** Abolition/Criminal Justice; Defund the Police; Gender Based Violence

**Critical Exposure**[www.criticalexposure.org](http://www.criticalexposure.org)

Critical Exposure trains DC youth of color to harness the power of photography and their own voices to fight for educational equity and social justice.

**Jurisdiction(s):** Washington, DC

**Issue Campaigns:** Civic Engagement; Education

**DC Initiative on Racial Equity and Local Government**

The DC Initiative on Racial Equity and Local Government seeks to raise awareness about the role of the DC government in advancing racial equity in partnership with community members, nonprofit organizations, foundations, and businesses. We promote the importance and use of a racial equity lens with DC policymakers and administration staff in their decision-making processes in order to provide opportunities and improve the lives of low-income communities and communities of color in the District.

**Jurisdiction(s):** Washington, DC

**Issue Campaigns:** Anti-Black Racism; Civic Engagement; Immigrant Justice

**Dreaming Out Loud, Inc.**[www.dreamingoutloud.org](http://www.dreamingoutloud.org)

Dreaming Out Loud, Inc. (DOL) works to create economic opportunity for marginalized communities through building a healthy, equitable food system in the Washington, DC metropolitan region. We are rebuilding urban, community-based food systems through cooperative social enterprise via increasing access to healthy food, improving community health, supporting entrepreneurs and cooperatives from low-income communities, as well as creating opportunities for at-risk residents to earn sustainable, family supporting wages and build wealth.

**Jurisdiction(s):** Washington, DC; Montgomery County; Prince George's County; Arlington County; City of Alexandria

**Issue Campaigns:** Anti-Black Racism; Asset Building; Civic Engagement; Environmental Justice; Food Justice; Workforce Development

### **Fair Budget Coalition**

[www.fairbudget.org](http://www.fairbudget.org)

A fair budget is one that is restorative and prioritizes racial justice. The Fair Budget Coalition advocates for budget and public policy initiatives that seek to address systemic social, racial, and economic inequality in the District of Columbia. We work to accomplish these goals by leveraging the collective power of our member organizations and impacted community members, particularly those from Black and other communities of color.

**Jurisdiction(s):** Washington, DC

**Issue Campaigns:** Anti-Black Racism; Civic Engagement; Community Safety; Defund the Police; Food Justice; Health Justice; Housing Justice

### **Identity**

[www.identity-youth.org](http://www.identity-youth.org)

In pursuit of a just, equitable and inclusive society, Identity creates opportunities for Latino and other historically underserved youth to realize their highest potential and thrive. Through direct service and systems advocacy Identity works to interrupt patterns of underachievement, lost hope and disconnection.

**Jurisdiction(s):** Montgomery County

**Issue Campaigns:** Anti-Black Racism; Civic Engagement; Education; Immigrant Justice; Workforce Development

### **Jews United for Justice**

[www.jufj.org](http://www.jufj.org)

Jews United for Justice advances economic, racial, and social justice in the Baltimore-Washington region by educating and mobilizing our local Jewish communities to action.

We move our region closer to equity and justice by advancing issue-based campaigns that make real, immediate, and concrete improvements in people's lives and build the power of working-class and poor communities of color. Through these campaigns we develop leaders, build our Jewish grassroots community, shift the consciousness of our community, and build the collective power needed to undo systemic racism and inequality.

**Jurisdiction(s):** Washington, DC; Montgomery County; Baltimore and Maryland state-wide

**Issue Campaigns:** Abolition/Criminal Justice; Anti-Black Racism; Budget and Tax Justice; Child Care; Civic Engagement; Culture/Arts Justice; Defund the Police; Housing Justice; Immigrant Justice; LGBT+ Rights; Local Campaign Finance Reform; Rights of Formerly Incarcerated Persons



### Justice for Muslims Collective

[www.justiceformuslims.org](http://www.justiceformuslims.org)

Our organization works to fight structural and institutionalized Islamophobia in the Greater Washington region through power-building. This work includes leadership development, community organizing, COVID19 rapid response and mutual aid efforts focused on essential workers and AMEMSA working-class community members, healing justice, civic engagement, and the use of narratives in the form of oral histories with community members. We also work at the federal level by working in coalition with other local partners across the country to ensure our local demands are uplifted at the federal level.

**Jurisdiction(s):** Washington, DC; Montgomery County; Prince George's County; Arlington County; Fairfax County; Prince William County; Loudoun County

**Issue Campaigns:** Abolition/Criminal Justice; Civic Engagement; Community Safety; Gender Based Violence; Housing Justice; Immigrant Rights; Islamophobia and local impact of the War on Terror; Women's Rights; Workers' Rights

### Legal Aid Justice Center

[www.justice4all.org](http://www.justice4all.org)

The Legal Aid Justice Center partners with communities and clients to achieve justice by dismantling systems that create and perpetuate poverty. By justice we mean racial justice, social justice, and economic justice. We accomplish this through multi-modal campaigns utilizing litigation, organizing (including community lawyering), communications, policy advocacy, and direct representation strategies.

**Jurisdiction(s):** Arlington County; City of Alexandria; City of Falls Church; Fairfax County; Fauquier County; Prince William County; Loudoun County; Virginia state-wide including Charlottesville, Richmond, Petersburg, the Eastern Shore, and the Shenandoah Valley

**Issue Campaigns:** Abolition/Criminal Justice; Anti-Black Racism; Children and Youth Rights; Community Safety; Consumer Rights (e.g., debt collection, predatory lending); Criminalizing Poverty; Defund the Police; Education; Health Justice; Housing Justice; Immigrant Justice; Rights of Formerly Incarcerated Persons; Workers; rights

### Many Languages One Voice

[www.mlovdc.org](http://www.mlovdc.org)

Many Languages One Voice (MLOVDC) was born over a decade ago to dismantle language barriers as an excuse to provide DC immigrant and non-English speaking residents inhuman service. We provide comprehensive coverage to DC's Black and brown immigrant communities by providing sanctuary, youth leadership, adult development, mutual aid, and language access services.

**Jurisdiction(s):** Washington, DC, with members in suburban Maryland

**Issue Campaigns:** Abolition/Criminal Justice; Anti-Black Racism; Children and Youth Rights; Civic Engagement; Community Safety; Criminalizing Poverty; Defund the Police; Education; Health Justice; Housing Justice; Immigrant Justice; LGBT+ Rights; Local Campaign Finance Reform; Workforce Development

**NAKASEC Virginia**[www.nakasec.org/virginia](http://www.nakasec.org/virginia)

NAKASEC VA's mission is to organize working class Korean and Asian Americans to achieve racial, economic, and social justice. Major programs include community organizing/grassroots advocacy, civic engagement, leadership development, community service provision, and working in coalition.

**Jurisdiction(s):** Arlington County; City of Alexandria; City of Falls Church; Fairfax County; Prince William County; Loudoun County

**Issue Campaigns:** Civic Engagement; Health Justice; Immigrant Justice; Language Access; Workers' Rights

**No Justice No Pride**[www.nojusticenopride.org](http://www.nojusticenopride.org)

No Justice No Pride (NJNP) is a collective of organizers and activists from across the District of Columbia. We exist to fight for trans justice and to end the LGBT "equality" movement's complicity with systems of oppression that further marginalize Trans and Queer individuals.

NJNP believes in holistic solutions to the problems facing queer and trans communities that target systemic forces and root causes. Our members are black, brown, queer, trans, gender nonconforming, bisexual, indigenous, two-spirit, formerly incarcerated, disabled, and white allies. We believe that we will not be free until the most marginalized amongst us are free, and that by prioritizing solutions that support folks facing multiple intersecting forces of oppression will lead us all to liberation. There can be no pride for some of us without liberation for all of us. Most importantly, we believe that those most impacted by these issues need to be the ones calling the shots.

**Jurisdiction(s):** Washington, DC; Montgomery County; Prince George's County

**Issue Campaigns:** Abolition/Criminal Justice; Anti-Black Racism; Asset Building; Community Safety; Criminalizing Poverty; Culture/Arts Justice; Defund the Police; Environmental Justice; Food Justice; Gender Based Violence; Health Justice; Housing Justice; LGBT+ Rights; Rights of Formerly Incarcerated Persons; Women's Rights; Workers' Rights

**ONE DC**[www.onedconline.org](http://www.onedconline.org)

At ONE DC, our mission is to exercise political strength to create and preserve racial and economic equity in Shaw and the District. We seek to create a community in DC that is equitable for all by organizing with long-time DC residents for our human rights to housing, income, and wellness through grassroots organizing, political education, leadership development, and alternative economics.

**Jurisdiction(s):** Washington, DC

**Issue Campaigns:** Asset Building; Civic Engagement; Defund the Police; Housing Justice; Workers' Rights; Workforce Development

### **Progressive Maryland**

[www.progressivemaryland.org](http://www.progressivemaryland.org)

Progressive Maryland exists to empower communities to act for social and economic justice by developing leaders, building alliances, shifting public opinion, and building grassroots power to advance economic, racial, and environmental justice in Maryland.

**Jurisdiction(s):** Montgomery County; Prince George's County

**Issue Campaigns:** Abolition/Criminal Justice; Anti-Black Racism; Civic Engagement; Defund the Police; Drug Decriminalization; Education; Environmental Justice; Health Justice; Housing Justice; Marijuana Legalization; Public Financing of Elections; Rights of Formerly Incarcerated Persons; Women's Rights; Workers' Rights

### **Restaurant Opportunities Center of DC (ROC-DC)**

[www.rocunited.org/dc](http://www.rocunited.org/dc)

ROC-DC is a membership-based worker center that builds power with low-income restaurant workers of color to improve wages and working conditions in order to create a more just and equitable restaurant industry. Our strategy involves worker organizing and leadership development through workplace justice and policy campaigns; worker education and labor law enforcement through targeted outreach and know your rights trainings; and coalition efforts to build worker power across identities, sectors and neighborhoods/regions.

**Jurisdiction(s):** Washington, DC, with members scattered across suburban Maryland and Northern Virginia

**Issue Campaigns:** Asset Building; Community Safety; Food Justice; Immigrant Justice; Workers' Rights; Workforce Development

### **Rights4Girls**

[www.rights4girls.org](http://www.rights4girls.org)

Rights4Girls works to change the narrative and policies that criminalize girls who have been impacted by gender-based violence and advocates for solutions that provide girls and young women with access to safety and support. We do so by centering the voices and needs of our most marginalized girls to ensure that their lives are made a priority. Our approach includes youth development, public and targeted audience education campaigns, policy development and advocacy, research and technical assistance, and coalition building.

**Jurisdiction(s):** Washington, DC; state-level advocacy in Virginia and Maryland

**Issue Campaigns:** Abolition/Criminal Justice; Anti-Black Racism; Children and Youth Rights; Community Safety; Defund the Police; Gender Based Violence; Women's Rights

### **Tenants and Workers United – Inquilinos y Trabajadores Unidos**

[www.tenantsandworkers.org](http://www.tenantsandworkers.org)

We organize low-income communities of color, immigrants, workers, women, and youth to build power and address the root causes of the issues people care about to advance social justice. We focus on affordable housing, immigrants' rights, education justice, and health equity.

**Jurisdiction(s):** City of Alexandria; Fairfax County; Prince William County

**Issue Campaigns:** Abolition/Criminal Justice; Civic Engagement; Education; Health Justice; Housing Justice; Immigrant Justice

### **Trabajadores Unidos de Washington, DC**

[www.tuwdc.org](http://www.tuwdc.org)

Created in 2014 by DC immigrant day laborers, TUWDC advocates for the needs of day laborers, low-wage workers and immigrants. Building leadership, engaging in civic action to change policy and defending workers rights are priorities. TUWDC builds worker economic security by developing cooperatives, gaining access to government and community programs.

**Jurisdiction(s):** Washington, DC

**Issue Campaigns:** Asset Building; Civic Engagement; Food Justice; Health Justice; Housing Justice; Immigrant Justice; Workers' Rights; Workforce Development

### **UndocuBlack Network**

[www.undocublack.org](http://www.undocublack.org)

UndocuBlack Network is a multi-generational network of currently and formerly undocumented Black people that fosters community, facilitates access to resources, and advocates to transform the realities of our people, so we are thriving and living our fullest lives.

**Jurisdiction(s):** Washington, DC; Montgomery County; Prince George's County; Arlington County; City of Alexandria; Fairfax County; Prince William County

**Issue Campaigns:** Abolition/Criminal Justice; Anti-Black Racism; Civic Engagement; Criminalizing Poverty; Health Justice; Immigrant Justice

### **Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations**

[www.vacolao.org](http://www.vacolao.org)

VACOLAO's mission is to serve as a working alliance among organizations in Virginia that serve or support the interest of the Latino communities in order to empower the community and secure equal treatment, equal opportunity and equal representation for Latinos/Hispanics in Virginia. We do this through direct advocacy, community education, and coalition building.

**Jurisdiction(s):** Arlington County; City of Alexandria; City of Falls Church; Prince William County; Loudoun County

**Issue Campaigns:** Children and Youth Rights; Civic Engagement; Community Safety; Food Justice; Health Justice; Housing Justice; Immigrant Justice; Women's Rights; Workers' Rights

### **Youth Activism Project**

[www.youthactivismproject.org](http://www.youthactivismproject.org)

Our organization helps teens get involved with policy advocacy and community organizing by providing mentorship, skills-building, and community-building.

**Jurisdiction(s):** National

**Issue Campaigns:** Anti-Black Racism; Children and Youth Rights; Civic Engagement; Education; Health Justice

# ORGANIZATIONS BY ISSUE AREA

## Abolition/Criminal Justice

Collective Action for Safe Spaces  
 Jews United for Justice  
 Justice for Muslims Collective  
 Legal Aid Justice Center  
 Many Languages One Voice  
 No Justice No Pride  
 Progressive Maryland  
 Rights4Girls  
 Tenants and Workers United

## Anti-Black Racism

Bread for the City  
 CASA  
 DC Initiative on Racial Equity and Local Government  
 Dreaming Out Loud, Inc.  
 Fair Budget Coalition  
 Identity  
 Jews United for Justice  
 Legal Aid Justice Center  
 Many Languages One Voice  
 No Justice No Pride  
 Rights4Girls  
 UndocuBlack Network  
 Youth Activism Project

## Asset Building

Dreaming Out Loud, Inc.  
 No Justice No Pride  
 ONE DC  
 Restaurant Opportunities Center of DC  
 Trabajadores Unidos de Washington DC

## Child Care

Jews United for Justice

## Children and Youth Rights

CASA  
 Legal Aid Justice Center  
 Many Languages One Voice  
 Rights4Girls  
 Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations  
 Youth Activism Project

## Civic Engagement

CASA  
 Critical Exposure  
 DC Initiative on Racial Equity and Local Government  
 Dreaming Out Loud, Inc.  
 Fair Budget Coalition  
 Identity  
 Jews United for Justice  
 Justice for Muslims Collective  
 Many Languages One Voice  
 NAKASEC Virginia  
 ONE DC  
 Progressive Maryland  
 Tenants and Workers United  
 Trabajadores Unidos de Washington DC  
 UndocuBlack Network  
 Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations  
 Youth Activism Project

**Community Safety**

CASA  
 Fair Budget Coalition  
 Justice for Muslims Collective  
 Legal Aid Justice Center  
 Many Languages One Voice  
 No Justice No Pride  
 Restaurant Opportunities Center of DC  
 Rights4Girls  
 Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations

**Criminalizing Poverty**

Legal Aid Justice Center  
 Many Languages One Voice  
 No Justice No Pride  
 UndocuBlack Network

**Culture/Arts Justice**

Jews United for Justice  
 No Justice No Pride

**Defund the Police**

CASA  
 Collective Action for Safe Spaces  
 Fair Budget Coalition  
 Jews United for Justice  
 Legal Aid Justice Center  
 Many Languages One Voice  
 No Justice No Pride  
 ONE DC  
 Progressive Maryland  
 Rights4Girls

**Education**

CASA  
 Critical Exposure  
 Identity  
 Legal Aid Justice Center  
 Many Languages One Voice  
 Progressive Maryland  
 Tenants and Workers United  
 Youth Activism Project

**Environmental Justice**

CASA  
 Dreaming Out Loud, Inc.  
 No Justice No Pride  
 Progressive Maryland

**Food Justice**

Bread for the City  
 CASA  
 Dreaming Out Loud, Inc.  
 Fair Budget Coalition  
 No Justice No Pride  
 Restaurant Opportunities Center of DC  
 Trabajadores Unidos de Washington DC  
 Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations

**Gender Based Violence**

Collective Action for Safe Spaces  
 Justice for Muslims Collective  
 No Justice No Pride  
 Rights4Girls

**Health Justice**

Bread for the City  
 CASA  
 Fair Budget Coalition  
 Legal Aid Justice Center  
 Many Languages One Voice  
 NAKASEC Virginia  
 No Justice No Pride  
 Progressive Maryland  
 Tenants and Workers United  
 Trabajadores Unidos de Washington DC  
 UndocuBlack Network  
 Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations  
 Youth Activism Project

**Housing Justice**

Bread for the City  
 CASA  
 Fair Budget Coalition  
 Jews United for Justice  
 Justice for Muslims Collective  
 Legal Aid Justice Center  
 Many Languages One Voice  
 No Justice No Pride  
 ONE DC  
 Progressive Maryland  
 Restaurant Opportunities Center of DC  
 Tenants and Workers United  
 Trabajadores Unidos de Washington DC  
 Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations

**Immigrant Justice**

CASA  
 DC Initiative on Racial Equity and Local Government  
 Identity  
 Jews United for Justice  
 Justice for Muslims Collective  
 Legal Aid Justice Center  
 Many Languages One Voice  
 NAKASEC Virginia  
 Restaurant Opportunities Center of DC  
 Tenants and Workers United  
 Trabajadores Unidos de Washington DC  
 UndocuBlack Network  
 Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations

**LGBT+ Rights**

Jews United for Justice  
 Many Languages One Voice  
 No Justice No Pride



**Local Campaign Finance Reform**

Jews United for Justice  
Many Languages One Voice

**Rights for Formerly Incarcerated Persons**

Jews United for Justice  
Legal Aid Justice Center  
No Justice No Pride  
Progressive Maryland

**Women's Rights**

Justice for Muslims Collective  
No Justice No Pride  
Progressive Maryland  
Rights4Girls  
Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations

**Workers' Rights**

CASA  
Jews United for Justice  
Justice for Muslims Collective  
Legal Aid Justice Center  
NAKASEC Virginia  
No Justice No Pride  
ONE DC  
Progressive Maryland  
Restaurant Opportunities Center of DC  
Tenants and Workers United  
Trabajadores Unidos de Washington DC  
Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations

**Workforce Development**

CASA  
Dreaming Out Loud, Inc.  
Identity  
Many Languages One Voice  
ONE DC  
Restaurant Opportunities Center of DC  
Tenants and Workers United  
Trabajadores Unidos de Washington DC

