



Situation Analysis Report



Arlington Unit

2018

Introduction

The Arlington Unit of Virginia Cooperative Extension conducted its situation analysis by reviewing multiple sources of information to assemble the Unit Profile, including census data and an annual profile prepared by the county.

In addition, our Extension Leadership Council (ELC) compiled and summarized local reports on priority issues affecting Arlington County. We recognized that many local organizations have conducted needs assessments of their own and have produced reports of their findings. These reports include the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Shop Smart Eat Smart Program Needs Assessment, Northern Virginia Community Foundation report on Aging, the Natural Resources Management Plan, the 2018 4-H Youth Needs Assessment, the Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey, the Affordable Housing Master Plan, and the Community Progress Network Data Walk, among others. In the past, we have conducted community surveys and key informant interviews to determine the primary needs of the county but have found that those who respond are people who already know about Extension's programs and we thought that their responses were a bit biased towards Extension's work. We wanted to hear from a broader sector of the community and therefore decided to turn to the findings and reports of other groups in the community who have conducted needs assessments.

Staff and the ELC analyzed the data from the unit profile and these supplemental reports to identify priority issues.

Unit Profile

Arlington County is located in northern Virginia, just across the Potomac River from Washington, DC. Its proximity to the nation's capital makes it a bustling and thriving area, but also one with a transient population where individuals and families who work for the military and other government agencies frequently move in and out of the county. At only approximately 26 square miles, increasing population requires careful stewardship of open space and natural resources. Arlington continues to support nationally recognized smart growth principles.

The population of Arlington as of January 1, 2018 is 225,200. It is projected to grow to 297,600 persons by 2040. Arlington is one of the most densely populated counties in the country with a density of 8,729 persons per square mile as of January 1, 2013. This has increased since 2010 when the figure was 8,224 people per square mile and the density is projected to continue to increase in coming years. One-person households comprise 39.1% of total households in Arlington. Of the total households in the County, 46.6% are families, of which 3.6% are female-headed households with children.

The largest population group by age are 25 – 34 year olds at 25.1%, followed closely by the 45-64 years olds at 22.7%. Minors under age 19 make up 19.1 % of the population. This reflects an increase of 2.1%, which has led to community engagement to address the challenges of increased capacity in the school system.

Arlington has the region's lowest unemployment rate at 2.5%, a decrease from 3.3% in 2013. Professional and technical services is the largest industry, accounting for 23.4 % of jobs, moving ahead of Government jobs at 21.60%. The majority of Arlington residents earn a high income relative to the rest of Virginia and the nation. Median household income in Arlington in January 2017 was \$110,388, which aligns with the Washington Metropolitan Area median family income of \$110,300. Per capita median income stands at \$87,986.

Virginia median household income in 2011 was \$62,391 and nationally the figure was \$51,484. Despite these high-income numbers, 9.74% of households earn less than \$25,000 per year and a total of 20.91% earn less than \$50,000. According to the Living Wage Calculator (<http://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/51013>) a family of four in Arlington needs \$50,930 to cover basic living expenses, so with more than a fifth of households earning less than that the county's Department of Human Services and other service providers have seen increased demand for emergency assistance such as money for food, rent, and utilities.

Arlington County is ranked as the most educated county in the nation. According to the annual profile released by the county, "in 2016 73.7% of adults aged 25 and older had a bachelor's degree or higher and 39% had a graduate or professional degree." This figure has risen slightly since 2011 when 70.2% of the population had bachelor's or higher degrees.

The county is ethnically, racially, and culturally diverse. In the public school system, 107 languages are spoken and students hail from 146 countries. Among Arlingtonians 30% speak a language other than English, compared to 21% of people nationwide. According to the 2010 U.S. Census approximately 36% of residents were Hispanic/Latino, African-American, Asian, or multi-racial. This marks a slight decrease from 2000 census data when 39% of residents fell into these groups.

According to data from the Community Progress Network (CPN), 30% of economically disadvantaged Arlington 3rd-5th graders fail to read at grade level, compared to 13% of all students. One in three Arlington students qualify for free or reduced price meals. In 2016-2017 96% of economically disadvantaged students graduated on time compared to 91% of all students. 74% of limited English proficient students graduated on time. In the 22204 zip code, the one with the highest incidence of poverty, 48% of residents have bachelor's degrees compared with 67% of residents across the county.

The Community Progress Network estimates that a minimum wage worker would need to work 109 hours per week in order to be able to afford to live in Arlington. The minimum wage in Arlington is \$7.25 per hour compared to \$11.50 in neighboring DC. The living wage for Arlington (salary required to meet minimum standards of living in a community) has been

calculated at \$14.25/hour. Nineteen percent of jobs in Arlington pay less than 60% of area median income.

CPN data shows a lack of childcare in Arlington. In the 22204 zip code there are close to 3,500 children between the ages of 0 and 5. Child care facilities in that zip code currently can only accommodate around 1,500 children and of those only about 250 slots accept subsidies. Arlington has been recognized nationally as being one of the healthiest communities in the country. Taking a closer look reveals that one's health status depends largely on where in the county they live. According to data from the Northern Virginia Health Foundation, the population of census tract 1031 has a median income of \$76,234, 28% have received bachelor's degrees, 50.1% are Black, 24.8% are Hispanic, and they have a life expectancy of 77 years. In census tract 1005 82.2% have received bachelor's degrees, the median income is \$161,034, 0% are Black, 6.1% are Hispanic, and they have a life expectancy of 84 years.

One in ten Arlingtonians don't have health insurance, which reflects the national rate of uninsured at 9%. As with other indicators, the rate of uninsured varies greatly depending on zip code. In zip code 22204—the one with the highest rate of poverty—14% of residents are uninsured compared to 3% in 22207, the wealthiest zip code.

Many low-income families experience food insecurity at some point during the month. They cite health, medical, or mental issues as the largest contributing factor to food insecurity. Other factors include high bills, unemployment, and low wages. Low-income Arlington children tend to have higher body mass indexes than their peers. 26% of two-four year-olds served through WIC are obese compared to 13% of all incoming kindergartners.

Housing prices in Arlington have increased much more rapidly than income. Between 1997 and 2016 average rent prices increased by 128% while the cumulative percent increase in income over that same time was only 60%.

Methodology

As stated in the introduction, we wanted to ensure that the needs of all Arlington residents were represented in this situation analysis, and not just those of the people who would respond to a community survey. We realized that many other local groups have conducted surveys and produced reports, so we elected to consult as many of those reports as we could find. Sources consulted included:

- Community Progress Network Data Walk: CPN is a consortium of partner organizations led by the Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing. In April 2018 they produced a Data Walk of statistics related to the health, housing, and education of Arlingtonians. Many of these data points can be found in the Unit Profile
- Community Progress Network roundtables: CPN is working on assembling groups of low-income residents to hear their views on the needs of Arlington. Each roundtable

focuses on a specific issue. One roundtable held in August focused on education, another held in November dealt with health, and two more will take place in 2019.

- Affordable Housing Master Plan
- Youth Risk Behavior Survey (administered in March 2017 to 2,800 Arlington students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12). The survey was administered by the Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth, and Families.
- Summary Report on Amendments to Arlington County's Comprehensive Plan: A Five - Year Review
- Arlington County 2016 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey
- 2016 Arlington County Community Interest and Opinion Survey
- Arlington ELC Diversity Committee interviews with representatives of minority communities
- The Essential Guide to Arlington County's Comprehensive Plan
- Natural Resources Management Plan
- Northern Virginia Community Foundation report: Our Older Neighbors: Aging in Northern Virginia 2010-2030
- Quick reference to comprehensive plan
- Shop Smart, Eat Smart Needs Assessment
- Urban Forest Master Plan
- Key informant interviews conducted by the 4-H agent
- Police 2017 Annual Report
- Public Spaces Master Plan (which resulted from a needs assessment survey conducted in 2016 with 1,400 households)
- A Study in Contrasts: Why Life Expectancy Varies In Northern Virginia
- How Healthy is Northern Virginia: A look at the latest community health indicators

Community Needs

The following needs have not been assigned priorities so they are listed in no particular order.

Education

Source: On Aug. 23 the Community Progress Network convened a roundtable with low-income Arlington families to allow them to voice their concerns and desires for change in public education in the county. More than 60 families attended and below is an overview of the needs they identified, taken from the executive summary prepared by CPN.

- Multi-Lingual Information: parents want information boards, parent programs, and tutoring in multiple languages.
- Welcoming Programs for New Families: Streamlining the registration process, offering parent trainings, and developing a buddy system for new families and students to help them adjust to the new system and learn about all of the opportunities the system offers.

- Increase Stress Management Resources: Offering more support for students who are feeling overwhelmed with school or issues outside of school.
- Healthier Food: Changing food services to allow more consistent, appealing healthy options for all grade levels.
- Parent Groups for Gang Prevention: Creating groups and programs to educate parents about potential gang issues, help divert students from joining, and supporting parents whose children have already joined.
- Mentors: Developing a mentorship program, particularly for students who are in any of the “at-risk” categories, to help have another positive adult voice in their lives and find a strong career and life path.
- Revive the “Workshop” program: Developing an apprenticeship program for teens.
- Technology Classes for Parents: Providing trainings for parents related to the devices and programs their children will be using throughout the school year.
- Incentives for New Daycares: Providing incentives for new and current businesses to provide onsite day care for employees’ children.
- Provide IDs for residents: Issuing an ID to residents who lack other identification that they can use to enter the schools and other county programs.
- Centralized Systems and Data: Streamlining applications for various programs in the county and schools.
- “Arlington Smart Card”: Creating a student/community Smart Card or Arlington Smart Card to centralize access and eligibility across systems.

Lack of Extracurricular Opportunities for South Arlington Youth

Source: 4-H Needs Assessment

Interviews with representatives of Arlington Extended Day and Arlington Public Schools revealed that youth living in South Arlington frequently lack access to nearby afterschool extracurricular activities. Many of these youth come from working families who may not have the time or resources to transport them to off-site programming, including those offered in the northern part of the county. These South Arlington youth need additional free or low-cost programming opportunities at locations that do not require transportation.

Need for STEM/Environmental Education

Source: 4-H Needs Assessment

The 4-H Needs Assessment uncovered a theme that Arlington youth need additional exposure to environmental education and STEM activities. An APS Science Specialist discussed that many Arlington youth do not have sufficient opportunities to explore nature, and as a result, do not feel comfortable spending time outdoors. On the STEM side, representatives from

Arlington Extended Day explained that their staff lack the knowledge to confidently facilitate STEM/Environmental education activities. Although it is a priority area for their program, they need additional support to execute this goal.

Lack of Engagement by Recent Youth Immigrants

Source: 4-H Needs Assessment

Interviews with representatives of Arlington Extended Day, Arlington Public Schools, and Arlington Gang Prevention Task Force revealed that youth who have recently immigrated to the United States face obstacles that their peers do not. Recent immigrants, these sources propose, are less likely to be involved in afterschool activities and face language barriers that prevent them from interacting with the broader school population. These youth are also frequently the victims of bullying in the schools. The 4-H Needs Assessment identified a lack of strategies to involve recent immigrant youth in afterschool programs and the broader community.

Well Being of Arlington Youth

Source: Arlington Partnership for Children Youth and Families Risk Behavior Survey 2017
<https://apcyf.arlingtonva.us/2017/09/youth-risk-behavior-survey-summary>

Compiled every three years, 2,800 Arlington youths in grades 6,8,10 and 12 were surveyed 2017 concerning risk behaviors. Among the key findings, bullying has increased and continues to be a serious problem, particularly in 6th and 12th grades. The number of young people who report feeling sad or hopeless has increased, notably among 12th graders where there was a 27% increase. Sexual harassment was identified by about 50% of females in grades 8, 10, and 12. Whereas tobacco smoking is at an all-time low, vaping (electronic cigarettes) has increased. Use of marijuana has increased 5% for 12th graders but use of over-the-counter drugs to get high increased notably among 6th graders from 2% in 2013 to 11% in 2017.

Community Health

Source: Arlington Dept of Human Services, Public Health Services Jan. 2018
<https://health.arlingtonva.us/destinations2027-IHPSA>

Arlington County used a widely circulated survey and interviews to get data as part of the Health Department's 2017-2027 planning process. Access to affordable housing, affordable and healthy food, and health care services were identified as the top three out of 23 options in which Arlington had opportunities for improvement. The study reported the County's top most

important health issues were chronic diseases, dental health, healthy eating, active living, and mental health. It is noteworthy that access to healthy food, healthy eating and an active life style plus dental health were identified as key issues and areas for improvement.

Expanding the stock of affordable housing units in Arlington

Source: Arlington County Affordable Housing Master Plan

The loss of 13,500 affordable units between 2000 and 2013 was a serious blow to the County's intent to ensure that all segments of the county have access to housing. Market forces are unlikely to be sufficient to address this problem, given the cost of land in Arlington. The Master Plan's supply goal is to add 21,000 net new affordable rental units between 2010 and 2040. The use of incentives for developers is one strategy. Additionally, using the Zoning Ordinance, Land Use Plan, and other regulations to encourage the production and preservation of units.

Housing affordability

Source: Arlington County Affordable Housing Master Plan

Arlington strives to build an inclusive community which welcomes diverse populations and encourages and empowers persons of all races, ages, ethnicities, religions, genders, sexual orientations, abilities and incomes to be fully engaged in the community. These goals can be reached through providing an increasing stock of affordable units, and then providing rental assistance and supportive services to those in need.

Needs of Older Arliniqtonians

Source: Our Older Neighbors, Prepared by Health Systems Agency of Northern Virginia For Northern Virginia Community Foundation, 2012

The population of Arliniqtonians over 65 is projected to grow at a rate faster than the general population over the next two decades, with the number of people over 75 growing the fastest. Of this population in Arlington, more than 20% have incomes under \$30,000 a year. These lower income populations have more health issues than more affluent populations, and would therefore benefit from additional programming relating to health and nutrition.

In addition, about 1/3 of Northern Virginia households of people over 65 are individuals living alone. Such individuals often are not motivated to purchase and prepare healthful meals for themselves.

Support for Job Search Techniques

Source: Interviews by the ELC Diversity Committee with representatives of the following communities: Russian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, Hispanic, Iraqi, and Iranian.

A common need expressed by virtually all of the spokespersons from the various immigrant communities contacted in Arlington was the need for assistance in seeking employment. One focus is understanding the cultural differences in the workplace between the U.S. and their home countries. Secondly was the need for affordable child care options to allow people to search for employment and, eventually, to work in the jobs they secure.

Educational support, beyond the public schools, for both children and adults.

Source: Interviews by the ELC Diversity Committee with representatives of the following communities: Russian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, Hispanic, Iraqi, and Iranian.

The primary issue is learning English so the immigrant community can be employed and function broadly in the U.S. Language issues can be addressed through ESL classes, but having access to those classes can pose problems. Often for immediate support, immigrants secure menial, entry-level jobs, but to get more appropriate and better-paying positions requires fluency. But working long hours can make it difficult to find available ESL classes. In addition, there are needs for tutoring, especially for children who need more help in school; creative programs, such as music and art that do not require fluency in English; and music therapy for refugees who have been through traumatic experiences.

Basic Financial Skills Training to the Disabled and Low-Income Residents

Source: Interviews with leaders in Arlington's affordable housing community and a focus group that AHC (an affordable housing provider) conducted with a group of their residents.

In the focus group that AHC conducted with their residents in August, many said that they have difficulty managing daily expenses. They indicated that one negative event can send them into a downward spiral out of which it can take a long time to climb. Several said that they struggle with managing the timing of bill payments, caring for elderly or disabled relatives who live with them and are not working, and managing expenses that don't come up every month, like birthdays and holidays.

In conversations with community leaders, they indicate a need for the following training and education among low-moderate income residents: financial life skills for disadvantaged youth, income tax preparation assistance, credit counseling, student loan repayment information,

training in basic money management, and identity theft prevention. They identified the following needs for vulnerable senior citizens: classes on how to live on a fixed income, financial scam prevention, income tax assistance, and credit counseling.

Need for educational and maintenance programs to support natural areas

Source: May, 2016, Needs Assessment Survey, to support update of the Arlington County Public Spaces Master Plan (PSMP).

Supporting and maintaining existing trees and natural spaces will enhance the county's environmental infrastructure while allowing for an expanding population to enjoy outdoor spaces. The Master Naturalist and Tree Steward programs will be key contributors to the above priority. Associated with the above is the need to foster and develop other nature-based education and training programs (such as promoted by the Master Naturalists, Tree Stewards and Master Gardeners).

Need for opportunities to enhance community gardens and urban agriculture

Source: July 2017 Draft of the Arlington County PSMP

The above are areas where the Master Gardeners and the 4H program can continue to provide crucial contributions. Outdoor activities and education in urban agriculture is particularly needed in the county's urban corridors where candidates for the 4H program primarily live.

Need for Public and Private Land use for Sustainable Agriculture Purposes

Interviews with urban agriculture education leaders and natural resource management staff in Arlington and Alexandria reveal that residents are searching for ways to maximize their usage of private landscape space while searching for ways to minimize use of fertilizer and pesticides in the environment. The demand for public community garden space and interest in agricultural usage of public land as outlined in the Urban Agriculture Task Force Report justifies our mission to educate residents on community use of common and underutilized spaces for community gardening, the acceptance of foraging in public spaces, and the development of rooftop and container gardening on impervious surfaces. The ANR Needs Assessment process identified a lack of public awareness of Extension-provided educational assets in service to Arlington County's plan of work and increasing interest in engaging in agricultural practices for food production, storm water retention, and pesticide use reduction.

Need for Pesticide and Synthetic Fertilizer Use Reduction on Private

Landscapes

Interviews with urban agriculture education leaders, public health, and natural resource management staff in Arlington and Alexandria reveal that residents are searching for ways to maximize their enjoyment of outdoor spaces and are searching for ways to minimize use of fertilizer and pesticides in the environment. The demand for chemical free recreational, school, workplace, and neighborhood spaces, justifies our mission to educate residents on pesticide-free management of personal and neighborhood spaces for the sustenance of native insects, birds and animals, the acceptance of native plant restoration and invasive plant removal efforts. The ANR Needs Assessment process identified a lack of public awareness of Extension-provided educational assets to serve these needs and the significant value of Master Gardener and Master Naturalist volunteer programs to address public education about integrated management solutions to plant disease, weed, and insect pests and human parasites of the landscape, garden, and home.

Need for Management of Urban Soils for Community Well Being

Interviews with Arlington and Alexandria landscape management programs, community garden leaders, and private landscape service providers show that there is concern for the well-being of the urban tree canopy, the health of private and public green space, and an appreciation for the roles that plants play in mitigating urban heat island effects, providing a sense of place, and enhancing public perception of our communities as desirable places to live. The demand for more tree canopy protection, clean water standards maintenance, as outlined by Zero Loss goals in the Urban Forestry and Natural Resource Master Plan, the demand for compost education and storm water management as outlined in the Zero Waste, and clean water goals of Arlington's Department of Environmental Services, Urban Agriculture Task Force Report, and the Natural Resource Master Plan help define our mission to educate residents on a range of research supported landscape best management practices. The ANR Needs Assessment process identified a lack of public awareness of Extension-provided educational assets in service to promote the significance of soil health in supporting community urban forestry tree planting projects, the Plant Nova Natives objectives, Audubon at Home program goals, and Chesapeake Bay Clean Water initiatives.