

MULTI-CULTURAL HOUSING RESOURCES

The rich diversity that graces the Commonwealth of Virginia is manifest not only in its topography—from the Appalachian mountains to the Atlantic Ocean—but also in its people. Many who are new to this country have chosen to make Virginia their home, to live and work and raise a family. The most recent census information reveals a significant increase in non-English speaking residents over the previous census.

Dealing with a new culture, customs, laws and systems can be difficult enough without the added barrier of a limited facility with English. In recognition of Virginia's growing number of multicultural residents, VHDA offers some assistance to help bridge the gap and provides information on housing and VHDA programs in other languages.

The following is a list of VHDA's multi-cultural resources and outreach efforts:

- Free Homebuyer Education classes are offered throughout the state 12 months a year. For a time commitment of only six hours, participants gain valuable knowledge that could prevent them from making costly mistakes. Classes have been conducted in Spanish and Vietnamese. For a schedule: tel. 1-800-968-7837 or see the VHDA web site.
- The Homebuyer Education Manual is available in Spanish.
- VHDA's web site has a Spanish portal.
- VHDA's home loan guidelines are available in a selection of other languages.
- VHDA subscribes to "Language Line" which provides interpreter services over the phone in more than 140 languages during VHDA's business hours. Call VHDA at 1-800-968-7837 and ask for interpreter assistance. You will either be asked to "hold" while the connection is made or you will be asked to leave your name and telephone number so your call can be returned.
- VHDA has created a Multicultural Advisory Council with representatives from multicultural organizations and businesses. This group meets quarterly.
- VHDA advertises in foreign language publications and on broadcast media.
- VHDA belongs to the Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.
- VHDA participates in several multicultural events throughout the year such as home buyer fairs, conferences, festivals, and cultural events and supports many community events. We encourage groups to contact us to discuss the possibility of scheduling a VHDA representative to participate, provide an exhibit or speak at an event. Please contact VHDA's Community Affairs Manager, Celia McGuckian at (804) 343-5891 or 1-800-968-7837.

Websites

The following organizations are either dedicated to serving immigrant communities or provide services or links of interest to the communities. Many contain information in other languages.

HUD [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development]

~ **www.hud.gov**

This site contains a great deal of information about housing, community services, Fair Housing, and housing counseling. Also contains excellent links.

Habitat for Humanity International

~ **www.habitat.org**

A Christian-based non-profit that helps very low income people build and finance their first home.

Fannie Mae

~ **www.fanniemae.com**

National organization that provides a continuous flow of funding to the mortgage markets to help make home loans affordable.

Fannie Mae Foundation

~ **www.fanniemaefoundation.org**

Created by Fannie Mae as a completely separate organization, the Foundation provides several programs to aid first time homebuyers. It also has the "New Americans Initiative" with information about credit, home buying and home ownership in several languages.

National Association of Realtors

~ **www.nar.realtor.com**

Site links to all state associations and includes information on diversity, Fair Housing and home buying.

Virginia Association of Realtors

~ **www.varealtor.com**

This site provides links to all local Virginia associations of Realtors, an extensive listing of Realtors who speak other languages, and links to many sites of interest to homebuyers.

National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals

~ **www.realestateespanol.com**

Excellent site containing a lot of good information in English and Spanish about finding and buying a home. It contains a glossary of terms used in buying and financing a home.

Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, Inc.

~ **www.chci.org**

Active, comprehensive services group with excellent links to programs, events and resources. Very good resource.

504 C Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20002

Ph: (202) 543-1771

The National Council of La Raza

~ **www.nclr.org**

This is a national, private, nonprofit organization established in 1968 to "reduce poverty and discrimination and improve life opportunities for Hispanic Americans." NCLR has more than 230 formal affiliates serving most states, D.C., and Puerto Rico.

Mr. Raul Yzaguirre, President

20 F St., N.W., 2nd Floor Washington, DC 20001

Ph: (202) 628-9600.

Arlington County, Dept. of Community Planning, Housing & Development

~ **www.co.arlington.va.us/cphd**

This county agency has staff who can speak Vietnamese and Spanish.

Doug Myrick, Housing Coordinator;

Beltrand Arellano

2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 701 Arlington, Va 22201

Housing and Community Development (703) 228-3760

Office of Neighborhood Services (703) 228-3830

Inspections Services (703) 228-3800

Planning Division (703) 228-3525

Websites

Norfolk Refugee and Immigration Services, Inc.

~ www.angelfire.com/va/therefuge/

Agency assists refugees, provides interpreters and ESL classes.

Ph: (757) 623-9131

Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

~ www.vahcc.com

The chamber is dedicated to promoting the "...growth of companies and entrepreneurs doing business abroad and within the Hispanic community."

Filipino American Student Association

~ web.odu.edu/al/fasa/splash.html

Fun, multimedia site to student association on campus of Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia. Good links to other Filipino sites.

Filipino American Student Cultural Center

~ www.courieronline.com/archive/vol28issue8/filipino.htm

This center is open to ODU students and the community.

The Vietnamese American Community of Washington DC, Maryland & Virginia

~ www.vnet.org/cdhmv

This site provides local news, activities & contacts.

The Virginia Dept. of Social Services

~ www.dss.state.va.us/family/newcomer.html

State agency in Richmond has helped resettle more than 40,000 refugees and immigrants.

Ph: (804) 692-1900

Charlottesville Resettlement Office

~ www.intrescom.org/charlottesville/index.cfm

Receives limited grant funding from the Commonwealth of Virginia Office of Newcomer Services. Good site with data, links and success stories.

Organization of Chinese Americans, Inc

~ www.ocanatl.org

1001 Connecticut Ave., NW #601

Washington, D.C., 20036

Ph: (202) 223-5500 **Fx:** 296-0540

Organization founded in 1973 has several chapters including at least two in Virginia:

OCA – CVC (Central Virginia chapter)

Yu Mei Wu; 3501 Musket Drive

Midlothian, VA 23113

OCA – EVC (Eastern Virginia Chapter)—this one has a web site with excellent historical information and links to excellent sites including news in Chinese.

www.members.aol.com/ocaorg/oca0006e.html

Goodwill Industries

~ www.goodwillrichmond.org

Mission of this Richmond organization is to assist persons with barriers to employment to achieve.

Organization is an active member of Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and seeks to assist immigrant workers.