



Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia  
626 East Broad Street, Suite 400  
Richmond, VA 23219

## Standing in the gap

**In the face of federal dismantling of civil rights enforcement,  
HOME ensures vulnerable Richmonders have equal access to quality and safe housing**

The federal funding crisis puts essential services and safeguards for Richmond residents at risk. Level funding from the City will ensure HOME can continue to serve Richmond's most vulnerable citizens — our clients, our neighbors, your constituents.

### MOVE TO OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM — SUPPORTING VOUCHER HOLDERS — FY25: \$150,000

- **HOME of VA's Move to Opportunity program provides one-of-a-kind support to Richmond residents with Housing Choice Vouchers:** our housing counselors are the only professionals in the City of Richmond working full-time to advise, counsel, and guide these families to safe and stable homes.
- **During 2024 alone, we provided one-on-one, HUD-certified housing counseling to 244 Richmond households with vouchers.**
- **Our success rates consistently beat national averages:** Across the country, bias and high housing costs make many vouchers unusable; the US Department of Housing and Urban Development reports that only 61% of voucher holders find homes. **But 82% of voucher holders who work with us find safe and stable housing.** Our program is one of only 33 nationwide — and the only one in Virginia.
- **Voucher holders include some of Richmond's most vulnerable residents:** 99% of voucher holders are Black, 89% represent female-headed households, 50% have children, and 20% have a disability. Overlapping challenges, from bias to ability to income, make survival a daily struggle.
- **The Virginia Fair Housing Law prohibits discrimination against voucher holders, but this type of bias remains rampant:** Our HUD-certified housing counselors do so much more than help with housing search. They intervene with landlords to explain the law, work closely with our fair housing investigators and attorneys, and force open doors that would be closed by bias — making the promise of housing a reality.

### FAIR HOUSING OUTREACH, EDUCATION, AND INVESTIGATIONS — FY25: \$100,000

- **Last month, the US Department of Justice froze indefinitely all civil rights litigation, including cases of housing discrimination.** In response, our legal team is standing in the gap — vigorously defending federal and state antidiscrimination protections in housing. These statutes remain on the book, and while federal enforcement fades, we remain on the case (see current case summaries on page 2).
- **Last year, the number of housing discrimination reports broke an all-time record, and record-high housing costs give landlords a heavy upper hand.** Put simply, this is no time to pull back on enforcement.
- **Low-income renters in Richmond and especially Black and Brown residents regularly face substandard and even hazardous conditions — a separate and unequal housing market.** Our investigations of reported violations and enforcing fair housing laws stands alone; no other city nonprofit holds the same mission.
- **Our defense of the law goes beyond investigation and litigation.** HOME of VA's outreach team conducts trainings for housing industry professionals to learn about fair housing law and common violations of rights. And our communications team targets online ads to make local consumers aware of housing violations happening here along with resources for how

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## RECENT LEGAL ADVOCACY FOR RICHMOND RESIDENTS

HOME of VA's fair housing attorneys and our fair housing investigators work hand-in-hand to document reports of bias and seek justice for our clients. **Our latest Richmond cases include:**

- **D.W., 2024-present** – Our client, a mother of two school-aged children, was unlawfully denied housing by seven landlords on account of having a Housing Choice Voucher. We have already filed one complaint with the Virginia Fair Housing Office while investigating the other six. Meanwhile, our housing counselors ensured this client moved into a safe and stable home this January.
- **D.D., 2024-present** – This client was denied housing after a background check produced an overly broad and inaccurate report of criminal history. These types of violations are common, and particularly harmful to Black residents due to their unjust overrepresentation in the justice system. We are working to correct the client's report and ensure that this housing provider revises its screening methods.
- **M.D., 2024-present** – This client came to us after being denied housing because of their dog – an emotional support animal whose presence is protected by the federal Fair Housing Act and the Virginia Fair Housing Law. The client's property manager is a large company with hundreds of units in Richmond, so success here would have broad impact in expanding housing opportunities.
- **M.H., 2024-present** – Our client reported discrimination when they tried to use a Housing Choice Voucher. This type of is prohibited in Virginia, yet it remains rampant. In fact, the multifamily housing provider in this case is a repeat offender of the "source of funds" standard of the Virginia Fair Housing Law.
- **P.K., 2024-present** – With SupportWorks Housing, we are investigating discrimination against a client by another large housing provider systemically discriminating against Housing Choice Voucher holders.
- **K.R., 2023-present** – This client is the owner of several single-family homes in a majority-Black community where appraisal bias appears to have unfairly undervalued the properties. We are working with the client to document the undervaluation (a disturbingly common reality, as noted in a major report we published last year) and correct the record.
- **A.M., 2024** – In violation of the Virginia Fair Housing Law, our client – a veteran, unhoused when he first contacted us – was denied housing by a property manager not following rules governing rentals to individuals with Housing Choice Vouchers. Our fair housing investigators documented the violations, our legal team wrote a demand letter clarifying the law, and our housing counselors ensured that the moved into their chosen home. Worked in partnership with caseworker at Commonwealth Catholic Charities.

## THE NEED: ONGOING – AND NEWLY URGENT

Developments in DC change daily. But in Richmond, as in cities across the nation, housing discrimination and the vulnerability of Housing Choice Voucher recipients are regrettably durable realities.

Federal budget and staffing cuts have created new and needless obstacles. But amid this crisis, **HOME of VA provides the City of Richmond with critical services – not replicated by other agencies – to expand individual housing opportunities and pursue systemic change.**

As you consider many important and competing priorities for the FY26 budget, I ask you to be mindful of our impact. With the City's continued support, we can continue to stand up for some of Richmond's most vulnerable residents and work to make this city a welcoming home.