



Virginia Episcopal Real Estate Partners (VEREP)

2026 was a building year for Virginia Episcopal Real Estate Partners as its efforts expanded to help Episcopal churches examine their properties to better serve their mission and their communities. The following are just a few initiatives, projects and developments that took place this year:

- **Hired an Executive Director**
- **Hired a full-time AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteer**
- **Rented office space in the Better Housing Coalition headquarters**
- **Initiated updates and improvements to the GIS database**
- **Updated and improved the www.verep.org website to include more resources for churches considering how best to use their property assets for housing, rental, child care and other mission real estate opportunities**
- **Launched a monthly “e-news”**
- **Produced 3 free educational webinars**
- **Produced a 101-page guide for leasing spaces on church property**
- **Worked with over 20 individual parishes on projects for education, housing, and/or other mission-based projects**
- **Continued its advocacy to promote the Faith in Housing Act**

VEREP Staff

VEREP hired Sarah Whiting as Executive Director, bringing more than 25 years of nonprofit leadership, fundraising, capital project management, and historic property redevelopment experience. Sarah most recently served as Director of Operations at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Richmond. Her previous leadership roles include Director of Operations and Capital Projects at The Valentine Museum, Executive Director of St. John’s Church Foundation, and senior positions with Preservation Virginia and Historic Richmond Foundation. Sarah started in August.

Isabella Burns, Mission Real Estate Specialist VISTA, began full-time work in September. Isabella is a sociology PhD student at George Mason University with a background in education, research, and community-based work. She holds a master’s degree in Applied Linguistics and a bachelor’s degree in Sociology and has worked in higher education, early childhood education, and applied research settings. Her research has explored economic mobility, education, school discipline, and organizational change using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Isabella chose to serve as an AmeriCorps VISTA because she wanted to apply her research and communication skills to work that directly strengthens communities.

VEREP is very grateful for the support received from Virginia Housing Alliance and the Host Site Scholarship received to fund Isabella’s year of work.



VEREP Office

In August, VEREP moved into its new office space within the Better Housing Coalition's offices. VEREP is grateful for its dedicated workspace and for the opportunity to be connected with a leading organization focused on housing and community development.

GIS Database Updates

Building upon the Affordable Housing Awareness grant received from Virginia Housing in 2025, VEREP has expanded its outreach by using its GIS Tool, a parcel database compiled and hosted by the Lincoln Institute of Real Estate and Land Policy. VEREP used the grant funding to produce VEREP's Data-Informed Marketing Plan which allowed it to reach out to 19 churches to bring affordable housing awareness to their clergy, congregations and church leadership.

Educational Webinars, E-News & Website Updates and Improvements

VEREP continually updates its website with case studies, educational resources, and opportunities for churches. This year VEREP produced three free webinars on the following topics:

- How to Lease Church Spaces
- How to Lease Church Spaces for Childcare
- Capital Needs Assessments and Their Benefits

The webinars reached over 100 individuals. More webinars are planned for 2027. All webinars are recorded and can be found on VEREP's website.

Also in 2026, VEREP launched its monthly e-newsletter. Congregation members and leaders, clergy and affinity groups are encouraged to sign up at the VEREP website to stay informed on current projects, educational events and resources and possible project funding opportunities.

Printed Leasing Guide

VEREP produced a 101-page leasing guide to go along with its webinar series on Leasing Church Spaces. The full guide and a shorter version are available for free at <https://www.verep.org/leasing-guide>. A printed guide will also be for sale at VEREP's booth at the Annual Convention.

Parishes Served by VEREP

Knowing that not all churches will be interested in a housing mission, VEREP continues to expand its list of expert consultants to include expertise in property law, leasing, child care and congregational discernment. VEREP served 20 churches in the Diocese of Virginia and the Diocese of Southern Virginia in 2026 by providing help with leasing space for childcare, capital needs assessments, congregational discernment, affordable housing consultations, landscape or dashboard analyses and feasibility studies. VEREP's work with congregations is made possible by generous grant funding by Trinity NYC and Virginia Housing and individual donors.

Advocacy

VEREP is eager to support churches preparing to take advantage of the Faith in Housing



Act, which takes effect January 1, 2027. VEREP continues to work with partner organizations to help churches understand and navigate the opportunities created by the Act.

Appreciation

We give thanks for our retiring trustees, Rev. Kathleen Chipps, Nina Janopaul and Helen Plaisance. We would like to acknowledge and give thanks for the extraordinary leadership of Nina Janopaul as she finishes 9 years on the board, the last year serving as president.

We also are very grateful for generous funding support from Virginia Housing and Trinity NYC.

We look forward to working with our new trustee candidates:

- Rhiann Allvin
- Beth Kennan
- Mike Purello

Board of Trustees, continuing members

Scott Andrews-Weckerly	Hickory Neck, Toano
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Staff:

Sarah Whiting, Executive Director
Isabella Burns, Mission Real Estate Specialist VISTA