

Virginia Episcopal Real Estate Partners (VEREP)



Virginia Episcopal Real Estate Partners made great progress in 2025 in its efforts to position itself as a resource for congregations seeking to review the use of their property for missional purposes. Highlights include:

- Secured external funding from Trinity NYC to strengthen its core mission and to assist individual congregations
- Received preplanning grants from Virginia Housing for Trinity Church Arlington and Iglesia de Santa Maria Fairfax in addition to last year's grant to Christ Ascension Richmond
- With the permission of the Bishop, VEREP has extended its activities into the Diocese of Southern Virginia, working with Bishop Susan Haynes
- Went live with a new web site (www.verep.org) that provides substantial information resources for churches considering how best to use their property assets for housing, rental, child care and other mission real estate opportunities.
- Secured additional expert resources through new Board members and an expanded roster of consultants and strengthened its administrative capabilities and on-line capabilities
- Actively working with over ten individual parishes on projects for education, housing and other missions
- Advocated for greater attention to affordable housing needs at state and national levels

External Funding from Trinity NYC

Trinity NYC has provided a two year-grant of \$225,000 that supports several activities of VEREP as part of their Mission Real Estate Development (MRED) program. Working with the Treasurer and other Diocesan staff, VEREP has developed a Congregational Survey Tool (central database) of diocesan properties and attributes and matched it to the Lincoln Institute for Land Policy GIS database that provides a wealth of other information on land use and census tract data. The database documents

congregational buildings, land acreage, zoning and land use, community demographics, church vitality and geography. This database will provide a strong foundation for congregations exploring the best way to utilize their property resources.

Additionally, the Trinity Grant funds up to ten VEREP landscape analyses (or dashboard) studies that collect information on a church, suggest possibilities for redevelopment and propose next steps. This grant also allows VEREP to assist up to ten churches undergoing congregational discernment about their future.

There are also funds available for Initial legal consultations for up to five congregations and advanced advisory for churches ready to issue a Request for Proposal.

Preplanning Grant

Under a memorandum of understanding with Trinity Church Arlington and Iglesia de Santa Maria Fairfax VEREP was awarded preplanning grants from Virginia Housing of \$70,944 and \$82,000 respectively to assist those churches in considering future options for their property. These grants cover costs such as appraisal, surveys, title searches, and building assessment. This is in addition to the Virginia Housing award last year of \$32,000 for Christ Ascension Richmond. Virginia Housing has funds available for such preplanning grants and is willing to fund VEREP as a 501(c)(3) organization to work with churches exploring housing missions. VEREP also received a generous grant of \$15,000 from St. Mary's Arlington to support the work at Santa Maria.

Diocese of Southern Virginia

With the cooperation of our Bishops and Bishop Susan Haynes of the Diocese of Southern Virginia, VEREP has executed memoranda of understanding with Hickory Neck and St. Andrew's Newport News to consider future actions for those congregations. The VEREP team also presented a workshop on mission real estate for a clergy conference for this diocese.

New Website

A \$50,000 award from Virginia Housing for housing outreach and communication has allowed a redesign and update in the VEREP website www.verep.org. The website includes a wealth of information on mission real estate development, including how to get started, case studies, and a comprehensive listing of books, videos, podcasts and organizations working in this field. Users can also sign-up for a forthcoming VEREP newsletter.

Landscape Analysis Studies

Under memoranda of agreement VEREP is providing landscape analysis studies and initial consultants with three more congregations. These analyses collect general information on the church, suggest possibilities for redevelopment and propose next steps. If the church wishes to consider a housing mission, VEREP initiates grant requests with Virginia Housing.

Educational Efforts

VEREP Board members attend and present at workshops, conferences and seminars to increase their awareness of MRED projects, to network with other organizations and

dioceses working in this arena, and to identify potential funding sources. This has included events sponsored by Virginia Housing, Enterprise Community Development, Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, and our own diocese. Videos of some of these conferences are available through the VEREP website.

Resources and Consultants

Knowing that not all churches will be interested in a housing mission VEREP has expanded its cadre of expert consultants to include expertise in property law, leasing, child care and congregational discernment.

Advocacy

We work with Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy and other advocacy organizations on faith-based housing legislation introduced in the General Assembly.

VEREP also supported a resolution at the last General Convention calling for a National Task Force on Affordable Housing and the Unhoused. The Task Force has started its work.

Appreciation

We give thanks for our retiring trustees Dr. Kathie Panfil and Carolyn Lanier. We look forward to our new trustee candidates: Linda Kelleher, T. Parker Gallagher, and Scott Andrews-Weckerly.

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