



## **Thus Ever to the Tyrant! Do Pro Bono Work for Legal Aid, and Promote Justice in Virginia**

**March 2014**

### **What**

Virginia's ten legal aid programs help low-income families and individuals maintain the basics of life: income, shelter, food, health care, education, and family stability. The programs range in size from eight employees to eighty, and in office setting from urban Richmond, Norfolk and Falls Church to rural small towns.

This brochure will describe the pro bono opportunities offered by all of Virginia's legal aid programs, those offered by individual programs, and contact information for all.

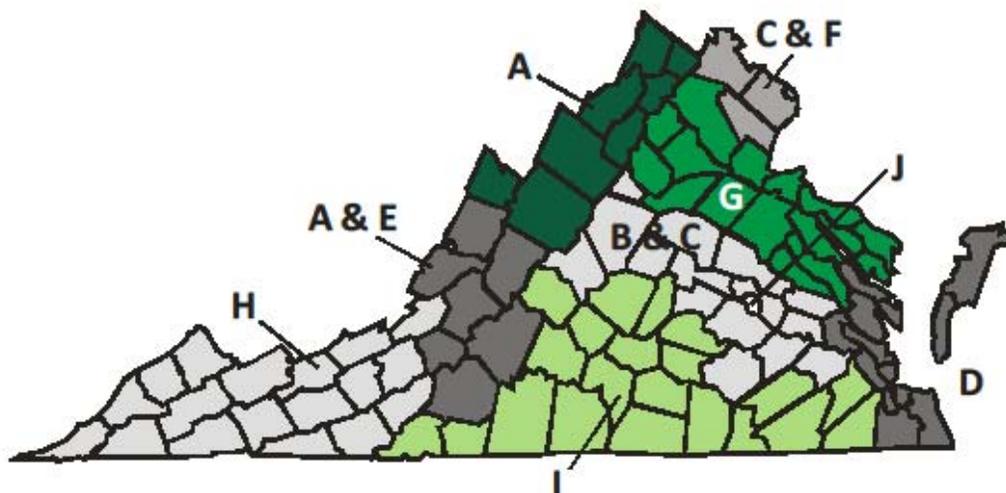
### **Why**

Every study of unmet legal needs in Virginia and in the U.S. in the last twenty years has shown that less than 20% of the legal needs of the low-income receive any assistance from a lawyer. Virginia currently has one lawyer for every 349 people in the general population, but only one legal aid lawyer for every 6184 people in poverty.

Congressional spending cuts and the downturn in interest rates that feed IOLTA revenue have caused Virginia's legal aid programs to lose 20% of their funding in the last two years; total staff positions are down by 19%, or 61 employees, and attorney positions are down 21%, or 34 lawyers.

Having a lawyer makes a huge difference in court case outcomes for litigants. We know this intuitively, but it has also been documented by a number of bar and academic studies. True justice requires lawyers on both sides of a case, but for the low-income here, that is a distant dream. You can help change that.

### Virginia Program Map



- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>A</b> Blue Ridge Legal Services (BRLS); Harrisonburg, Winchester, Roanoke, Lexington</p> <p><b>B</b> Central Virginia Legal Aid Society (CVLAS); Richmond, Petersburg, Charlottesville</p> <p><b>C</b> Legal Aid Justice Center (LAJC); Charlottesville, Falls Church, Petersburg, Richmond</p> <p><b>D</b> Legal Aid Society of Eastern Virginia (LSEV); Hampton, Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Williamsburg, Belle Haven</p> <p><b>E</b> Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley (LASRV); Roanoke</p> | <p><b>F</b> Legal Services of Northern Virginia (LSNV); Falls Church, Alexandria, Fairfax, Leesburg, Manassas</p> <p><b>G</b> Rappahannock Legal Services (RLS); Fredricksburg, Culpeper, Tappahannock</p> <p><b>H</b> Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society (SWVLAS); Marion, Castlewood, Christiansburg</p> <p><b>I</b> Virginia Legal Aid Society (VLAS); Lynchburg, Danville, Farmville, Suffolk</p> <p><b>J</b> Virginia Poverty Law Center (VPLC); Richmond (Statewide Program)</p> |
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## PROGRAM PROFILES

# BLUE RIDGE LEGAL SERVICES

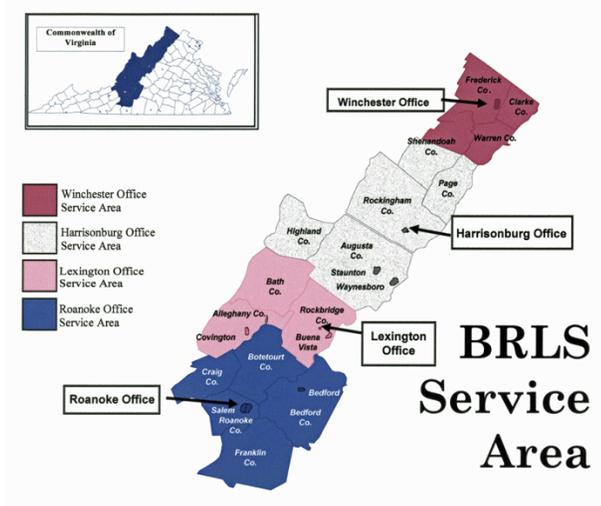


*The Legal Aid Society serving the Shenandoah and Roanoke Valleys of Virginia.*

**For information or to volunteer, contact:** John E. Whitfield, Executive Director  
 Blue Ridge Legal Services, Inc.  
 P.O. Box 551  
 Harrisonburg, VA 22803  
 (540) 433-1830  
[jwhitfield@brls.org](mailto:jwhitfield@brls.org)  
[www.brils.org](http://www.brils.org)

### Offices in:

- Winchester
- Harrisonburg
- Lexington
- Roanoke



**Current openings:** Posted on website ([www.brils.org](http://www.brils.org)) and [www.nlada.org](http://www.nlada.org)

**Number of summer and school-year law clerk positions; salary if any:** We average 5-6 summer law clerks each year. Contact the managing attorney of the office you're interest in. Candidates should secure their own funding or work as a volunteer. We will gladly suggest funding sources and cooperate in process of securing them.

**Total number of attorneys:** 12

**Starting salary for new attorney:** \$51,006 (plus a \$5,000 LRAP from LSCV)

**Program founded in:** 1977

**Mission statement and priorities:** Blue Ridge Legal Services, Inc. (BRLS) is a nonprofit charitable law firm providing free legal assistance in civil matters of critical importance to low-income residents of the Shenandoah Valley and Roanoke Valley. BRLS is committed to eliminating poverty-based inequities in the civil justice system by providing high-quality legal advice and representation to low-income residents of our

service area, folks who would otherwise be unable to obtain legal help due to their poverty.

Priorities include:

- Family disputes (for example, domestic violence, divorce)
- Problems dealing with debts and bankruptcy
- Housing and landlord-tenant disputes
- Eligibility for various government benefits (such as food stamps, TANF, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits)
- Access to health care (for example, issues involving Medicaid and Medicare)
- Consumer disputes, and
- Issues affecting seniors (such as exploitation and problems with nursing homes).

For additional information about BRLS, please see our website at [www.brsls.org](http://www.brsls.org).

LAW OFFICES  
**CENTRAL VIRGINIA LEGAL AID SOCIETY, INC.**  
RICHMOND OFFICE  
101 WEST BROAD STREET, SUITE 101 • P.O. BOX 12206 • RICHMOND, VA 23241

**For information or to volunteer, contact:** Stephen E. Dickinson, Executive Director  
Central Virginia Legal Aid Society  
101 W. Broad Street, Suite 101  
Richmond, Virginia 23220  
804-200-6049  
[steve@cvas.org](mailto:steve@cvas.org)  
[www.cvas.org](http://www.cvas.org)

**Offices in:** Charlottesville, Petersburg and Richmond

**Total number of attorneys:** 10

**Total number of staff:** 27

**Program founded in:** 1974

CVLAS provides representation through legal advice, brief service, negotiation, litigation, and representation in administrative hearings, provision of information and advice through clinics, and community education, and activities in partnership with local, state and national groups which support legal aid and other non profits and legal aid societies providing services to our clients. In addition, CVLAS provides the following:



Special projects focusing on client populations:

- a. Protection and support for survivors of domestic violence.
- b. An Elder law project which focuses on the needs of clients over 60.
- c. Foreclosure prevention project for those whose home ownership is threatened.
- d. Services to applicants/clients with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).
- e. The Virginia Farm Workers Program which represents H2A visa holders as well as US residents and citizens across the state of Virginia.

- f. Support of the rights and needs of disabled clients.
- h. Outreach to the homeless with particular emphasis on homeless veterans.
- i. An extensive pro bono project which partners pro bono attorneys and law students with CVLAS clients for a variety of services.



# LEGAL AID JUSTICE CENTER

**For information or to volunteer, contact:**

Mary Bauer, Executive Director

1000 Preston Avenue, Suite A

Charlottesville, Virginia 22903

[mary@justice4all.org](mailto:mary@justice4all.org)

(E-mail submissions must be followed by a hard copy for consideration.)

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

Twitter: @LegalAidJustice

**Offices in:** Charlottesville, Falls Church, Petersburg, Richmond

**Total number of attorneys:** 25

**Total number of paralegals:** 7 (paralegals and community organizers)

**Program founded in:** 1967

**Mission statement and priorities:**

The Legal Aid Justice Center, which provides civil legal services to low-income families throughout Central Virginia and to at-risk children, low wage immigrant workers, institutionalized persons and other vulnerable populations statewide, is known for its effective and strategic legal advocacy on behalf of all low-income Virginians. Our mission is to seek equal justice for all by strengthening the voices of low-income communities and solving clients' immediate legal problems while rooting out the inequities and exploitation that keep people in poverty. We do not receive funding from the federal Legal Services Corporation.

**Direct Representation**

Unlike in criminal cases where the state appoints a public defender, individuals involved in civil disputes are not constitutionally entitled to an attorney. Legal Aid Justice Center advocates represent low-income families and individuals who qualify for free legal services under federal poverty guidelines, providing counsel, advice and representation when needed. We also identify high impact cases that serve as an efficient way to tackle the systemic problems affecting many low-income and vulnerable Virginians in order to make the system work better for all. Each year, our legal representation benefits over 3,500 people.

**Community Education, Outreach, and Organizing**

Community organizing, outreach and education are an essential part of our service to the communities in which we work. Our goal is to help community members become aware of their legal rights and better able to advocate for themselves. The Legal Aid Justice Center staff gives presentations at community centers, shelters, social service providers, soup kitchens, community service boards and senior centers. We also provide in-depth workshops to parents, staff from other organizations, community groups, court personnel, lawyers and law students so that families and providers can be better advocates for those in their care. We reach over 5,000 people through workshops and community education materials each year.

### **Statewide Advocacy**

In addition to addressing the day-to-day needs of our clients, the Legal Aid Justice Center works at the state level to make the changes needed to address problems affecting our client population. We have become a respected voice in administrative hearings and in the halls of the General Assembly. In addition, we collaborate with the courts, resident organizations, family groups, law schools, private attorneys, a variety of social service agencies and other community organizations across the state to guarantee all people access to the legal system and protect the rights of low-income and vulnerable individuals and families.

### **Practice Areas:**

#### **Civil Advocacy Program**

Housing • Mental Health • Consumer Protection • Employment • Immigration Law • Public Benefits (Medicaid, SSI, TANF) • Medical-Legal Partnerships, including Child Health Advocacy Program (CHAP) and Elder Law Initiative • Virginia Institutionalized Persons (VIP) Project

#### **JustChildren Program:**

Education • Juvenile Justice • Foster Care

#### **Immigrant Advocacy Program**

Immigrant Rights • Minimum Wage • Overtime Pay • Non-payment of Wages • Employment Discrimination



## **The Legal Aid Society of Eastern Virginia, Inc.**

**For information or to volunteer, contact:** Raymond A. Hartz, Esq., Executive Director  
125 St. Paul's Boulevard, Suite 400  
Norfolk VA 23510  
(757) 627-5423  
rayh@laseva.org

**Offices in:** Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Hampton, Williamsburg & Eastern Shore

**Total number of attorneys:** 21

**Total number of paralegals:** 4

**Program founded in:** 1966

**Mission statement and priorities:** To promote the equal application of justice and to remove impediments to fairness for the low income and vulnerable families of Eastern Virginia.

## LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF ROANOKE VALLEY



Courtesy of City of Roanoke

The Roanoke Valley is in the lower Blue Ridge, and features some of Virginia's best scenery and outdoor recreational opportunities. The Blue Ridge Parkway passes through the city, and the Appalachian Trail lies just outside. Roanoke is a prosperous and energetic medical, railroad, and manufacturing center with a surprising diversity of arts, cultural and entertainment resources. A wide variety of housing choices, from urban apartments to rural farms, is within easy access for program staff.

**To volunteer, contact:**

Henry L. Woodward, Senior Attorney  
Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley  
132 W. Campbell Ave., Suite 200  
Roanoke, VA 24011-1206  
Phone: (540) 344-2088  
Email: [henry@lasrv.org](mailto:henry@lasrv.org)

**Office:** Roanoke. The Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley is Virginia's oldest staff attorney model legal aid society, founded in 1966, and maintains a solid record and reputation for quality legal work and substantial impact litigation. The program is funded by multiple sources to provide legal services in civil matters to low income people in an 8-county area surrounding Roanoke, Virginia.

**Total number of attorneys:** Four

**Mission statement and priorities:** “The mission of the Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley is to apply a full range of expert legal services to identify and resolve the most critical civil injustices facing low income people.” We maintain a list of priority issues which we are committed to addressing, in conjunction with statewide working groups within the legal aid community. The Legal Aid Society has effectively litigated at all levels in the federal and state court systems and has routinely lobbied legislative and administrative bodies on behalf of its clients to achieve its priorities.

**Domestic Violence Prevention Program** – This program provides victims of domestic violence with help getting protective orders, custody, child and spousal support, divorce, housing and other assistance essential to escaping abuse. The program is funded by a state grant from the Virginia Domestic Violence Victims Fund.



**For information or to volunteer, contact:** Jim Ferguson, Esq., Executive Director  
4080 Chain Bridge Rd.  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
(703) 778-6800  
[hrlsnv@lsnv.org](mailto:hrlsnv@lsnv.org)  
[www.lsnv.org](http://www.lsnv.org)

**Offices in:** Arlington, Old Town Alexandria, Falls Church, Fairfax City, Manassas, Leesburg, Fredericksburg, and the Hybla Valley neighborhood of Fairfax's Route 1 corridor.

**Total number of attorneys:** 31

**Total number of paralegals:** 3

**Program founded in:** 1980

**Mission statement and priorities:**

LSNV's mission is to help promote a more just community by providing high-quality legal assistance and advocacy for families and individuals who face the loss or deprivation of a critical human need, such as food, shelter, income, medical care, education, family stability, or personal safety.

**Special programs:**

LSNV's attorneys work in specialized practice areas including:

**Housing**

LSNV's Housing Law Program provides legal advocacy, outreach, and education with a primary goal of preventing homelessness caused by unnecessary evictions, illegal lockouts, utility cut-offs and involuntary displacement due to job loss or discrimination based upon mental or physical disability. Housing advocates also file affirmative Fair Housing lawsuits and rent escrow actions against landlords to improve living conditions for tenants and force landlords to comply with building and housing codes materially affecting health and safety.

**Family Law**

The Family Law Unit handles a full range of family-related issues from assistance in child custody matters, visitation, and support to cases involving termination of parental rights. The unit's highest priority is representing **survivors of domestic violence** in protective order cases and other matters. The Family Law unit's mission is to help

families achieve and maintain a safe and stable home for themselves and their children.

### **Public Benefits**

LSNV's Public Benefits Unit assists clients, many of whom suffer from a physical or mental impairment, in obtaining critical public benefits such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, Food Stamps, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability, and other public benefits. Through **The HIV/AIDS Law Project**, LSNV provides representation, entitlement counseling, and informational presentations to persons living with HIV/AIDS. The mission of the Public Benefits Group is to assist individuals and families to meet their basic needs and to move toward greater independence.

### **Consumer Advocacy**

The Consumer Law Unit represents individuals in a variety of civil matters targeted at protecting the client's limited income and property from loss. From garnishment protection to bankruptcy, income maintenance, credit and asset protection, the consumer law advocates work to protect clients interests. Other matters include, car repair-ripoffs, repossession disputes, illegal towing practices, overdue storage bills, utility disputes, credit reporting errors, failure of insurance companies/HMOs to pay medical claims, student loan discharge issues, foreclosure and other similar matters.

### **Elder Law**

LSNV's Elder Law Practice Group provides specialized services for persons over the age of 60 years such as home visits and community legal education programs at senior retirement homes/communities. Elder law advocates assist with Medicaid and Medicare issues, access to health care, nursing home and assisted living issues, Wills, Advanced Medical Directives, Powers of Attorney and guardianship matters.

### **The Law Center for Children (TLC)**

The Law Center for Children specializes in the unmet legal needs of children in the judicial, educational, child-welfare and health-care systems. TLC advocates provide assistance with obtaining appropriate evaluations and placement in special education matters and representation on school discipline issues. TLC advocates also provide representation to families and children in adoptions, child emancipation proceedings, foster care issues and children's disability cases.

### **Employment Law**

LSNV's Employment Law Advocate provides legal advice regarding wrongful discharge matters, non-payment or underpayment of wages, denial of unemployment compensation, employment discrimination, civil service disciplinary matters, health insurance claims, pensions and disability benefits.

## Rappahannock Legal Services



**For information or to volunteer, contact:** Ann H. Kloeckner, Esq., Executive Director



Rappahannock Legal Services  
500 Lafayette Blvd., Suite 100  
Fredericksburg, VA 22401  
(540) 371-1105  
akloeckner@rapplegal.com  
www.rapplegal.com

**Offices in:** Fredericksburg, Culpeper and Tappahannock

**Total number of attorneys:** 5

**Total number of paralegals:** 3

**Program founded in:** 1973

**Mission statement and priorities:** RLS gives priority to cases involving loss of housing, housing conditions, income maintenance, health, family support, family violence prevention, and immigration. RLS is an unrestricted program.

**Special programs:** Our bi-lingual attorney and paralegal provide outreach services to the Hispanic community in our service area, including those in need of representation in immigration cases. Our staff attorneys provide services to domestic violence victims of all nationalities including obtaining civil protective orders to end abuse. Our staff attorneys provide services to elderly persons under Title III.

## Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society

**For information or to volunteer, contact:** Larry T. Harley, Esq., Executive Director  
Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society  
227 West Cherry Street  
Marion, VA 24354  
276-783-6576, ext. 223  
larry@svlas.org  
www.svlas.org

**Offices in:** Marion, Christiansburg, and Castlewood

**Total number of attorneys:** 16

**Total number of paralegals:** 4; 4 additional paralegals in Centralized Intake Unit

**Program founded in:** 1972

**Mission statement and priorities:** **It is the mission of SVLAS to champion equal justice for low-income Virginians and to work to remedy the conditions that burden the low-income community. To these ends we strive**

- **to provide high quality, courteous, and effective legal services to low-income families and individuals facing serious threats to their personal, economic or family stability**
- **to work with others to identify and respond to problems faced by those in the low-income community within our region.**

**Special programs:** We house special programs in the areas of Earned Income Tax Credit program, public guardianship program, comprehensive services to victims of domestic violence, family engagement, and elder law.



VIRGINIA  
LEGAL AID  
SOCIETY



**For information or to volunteer, contact:** David Neumeyer, Esq., Executive Director  
Virginia Legal Aid Society  
P.O. Box 6200, 513 Church St.  
Lynchburg VA 24505  
434-528-4722  
[davidn@vlas.org](mailto:davidn@vlas.org)  
[www.vlas.org](http://www.vlas.org)

**Offices in:** Lynchburg, Danville, Farmville, Suffolk

**Total number of attorneys:** 14

**Total number of paralegals:** 8

**Program founded in:** 1977

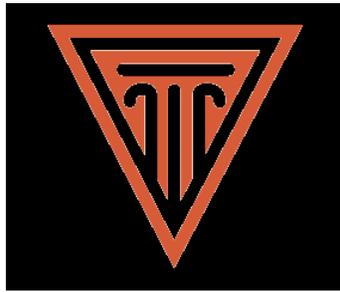
**Mission statement and priorities:**

Virginia Legal Aid Society's mission is to resolve serious legal problems of low-income people, promote economic and family stability, reduce poverty through effective legal assistance, and champion equal justice. VLAS uses legal skills to solve problems in

health care, public benefits, housing, family relations, advance directives, consumer, education, and economic self-sufficiency.

**Special programs:**

- 1) **LawLine**, Virginia Legal Aid Society's intake and advice hotline, provides screening, assessment, referrals, information and legal advice to most of Virginia Legal Aid Society's applicants during their first contact with VLAS regarding a new problem. Callers needing extended service, whether the drafting of a document or the filing of a lawsuit, are referred by the LawLine to a local VLAS office. The system allows us to help thousands of people every year.
- 2) **Housing Improvement and Preservation (HIP)** provides advice and representation in evictions, foreclosures, correction of hazardous conditions, and renovation or construction of affordable housing;
- 3) **Strengthening Families with Children (SFC)** strengthens low-income families with children by increasing access to health care and education, increasing and preserving financial resources, and increasing stability for families in transition.
- 4) **Senior Citizens Legal Assistance** provides advice and representation to senior citizens in social or economic need;
- 5) **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Program** uses a variety of means, including volunteer accountants, drop-in clinics, and a tax-preparation website, [icanefile.org](http://icanefile.org), to help low-income Virginians with earned income receive up to \$4,000 per year in tax credits
- 6) **Private Bar Involvement (PBI)** involves approximately 150 attorneys in providing representation to VLAS clients, most often in divorces, bankruptcies, wills, and guardianships;
- 7) **Financial Freedom** is a financial literacy, budgeting, consumer awareness, and consumer law project presented in classes, public events, individual mentoring, and case representation, principally in our Danville office where we have a full-time coordinator, help over 300 people a year, and work with a coalition to increase income and assets in the region;
- 8) **HEAL (Health, Education, Advocacy, Law) Project**: an innovative medical-legal collaboration designed to ensure that families' and individuals' basic needs for food, safe housing, income, nutrition, family stability, and health insurance are met so that physicians can be more effective in preventing and treating health problems. The project trains health care providers to identify poverty-based barriers to maintaining a patient's health; connects medical and legal professionals in jointly solving obstacles to improved health outcomes; and provides direct, proactive legal assistance to patients experiencing problems.



## **Virginia Poverty Law Center**

Representing Low-Income Virginians For 30 Years

**For information or to volunteer, contact:**

James W. (Jay) Speer, Esq., Executive Director  
Virginia Poverty Law Center, Inc.  
700 East Franklin St., Suite 14T1  
Richmond, VA 23219  
804-782-9430  
[jay@vplc.org](mailto:jay@vplc.org)  
[www.vplc.org](http://www.vplc.org)

**Office in:** Richmond

**Current openings:** none

**Number of summer and school-year law clerk positions; salary if any:** We usually have 1-3 summer law students and sometimes school-year clerk positions. We assist students in their efforts to obtain third-party funding.

**Total number of attorneys:** 7

**Total number of paralegals:** 1 responsible lending coordinator

**Starting salary for new attorney:** \$48,000 plus \$5,000 per year in LRAP distributed tax-free by Legal Services Corporation of Virginia. We also provide health, life and disability insurance and contribute 8% of your salary to a retirement plan.

**Program founded in:** 1978

**Mission statement and priorities:**

The Virginia Poverty Law Center (VPLC) provides leadership, support, training, public education, and advocacy to address the civil legal needs of Virginia's low-income population. Our legal staff specializes in areas of law that affect low-income Virginians. Through training and communications, we educate others about the legal rights of the poor and identify systemic problems and issues. We work collaboratively with Virginia's legal aid community, other organizations, and stakeholders to represent the interests of low-income Virginians in the courts, executive agencies, and legislative bodies.

### **Direct Representation**

We do not generally handle individual cases unless local legal aid offices ask us to co-counsel. However we will handle individual cases when we determine that representation will help us fulfill our mission.

**Outreach and community education** are an important part of our mission. Most of our presentations are made to coalitions, associations and other service providers that work with the poor in Virginia.

### **Statewide Advocacy**

VPLC is seen by many legislators and members of the Executive and Legislative branches of Virginia government as an important source of information and a strong voice for low-income Virginians. We have had much success in proposing and opposing legislation at each year's General Assembly.

### **Special programs:**

Each one of our 7 attorneys specializes in one of the following areas:

Health law

Elder law

Family/Foster Care

Rights of immigrants

Family Law/Rights of domestic violence victims

Housing law

Public benefits (unemployment, TANF and food stamps)

Consumer law

Each attorney is responsible for coordinating his or her own area of expertise and determining what issues have the highest priority.