



STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2027

 www.equalityvirginia.org

OUR PROCESS

In early 2024, Equality Virginia embarked on a strategic planning journey to shape a clear, actionable vision for the organization's future. The process began with a focused pre-Gather phase, where Equality Virginia's leadership and Strategic Planning Team came together to define key questions and goals that would ensure a strategic plan rooted in the organization's mission and responsive to the current climate.

Committed to genuine community engagement, Equality Virginia prioritized gathering input from a broad range of voices. This decision led to one-on-one interviews with 19 stakeholders, engagement with 184 community members through a comprehensive survey, a staff retreat with its five-member team, and a strategically focused board retreat. These conversations provided valuable insights and perspectives that informed the objectives of the strategic plan.

With a deep understanding of both internal changes and the challenging landscape for LGBTQ+ rights, Equality Virginia recognized the necessity of a thoughtful multi-year plan to navigate the coming years with resilience and intention.

Mission: *Equality Virginia advocates and organizes across Virginia to build a future where all Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and broader spectrum of people (LGBTQIA+) thrive.*

Vision: *Lived Equality for LGBTQIA+ Virginians.*

WE BELIEVE

This strategic plan is being adopted as we close our 35th year. Legislative Advocacy has always been a cornerstone of our focus and will remain so while our legal rights are under threat. As we move forward, our focus won't change - instead we emerge with stated commitments aligned to our values.

- We believe our best roles are in system level change, focused support for individuals to empower their own local advocacy, and in education of the community
- We believe the full lifespan and spectrum of LGBTQIA+ Virginians deserve legal protection and advocacy
- We believe in collaborating with communities, organizations, advocates, and organizers to change our Commonwealth
- We believe LGBTQIA+ Virginians have a right to thrive at work, school, home, and in their chosen communities.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENTS GUIDED BY OUR VALUES

At Equality Virginia, our values are the foundation of our work. They guide how we serve, advocate, and connect with LGBTQIA+ communities across the Commonwealth. As we pursue our strategic goals, we commit to upholding these core values in every initiative, relationship, and decision. Our commitments to Community, Equity, Perseverance, Impact, Empowerment, and Integrity reflect our dedication to creating a safer, more inclusive Virginia for all LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Community *We are dedicated to building a strong, interconnected LGBTQIA+ community across Virginia, fostering support, resilience, and a sense of belonging for all.*

Our Commitment: We commit to strengthening the connections among LGBTQIA+ individuals and organizations by creating networks, coalitions, and community events that promote unity, shared resources, and collective support. Through collaborative efforts, we aim to ensure that every LGBTQIA+ Virginian feels they are part of a welcoming, supportive community.

Equity *We prioritize inclusivity and work tirelessly to address the unique needs and challenges of marginalized groups, especially those within BIPOC, trans, and rural communities.*

Our Commitment: Equality Virginia is dedicated to centering the voices of those most impacted by discrimination and providing equitable access to resources and support services. We are committed to ensuring that all programs and advocacy efforts prioritize these historically underserved communities, helping to create a Virginia where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Perseverance *We are resilient and committed to creating long-term change, advocating for LGBTQIA+ rights and protections in all areas of Virginia, even when challenges arise.*

Our Commitment: We will sustain advocacy efforts to promote legislative protections and pursue equality for LGBTQIA+ Virginians, even in the face of adversity. With a focus on resilience and consistency, we remain steadfast in our mission, pushing forward to protect and advance the rights of LGBTQIA+ individuals across the state.

Impact *We strive to create meaningful, lasting change that improves the lives of LGBTQIA+ Virginians and strengthens the communities we serve.*

Our Commitment: Equality Virginia measures success not only by policy victories but by the direct, positive impact on individuals' lives. Every initiative is crafted with meaningful outcomes in mind, whether by expanding access to services, reducing stigma, or increasing acceptance in communities. We aim to create tangible improvements that resonate throughout Virginia's LGBTQIA+ communities.

Empowerment *We believe in the power of LGBTQIA+ individuals to create change and are committed to providing resources, training, and opportunities that amplify their voices and build leadership capacity.*

Our Commitment: We are dedicated to fostering leadership and advocacy within the LGBTQIA+ community by providing resources, mentorship, and programs that equip individuals with the tools to advocate for themselves and others. We believe that empowered LGBTQIA+ leaders will be the drivers of lasting change in Virginia.

Integrity *We hold ourselves accountable to our mission, values, and communities, conducting all actions with transparency, respect, and a commitment to upholding the rights and dignity of LGBTQIA+ Virginians.*

Our Commitment: At Equality Virginia, we operate with transparency by openly sharing how decisions are made, how resources are allocated, and how community feedback informs our actions. We engage in open, honest communication with our stakeholders and embrace shared leadership, empowering communities to be equal partners in shaping our work and direction.

2025-2027 GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal 1: Build Strong LGBTQIA+ Leadership and Community Power

Impact: By growing LGBTQIA+ leadership across Virginia, Equality Virginia empowers individuals to bring positive change, advocate for equality, and effectively respond to challenges and opportunities.

Strategies:

- 1.1: Build a network of regional LGBTQIA+ groups across Virginia, helping them share resources and work together on local issues.
- 1.2: Launch a Statewide Advocacy Institute to equip new and existing leaders with tools and knowledge for effective advocacy in their local communities
- 1.3: Develop a regional resource matrix that includes the mission, purpose and skills of organizations and community members.
- 1.4: Promote the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ issues in discussions and decisions across government and community organizations.

Outcomes: An empowered network of LGBTQIA+ leaders who drive change locally and statewide, helping build resilient communities across Virginia.

Goal 2: Build and Strengthen Partnerships to Activate Change

Impact: Stronger connections with organizations across Virginia create a support network for LGBTQIA+ individuals, addressing needs and fostering inclusive, welcoming communities.

Strategies:

- 2.1: Form a statewide LGBTQIA+ coalition with allied groups to share resources, collaborate on initiatives, and build a network of support.
- 2.2: Host regular regional meetings and forums to lift up community needs of LGBTQIA+ individuals and groups, foster open dialogue, and encourage collaboration.
- 2.3: Explore ways to increase support of and dialogue with community level organizations across the Commonwealth

Outcomes: A network of LGBTQIA+ and allied organizations across Virginia, expanded support and resources for marginalized communities, and stronger, more unified community efforts to address LGBTQIA+ issues.

Goal 3: Listen Deeply and Co-Develop Advocacy Strategies That Meet Community Needs

Impact: Building advocacy skills and increasing community engagement helps ensure LGBTQIA+ voices are heard in public policy and that rights and protections are strengthened for long-term impact.

Strategies:

- 3.1:** Strengthen the responsive advocacy network that informs and mobilizes communities on legislative issues affecting LGBTQIA+ rights.
- 3.2:** Work alongside civic groups and community leaders to build support, counter misinformation, and foster positive dialogue on LGBTQIA+ issues.
- 3.3** Bring together communities from various regions to discuss everyday challenges and policy needs related to LGBTQIA+ rights to support the creation of the legislative agenda
- 3.4:** Cultivate an informed and engaged electorate within LGBTQIA+ communities by fostering awareness of policy impacts and promoting civic participation, thereby empowering community members to influence legislative outcomes that support and protect LGBTQIA+ rights.

Outcomes: More LGBTQIA+ community members engaged in advocacy, stronger legislative support for LGBTQIA+ rights, and improved community relationships that foster understanding and inclusion.

Goal 4: Action and Outreach to Historically Neglected Communities

Impact: Equality Virginia will create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all LGBTQIA+ Virginians, particularly those who have been underserved, ensuring that their needs, voices, and rights are prioritized in advocacy efforts.

Strategies:

- 4.1:** Amplify our support and connection to Trans Communities
- 4.2:** Increase support and outreach in Rural LGBTQIA+ communities

- 4.3:** Build partnerships with organizations serving underrepresented communities including intersectional communities impacting LGBTQIA+ Virginians
- 4.4:** Repair and strengthen relationships with BIPOC LGBTQIA+ Communities

Outcomes: Increased agency and engagement from historically neglected communities in advocacy efforts, strengthened community relationships, improved access to resources for underserved populations, and a deeper, trust-based connection with BIPOC, trans, and rural LGBTQ+ Virginians.

FOUNDATIONAL WORK: Strengthen Internal Capacity to Enable Organizational Growth

Impact: Fostering a healthy, inclusive organizational culture and enhancing Equality Virginia’s internal systems ensures the organization can effectively support LGBTQIA+ communities and achieve its mission.

Strategies:

Organizational

- 5.1:** Develop a strong Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) framework for board and staff, with ongoing training to build an inclusive and supportive culture.
- 5.2** Increase our sustainability by developing a comprehensive fundraising strategy.
- 5.3** Design a comprehensive communication framework that drives a positive shift in public perception, builds understanding around LGBTQIA+ challenges, and solidifies Equality Virginia’s influence.

Board

- 5.4:** Create a board recruitment and development strategy to bring in diverse voices, strengthen community connections, and enhance the board’s outreach, fundraising, and advocacy roles.
- 5.5:** Foster collaboration and trust between board and staff, clarifying roles and ensuring alignment on Equality Virginia’s goals and mission.

Staff

- 5.6** Recruit, retain, and develop a strong staff team and support them with the tools needed to thrive.
- 5.7** Organize and grow staff to enact our strategic goals.

Outcomes: A well-supported, diverse board and staff, a cohesive organizational culture, and sustainable growth that enables Equality Virginia to create lasting impact in communities across the state.