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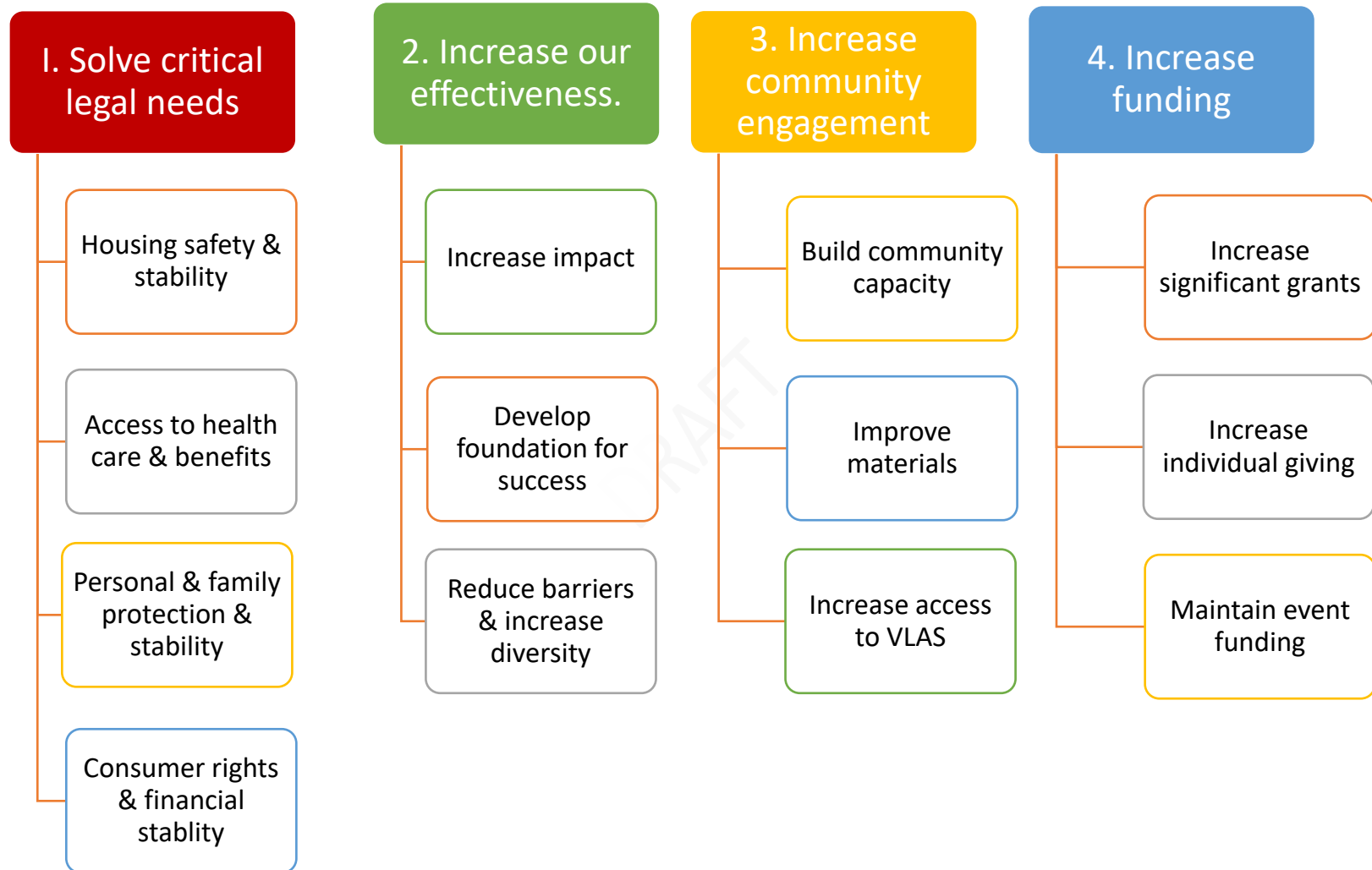


Draft New Strategic Plan 2023-2027:

August 10, 2022

For review by the Board of Directors September 23 and approval December 6, 2022

To provide the best legal services possible for our area, VLAS will:



Goal I: Solve Critical Legal Needs

Housing safety & stability	Objectives	Strategies	Responsible Entity	Impact
	Increase housing education & outreach	<p>Increase community outreach about housing issues facing our client population</p> <p>Increase tenant and homeowner knowledge of legal protections, rights, responsibilities and the Court process</p> <p>Empower tenants to advocate for themselves in their dealings with landlords and the Court</p> <p>Connect our clients with community resources when available</p> <p>Work with available community partners to maximize the effectiveness of our advocacy and coordinate opportunities and resources for our clients</p> <p>Track the number of people affected by our outreach & assess its effectiveness</p>	<p>Attorneys</p> <p>Housing Paralegals</p> <p>Outreach staff if available</p> <p>Housing & Consumer Practice Group</p>	<p>Increase in tenant & home owner knowledge of their rights and responsibilities</p> <p>Increased awareness of the availability of Legal Aid assistance in housing matters</p> <p>Increase in housing stability for our client population</p>
	Promote housing stability	<p>Prevent or delay evictions</p> <p>Help tenants get more time to transition to alternative housing when necessary</p> <p>Help tenants and homeowners avoid an eviction, money judgment or foreclosure on their record when possible</p> <p>Prevent unlawful exclusions and look for opportunities to use the statutory damages provisions</p> <p>Preserve and promote home ownership- mobile home, rent to own, foreclosure, etc.</p>	<p>Attorneys</p> <p>Housing Paralegals</p> <p>Outreach staff if available</p> <p>Housing & Consumer Practice Group</p>	<p>Increase in housing stability for our clients</p> <p>Reduce the long-term implications of housing instability on our clients</p> <p>Reduction in evictions for our client population</p> <p>Increased ability for self-advocacy of tenants & homeowners</p>

		<p>Look for opportunities to empower our client population to be proactive and avoid the court process</p> <p>Promote the expansion of our in-court Eviction Clinics as appropriate</p>		
	Reduce unsafe housing	<p>Educate tenants on the proper legal remedies for unsafe and dangerous conditions and a landlord's failure to repair or maintain the property</p> <p>Advise tenants against the withholding of rent for repair and/or conditions issues</p> <p>Empower tenants to properly advocate for themselves to address repair and conditions issues with their landlords and/or the Court-proper notice, repair and deduct, tenant's assertions, etc.</p> <p>Look for opportunities to strategically challenge habitually unlawful landlords</p>	<p>Attorneys</p> <p>Housing Paralegals</p> <p>Outreach staff if available</p> <p>Housing & Consumer Practice Group</p>	<p>Increased awareness of landlords and properties in our service area with habitually dangerous housing conditions</p> <p>Tenants will have more success in unlawful exclusion cases that either they file themselves or we represent on.</p> <p>Tenants will be more successful in getting repairs made and unsafe conditions addressed</p>

Access to Health Care & Benefits	Objectives	Strategies	Responsible Entity	Impact Measures
	Obtain and protect eligibility for, access to, and quality of government-funded health care programs	Obtain and protect eligibility for Medicaid (including MCO appeals, and dental programs for adults and children), Medicare, FAMIS, FAMIS Moms, and new health care programs Reduce obstacles to obtaining health care by educating clients about Medicaid transportation, and supporting community efforts to increase transportation options for other health care needs Increase community awareness	Local office advocates and staff; bi-lingual staff, community outreach staff, Practice group; Enroll VA navigators	Our client population will enroll and remain enrolled in health insurance programs, and have improved access to quality healthcare services Our client population and community will know more about access to health care programs, Medicaid dental benefits, and transportation options
	Obtain and maintain government benefits for which clients are eligible, including SSDI, SSI, TANF, SNAP, UI, and energy assistance	Advise and represent clients that apply and qualify Refer veterans' benefits cases to other appropriate resources Increase community awareness	Local office advocates and staff; bi-lingual staff, community outreach staff, practice group	Clients that we represent will obtain and/or maintain benefits they have sought and are eligible for Our client population and community will know more about public benefit programs and who qualifies
	Remove barriers to employment	Assist with driver's license restoration, and expungements when necessary to obtain or maintain employment Support community efforts to increase transportation options	Local office advocates and staff; bi-lingual staff, community outreach staff, practice group	VLAS clients will have fewer barriers to employment

Personal & Family Protection & Stability	Objectives	Strategies	Responsible Entity	Impact Measures
	Protect personal safety	<p>Obtain permanent protective orders</p> <p>Assess clients' circumstances holistically to identify and meet other legal needs related to safety</p> <p>Ensure access to legal services by the entire client population, with a focus on our historically underserved communities</p>	Local office advocates and staff; bi-lingual staff, community outreach staff, practice group	More victims of domestic violence will receive protective orders or other positive legal outcomes; higher case numbers in the underserved communities
	<p>Obtain divorce, support, custody, in significant cases such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieves another legal priority goal • Involves domestic violence • DCSE not involved or available • Initial petition or client's order challenged • Attorney on the other side 	<p>Increase number of uncontested divorces using pro bono attorneys when available</p> <p>Assess clients' circumstances holistically to identify and meet other legal needs related to safety</p> <p>Ensure access by the entire client population, with a focus on our historically underserved communities</p>	Local office advocates and staff; bi-lingual staff, community outreach staff, practice group	VLAS clients will receive increased family stability or other positive legal outcomes; higher case numbers in the underserved communities
	Protect educational rights of children	<p>Provide representation in denials of appropriate special education services, access to special education services, long-term suspensions, expulsions, and discrimination in any services</p> <p>Increase community awareness about available resources</p>	Local office advocates and staff; bi-lingual staff, community outreach staff, practice group	<p>More low-income and disabled children will receive appropriate special educational services and assistance with discipline cases</p> <p>More low-income parents and the community will know more about education rights</p>

	Protect parental rights in CPS cases	<p>Provide assistance in child removal cases where court-appointed counsel unavailable</p> <p>Increase community awareness</p>	Local office advocates and staff; bi-lingual staff, community outreach staff, Practice group	<p>More parents will be assisted with their parental rights when they are endangered and other representation is unavailable</p> <p>Parents will know more about their parental rights</p>
	Provide advance planning and guardianship documents	<p>Create general and medical POAs, wills, living wills, guardianships</p> <p>Provide as requested and appropriate; use pro bono when available</p>	Local office advocates and staff; bi-lingual staff, community outreach staff, practice group	Clients needing advanced planning documents will receive them, and receive assistance with guardianships

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Consumer Rights & Financial Stability	Objectives	Strategies	Responsible Entity	Impact
	Increase consumer education & outreach	<p>Increase community outreach about consumer rights</p> <p>Increase consumer knowledge of legal protections, rights & responsibilities</p> <p>Empower consumers to advocate for themselves in consumer matters</p> <p>Identify & promote financial literacy opportunities for our client population when available & appropriate</p> <p>Track the number of people affected by our outreach & assess its effectiveness</p>	<p>Attorneys</p> <p>Housing & Consumer Practice Group</p> <p>Outreach Staff if available</p>	<p>Our client population will be more knowledgeable of their consumer rights</p> <p>Our client population will be better equipped to advocate for themselves in consumer matters</p> <p>Financial literacy will lead to more financial security for our client population</p>
	Protect consumers through individual representation & impact advocacy	<p>Encourage and support more consumer advocacy & litigation- through co-counseling or pro bono referrals when available & appropriate</p> <p>Look for opportunities to use consumer statutory protections in other substantive areas- housing, etc.</p> <p>Coordinate consumer litigation & advocacy projects using the Consumer & Housing Practice Group</p> <p>Provide opportunities for advocates to receive substantive consumer law training</p> <p>Look for opportunities for impact advocacy & litigation</p>	<p>Attorneys</p> <p>Housing & Consumer Practice Group</p>	<p>Better protection of consumers in our program service areas</p> <p>Increase in consumer advocacy in our program</p> <p>Increase in the financial stability of our client population</p>

Goal II: Increase Our Effectiveness

	Objectives	Strategies	Responsible Entity	Impact Measures
Increase Impact	Provide support and guidance to advocates and staff to ensure they have the appropriate skills and knowledge	<p>Ensure staff are adequately trained on all priority areas and advocacy and technology tools</p> <p>Increase co-counseling opportunities for advocates with more experienced attorneys both inside and outside of the program.</p> <p>Develop a mentorship program</p>	Executive Director, Director of Advocacy, Local office Managing Attorneys, Practice Group leaders & Director of Administration	<p>VLAS advocates will increasingly obtain remedies and case outcomes that help more of our client population</p> <p>VLAS staff receive regular, but at least annual, technical trainings</p> <p>VLAS has an active mentorship program for all positions</p>
	Seek maximum program-wide impact in all casework and advocacy efforts	<p>Regularly hold senior staff meetings to direct advocacy, discuss trends and case work across the program.</p> <p>Address systemic problems for low-income individuals, and systemic outcomes in routine cases</p> <p>Monitor internal and external data sources to identify legal service delivery trends</p>	Exec Director, Director of Advocacy, managing attorneys, Practice Group leaders, and Administrative Staff	<p>VLAS staff attorneys will increasingly obtain remedies and case outcomes that help more of our client population</p> <p>VLAS will adjust legal service, advocacy, and outreach strategies to adapt to new and emerging data trends and community needs</p>

Develop a Foundation for Success	Objectives	Strategies	Responsible Entity	Impact Measures
	Improve technology and advocacy tools to meet the needs of our client communities	Develop technology plan Obtain funding for new technologies Implement technology improvements Update website to improve accessibility and user-friendliness	Executive Director and Director of Administration	Adopt technology plan Introduce new technologies New and improved website
	Ensure VLAS maintains staffing resources to meet the demands of the client community and strategic plan	Perform an external infrastructure and staffing analysis for optimal organizational performance and impact Create and implement a staffing plan	Executive Director, Managing Attorneys and Director of Administration	Increase in attorneys to ensure an equal distribution of representation across the VLAS service area, but maintain at least the minimum staffing of three attorneys in each office Increase in non-attorney casehandlers, community navigators and outreach workers Creation of new administrative and support positions in local offices, finance & HR, development & communications, and technology to meet organizational needs
	Ensure top talent is attracted to and retained by VLAS	Prioritize racial, gender, geographic and age diversity on the Board and staff to reflect the communities we serve Identify innovative retention practices for existing staff Identify new recruitment strategies for new staff Establish succession plans for senior leadership, including cross-training and mentorship opportunities	Executive Director, Director of Advocacy, Director of Administration, Director of Development and Managing Attorneys	Increase and retain the number of diverse of staff and board members Decrease in turnover and hiring lag time Leadership training and performance development opportunities are provided to staff

	Increase funding to implement the strategic plan	Develop annual fundraising plan to meet program objectives Increase existing funding sources Identify new funding sources	VLAS Board of Directors, Executive Director, Director of Advocacy, Director of Development, Director of Administration and Managing Attorneys	Annual revenue increases to meet strategic plan objectives and initiatives
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	Objectives	Strategies	Responsible Entity	Impact Measures
Reduce Barriers & Increase Diversity	Internal education and action	Educate and empower staff and board using webinars, webcasts, live presentations, CLEs, recordings, and printed materials Provide DEI and bias training opportunities for staff and Board at program-wide, statewide, and Board meetings.		Improved staff awareness of how culture and biases may affect communication amongst staff and clients.
	Educate Staff and Board about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), bias, implicit bias, and systemic racism.	Offer opportunities to discuss DEI and bias matters through mentorship, small group or roundtable discussions, and other settings.	Committee Executive Director Director of Administration Training Responsible Person Liaison (LSCV-Karl) Case handlers/advocates	VLAS attorneys will increasingly recognize and address denial of access to justice or inconsistencies in the justice system based on systemic barriers and biases. VLAS will increasingly reach broader audiences in online and printed educational materials.
	Make inclusion and diversity a part of VLAS work culture			Promotes employee satisfaction and productivity. Creates a work environment where employees are surrounded by representation of various cultures, ways of thinking and backgrounds-making teams more comfortable being themselves at work.
				Creates a work culture that nurtures and promotes diversity in client representation, recruitment, and community partnerships.

	<p>Community Outreach</p> <p>Educate and raise awareness with clients and community on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), bias, implicit bias, and systemic racism.</p> <p>Engage with cultural partners to be better informed on how or why cultural or religious beliefs and customs may impact delivery of or acceptance of available legal services.</p>	<p>Conduct outreach to the community at large, partners, bench/Bar.</p> <p>Consumer education in public schools—financial literacy class, community centers, churches, etc.</p> <p>“So, you’re 18 now”—general education—targeting diverse population</p> <p>Provide domestic violence education, using in person, or virtual presentations, and printed materials, with an emphasis on understanding cultural divides that may inhibit request for services.</p>	<p>Committee Partner Agencies/Local Bar Grant Writing & Communications Coordinator DV Outreach Coordinator Housing Outreach Coordinator Managing Attorneys Director of Development</p>	<p>Increase awareness of issues in the community and promote visual presence of VLAS.</p> <p>Clients and community partners will be better informed when to seek legal assistance.</p> <p>Improved likelihood of increasing awareness of legal issues that tend to affect one’s credit, housing, food security and family safety in young adults and older adolescents. (Educate students and young adults to help reduce the cycle of poverty)</p> <p>Decrease gaps in services to certain cultural groups in areas such as domestic violence and housing.</p>
	<p>Case Acceptance</p> <p>Train case handlers how to consider the presence of systemic racism, barriers, bias, or inequities in case facts in determining the level of assistance to provide to clients.</p> <p>Ensure VLAS services are provided equitably.</p>	<p>Maintain a log for each office to document reports of denial of or delay in access to justice based on systemic racism, bias or other cultural disparities</p> <p>Consider any of the above factors as a basis for accepting a lower tier case or non-tier case for representation in the managing attorney, Executive Director or Advocacy Director’s discretion.</p>	<p>Managing Attorneys Executive Director Director of Advocacy Board-for client filed grievance Designee, in absence of above</p>	<p>Improved communication to judicial, court clerk, and magistrate staff of implicit bias, policies or systemic barriers that prevent or delay access to justice. or the appearance of such to the community.</p> <p>Decreased hesitancy of clients to seek out redress in the legal system.</p> <p>Reduced discrimination in housing, increased access to public education, improved accommodation, and access to courts for the disabled or clients with LEP/ESL.</p>

				Increased cultural awareness by government agencies involved in adult/child protective services or domestic violence matters
	Fundraising Seek funds to assist in the goals and initiatives of the DEI-Structural Racism Committee and related clientele work	Conduct grant research and submit viable grant application with target of additional advocate to handle case work involving such matters and hiring internal VLAS DEI staff personnel or add-on duties	Executive Director Director of Administration Director of Development Grant Writer Coordinator	With additional funding, VLAS will increasingly address systemic barriers and bias in access to justice issues VLAS will remain current with diversity, inclusivity, bias issues in the workplace with funding for training, hiring policies, online hiring platforms, DEI staff, and outreach. VLAS will benefit from longevity in staffing through continued commitment to promoting and fostering a safe, inclusive, and open workplace.

Goal III: Increase Community Engagement

	Objectives	Strategies	Responsible Entity	Impact Measures
Build Community Capacity	Build our communities' capacity to help themselves	<p>Develop a "curriculum" to teach our partners how to help their clients with basic legal issues.</p> <p>Develop a network of people among our community partners qualified to explain basic legal issues to their clients and understand when to seek VLAS help.</p> <p>Build on first two strategies by launching a Community Navigator pilot program that eventually expands throughout VLAS's service area.</p>	Development Team, with assists from LawLine, Managing Attorneys, and other senior attorneys	<p>Complete curriculum.</p> <p>New printed/online materials to advance community's legal education.</p> <p>Partner survey on effectiveness of our training.</p> <p>Partner estimate on number of their clients receiving legal education.</p> <p>Number of VLAS materials distributed, number of visits to online education materials.</p> <p>Launch of at least one Community Navigator pilot program.</p>
	Increase our contact with and impact on underserved communities (including rural areas, ESL population, African Americans, the elderly)	<p>Create partnerships with organizations that reach these populations.</p> <p>Equip these partners with the tools and skills they need to serve as effective, trusted messengers on our behalf.</p> <p>Meet as needed with these partners to provide education, replenish outreach materials and receive feedback from them to ID the key needs of the communities they serve.</p>	Outreach Coordinator, Development Team	<p>Number of partnerships.</p> <p>Partner survey on effectiveness of our training.</p> <p>Partner estimate on number of their clients receiving legal education.</p> <p>Number of VLAS materials distributed, number of visits to online education materials.</p>

Improve Materials	Objectives	Strategies	Responsible Entity	Impact Measures
	Improve public education content to make our materials more attractive and easier to use for our target population.	<p>Continually edit VLAS education materials to be more easily digested.</p> <p>Develop new online outreach content</p> <p>Translate more materials into languages besides English.</p> <p>Develop guidelines to increase the effectiveness of online outreach (e.g., time limits for presentations).</p>	Communications Coordinator, Development Team	<p>Pieces of edited materials</p> <p>Feedback from partners on clarity, effectiveness of our materials.</p>

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Increase Access to VLAS	Objectives	Strategies	Responsible Entity	Impact Measures
	Overcome transportation barriers that make it difficult for clients and potential clients to come to us.	<p>Partner with city/county transportation agencies, existing VLAS partners and other groups to make public transportation more useful and affordable.</p> <p>Partner with organizations that offer free or low-cost car rides to VLAS clients.</p>	Development Team	<p>Free or low-cost bus passes issued</p> <p>Number of partners agreeing to provide transportation to people in need.</p> <p>Number of monthly trips given by these partners.</p>
	Set up more “kiosks” that bring VLAS information and services to locations visited by our target population.	<p>Create more partnerships with libraries, DSS's, churches, community colleges, retailers and others to carry permanent VLAS displays of information.</p> <p>Offer regular clinics (legal education events) at select locations to promote VLAS education.</p> <p>Deploy social media to supplement and promote our remote education and outreach</p>	Development Team	<p>Number of locations that present VLAS materials.</p> <p>Number of brochures distributed.</p> <p>Number of clinics held.</p> <p>Number of educational social media posts.</p> <p>Number of engagements with educational social media posts.</p>

Goal IV: Increase Funding

Increase significant grants	Objectives	Strategies	Responsible Entity	Impact Measures
	Increase significant grants (\$5,000 or more) from foundations and government programs	<p>Identify areas of future community need likely to attract funding support, such as (from recent past) evictions and domestic violence and (potential next areas) opioid abuse and veteran support.</p> <p>Build on our increasing experience with government-based grants to apply successfully for similar grants.</p> <p>Continuously learn from successful and unsuccessful grant applications and apply those lessons to increase our chances for success in future applications</p>	Development Team	<p>Number of large grants</p> <p>Number of government grants</p> <p>Dollars raised from large foundation and government grants.</p>

Increase individual giving	Objectives	Strategies	Responsible Entity	Impact Measures
	Increase individual giving	<p>Continually increase and update potential donor database</p> <p>Build relations with community influencers</p> <p>Boost our online donations</p>	Development Team	Number and amount of individual donations increases

Maintain event funding	Objectives	Strategies	Responsible Entity	Impact Measures
	Maintain funding from special events	<p>Continue staff-led major special events honoring individuals and VLAS anniversaries</p> <p>Supplement staff-generated major special events with smaller events led by board members or friends of VLAS</p>	Development Team	Amount raised from special events continues and increases