

OAR's Bold Shift: Local Action for Systemic Change



Like many organizations navigating today's challenges, OAR is recalibrating our work to meet the urgent needs of those we journey with — people who are under constant attack by systems never truly designed with them in mind. We believe this is especially true for those most impacted by systemic injustice and generational disinvestment, facing deeply entrenched injustices across the housing, education, employment, healthcare, and criminal legal systems — compounded by relentlessly punitive policies.

We're shifting the way we engage in upstream work, placing greater emphasis on advocacy at the local level to push for meaningful alternatives to incarceration — especially as legislative change at the state and federal levels remains difficult under the current circumstances. At the same time, we remain deeply committed to the day-to-day, individualized programming that defines OAR — our downstream work — which continues to journey with and uplift those directly impacted by the criminal legal system. We believe this dual approach — addressing both immediate needs and systemic barriers — is essential to building lasting change for those most impacted.

We are excited to report that we have established a new partnership with the Urban Institute, a nonprofit, working to improve lives through evidence-based policy and practice. We are honored that OAR was selected as one of just 25 organizations nationwide for the Urban Institute's Catalyst Grant Program, which supports innovative efforts to use data and technology to advance racial equity and reform in the criminal legal system.

With this grant, we are launching a program to collect and analyze data from Arlington courts. We will focus on who gains access to bond, alternative sentencing, diversion, and other programs that connect people with critical resources while helping them avoid incarceration. Just as importantly, we'll be in court watching who gets excluded. We will examine disparities across race, income, gender, and other factors that shape legal outcomes. This information will inform our conversations with decision-makers and stakeholders in the legal system to push for meaningful reform.

Of course, this is a time-limited grant — just six months in duration. Once we've gathered our data, the work of advocacy, policy reform, and building new pathways must continue. To make the most of this opportunity — and in this critical moment — we'll need your support, now more than ever.

Thank you for journeying with OAR.

The OAR Collective

New Number to Reach Us



Office Notice:

Our main phone number is temporarily down.

**Please use this number to reach
our office:
703-745-5441**

Our main phone line is having technical issues right now.
You can reach us at 703-745-5441, and this number will stay active even
when our old line comes back.
Thank you for your patience — we look forward to connecting with you!

Give 8/28



Give 8/28: The Only National Giving Day for Black-Led & Benefiting Nonprofits. On August 28, join us for Give 8/28—a national day of giving that celebrates and supports Black-led and Black-benefiting nonprofits. Your gift through our Give 8/28 page (make this a link to our page) will help OAR open new paths for those returning to the community from incarceration.

Every contribution matters — will you join us?

[Click here to donate and learn more about Give 8/28](#)

Voting in Virginia



From now until Election Day, we'll be featuring a short section in each enewsletter to help you get ready to vote. Whether you're a first-time voter or a seasoned Election Day pro, our Voting in Virginia series will share timely information, helpful reminders, and a few surprises along the way.

In Virginia, elections can be decided by just a handful of votes — in 2017, one House of Delegates race was literally decided by drawing a name from a bowl after a tie. Your participation truly matters. Let's make sure every voice in our community is heard.

[More Info on Virginia Elections](#)

CHARLIE'S CORNER



Hi friends, it's Charlie.

I see a lot of people come through OAR's doors, and I've learned that sometimes the path ahead isn't the same for everyone — and that's just not fair. Some folks face bigger hurdles because of systems that were never designed for them to succeed. I may not understand all the legal stuff, but I know this: when we look out for each other, lend a paw when someone stumbles, and make sure no one gets left behind, our whole pack is stronger. That's the kind of community I'm barking for.

—Charlie

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