



2023 - 2024

Annual Report



LIBERAL ARTS AND HUMAN SCIENCES
INSTITUTE FOR POLICY
AND GOVERNANCE
VIRGINIA TECH.

**VIRGINIA TECH INSTITUTE FOR POLICY
AND GOVERNANCE**

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About VTIPG

Founded in 2006, the Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance is actively involved in empirical and theoretical research, and supports sponsored research endeavors in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences (CLAHS).

We engage in research, capacity building, technical assistance and community-based participatory inquiry with and on behalf of those we serve; principally public, nonprofit and private organizations, and the vulnerable populations and communities those entities support.

Our projects broadly encompass research and praxis in the areas of Urban & Community Development, Health & Human Sciences, Governance & Management, Sustainability & the Environment, and Democracy & Civil Society. We coordinate with academic and community partners across the university, region, nation, and beyond.

Our main office is located in Blacksburg, VA. However, we also have dedicated personnel in Richmond, Abingdon, and Fairfax. The Institute employs faculty, staff, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers, and collaborates with resident and non-resident research associates and fellows.

Key Highlights from the Past Year: A Note from the Director



The 2023-24 year has been an eventful one for the Institute and I seek to offer a brief overview here. Here are some highlights, grouped by topic for convenience.

Institutional Changes

- The Institute formally became a research center of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences (CLAHS), transferring from the School of Public International Affairs (SPIA), on July 1, 2024. We are grateful for the guidance and support of Dean Laura Belmonte and look forward to working closely with the Dean and her colleagues as we continue our research and scholarship.


People

- We were delighted to welcome Megan Notter as our Grant and Fiscal Manager in the Fall of 2023. She has quickly taken our grant and fiscal stewardship to a high level of professionalism as we grew this past year.

- We also formally welcomed five additional research faculty and staff to the Institute on July 1, 2024. The group has been leading cognate research and capacity building efforts from Richmond for that region and the Commonwealth during the past several years. We extend a warm welcome to Cecily Rodriguez, now our Associate Director for Research and Organizational Innovation, Dr. Anne Walters, Dr. Andrew Sharp, Hilal Yalcin, and Ryan O'Connell!
- We were very pleased to welcome five other additions to our faculty:
 - Dr. Kimberly Horn, who previously was affiliated with the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute, joined us as a Research Scientist.
 - Dr. Ciara Collins is our new Family Research Unit (FRU) Director, and we look forward very much to working with her. She brings a wealth of relevant knowledge and a strong research background to her new post.
 - Dr. Bernice Owusu-Brown joins the Institute from service as a Post-Doctoral Associate in the Department of Economics. She brings a strong background in health economics, gender economics, and international development.
 - Dr. Ariel Otruba, faculty member at Arcadia University, and Dr. Vanessa Guerra, Assistant Professor of Urban and Environmental Planning at the University of Virginia School of Architecture, have joined the Institute as Non-Resident Research Associates.

Each of these individuals is outstanding and we look forward to continuing to work with them!

- Andrea Briceno Mosquera has transitioned from her previous role as post-doctoral scholar at VTIPG and is now with the Institute as a Research Scientist. She will continue to work closely with me, David Moore, Mary Beth Dunkenberger, and Cecily Rodriguez.
- Viola Runia recently joined our FRU group as a Court Specialist. She comes to us with significant experience and is already making her mark on her efforts in Fairfax.

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- We also congratulate two of our recently completed affiliated doctoral students who have now assumed full-time academic positions:
 - Dr. Nicole Nunoo successfully defended her dissertation in the Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education PhD program in August of 2023 and is currently a Postdoctoral Research Associate addressing Human Dimensions of Climate Smart Agricultural and Food Systems at the University of Georgia. I was pleased to serve on Nicole's committee. Dr. Kim Niewolny of her department served as her advisory committee chair.
 - Dr. Molly Todd successfully defended her dissertation in the Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought (ASPECT) PhD program in September of 2023 and is now serving as a Teaching Assistant Professor at the University of Colorado, Boulder in the International Affairs and Sociology departments. I was pleased to co-chair her committee with Dr. Laura Zanotti of the Political Science Department.
 - We were very pleased to host Aziz Ardic, a University of Istanbul PhD student in Philosophy, as a graduate fellow at VTIPG. Aziz was chosen by a national commission in a country-wide competition in Turkey to join us for a calendar year that began last August. Aziz worked closely with me and his advisory committee chair in Turkey as he developed his dissertation during his stay. He left us at the end of July 2024. We shall miss him very much and wish him every success.
 - We also bade farewell to two of our colleagues on the FRU team in Fairfax this year.
 - Dr. Melony Price-Rhodes retired in December of 2023 following more than two decades of service with the FRU, much of that period as its Director. Melony proved an effective team leader and mentor and became an integral part of the Institute soon after we began operations. We shall miss her.

- Claudia Malenich retired in June of 2024 as a Court Specialist. She was much admired by all who worked with her for her expert knowledge and professionalism. We know she will be gardening and enjoying her grandchildren and we wish her much joy as she does so.

Selected Publications

It was a great year for published work by our faculty, with some examples listed below. The full list is available in the Publications section of this report.

- Mary Beth Dunkenberger, David Moore, Lara Nagle, and Sam Rasoul. (2023). Building a Recovery Ecosystem for the Catawba Region. *Richmond Public Interest Law Review*, 27(1). <https://scholarship.richmond.edu/pilr/vol27/iss1/5/>
- Kimberly Horn, Stephanie Mathis, Lara Nagle, Mary Beth Dunkenberger, Angela Hagaman, and Robert Pack. (2024). Is peer support a tipping point for the opioid use disorder crisis in Appalachia? Research holds the answer. *Harm Reduction Journal*, 21(122). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12954-024-01041-7>
- Lesly Joseph, Max Stephenson Jr., Laura Zanotti, and Scutt Ricot. (2023). Sustainable agriculture and food sovereignty in Haiti: sharing knowledge and shaping understanding of food systems at the University of Fondwa. *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsufs.2023.1230763>
- Vanessa Guerra, Max Stephenson Jr., Desiree Poets, and Molly Todd. (2024). The contributions of community-led newspapers to the resilience of Rio's Maré and Rocinha favelas during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2024.2357707>
- Andrea Briceno Mosquera. (2023). Admissions Officers' Perceptions When Undocumented Students Seek In-State Resident Tuition Policy. *Educational Policy*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08959048231201789>

Sponsored Research and Programs


The Institute is engaged in a robust sponsored research portfolio encompassing program evaluation, community-based research, technical assistance and capacity-building projects focused on topics in public health, public policy, housing, workforce development, education, international development, and more.

IPG faculty were involved actively in more than 15 sponsored projects during the 2023-2024 academic year, many of which are treated in greater detail in the sections that follow, including:

- Behavioral Health Interpreter Training
- CivilianLEAD
- Fairfax Family Research Unit (FRU)
- Heat Ready, Roanoke!
- Impactful Community Engagement and Planning (ICEP) for the Roanoke City and Alleghany Health Districts (RCAHD)
- Leadership and Management Pathways Program (LAMPP)
- Maré from the Inside and the Maré Research Group
- Peer Mentor Champion Training
- Reimagining St. Paul's College
- Roanoke Valley Collective Response Asset Mapping
- Roanoke Valley Connection to Care (C2C) and the C2C Housing First Toolkit
- SAMHSA Grant Program Evaluations
- Studies to Advance Recovery Supports (STARS)
- TAP Pathway Home
- Violent Infrastructures Photovoice Exhibit
- Virginia Management Fellows (VMF)
- Virginia Public Sector Leader (VPSL)
- Virtual Project Management Training

Community & Social Change Research: The Community Change Collaborative (CCC)

- The Community Change Collaborative (CCC) hosted several faculty forums and guests this year including Professor Aaron Ansell of our Department of Religion and Culture, Solmaz Yadollahi, Research Fellow, Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg, and Dr. Ariel Otruba, Faculty Member, Arcadia University.
 - In addition to hosting thoughtful talks by these scholars and undertaking accompanying interviews for our current podcast program, the group systematized the archive of its long-standing podcast series concerning the dynamics of democratic change to enable easier public access to the collection: <https://ipg.vt.edu/WhatWeDo/Podcasts.html>.
- The Collaborative continues to work closely with a group called St. Paul's College for Life (SPC4Life) in Brunswick County, Virginia, which is comprised of alumni and friends of the now-closed St. Paul's College, long located in that community. SPC4Life is developing educational curricula for Brunswick County's most vulnerable young people and CCC is helping them with their governance strategy and strategic positioning.
- In addition, the Collaborative is working with the Calfee Community and Cultural Center (the former Calfee Training Institute) in Pulaski, Virginia, a historically Black educational institution during the period of segregation, which a community group (including alumni) is restoring for multiple uses as well as for a museum depicting the school's important history.
- I collaborated with Dr. Neda Moayerian and CCC President Brad Stephens to write a paper for the conference of the International Society for Third Sector Research in Antwerp, Belgium in July concerning this project entitled, "Revisiting the Social Role of Radical Imagination Amidst Widespread Democratic Erosion." The article is now under review at an academic journal.

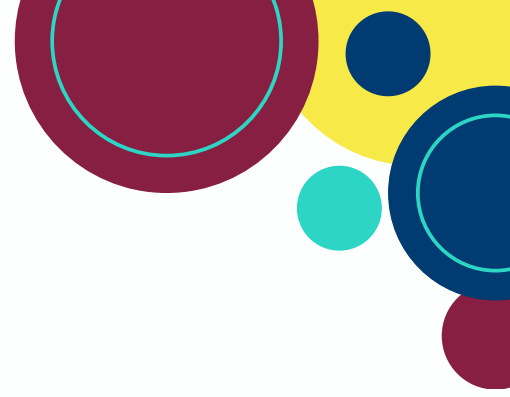
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- Finally, CCC has also collaborated on producing a new podcast series in partnership with VT Publishing and VT Libraries called Social Science for Public Good. It focuses on connecting activists, NGO leaders, and government professionals to social science theories and research that will help them to conceptualize social change more sensitively and thereby craft strategies more likely to encourage it.
 - The inaugural season of the podcast has explored current theories of trust and power across an arc of twelve episodes. Upcoming sessions will feature leading scholars on imagination and social change, democratic justice, and decolonization. Interspersing interviews with prominent theorists and explanations designed to provide context, the series seeks to communicate not only a sense of the current scholarship, but also how that knowledge is relevant to those seeking to promote social change. This project has been supported by a collaborative research grant from VT Libraries.

As I close, I would be remiss not to thank all of those who have worked with or supported the Institute this year. You are, we realize, why we exist when all is said and done. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Max Stephenson

Max O. Stephenson Jr., Professor of Public and International Affairs and
Director, Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance



VTIPG Personnel

FACULTY



Max O. Stephenson, Jr., PhD

Director and Professor of Public and International Affairs

Dr. Max Stephenson has served as the Director of VTIPG since its founding in 2006. Dr. Stephenson is also a professor in Urban Affairs and Planning at Virginia Tech. His research areas include nonprofit and nongovernmental organizational governance, international development, and public policy and theory.



Mary Beth Dunkenberger, MBA

Deputy Director

Mary Beth Dunkenberger has served as the Deputy Director of VTIPG since March 20, 2023. She has been with the Institute since its founding in 2006. Her research areas include organizational and program assessments, policy and program innovations, and connections between social programs and economic and community development.



David Moore, PhD

Associate Director for Strategic Partnerships

Dr. David Moore has served as the Associate Director for Strategic Partnerships at VTIPG since March 20, 2023. He has been with the Institute since its founding in 2006. His research areas include organizational development and capacity building, early childhood and workforce development, and nonprofit and NGO governance.



Cecily Rodriguez, MPA

Associate Director for Research and Organizational Innovation

Cecily Peoples Rodriguez was the Manager of Applied Research at SPIA Richmond since 2018 and now serves as an Associate Director at VTIPG. Her research areas include the implementation of language access services, behavioral health equity, organizational culture, and migrant and refugee communities in the US.



Ciara Collins, PhD
Director, Family Research Unit (FRU) & Research Faculty

Ciara Collins joined the FRU Team as its Director in 2024. Prior to joining the Institute, Ciara worked at Abt Global for four years as a consultant and analyst with child services. Her research interests include foster care and adoption, child well-being and maltreatment, behavioral health, and trauma.



Melony Price-Rhodes, PhD (Retired in 2023)
Senior Program Director

Dr. Price-Rhodes retired as the principal investigator for the Family Research Unit (FRU) in Fairfax County where she began in 2001. The FRU team assists in securing all relevant support from federal entitlement and state programs to maximize the services provided to children in foster care in the county.



Elizabeth Allen, MS
Senior Program Research Associate and Data Specialist

Elizabeth Allen has served as a Senior Research Program Associate at VTIPG since 2015. Liz is a data manager, evaluator, and project specialist on sponsored research projects. Her current projects include data management on a SAMHSA/CMHC grant and two SAMSHA/CCBHC-IA Expansion grants.



Bryce Hoflund, PhD
Research Scientist

Dr. Bryce Hoflund is a Research Scientist at VTIPG. Prior to rejoining VTIPG in 2022, Dr. Hoflund was an associate professor and the Blue Cross Blue Shield Chair of Healthcare Administration and Policy in the School of Public Administration at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Her research areas include food policy, health policy, network management and leadership.



Kimberly Horn, PhD
Research Scientist

Dr. Kimberly Horn is a Research Scientist who joined the Institute in 2023 and has worked with Mary Beth Dunkenberger on shaping a regional response to the ongoing opioid and addiction crisis confronting Southwest Virginia. She also serves as a principal investigator on the STARS project.



Erin Mooney, MA
Case Analyst, Family Research Unit (FRU)

With the FRU since 2001, Erin Mooney's responsibilities include implementing the rules and regulations for Title II (Social Security) and Title XVI (Supplemental Security Income), performing case management activities for youth in receipt of foster care services.



Andrea Briceno Mosquera, PhD
Research Scientist, Public and International Affairs

Dr. Andrea Briceno Mosquera has focused on mixed-method analyses of policy-making processes and program evaluation. She has taught courses in policy analysis, research methods, diversity, equity and inclusion, and economics. At VTIPG, she supports community-engaged curriculum design and the evaluation of public health and workforce program implementation.



Lara Nagle, MSLA, MURP
Community-Based Research Manager

Lara Nagle has served as the Community-based Research Manager at VTIPG since 2019. She supports program evaluations for organizations at the local, regional and state level, including those in workforce development, public health, and housing.



Bernice Owusu-Brown, PhD
Research Scientist

Dr. Bernice Owusu-Brown joined IPG as a Research Scientist in 2024. She had previously served as a Post-Doctoral Associate and Adjunct Instructor in the Department of Economics at Virginia Tech. Her research interests include health disparities and intersectionality, economic impact on health access, gender inequality and health outcomes, and healthcare utilization and gender.



Andrew Sharp, PhD
Senior Public and Community Engagement Manager

Dr. Andrew Sharp has been a Senior Public and Community Engagement Manager and Lecturer at Richmond SPIA since 2021 and now with VTIPG. His research areas include public and community engagement, religion and the environment, global ethics, interfaith dialogue, and religion and identity.



Laura Taylor, MPH, CHES, CPH
Health Program and Policy Research Associate

Laura Taylor has been with VTIPG since 2021. Her research areas include community health and program development, substance use disorders (SUD), and brain health in the geriatric community. Laura has been a major part of the Connection to Care (C2C) project to address the SUD crisis.



Anne Walters, PhD
Applied Research Associate

Dr. Anne Walters now serves as an Applied Research Associate at VTIPG and has worked at Virginia Tech in Richmond for two years on projects including the Virginia Public Sector Leader Program, CivilianLEAD, and the Leadership and Management Pathways Program. Her research interests include organizational and workforce development, program and policy assessment.



Brian Salazar Zamora, BA
Assistant Project Director, Family Research Unit (FRU)

Brian Salazar Zamora has been with the FRU since 2016 and provides technical assistance and expertise to ensure seamless operational processes that enhance Fairfax County's ability to access federal funds and maximize services under Title II, Title IV-D, Title IV-E (until 2012), and Title XVI.

SENIOR FELLOWS



Bob Leonard, BA
Professor, VT School of Performing Arts

Bob Leonard is a theatre maker, writer, teacher and arts organizer in the School of Performing Arts, where he is the primary advisor for the MFA program in Applied Theater and Public Dialogue. Bob has been part of the advisory group for the St. Paul's College for Life project, helping with organizational strategy and the use of theatrical techniques in the reimagination process.



Andy Morikawa, BA, Executive Director Emeritus
Community Foundation of the New River Valley (Virginia)

Andy Morikawa has served as a Senior Fellow at VTIPG since 2010. His expertise includes nonprofit leadership, governance, and board development. Andy is a longtime host of the Trustees Without Borders podcast and a consultant on VTIPG community development projects.

STAFF



Megan Notter, MS
Research and Fiscal Manager

Megan Notter has served as the Research and Fiscal Manager at VTIPG since October 2023. She serves as the administrative lead, handling reconciliations, grant budgeting, and compliance with University financial and accounting policies and procedures.



Billy Parvatam, MA
Communications Coordinator and Administrative Specialist

Billy Parvatam has served as the Communications Coordinator and Administrative Specialist at VTIPG since 2021. His responsibilities include communications, scheduling, social media, website management, and administrative and fiscal support.



Ryan O'Connell, BA
Virginia Management Fellows Coordinator

Ryan O'Connell has been the Virginia Management Fellows Coordinator for Richmond SPIA since 2023, and now with VTIPG. Her responsibilities include event coordination, seminar organization, communications and social media, and coordinating orientation for mentors and fellows.



Hilal Yalcin, BS
Communications Coordinator and Administrative Specialist

Hilal Yalcin has been the Research and Administrative Coordinator for Richmond SPIA since 2023, and now with VTIPG. Her responsibilities include sponsored programs administration, event coordination, procurement, communications and social media, and fiscal support.



Chris Elam, AAS
Case Analyst, Family Research Unit (FRU)

With the FRU since 2019, Chris Elam's responsibilities on the FRU team include maintaining comprehensive knowledge and analysis of state and county regulations and the VA Uniform Assessment Instrument, and preparing statistics and information for contract deliverables to agency stakeholders.



Vickie Grazioli, BA
Medicaid Case Analyst, Family Research Unit (FRU)

With the FRU since 2011, Vickie Grazioli's responsibilities include implementing the rules and regulations for Title XIX (Medicaid) funding and performing case management activities related to determining initial and continuing Title XIX eligibility for Fairfax-Falls Church CSA services.



Viola Runia, BA
Court Specialist, Family Research Unit (FRU)

Viola Runia joined the FRU in 2024. She maintains comprehensive knowledge of rules and regulations for Title IV-D funding, and assists with the establishment of Judicial Support Orders at the Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court and Title IV-D case management.



Claudia Malenich (Retired in 2024)
Court Specialist, Family Research Unit (FRU)

Claudia Malenich was a Court Specialist with the FRU for 20 years. Her responsibilities included maintaining comprehensive knowledge of rules and regulations for Title IV-D funding and the establishment of Judicial Support Orders at the Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court.

NON-RESIDENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATES



Lyusyena Kirakosyan, PhD
Non-Resident Senior Research Associate

Dr. Lyusyena Kirakosyan's research interests focus on critical disability studies, particularly in the context of the Paralympic Games and legacy. She holds a PhD in Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought (ASPECT) from Virginia Tech and a Master's degree in Management.



Vanessa Guerra, PhD, Non-Resident Research Associate, VTIPG
Assistant Professor, UVA School of Environmental Planning

Dr. Vanessa Guerra is an Assistant Professor of Urban and Environmental Planning for the University of Virginia's School of Architecture. Dr. Guerra has been an active member of the Virginia Tech-based Maré Research Group. Her research areas include urban informality and resilience, spatial justice, co-production, and cognitive urbanism.

Neda Moayerian, PhD, Non-Resident Research Associate, VTIPG
Assistant Professor, University of Tehran School of Planning

Dr. Neda Moayerian is an Assistant Professor at the University of Tehran School of Urban Planning and a Non-Resident Research Associate at VTIPG. Dr. Moayerian is currently involved with VTIPG's projects on the Syrian refugee crisis in multiple countries, art-based development in a Brazilian favela, international development and hybrid NGOs.

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Ariel Otruba, PhD, Non-Resident Research Associate, VTIPG
Faculty Member, Arcadia University

Dr. Ariel Otruba is a Faculty Member at Arcadia University in Glenside, PA. She joined VTIPG as a Non-Resident Research Associate in January 2024. Her research areas include political violence, forced displacement, migration and border conflict, human rights, peacebuilding, political ecology, infrastructure and urban planning, and feminist research methods.

AFFILIATED GRADUATE STUDENTS



Aziz Ardic, Visiting Graduate Fellow
PhD Student in Philosophy, University of Istanbul

Aziz Ardic joined VTIPG as a Visiting Graduate Fellow for the 2023-2024 academic year. He was selected to do so by a national commission in a country-wide competition in Turkey. His research interests include neo-institutionalism, neoliberalism, and governmentality.



Yugasha Bakshi, PhD Student
Planning, Governance, and Globalization

Yugasha Bakshi has been an affiliated PhD student with the Institute since 2022. She serves as a co-host of the Social Science for Public Good podcast. Her research interests include urban and regional planning and water, sanitation, and hygiene.



Dana Carhart, MPH
Graduate of the Public Health Program at Virginia Tech ('24)

At VTIPG, Dana supported the Connection to Care (C2C) and MRCS Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) projects. Her research interests include food sovereignty, policy development and evaluation, and early intervention for students with learning disabilities.



Paul Delaughter, PhD Candidate
Counselor Education and Supervision

Paul Delaughter joined the Institute in 2024 to support the Mount Rogers Community Services (MRCS) USDA Smyth Crisis Campus Expansion program evaluation. His research interests include counseling, mental health and wellness, and substance use addiction treatment and recovery.



Amin Farzaneh, PhD Student
Planning, Governance, and Globalization

Amin Farzaneh supports the Impactful Community Engagement and Planning (ICEP) project for the Roanoke City and Alleghany Health Districts (RCAHD) and the Community Change Collaborative (CCC). His research interests include urban regeneration, placemaking, community development and social change.



Marcel Pambo, PhD Student
Planning, Governance, and Globalization

Marcel Pambo has been affiliated with the Institute since 2020 through his engagement with the Community Change Collaborative (CCC). His research interests include political accountability, regional collective security in West Africa, and community change.



Quinn Richards, MPH
Graduate of the Public Health Program at Virginia Tech ('24)

At VTIPG, Quinn supported the Impactful Community Engagement and Planning (ICEP) project for the Roanoke City and Alleghany Health Districts (RCAHD). Their research interests include biomedical ethics in animal research, equine health, human-animal bonds, and harm reduction.




Brad Stephens, PhD Student
Planning, Governance, and Globalization

Brad Stephens began his PhD program in 2022 and has supported CCC and a variety of VTIPG projects such as St. Paul's College for Life, Calfee Institute, and the Social Science for Public Good podcast. His research interests include trust, nonprofit management and leadership, and social science education.

Sponsored Projects


BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INTERPRETER (BHI)



The behavioral health interpreter training program aims to equip individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to interpret effectively in mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) settings. The program covers topics such as communication techniques, mental health terminology, crisis intervention, and self-care strategies for interpreters.

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CIVILIANLEAD



CivilianLEAD is a specialized training program designed to develop and enhance the leadership skills of individuals who hold civilian leadership roles at Virginia State Police. The program helps participants to develop a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and responsibilities associated with leading law enforcement organizations.

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FAMILY RESEARCH UNIT (FRU)



The Family Research Unit (FRU) provides research, technical expertise and human capacity to Fairfax County's Department of Family Services Child Protective Services (CPS), Foster Care and Adoptions (FC&A), and the Fairfax/Falls Church Children's Services Act (CSA) Programs. The FRU team has been maximizing service utilization for 23+ years.

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HEAT READY, ROANOKE!

With funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Heat Ready, Roanoke! project brings together urban planners, local government, healthcare professionals, and residents to: (1) understand the problem of extreme heat, (2) work together to connect existing resources, and (3) co-produce community resilience.

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IMPACTFUL COMMUNITY ENGAGED PLANNING (ICEP)

The Institute is working with the Roanoke City and Alleghany Health Districts (RCAHD) on a three-year process to improve the health department's community engagement strategies and data collection, and to make these strategies part of ongoing operations with the goal of continually assessing and refining service delivery.

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LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT PATHWAYS PROGRAM (LAMPP)

The LAMPP program focuses on facility, office, department, or shift group training needs for front line staff and new managers, with funding from the Virginia Center for Behavioral Rehabilitation (VCBR).

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MARÉ RESEARCH GROUP

The Maré Research Group is a multi-stakeholder, international research and artistic partnership. The team has been conducting ongoing research documenting the lives of residents of the Complexo da Maré in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, through library exhibits, roundtable discussions, and written works.

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NIH STUDIES TO ADVANCE RECOVERY SUPPORT (STARS)

The Studies to Advance Recovery Support (STARS) Network is a thematic, stakeholder-focused research network that aims to generate trainings, tools, and platforms targeted to the implementation and study of peer recovery support services for individuals treated with medications for opioid use disorder.

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PEER EMPOWERED ADDICTION RECOVERY LIVING (PEARL)

VTIPG provided technical assistance, PhotoVoice program evaluation, and grant proposal support to assist Piedmont Community Services with the launch and maintenance of the PEARL program, a recovery housing program for pregnant and postpartum women.

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PEER MENTOR CHAMPION TRAINING

The Peer Mentor Champion Training is designed to build capacity in public organizations by providing the tools and training employees need to create customized peer mentoring programs that are meaningful for their specific environments.

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REFUGEES WITH DISABILITIES IN JORDAN

This inquiry explores a range of challenges faced by, and opportunities available to, Syrian refugees with disabilities in Jordan that shape their capacity to engage in their communities based on the insights of Syrian refugees with disabilities currently living in Jordan and staff members of relevant civil society service and support organizations.

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ROANOKE VALLEY CONNECTION TO CARE (C2C)

The C2C project coordinates referral, treatment, recovery, and crisis response resources, including backpacks equipped with potentially life-saving tools, to reduce overdose and substance use health issues. In 2023, the C2C team developed a Housing First Toolkit for developers and operators to increase recovery housing and harm reduction options.

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SAMHSA EVALUATION TEAM

The SAMHSA Evaluation Team has provided grant performance evaluation, needs and outcome assessments for several Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grants for two Southwest Virginia community services boards.

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TAP PATHWAY HOME

TAP's Pathway Home program helps people in jails, prisons and Community Corrections Facilities (CCFs) return to their communities, find jobs, and avoid re-incarceration. Pathway Home supports participants every step of the way, from before release up to a year of follow-up.

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UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE ACCESS

This research project aims to enhance language access within the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) and Community Services Boards (CSBs) for Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals across Virginia.

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USDA MRCS SMYTH CAMPUS FOR CRISIS CARE

Mount Rogers Community Services (MRCS) will expand their Smyth County mental health and recovery campus. A team of VT faculty and graduate students is evaluating health outcomes, the construction process, health economics, and the trauma-informed design elements.

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VIOLENT INFRASTRUCTURE EXHIBIT & BOOK

Violent Infrastructure: Ecologies of Decay and Displacement is the name of a traveling PhotoVoice exhibition based on a multi-year, feminist visual ethnography project led by Ariel Otruba. Dr. Otruba is working on a book with several VTIPG colleagues to accompany the exhibit.

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VIRGINIA MANAGEMENT FELLOWS (VMF) PROGRAM

The VMF program is a nationally-recognized management and leadership succession pipeline program that equips college graduates interested in state public service with the knowledge and capacities to lead successfully in today's complex governing environment.

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VIRGINIA PUBLIC SECTOR LEADER (VPSL) PROGRAM

VPSL is a dynamic leadership development certificate program that is tailored to professionals at all levels within the public sector to enhance leadership skills and address the evolving needs of state agencies, using developmental interventions across five key leadership dimensions.

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VIRTUAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT TRAINING

This project provides project management training for a selected group of employees at the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) agency to enhance their skills and knowledge of project management.

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YWCA RECOVERY ECOSYSTEM NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The YWCA of Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia worked with VTIPG and CECE to identify wraparound services, gaps, and networking capacity to strengthen the recovery ecosystem and to inform the vision for a planned community wellness and resource center in Glade Spring, VA.

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eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca
Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia



Community Change Collaborative (CCC)

Faculty Forums

The CCC facilitates conversations with visiting practitioners and Virginia faculty who conduct research or projects related to community change, which span a variety of disciplines. Many of these presentations have been recorded on the Trustees Without Borders podcast hosted by Andy Morikawa for many years and now by graduate research assistant Bradley Stephens.

Aaron Ansell, Associate Professor, Department of Religion and Culture.

Dr. Aaron Ansell is an Associate Professor in the Department of Religion and Culture at Virginia Tech. His research interests include sociocultural anthropology, northeast Brazil, alternative democracy, political discourse, and anti-poverty policy. Dr. Ansell spoke to the CCC on November 18, 2023. An archived version of the faculty forum can be found [here](#).

Guest Speakers

The CCC invites national and international guests to reflect on their experiences researching or enacting community change. Each Speaker Series event is structured to fit the interests of our visitors. This often includes a public lecture, performance, and/or workshop; a professionally-recorded interview for the Trustees Without Borders podcast series; and/or guest visit to a graduate or undergraduate course.

Dr. Ariel Otruba, Faculty Member, Arcadia University & Non-Resident Research Associate, VTIPG.

The Institute hosted Dr. Ariel Otruba in October 2023 to present her work concerning long-time displaced individuals in Georgia, whose situations she has captured via Photovoice methodology in a photographic exhibition entitled, “Violent Infrastructure: Ecologies of Decay and Displacement.” Dr. Otruba offered a lecture, conducted a workshop on photovoice, and was [interviewed](#) on the Trustees Without Borders podcast series. A news article summarizing her visit can be found [here](#).



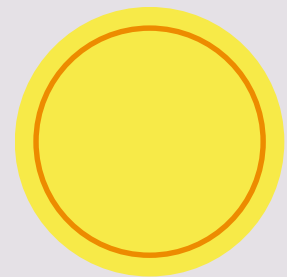
Solmaz Yadollahi, Research Fellow, Brandenburg University of Technology.

Dr. Solmaz Yadollahi is a Research Fellow at the Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg in Germany. Her research interests include urban management, specifically the capacities of the current urban heritage conservation assemblage in the context of urban development in Tehran, Iran. Dr. Yadollahi spoke to the CCC on April 5, 2024, for a guest lecture entitled, “On Urban Heritage Planning in Tehran and Beyond - A Dialogue of Hope and Responsibility.” An archived version of the Forum can be found [here](#).

CCC Projects

Calfee Institute

Over the past year, a team of researchers from VTIPG has had the privilege of learning about the work occurring to reimagine the historic Calfee school as the Calfee Cultural & Community Center (CCCC). The Calfee Training School was originally a Black elementary and middle school in Pulaski County but has been vacant for decades. After languishing for several years, a group of Pulaski residents has recently mobilized to reimagine the physical space as well as preserve the stories of the school, which historically played a vital role in both the local Black community and the broader civil rights movement. This has led to the formation of the CCCC, with a vision for the future of Calfee including a much-needed childcare facility, community kitchen space, a community museum, outdoor play space, and more. Jill Williams, co-executive director of the effort, has met with VTIPG to share the story and discuss potential collaborative opportunities. [Learn More](#)





Community Change Journal

Community Change is an online, peer-reviewed, graduate student journal that seeks to explore multiple approaches to democratic community development and change. This interdisciplinary journal examines the practices, processes, and individual and collective struggles that produce change at all levels of society. *Community Change* aims to provide opportunities for graduate students to become acquainted with academic publication processes. In 2023, the journal published Issue 4.2, “Transmission and Transition, Part 2,” focused on the transmission of misinformation, political ideas, resources, and stories; as well as Special Issue 6.1, “Decolonization/ Decoloniality: Old Debates and New Directions,” with guest editors Drs. Desiree Poets, Max Stephenson, and Laura Zanotti in 2024. We thank Jon Catherwood-Ginn for serving the past three years in his role as Executive Editor and we welcome incoming Executive Editor, Brad Stephens. [Learn More](#)

Social Science for Public Good Podcast

For the past year, IPG has partnered with VT Publishing and VT Libraries on a new podcast series called “Social Science for Public Good.” The program focuses on connecting activists, NGO leaders, and government professionals to social science theories and research that will help them conceptualize social change with heightened sensitivity and thereby craft strategies that will encourage more effective community action. Planning, Governance, and Globalization PhD students Bradley Stephens, Yugasha Bakshi, and Amin Farzaneh have served as co-hosts.

[Learn More](#)

St. Paul’s College for Life (SPC4Life)

IPG Director Max Stephenson Jr., Senior Fellows Bob Leonard and Andy Morikawa, and Graduate Research Assistant Bradley Stephens, in partnership with Scott Tate of the Center for Economic and Community Engagement, have been working with alumni of St. Paul’s College (SPC) in Lawrenceville, VA to re-envision the role of this historically Black college and university (HBCU) that closed in 2013. The group has been working with SPC alumnus Chris Stephenson throughout the process, which has included assisting with the group’s strategic planning meetings and site visits.

[Learn More](#)

Publications & Presentations

- Bendfeldt, E., Niewolny, K., Stephenson, M.O., Archibald, T., & Stewart, A. (2024, June 5-8). *The Ecotonal Nature of Community Food Work: A Case Study of Trauma-Informed Care and Mutual Aid for Social and Health Equity* [conference presentation]. Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society Conference, Syracuse, New York.
- Bucklen, E. (2023). Book Review: *Set the World on Fire: Black Nationalist Women and the Global Struggle for Freedom*. *Community Change*, 4(2), 2. <https://doi.org/10.21061/cc.v4i2.a.46>
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- Dunkenberger, M.B., Nagle, L., & Taylor, L. (2023, November 9-12). *Building a Connection to Care: Community-Engaged Evaluation for Policy and Product Development* [conference presentation]. AEA 2023, New Orleans, LA, United States.
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- Elf, J., Horn, K., Abroms, L., Stanton, C., Cohn, A., Spielberg, F., Gray, T., Harvey, E., Debnam, C., & Kierstead, L. (2023). Prevalence and correlates of cardiovascular, pulmonary, cancer, and mental health comorbidities among adults with HIV who smoke. *Journal of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care*, 34(4), 363-375. <https://doi.org/10.1097/JNC.0000000000000356>
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- Guerra, V., Grimes, C., & Stephenson, M.O. (2024, April 24-27). *From Crisis to Empowerment: The Role of Community-led Solutions Journalism in Maré and Rocinha Favelas Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic* [conference presentation]. International Conference on Urban Affairs, New York, New York.
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- *Violent Infrastructures: Protracted Displacement and Housing (In)Justice in the South Caucasus and Beyond*. (2024). Ariel Otruba, Max Stephenson Jr., Yannis Stivachtis and Nino Dzotsenidze, eds. Virginia Tech Publishing: Blacksburg, VA.

Partners

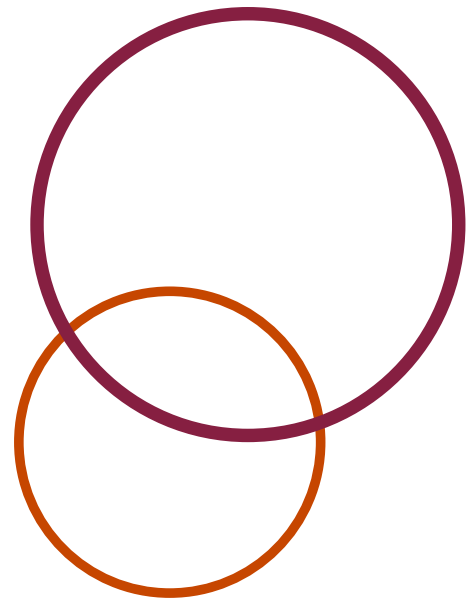
IPG is privileged to work with a wide variety of academic and community partners, both within Virginia Tech and beyond. We list more than 50 collaborators with which the Institute has been engaged in the past year, below.

Academic

- Center for Economic and Community Engagement (CECE)
- Center for European Union and Transatlantic Studies (CEUTS)
- Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation (CFSCT)
- Center for Humanities
- Center for Peace Studies and Violence Prevention (CPSVP)
- Center for Refugee, Migrant, and Displacement Studies (CRMDS)
- College of Architecture, Arts, and Design (CAAD)
- College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences (CLAHS)
- Colorado State University
- Community Design Assistance Center (CDAC)
- Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation (FREC)
- Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures
- East Tennessee State University (ETSU)
- Fralin Biomedical Research Center
- Institute for Society, Culture, and Environment (ISCE)
- Office of Inclusion and Diversity
- Outreach and International Affairs (OIA)
- School of Performing Arts (SOPA)
- School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA)
- The Graduate School
- University of Fondwa (Haiti)
- University Libraries
- Virginia Center for Housing Research (VCHR)
- VT Publishing

Community

- Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare (BRBH)
- Bradley Free Clinic/HOPE Initiative
- Calfee Community & Cultural Center (CCCC)
- Carilion Clinic
- City of Roanoke - Office of Sustainability
- Council of Community Services' Drop-In Center
- Fairfax County Department of Family Services
- Franklin County EMS
- Mount Rogers Community Services (MRCS)
- National Committee for United States-China Relations
- New River Valley Community Services (NRVCS)
- Piedmont Community Services (PCS)
- Redes da Maré
- Roanoke City and Alleghany Health Districts (RCAHD)
- Roanoke Valley Collective Response to the Opioid and Addiction Crisis (RVCR)
- Salem City EMS
- St. Paul's College 4 Life (SPC4LIFE)
- The Rescue Mission
- Total Action for Progress (TAP)
- United Nations Association of Mongolia
- Virginia Center for Behavioral Rehabilitation (VCBR)
- Virginia Clinicians for Climate Action (VCCA)
- Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS)
- Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
- Virginia Department of Human Resources and Management (DHRM)
- Virginia Harm Reduction Coalition (VHRC)
- Virginia State Police
- Western Virginia Regional Jail (WVARJ)
- YWCA of Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia (NETN SWVA)

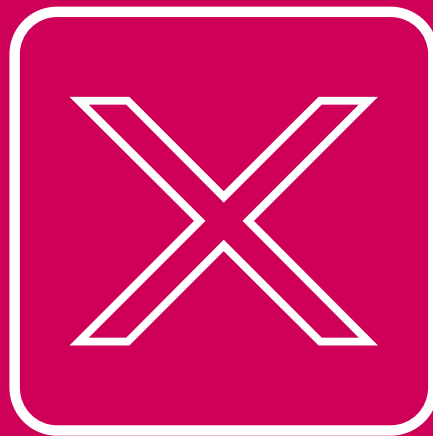


Please stay in touch!

We value hearing from you regarding new projects and opportunities to partner, affiliate updates and announcements, and any recent news you'd like to share. We are excited to continue strengthening our network and hope you will stay in touch!



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