MINORITY & VETERAN FARMERS OF THE PIEDMONT

ANNUAL REPORT

2025-2026

Growing Opportunity Through Agriculture, Education & Service



MVFP empowers communities and advances rural resilience through education, advocacy, and engagement that promote rural living, environmental stewardship, and equitable access to local food. By strengthening local food systems and supporting youth and families, we help cultivate strong, healthy, and future-ready communities.

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Mission

Minority and Veteran Farmers of the Piedmont empowers communities and advances rural resilience through education, advocacy, and engagement that promote rural living, environmental stewardship, and equitable access to local food.

Vision

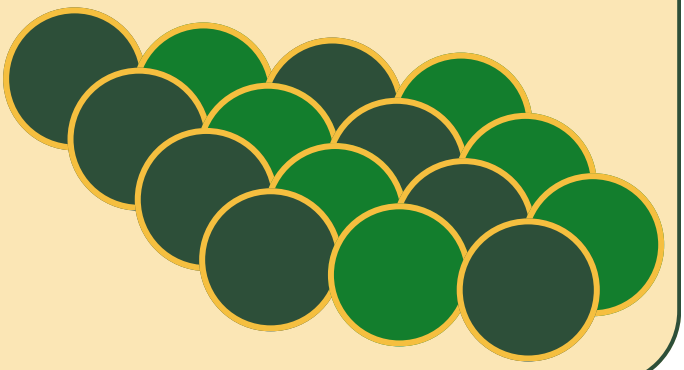
A future where all communities have equitable access to agricultural education, local food systems, economic opportunity, and environmental stewardship.

COMMUNITY IMPACT DASHBOARD

75
YOUTH ENGAGED

11 EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

15 COMMUNITY PARTNERS



Core Focus Areas

- FARMER EDUCATION
- VETERAN ENGAGEMENT
- YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
- FOOD SECURITY
- COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS
- AGRICULTURAL ADVOCACY

FROM THE BOARD

Cultivating Opportunity Together

As we reflect on another year of service, I am proud of the impact Minority & Veteran Farmers of the Piedmont continues to make across Virginia's agricultural communities.

This year, we strengthened our commitment to supporting producers, mentoring youth, engaging veterans, and expanding access to fresh local food. Through partnerships with educators, workforce organizations, food access agencies, and community leaders, we demonstrated that thriving local food systems create stronger families, healthier communities, and more resilient economies.

Our work remains grounded in service, stewardship, and opportunity. Every workshop delivered, every youth engaged, every producer supported, and every pound of food distributed represents an investment in the future of Virginia agriculture.

Thank you to our volunteers, partners, donors, and supporters for standing beside us. Together, we are growing opportunity for generations to come.



With Appreciation,

Ralph Morton

Ralph Morton, President
Minority & Veteran Farmers of the Piedmont

MVFP board members & staff can be reached by emailing info@mvfpva.org.

Board Members



Brian Thompson



Rev. Willie Crenshaw



Brian Morris



Rev. Dr. Johnny Hicks



Kenya Bell

CULTIVATING KNOWLEDGE

Throughout the year, MVFP continued its commitment to practical agricultural education by providing hands-on learning experiences that connected participants to the skills needed for successful food production and stewardship. Programs focused on soil health, livestock and poultry management, beekeeping, and emerging agricultural technologies.

Through workshops, demonstrations, and field experiences, participants gained knowledge that strengthens local food systems while preserving agricultural traditions for future generations.

Soil Health





Soil Health Workshops brought farmers together to learn hands-on strategies for improving soil health, increasing productivity, and strengthening farm sustainability.

Beekeeping





In Beekeeping Workshops, led by Arianne Morton (far left), participants learned the important role bees play in supporting healthy farms and ecosystems.

GROWING LEADERS

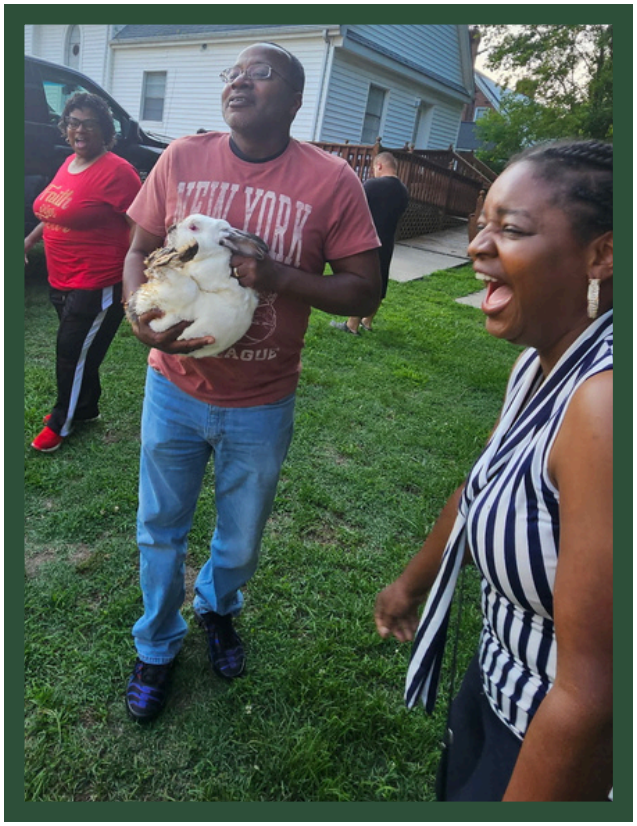
Youth engagement remains central to MVFP's mission. During the year, students and young learners participated in farm visits, educational demonstrations, and agricultural enrichment opportunities designed to build awareness of food systems, environmental stewardship, and career pathways.

By creating meaningful connections between youth and agriculture, MVFP helps cultivate the next generation of community leaders, producers, and advocates.

Vacation Bible School: Shiloh Baptist Church







MVFP was honored to partner with Shiloh Baptist Church's Vacation Bible School in Bowling Green, Virginia to bring agricultural education to youth and families through hands-on learning and animal interactions.

United Christian Academy









MVFP welcomed high school students from United Christian Academy to Cattle Run Farm for a hands-on agricultural learning experience. Students explored livestock production, including goats, hogs, rabbits, beef cattle, and poultry, while also learning about gardening, composting, soil health, stewardship, and the importance of caring for God's creation. The visit provided a unique opportunity to connect classroom learning with real-world agriculture and gain a deeper appreciation for where food comes from and the farmers who produce it.

Virginia State University Tours Cattle Run Farm



Virginia State University students visited Cattle Run Farm in autumn for an immersive, hands-on agricultural learning experience. Students participated in livestock management activities including piglet processing, goat vaccination and herd health practices, poultry processing, and disease management.



Poultry Processing





Poultry Processing Workshops gave participants hands-on exposure to safe, humane, and efficient poultry processing practices. Participants gained practical skills to support small-scale meat production and on-farm profitability.

Virginia State University AgFest 2026











Virginia State University's AgFest 2026 brought together farmers, agricultural organizations, students, and community members for a day of learning, networking, interactive exhibits, local food, and agricultural innovation.

SERVICE THROUGH AGRICULTURE

Through leadership development opportunities, mentorship, and community service activities, MVFP farmers shared their knowledge, skills, and commitment to service with communities across the region.
For Veterans of the armed forces, agriculture can create new opportunities for leadership, connection, and community impact beyond military service.

VALOR hosted by MVFP





MVFP hosted VALOR Class VII (Virginia Agriculture Leaders Obtaining Results) before their upcoming graduation for a tour of Cattle Run Farm and the Carver Agricultural Research Center. MVFP's own Sarah (Jewell) Morton is a VALOR alumna from a previous cohort.

Thank You, Sheila Jackson: Champion of Volunteerism



MVFP extends its heartfelt appreciation to Sheila Jackson (pictured, left) for her dedicated service as Garden Coordinator until stepping down in 2026. Through her leadership, Sheila strengthened community gardens, promoted volunteerism, advanced food-growing education, and inspired youth and families to connect with agriculture, wellness, and the land. Her work in gardening, herb production, and community engagement has left a lasting impact on MVFP and the communities we serve.

BUILDING CONNECTIONS

MVFP actively participated in statewide agricultural events and conversations throughout 2026, strengthening relationships with producers, educators, policymakers, and industry leaders. These engagements create opportunities to share best practices, elevate rural voices, and ensure that minority, veteran, and beginning farmers remain part of the broader conversation about Virginia's agricultural future.

Virginia Agribusiness Council Banquet



Building Bridges at Richmond's Premier Agribusiness Event: MVFP representatives joined agricultural leaders, policymakers, and producers from across Virginia to discuss issues impacting farming, food systems, and rural communities.

Speaking at the Nebraska Women in Agriculture Conference





MVFP founder Sarah Morton was invited to keynote the Nebraska Women in Agriculture Conference. Sarah shared her experience as a farmer, highlighting the importance of food systems, entrepreneurship, community service, and empowering the next generation of women in agriculture.

FOOD RESILIENCY DASHBOARD

Strengthening Access to Local Food

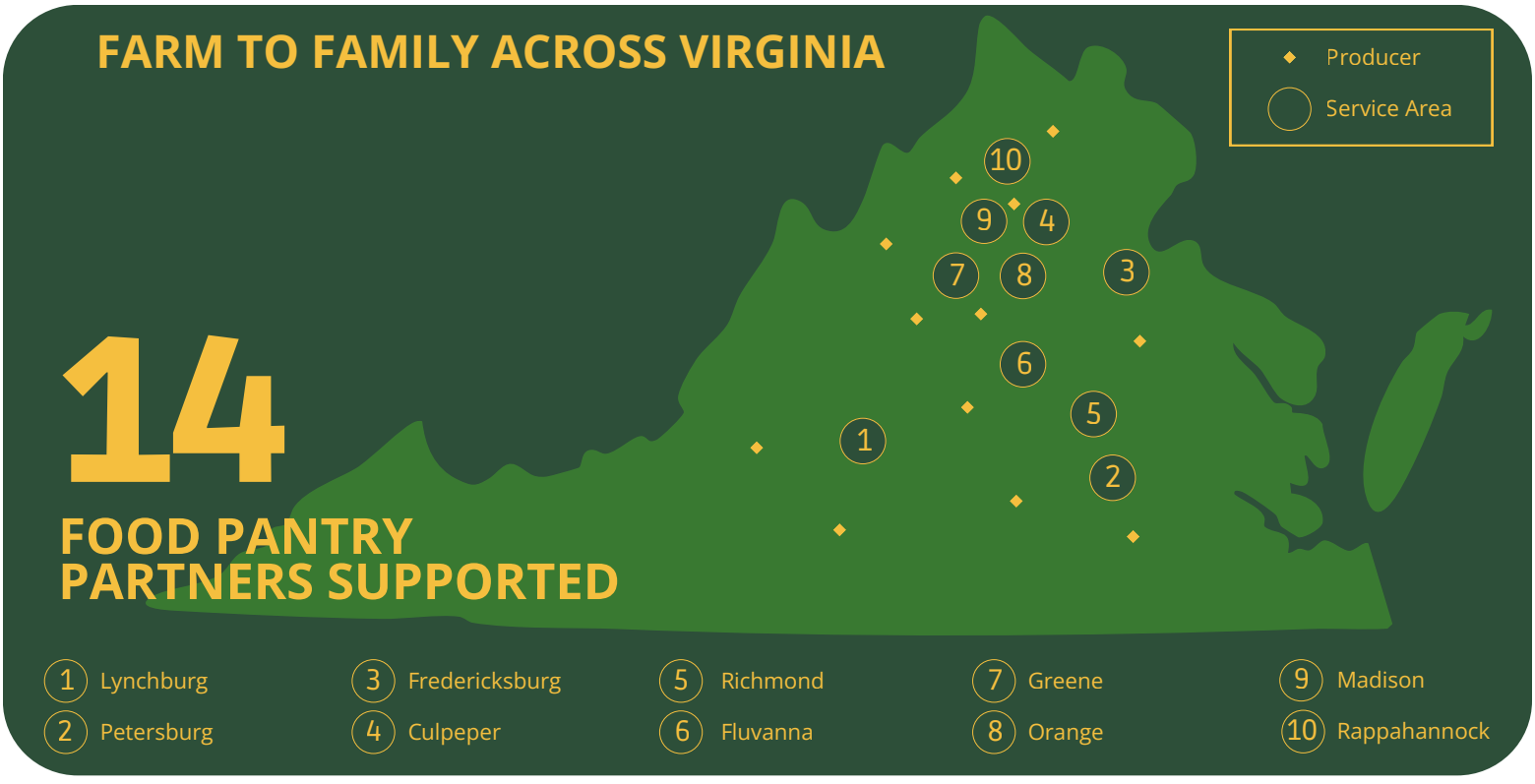
Through partnerships with producers, food pantries, educational institutions, and community organizations, MVFP continues to connect locally produced food with families facing food insecurity.

In 2026, our Food Resiliency Program expanded access to nutritious food while helping producers diversify markets and strengthen business sustainability.

33,600
INDIVIDUALS SERVED

8,400
POUNDS OF FRESH, LOCAL FOOD DISTRIBUTED

FARM TO FAMILY ACROSS VIRGINIA



14
FOOD PANTRY PARTNERS SUPPORTED

1. Lynchburg
2. Petersburg
3. Fredericksburg
4. Culpeper
5. Richmond
6. Fluvanna
7. Greene
8. Orange
9. Madison
10. Rappahannock

LOOKING AHEAD

As MVFP looks toward 2027, we remain focused on agricultural education, youth engagement, veteran leadership, food resiliency, and community partnerships.

Future priorities include expanding educational opportunities, strengthening producer support networks, increasing youth participation, and creating additional pathways that connect agriculture with workforce and community development.

Together with our partners, volunteers, and supporters, we will continue cultivating opportunity throughout Virginia's Piedmont region and beyond.

2026 FUNDING PARTNERS

Prince Charitable Trusts

Agua Fund, Inc.

American Farmland Trust

PATH FOUNDATION

small farm educational outreach program

UVA Health
UVA Community Health

Farm Credit Foundation for Agricultural Advancement

Foodshed Capital

Sentara

Virginia State University
Greater Happens Here
College of Agriculture

Virginia Career Works
Piedmont Region

PHOTO GALLERY



















Thank you for the continued partnership



Minority and Veteran Farmers of the Piedmont representatives at the 54th Virginia Agribusiness Council Annual Legislative Appreciation Banquet, held January 15, 2026 at Main Street Station in Richmond, Virginia.



https://www.mvfpva.org/