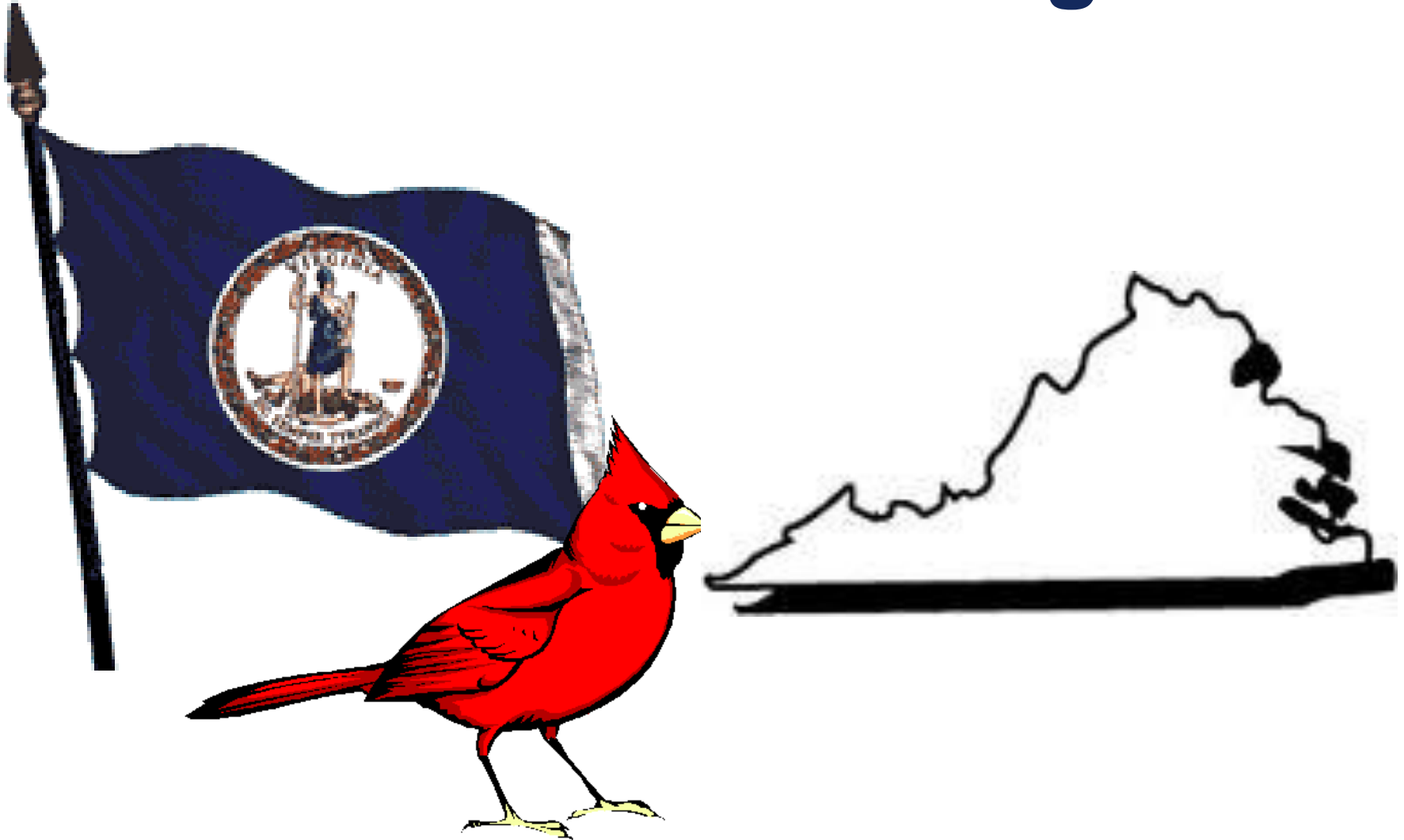


Commonwealth of Virginia



Self-Advocacy Groups in Virginia

Statewide Organizations:

- Virginia Advocates United Leading Together (VAULT)
 - Statewide cross-disability self-advocacy coalition
- Virginia Organization of Consumers Asserting Leadership (VOCAL)
 - Statewide mental health recovery network

Statewide Groups:

- VA Self-Advocates - facilitated by the Arc of VA
- Autistic Self-Advocacy Network, Virginia Association of DeafBlind

Local groups:

- People First Chapters
- People 4 People
- 16 Centers for Independent Living (CILs) have various self-advocacy groups
- Arcs and private provider support self-advocacy groups

Virginia Self-Advocacy Resources

Name of self-advocacy organization	Who provides the resource(s)?	What resource(s) is provided?
Local People First Chapters	Local Arc chapters and service providers	Meeting space, technical assistance
People 4 People (local group)	Service provider	Meeting space, transportation, technical assistance
Virginia Advocates United Leading Together	Developmental Disabilities Council	Grant for the operation of the organization

What has Worked in Virginia

- The “r” word movement brought together self-advocates
- I’m Determined project through the VA Department of Education develop self-determination skills in students
- Projects of National Significance at the University Center of Excellence for Developmental Disabilities have laid the foundation for self-advocacy initiatives
- Youth Leadership Forum Alumni have taken leadership roles in Virginia
- Positive relationships between the Developmental Disabilities Council and University Center of Excellence to promote self-advocacy efforts statewide and locally
- Youth with disabilities advocated for Disability History and Awareness Month in Virginia
- Newly formed cross disability self-advocacy organization

Challenges for Self-Advocates in Virginia

- Self-advocacy initiatives that are run by people with disabilities
- Develop a common message among the self-advocacy groups
- Control of funding both internal and external
- Figuring out social networking to enhance self-advocacy across the state
- Lack of :
 - Funding
 - Transportation to attend meetings
 - Coordination with self-advocacy groups and youth with disabilities
 - Knowledge about self-advocacy groups in their local area
 - Support from organizations

Success in Self-Advocacy in Virginia

- Develop the next generation of leaders with disabilities through I'm Determined and YLF
- The R-Word campaign led by The Arc resulted in general assembly action and renaming of state DD agency
- Successful in obtaining a resolution that established October as Disability History and Awareness Month
- Developed a strong self-advocacy training network
- VAULT - a newly formed cross-disability self-advocacy organization

Virginia's Goals for Self-Advocacy

- Have a strong voice in the state capitol
- Increase community living opinions
- Have competitive employment to be the first option
- Develop the next generation of self-advocate leaders
- Broaden the youth movement to make certain every student has an active part in the plans that are made for their future
- Connect more people with disabilities to a self-advocacy group in their local area
- Support VAULT in their development of common agendas and policy statements



Goals of Self-Advocacy in Virginia

“The Self-Advocacy Tree” was developed during a self-advocacy forum that was held in April, 2010 with 46 advocates with disabilities from across Virginia

Virginia's Self-Advocacy Team

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