



# FAIRFAX COUNTY NAACP

## 2025 ADVOCACY AGENDA

Fairfax County NAACP • Unit 7066

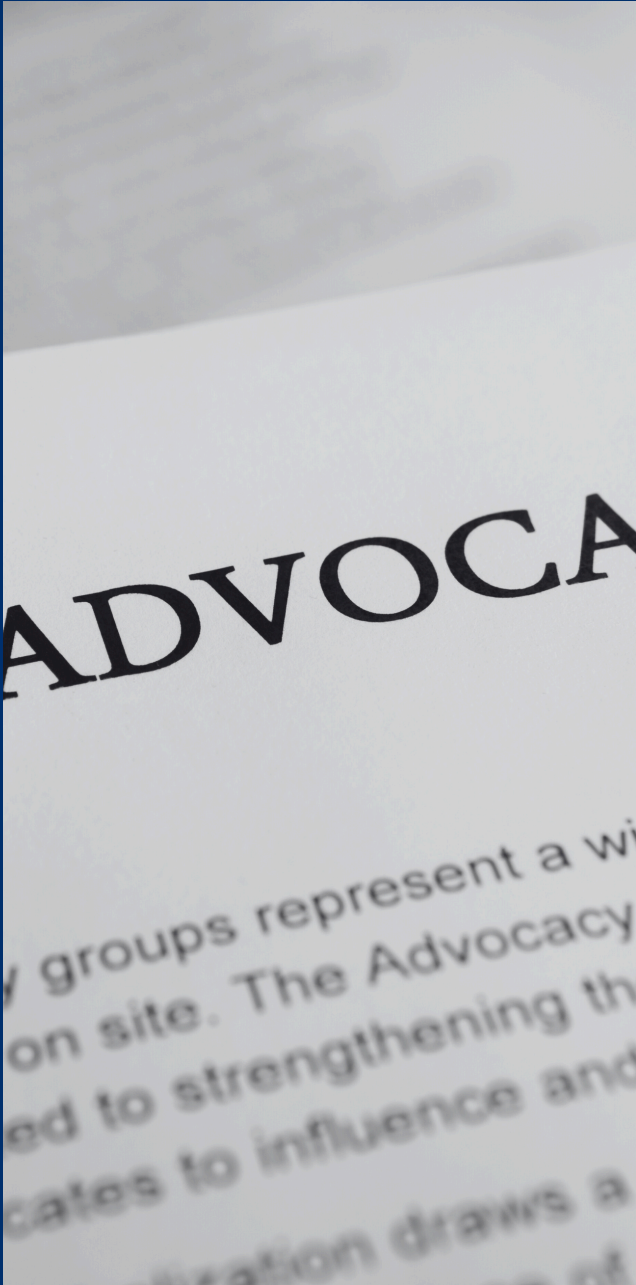
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# FRAMING OUR AGENDA



As we move into an important statewide and local election year, our focus naturally will remain on the political engagement of our membership and our community. The stakes are too high to do otherwise. We also will continue to focus our efforts on areas that remain of primary importance and concern to our community: Education, Criminal Justice, and Housing. Additionally, through our Budget Committee, we will maintain a laser focus on the Fairfax County budget to ensure funds are expended in an equitable fashion across all sectors of county initiatives and programs.

By working with our elected officials and serving on various community-focused boards and commissions, we will continue to work toward a more equitable and humane society, thus ensuring that Fairfax County continues to advance along a progressive pathway that offers true liberty and justice for all.

Fairfax County NAACP  
2025 Advocacy Agenda

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we head into unprecedented times, we at the Fairfax NAACP face many difficult challenges and a tough road ahead, but we are resilient. Over the next few years, there is much work to be done; if we fail to take heed, respond, and act accordingly, we could see a continuation of the turmoil throughout much of the coming year and beyond. The challenges we will surely face will be highlighted as our communities likely struggle in ways that require renewed focus, renewed energy, and new policies and laws to close the gaps that have remained wide for far too long.

As we call for an end to structural disparities, we have a duty to examine our own community and eliminate the barriers that perpetuate and foster institutional racism. Since the root causes of the problems our communities face—inequality and injustice—are deeply connected, so must our solutions be. We must ensure that all our decisions are intentional, transformative, proactive, and equitable.

In 2024, membership in the Fairfax County NAACP Branch continued to grow steadily. We now have hundreds of members as well as many partners, allies and supporters. Our shared mission is to achieve equity, political rights, and social inclusion by advancing policies and practices that expand human and civil rights, eliminate discrimination, and accelerate the well-being, education, and economic security of Black people and all persons of color.

Our 2025 Advocacy Agenda will succeed when we challenge ourselves to join together and live up to the ideals of Dr. King's "beloved community." Our advocacy committees will continue working to remove systemic barriers and institute fair and **equal access to quality education; a restorative criminal justice system; affordable and equitable housing; access to quality and affordable health care; a just transition to clean energy and energy efficiency; economic justice;** and support for our vulnerable communities.

With a Servant Leader's Heart,



**Niki L. Zimmerman, President**  
Fairfax County NAACP  
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## Education Committee

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The Education Committee works to ensure that all students of color and economically disadvantaged students are on the path to college or a successful career by ensuring access to great teachers, equitable resources, a challenging curriculum, and a representative environment. Access to quality education is both a human and a civil right. During 2025, the Education Committee plans to push forward on the following initiatives:

- Per our State of our Schools for Black Students and Staff conversation with Superintendent Dr. Reid on November 12, 2024, we will be asking for regular community meetings where FCPS can share updated data on important metrics and program changes as they impact Black students and staff:
  - literacy and numeracy data;
  - AAP enrollment;
  - changes to math access pathways;
  - Black staff recruitment and retention;
  - efforts to prepare communities and staff for diversity in staffing; and,
  - training of Regional Area Superintendents to be resources for parents.
- Advocate for a clear, measurable plan to improve literacy through 12th grade for students of color and economically disadvantaged students, and regular reporting on progress toward this goal.
- Use current hiring and retention data to create a transparent, data-driven plan to increase hiring and improve retention of Black teachers.
- Demand that FCPS address the Special Education teacher shortage with urgency.
- Support the efforts of the teachers' unions as success on the union agenda will support attracting and retaining FCPS teaching staff.
- Advocate for robust universal Early Childhood Education beginning at age 3 for children of color, in alignment with the learning and equity goals of the FCPS Strategic Plan.

## Criminal Justice Committee

[justice@fairfaxnaacp.org](mailto:justice@fairfaxnaacp.org)

In 2025, the Criminal Justice Committee will advocate for improvements in the following areas of concern:

- **Examine policies regarding co-responder model**

Fairfax County has a co-responder program that pairs mental health clinicians with police officers to aid in de-escalation. On September 16, 2024, however, a Fairfax County police officer responded alone to a welfare check with an individual who was experiencing a mental health crisis. The situation escalated resulting in the shooting death of the individual in crisis. While we are encouraged that Fairfax County has a co-responder program, we plan to gain clarity on how co-responder deployment is decided and to ensure that established protocols are followed consistently to minimize the risk of such a tragic and unwarranted outcome.

- **Expungement Clinic**

Countless people have criminal records that hinder their ability to make a living, find housing, get education, and so much more. We plan to partner with local organizations and hold a Criminal Record Expungement Clinic to increase the awareness of the potential for expungement for individuals with criminal records.

- **Local Community Representation**

Fairfax County and the Commonwealth of Virginia have many boards, authorities, and commissions (BACs) that members of the community may serve on. We already have a few representatives of the NAACP on a few of the BACs, but we intend on growing the NAACP's representation on these BACs. We're in the process of recommending appointees for several boards in Fairfax County and will continue to do so moving forward.

- **Reform the Office of Fairfax Commonwealth's Attorney**

Hold the Office of the Fairfax Commonwealth's Attorney accountable for implementation of its own "Plea Bargaining, Charging Decisions, and Sentencing Policy" guidelines. The CA's office needs to effectively implement sections 3A, 4, 6, and 12 to ensure fair plea bargaining, charges, and dispositions. Plea Bargaining is the primary way most criminal cases are resolved; the Fairfax CA's office has

## Criminal Justice Committee (cont.)

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ineffectively applied these guidelines to cases, creating plea deals that do not reflect what is shown in the guidelines while also creating situations that are wholly unjust and do not represent its own values of criminal justice reform. We will continuously advocate that the Fairfax CA's office follow through with criminal justice reforms that ensure fairer plea bargaining, charging, and sentencing. We will engage with the Fairfax CA's office and encourage specific data collection in order to examine the magnitude of this problem and focus in on possible solutions and outcomes.

- **Amending [Section 18.2-57\(c\)](#) of the Virginia Code**

This law, which addresses the assault and/or battery of a law enforcement officer, carries a felony charge and a mandatory minimum sentence of six months and a maximum sentence five years. According to the Virginia State Police, most instances of “assault” do not result in any injury. The simple brushing of an arm, the tug of a shirt, an item as small as an onion ring touching an officer—or an alleged attempt of making a touch—gives law enforcement the ability to charge any individual with a Class 6 felony. The law currently gives the law enforcement officer enormous power to make a felony charge if there was an attempt to make a touch or if there was minor physical contact. Oftentimes individuals facing such a charge are people of color, people having a mental health crisis, people who are intoxicated, or people who have a physical and/or intellectual disability. We plan to do much more outreach to the General Assembly to provide examples on how these laws could and should be changed.

## Fair and Affordable Housing Committee

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The Housing Committee advocates for fair and affordable housing for all residents, especially for people of color who were systematically excluded from it for generations. We will help spread local awareness of the effects of past injustices such as segregation laws, racial covenants, discrimination in renting and lending, displacement, and gentrification. Largely because of these policies, people of color are disproportionately represented in both the population of homeowners (low) and in the population of homeless people (high). We seek new intentional policies and actions to redress past policies. Some of our main points of advocacy for 2025 are as follows:

### **Help the community understand the ongoing effects of racial segregation policies in housing and development**

- Help publicize recent research on the history of local residential segregation policies and their impact on current land-use patterns. Because these policies were intentional, new policies can intentionally seek different outcomes.

### **Influence new policies to stress equity in community economic development**

- Influence county land- use policy to encourage equitable development that benefits current low-income residents (especially people of color) and local businesses wishing to retain and improve their communities (as opposed to gentrification).
- Reduce displacement of current residents and businesses. Each development application should identify the number of rental units and local businesses that would be displaced to make this part of the public discussion.
- Have County recognize renters (30% of the population) as having rights equal to those of homeowners. Renters should be notified of plans for nearby development and be invited to engage in discussions about such changes.

### **Affirmatively further fair housing**

- We will hold a joint event with the Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development to promote mechanisms to increase Black homeownership.
- Stress that Fair Housing means that people of color must have housing choices *throughout* the community.
- Continue working with the Washington Metro Council of Governments (COG) Fair Housing Outreach group to encourage the County to produce annual progress reports on fair housing actions, including on goals and metrics.



## Fair and Affordable Housing Committee (cont.)

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### **Support more funding for stable housing**

- Organize stakeholders to testify for more affordable housing funding throughout the budget process and especially at the three-day public comment period. Advocate especially for county funds to:
  - Build more committed affordable housing;
  - Provide more emergency rental assistance to keep people housed; and,
  - Provide decent emergency shelters for people who are unhoused.

### **Encourage greater public acceptance of committed affordable housing**

- Help organize local, mainly faith-based, community groups to support affordable housing and homeless shelters when they are sited in neighborhoods that oppose them.

### **Support rights of tenants and mobile home owners**

- Continue work with local organizations, such as Tenants and Workers United, that organize low-income tenants and mobile home owners, who are mostly people of color.
  - Support involvement of organizational partners trusted by residents in the formation of mobile home park policies;
  - Push for market-rate compensation to any mobile home owner who is displaced by sale of their mobile home park to a developer;
  - Promote tenant organizing in Fairfax Redevelopment and Housing Authority housing; and,
  - Support the right to counsel in eviction court, including for undocumented residents.

### **Support the civil and human rights of homeless people, including their right to housing**

- Continue to push the County to provide adequate indoor overnight shelter during summer heat spells.
- Pursue County guidelines for humane treatment of people in homeless camps that are cleared by County police, including alternate shelter, storage, witnesses to any camp clearing, and deployment of only officers trained in de-escalation,

## Political Action Committee

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Government should be accountable to the people, transparent in practice, inclusive of all people, participatory and accessible, representative of the groups it serves, and responsive to the needs of everyone. The Political Action Committee works to increase access to the democratic process through voter registration, voter education and protection, education, advocating for a participatory budgeting process, and working to repeal racially discriminatory legislation. We have an incredible opportunity to build Black political power in Fairfax County. In 2025, the Political Action Committee will advocate to effect change in the following ways:

- **Ensure that Fairfax County Voters are not erroneously removed from voter rolls.**  
We will encourage Virginia Legislators to pass legislation to ensure that voters are protected and have timely recourse if any action is taken by the Virginia State Governor's office to remove voters from the voter rolls.
- **Voter Empowerment Campaign.**  
We will work to ensure voter empowerment through education, training, voter registration, and election participation efforts throughout the year. Our goal will be to increase the number of Black registered voters by 10% for 2025-2026. In addition to focusing on increasing voter registration of 18–29-year-olds, we will also focus on identifying the large percentage of Black voters who are infrequent voters or may be at risk of being removed from the voting rolls. We will also continue to work for the automatic restoration of voting rights to the formerly incarcerated.
- **Voting Rights and Political Representation.**  
We will advocate for enhancements that will increase voter access in Virginia, including:
  - Beginning pre-registration at age 16, which will increase voter registration of 18–29-year-olds;
  - Requiring localities to hold mandatory Sunday voting during the early voting period; and,
  - Automatically restoring of voting rights to the formerly incarcerated.

## Political Action Committee (cont.)

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- **Make A Plan To Vote Campaign | TurnOut To Win.**  
Research shows voters are more likely to make it to the polls if they make a plan on when, where, and how they will vote. We will encourage such planning among our membership and supporters.

## Budget Committee

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Our local government is responsible for serving its citizens in every community with fairness and equity. The Budget Committee will strive to reduce inequities in our community by seeking more funding to support initiatives and programs in underserved communities. We will advocate for the economically disadvantaged citizens whose voices are often unsolicited and unheard. In 2025, the Budget Committee will focus on the following priorities:

- Make recommendations to the County Board of Supervisors during the FY 2026 Budgetary Review process that addresses the above with specific budgetary proposals;
  - **Public Defender Office**  
We support this office's requested budget increase of \$300K for additional resources. Greater legal assistance to indigent blacks and Latinos who are arrested at a disproportionate rate is consistent with equity in justice. The County currently supplements 15% of the Office's salaries and we request an increase to 25% to align with neighboring jurisdictions.
  - **Expand the Co-responder Program**  
All police stations should have co-responder resources 24/7 to prevent future Sydney Wilson outcomes. It's a wise financial investment versus paying wrongful death civil suit settlements.
  - **Housing**  
Increase to 2 cents or add \$32M of incremental funding for affordable housing. Acquisition and conversion of more commercial properties for emergency housing.  
More resources for representation of lower-income tenants in Friday's Eviction court.
  - **Education**  
Fairfax County takes pride in offering the finest educational opportunities to its student population. We are at risk of losing that if the Board of Supervisors does not fund the ratified collective bargaining agreement negotiated between

## Budget Committee (cont.)

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Fairfax County Public Schools and the newly formed Fairfax Education Union, then unanimously ratified by the Fairfax County School Board. The FY 2026 Proposed Budget allocates \$212.4 million toward a 7.0% salary increase for all staff, with additional funding included for changes in benefit rates and contract length increases for H-scale transportation and food service workers. Compensation for Fairfax County average teachers' salaries trails its neighboring school districts. Masters Lane Market Comparison reports that FY 2025 starting teachers' salaries ranked the county 5th among 8 other school districts in northern Virginia. To attract qualified teachers and operational staff, the county has to provide competitive salaries and benefits that will recruit and retain the highest quality professionals in the area, if not, the country.

More Special Education Teachers and Early Education Teachers.

We support the hiring and retention of more black teachers.

More funding for legal representation for parents of children with special needs in Advocacy cases.

- **Legal Redress**

We asked for \$5M in the FY 2025 County budget to support low-income residents in non-criminal proceedings including tenant landlord disputes, employment matters, consumer disputes, etc. We believe that offering attorneys stipends will make this feasible.

- Keep the Fairfax County NAACP informed of Board of Supervisors meetings, plans, and announcements so that our Advocacy committees can respond as needed and act accordingly.
- Collaborate with community organizations in which we have shared interests in promoting programs and initiatives that deserve greater prioritization and funding.
- Assist other committees in the chapter in obtaining the government budgetary resources.

**Budget Committee (cont.)**  
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- Monitor how government funds are spent as directed by our Advocacy committees for programs of interest.



## Join the Movement for Change!

Become a member of our local NAACP branch and help create meaningful progress in our community. Together, we can amplify our voices and fight for equity and justice for all. Be a part of the movement—take the next step and join us today!



**NAACP**  
*Fairfax County Branch*