



# FAIRFAX COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES

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2016  
NEEDS ASSESSMENT  
SUMMARY

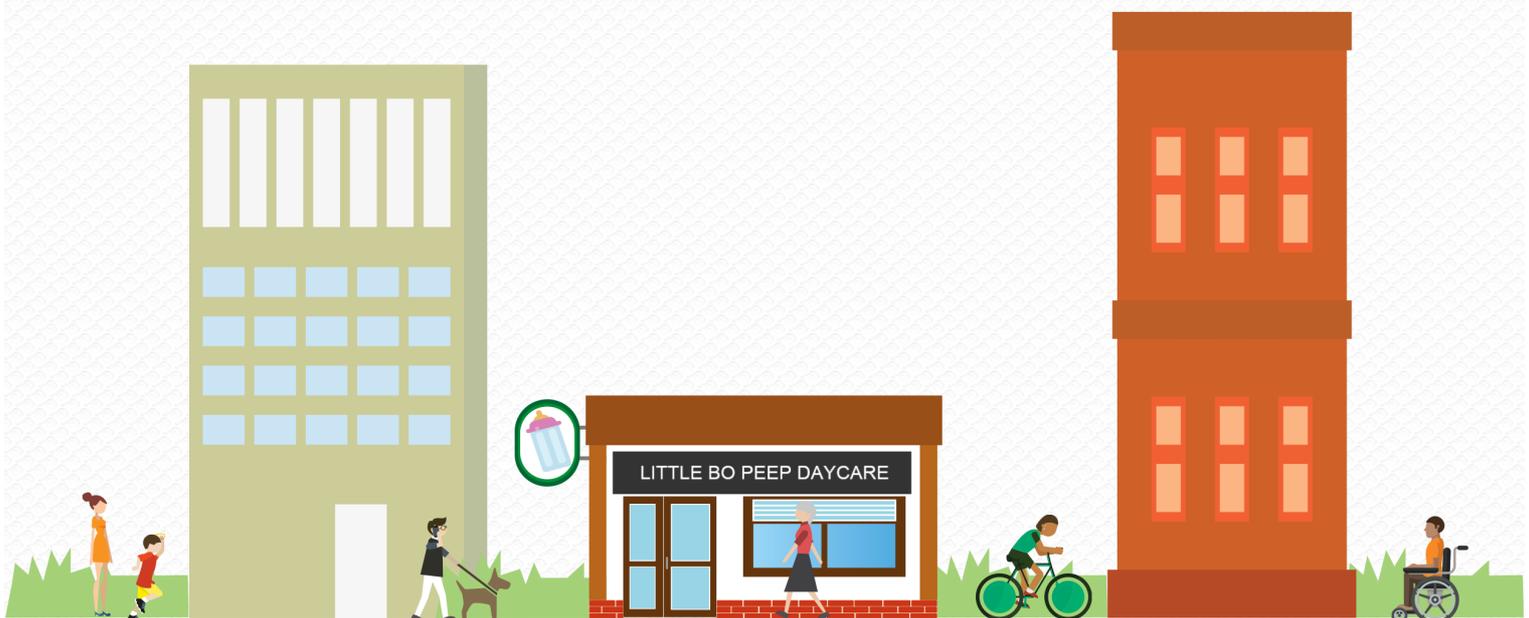
# INTRODUCTION

The human services system touches the lives of all Fairfax County residents, working to create holistic opportunities for individuals to be safe, be healthy, and realize their full potential. The system, comprised of public and private partners working together to provide a range of programs and services, is the foundation of Fairfax County.

Over the past decade, population, economic, and infrastructure changes have continued to transform Fairfax County into an urbanized, dense region impacting many of the traits that have historically defined the area. These changes have consequently resulted in a broadening of needs among residents in the areas of housing, economic self-sufficiency, health, and connections to resources. The challenges that residents face are more complex than in the past, often overlapping and spanning across various demographic and socioeconomic populations. More residents now need assistance just to afford basic necessities such as food, housing, and health care. And, populations anticipated to grow within the county are those which have often experienced the most challenges in the past.

To better understand the needs of residents and plan for the future, an assessment was conducted utilizing feedback from the community; survey data; and information from Fairfax County programs and services. Highlights from this assessment are contained in this report, demonstrating the significance and broadening of challenges many Fairfax County residents now face.

The findings of the assessment are significant for the human services system and for all of Fairfax County. If the identified needs are left unaddressed, Fairfax County will experience a decline in the quality of living valued by residents including a vibrant economy, excellent schools, and strong public safety system. Human services can no longer be identified as only a critical safety net for the very poor, but rather the key to Fairfax County where all residents enjoy success, prosperity, and health.



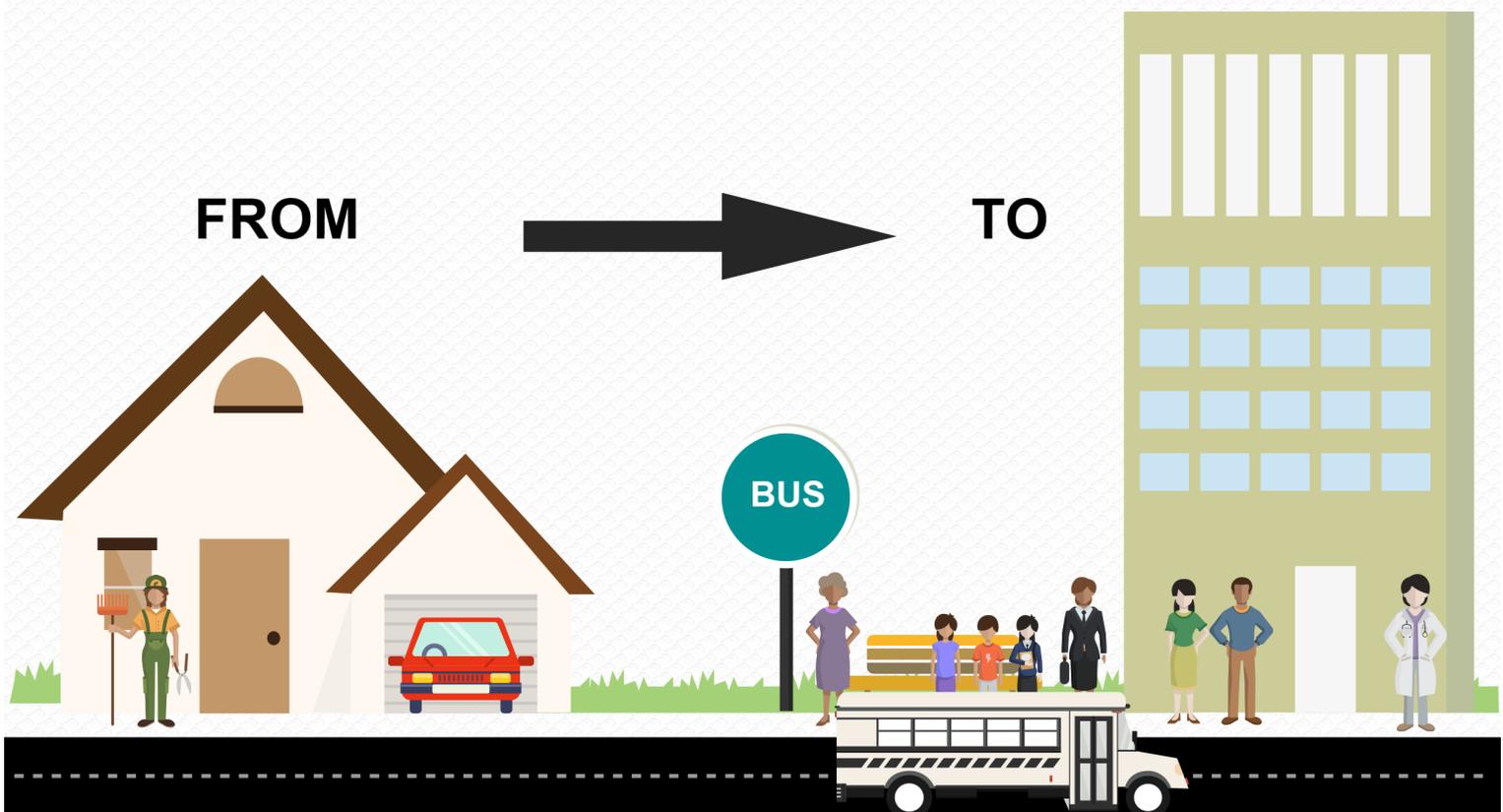
# KEY CHANGES IN FAIRFAX COUNTY

Since the 1950s, Fairfax County has grown from a small suburban community to a vibrant, highly dense area. With more than 1.1 million people, the population is projected to continue to grow and become more racially and ethnically diverse.<sup>1</sup> As the population grows, English proficiency will increasingly become a key component for individuals working towards economic success. Additionally, older adults are projected to become an even greater percentage of the population.

As the population of the county has increased, housing has become more dense and expensive, particularly for renters. Consequently, there is a shortage of affordable housing units and also a shortage of accessible housing units. Changes in housing and population are inextricably linked to transportation and a growing need for infrastructure to support the changing community.

Along with population and infrastructure changes over the past decade, the county has also undergone shifts in the local economy. In general, Fairfax County has rebounded slowly from the Great Recession with an overall sluggish economy. Wages have not kept pace with inflation and when coupled with the cost of housing, transportation, and other goods, many more residents are finding it difficult to achieve economic success and get ahead as compared to the past.

These population, economic, and infrastructure changes are significant when viewed independently, but when evaluated together they are having a profound effect on the fabric of the county.



# KEY CHANGES IN FAIRFAX COUNTY

## Population, Economy, & Infrastructure

### RACE & ETHNICITY



Since 2005, the proportion of the population composed of African-American or black residents, Asian residents, and residents indicating they are two or more races has continued to increase. There has also been an increase in the percentage of residents identifying as Hispanic or Latino. When compared to the overall county population, youth are the most racially and ethnically diverse.<sup>2</sup>

### POVERTY

The county is witnessing an overall increase in individuals living below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and in the number and proportion of the population living at or below 200 percent of the FPL.

#### Below 200% of FPL



**180,000**

Approximately 180,000 individuals were living at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) in 2014.<sup>4</sup>



**\$47,700**

for a four member household at the Federal Poverty Level as of 2014.

Child poverty rates are consistently higher than the overall poverty rate in Fairfax County.



**23,000**

In 2014 alone, more than 23,000 children were living below poverty in the county.<sup>6</sup>

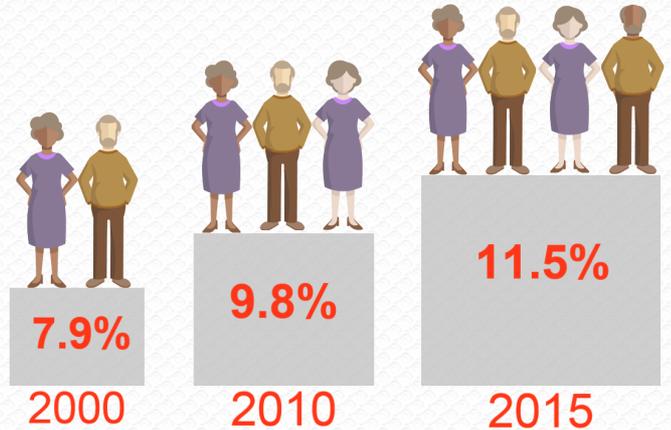


**\$23,850**

for a family of four at the Federal Poverty Level in 2014.

### AGE

The total population of adults ages 65 and older continues to increase at a higher rate than the overall population. Increases in life expectancy rates and migration are influencing the growth of this segment of the population.<sup>3</sup>



### WAGES



Overall, the middle class in Fairfax County is shrinking.<sup>5</sup> Wages have not kept pace with inflation. In addition, the recovery of jobs since the recession has been unequal among low-, middle-, and high-wage professions.

In 2005, an average full-time worker earned approximately \$64,000. By 2014, this same worker should have made approximately \$80,000. Instead, this worker made approximately \$73,000.<sup>7</sup>



2005

**\$64,000**

2014

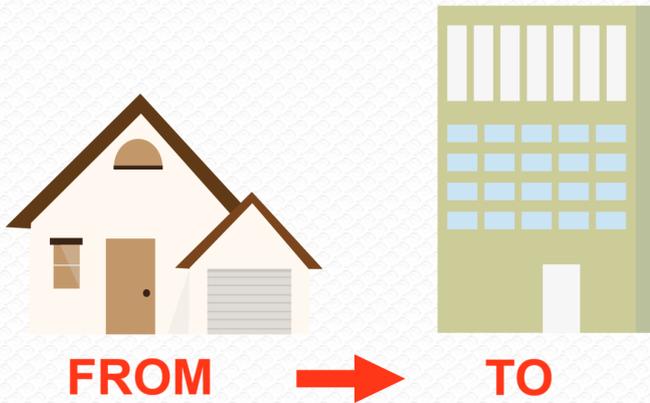
**\$80,000** (anticipated wages)

**\$73,000** (actual wages)

# KEY CHANGES IN FAIRFAX COUNTY

Population, Economy, & Infrastructure

## HOUSING

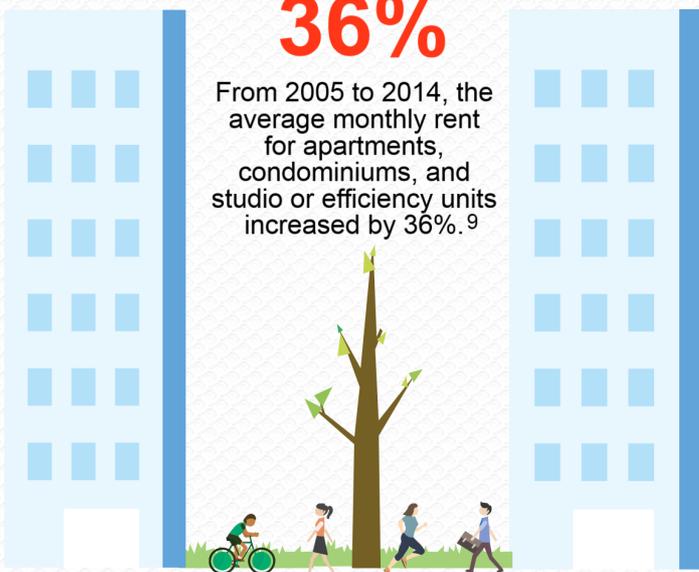


As the county has become more dense, so has the housing type. There has been a shift from single family detached homes to attached multifamily units.

Rents continue to climb.

### 36%

From 2005 to 2014, the average monthly rent for apartments, condominiums, and studio or efficiency units increased by 36%.<sup>9</sup>



### \$1,202

In 2005, the average monthly rent in Fairfax County was \$1,202.

### \$1,640

By 2014, the average monthly rent was \$1,640.<sup>11</sup>



## TRANSPORTATION



Transportation is costly, regardless of mode.



### \$11,000

Research estimates that transportation costs for Fairfax County residents are approximately \$11,000 for a family with two working adults and three children.<sup>10</sup>

Low-income workers are more likely to use public transportation.

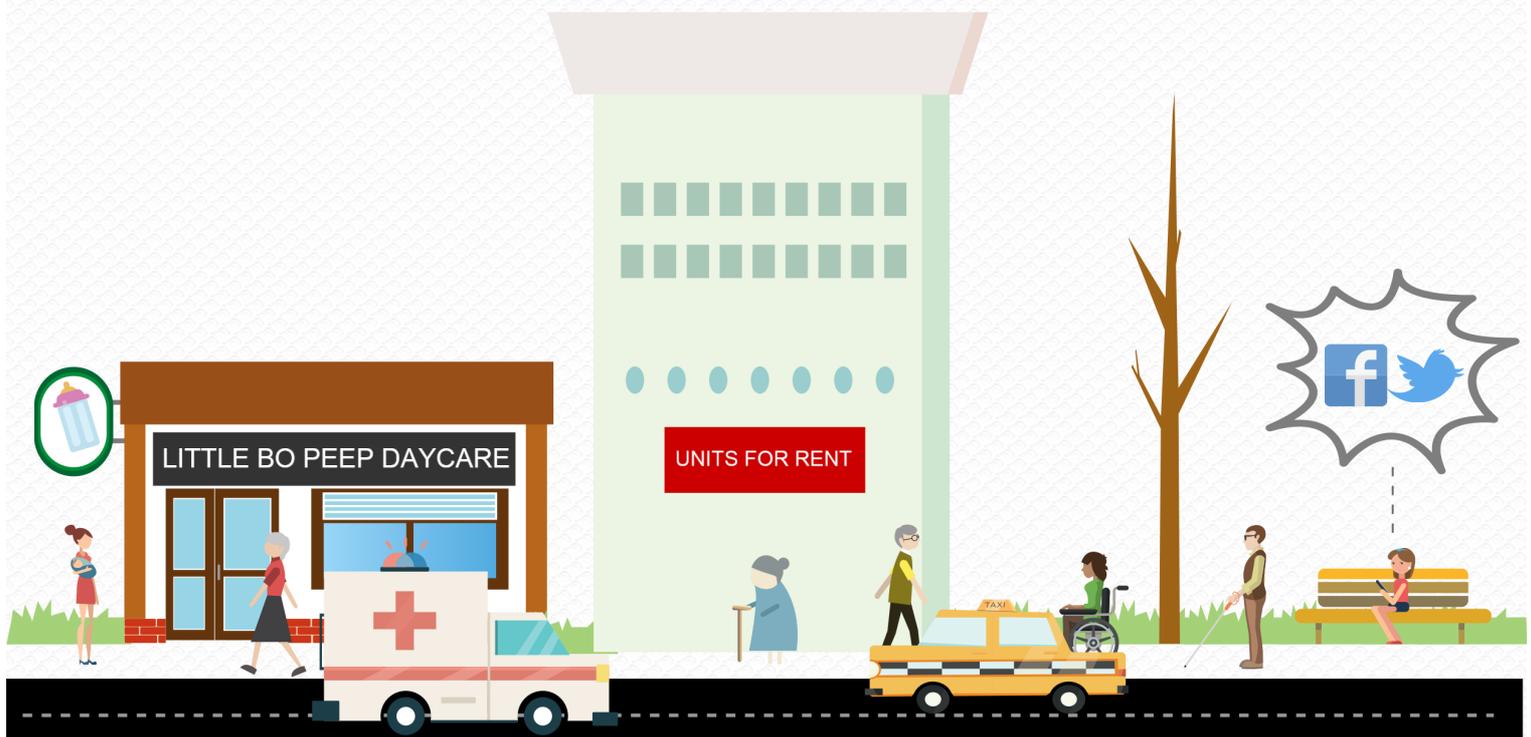


According to US Census data, many of the county's lower-income residents are more likely to access public transportation or carpool to get to work compared to residents above poverty.<sup>12</sup>

# KEY HUMAN SERVICES NEEDS

Although Fairfax County has benefited overall from the growth and changes in the population, economy, and infrastructure over the past decade, these shifts have also resulted in more challenges for many residents. More than ever before, a greater number and percentage of the population is facing intense and complex service needs. For most individuals and families, several factors contribute to one or more of these needs, often intersecting one another and resulting in pressing implications on a daily basis. For example, an older adult living on a fixed income may have to choose between medicine and food in order to pay rent. Or, a single parent may not be able to afford child care to allow him or her to work evening shifts. Although typically hidden in the overall positive outlook of Fairfax County, these illustrations are more often than not the reality for many residents.

The information and data described in the following pages highlight key needs currently facing Fairfax County residents in the areas of housing, economic self-sufficiency, health, and connections to resources. Although the needs do not address every important local challenge, residents and stakeholders have identified them as pressing due to their mounting urgency and complexity. While these challenges do not describe every household in the county, these issues are growing in scope and complexity and, if left unaddressed, will have an impact on the overall health, well-being, and economic future of Fairfax County.



# KEY HUMAN SERVICES NEEDS

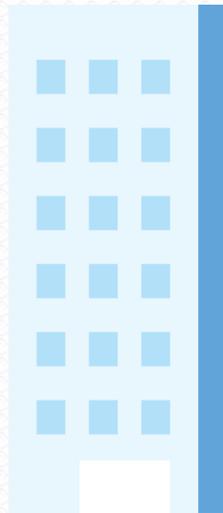
## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

A large proportion of county residents spend more than 1/3 of their income on housing, particularly individuals who rent. Combined with substantial gaps in the number of affordable rental units, many residents have difficulty securing and maintaining housing. The high cost of housing coupled with the lack of affordable housing options means that residents are very vulnerable when any life shocks occur.

From 2005 to 2014, a range of

### 41% to 47%

of all renters in Fairfax County were burdened by housing costs.<sup>13</sup>



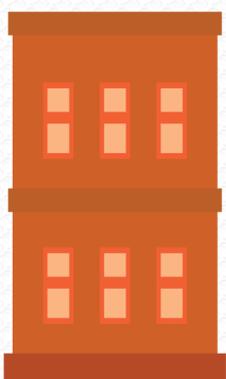
Shortage of affordable rental units.<sup>14</sup>

### 31,630



## ACCESSIBLE HOUSING

Accessible housing is inextricably tied to affordability and the number of these units in Fairfax County is limited. Increases in the older adult population and individuals with disabilities are further driving the need for accessible housing. Overall there is a lack of accessible housing units in Fairfax County.



## SUPPORT SERVICES

The ability to live in the place of one's choice is critical to the health and overall well-being of older adults and individuals of all ages with disabilities. Aging, disability, and caregiver support services play a critical role in preventing individuals from requiring more intensive services; however, gaps exist in the availability of affordable services to individuals who wish to live independently.



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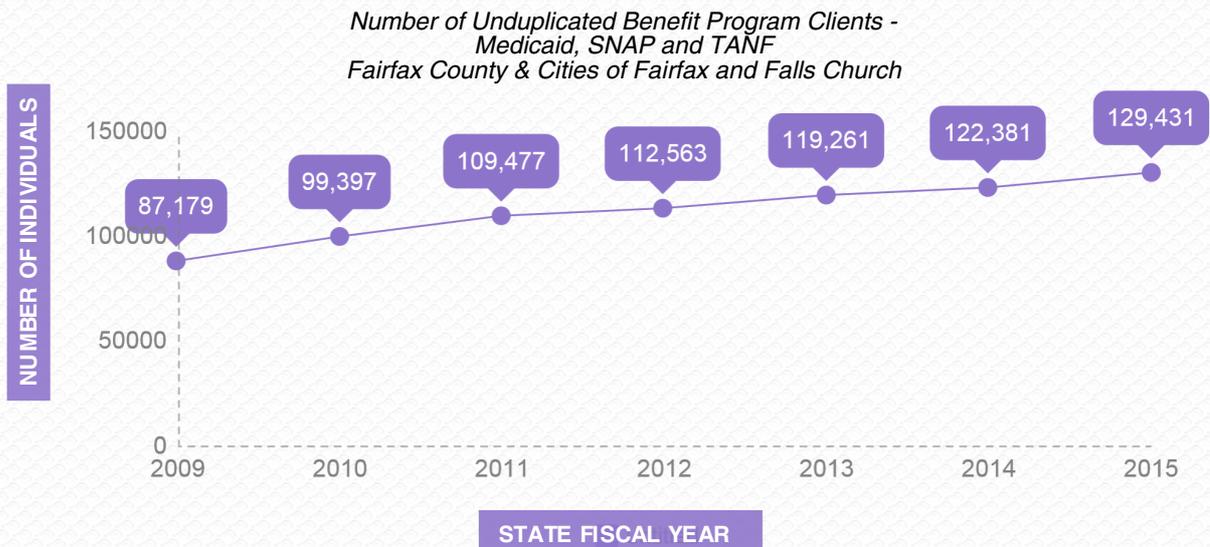
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# KEY HUMAN SERVICES NEEDS

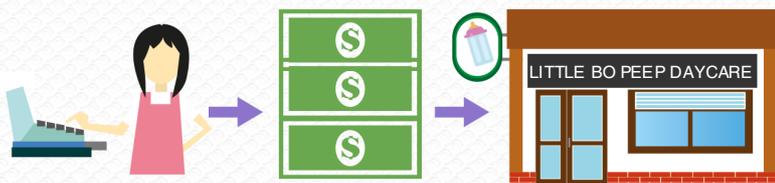
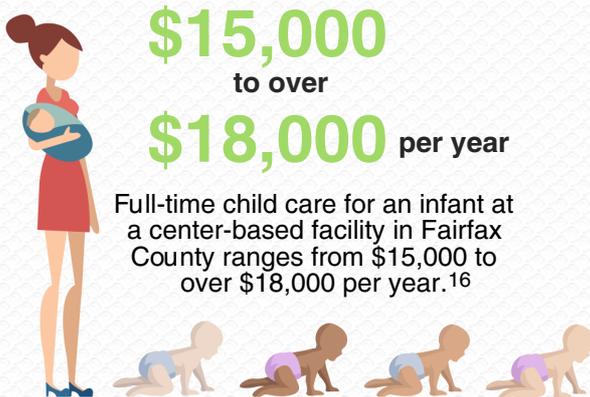
## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

With the slow economic recovery and subsequent economic pressures on middle and lower-income households, many more individuals have sought some type of financial assistance or subsidy to make ends meet. Requests for food assistance (SNAP), health insurance (Medicaid), and cash assistance (TANF) have continued to increase, indicating more individuals are unable to meet their basic needs than in the past.<sup>15</sup>



## AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE

Child care is the second largest expense for families next to housing.



Families earning low incomes pay a significantly higher share of their income for child care than families with high incomes.

## EARLY EDUCATION



Quality early childhood education programs support children's cognitive and social emotional development and ongoing success.

## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

"Often times one parent decides not to work because it's cheaper than paying for daycare."

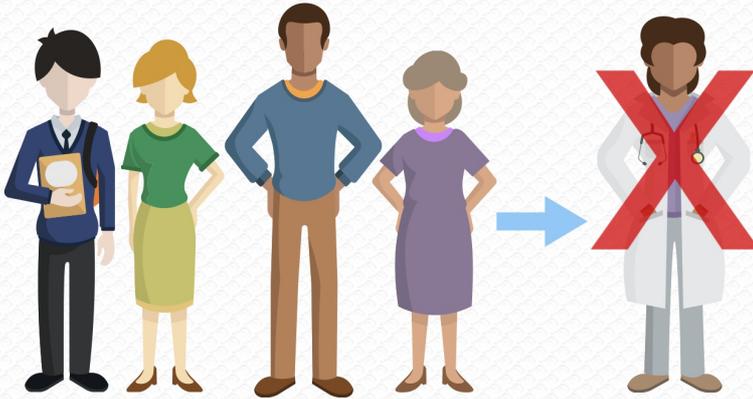


# KEY HUMAN SERVICES NEEDS

## AFFORDABLE HEALTH INSURANCE

Access to affordable health insurance is an important factor in promoting health and well-being within a community.

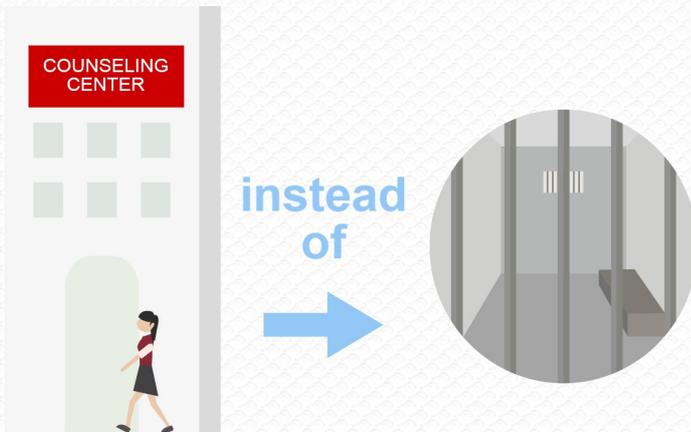
### 30,300 adults



In 2014, Fairfax County had an estimated 30,300 adults without health insurance who were between the ages of 18 and 64 and lived in households with incomes under 138% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).<sup>17</sup> These individuals likely fall into the coverage gap, which means they are not currently eligible for assistance with health insurance.

## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR ADULTS

Although difficult to precisely determine the number of residents in need, there are challenges for residents when accessing outpatient behavioral health services. Furthermore, there are challenges and needs associated with obtaining residential treatment services due to system capacity and cost. In addition, culture, societal stigma, and language differences create barriers.



Within the county there is a need to reduce the number of people with mental illness who are incarcerated. According to the Fairfax County Office of the Sheriff, as many as half of all Fairfax County Jail inmates at any given time have mental health and/or co-occurring substance use disorders.<sup>19</sup>

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence is a community problem that occurs across all demographic and socioeconomic statuses. While it seems that more residents are aware of and accessing services for assistance, the demand for emergency shelter for individuals and families affected by domestic violence remains high. Additionally, special attention should be paid to supporting children who witness domestic violence.

### 1 in 4 homes



Domestic violence affects 1 in 4 homes in Fairfax County and is a leading cause of homicide in our community.<sup>18</sup>

## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH

Feedback from the community points to lack of easily accessible and affordable outpatient treatment services for children and youth and long-term options for children requiring more intensive care coordination or case management. Young adults with high-intensity needs are particularly vulnerable as they "age out" of residential treatment programs and services.



# KEY HUMAN SERVICES NEEDS

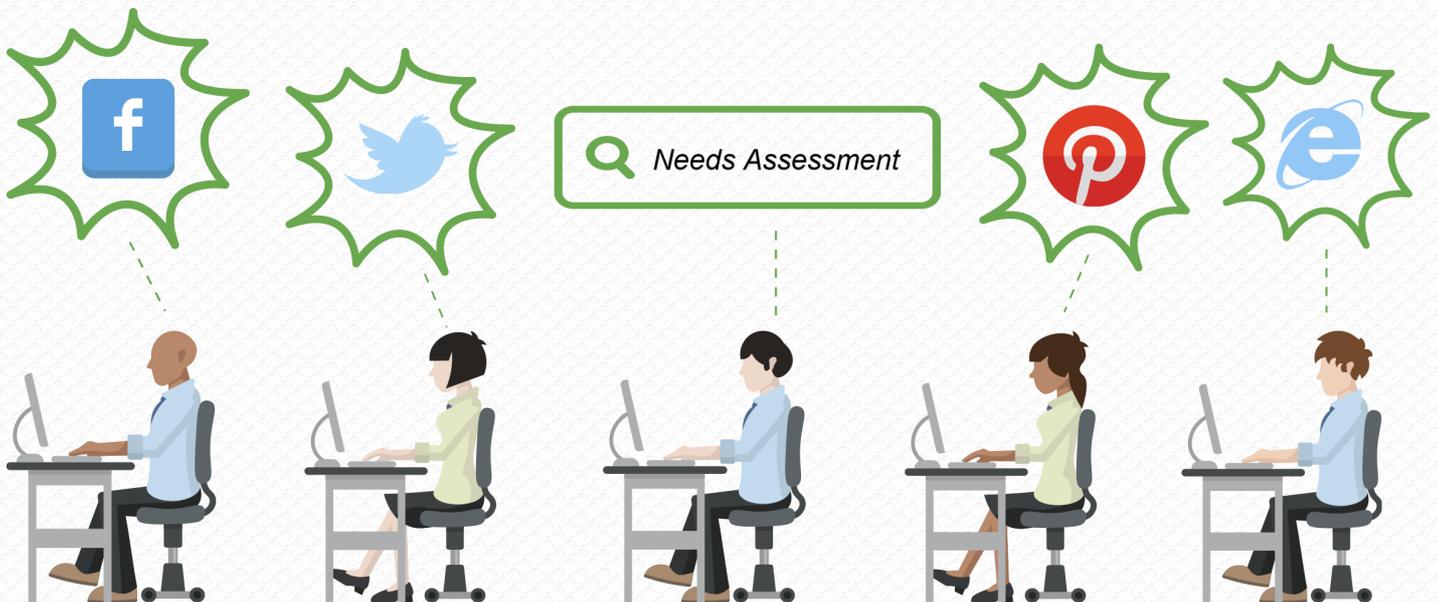
## AFFORDABLE & ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Residents of Fairfax County are unable to effectively and efficiently travel within the county due to congestion and complex public transportation systems. This is especially true for older adults and individuals with disabilities who may need to rely on public transportation to remain independent.



## ACCESS TO HUMAN SERVICES INFORMATION

Although the county has a high level of internet access overall, disparities exist by age and income level.<sup>20</sup> With the vast majority of information communicated through the internet or social media, individuals who do not have access to information are further disconnected from resources.

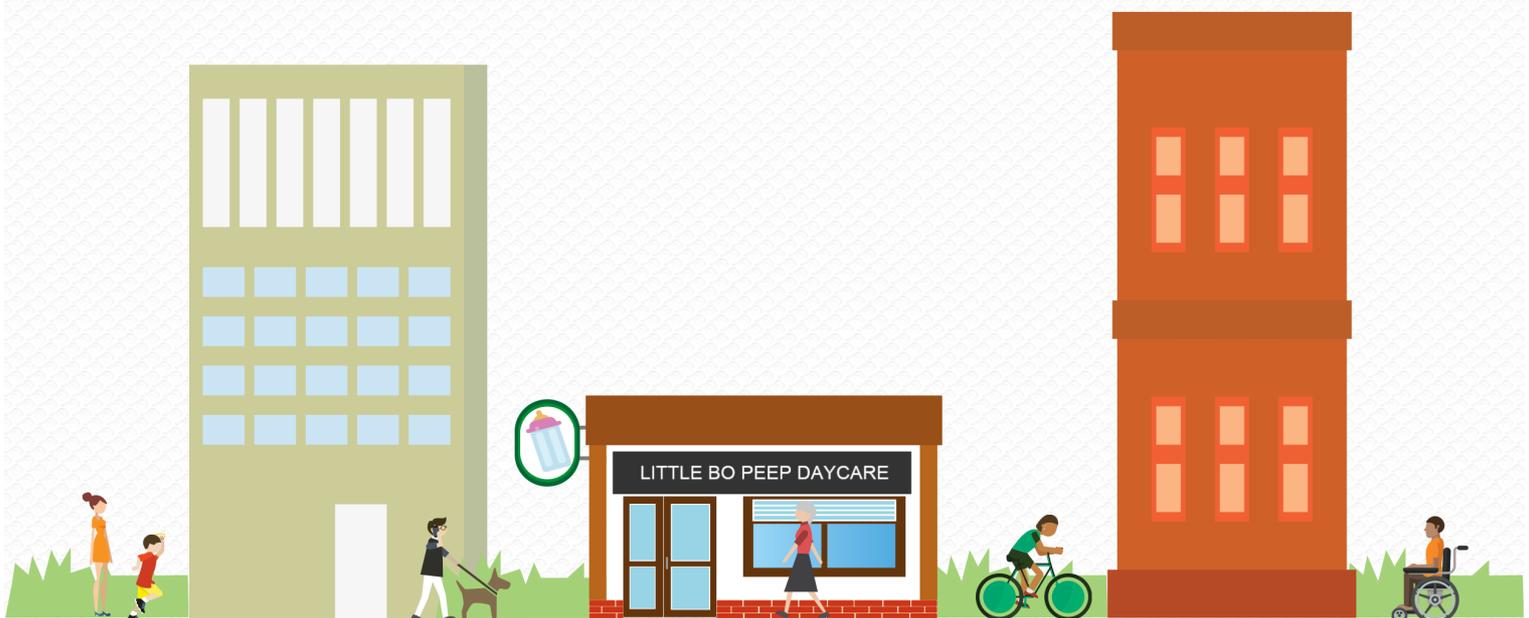


# CONCLUSION

As the county continues to evolve, the breadth and complexity of needs will impact the lives of a greater number of people in the community and have a ripple effect on the overall well-being of the county. These needs will not dissipate on their own. To ensure a vital and thriving Fairfax County over the long-term, the community as a whole – residents, faith community, nonprofit organizations, businesses, schools, public safety, and county agencies – must mobilize to address these issues holistically.

Partnerships and collaborations amongst stakeholders are an integral part of the human services system. However, truly addressing challenges requires an integrated system and modern approach to best serve individuals and families. An integrated system will help align complimentary programs to facilitate more client-centered service delivery and make programs more available when and where they are most needed. This includes co-located services, place-based initiatives, and technological strategies to provide flexibility in accessing information and services.

Moving towards an integrated model requires leveraging the knowledge, skills, and abilities of stakeholders across the county and collectively investing our time and resources in efforts that improve outcomes. This work will require patience and persistence, but it is the only way to transform our system and build a better future for Fairfax County.



# NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Fairfax County, Virginia, Department of Neighborhood and Community Services. Economic, Demographic and Statistical Research. (2015). Demographic Reports 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/demogrph/demrpts/report/fullrpt.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Census Bureau/American FactFinder. 2005-2014 American Community Survey. Retrieved from <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>.

<sup>3</sup>Fairfax County, Virginia, Department of Neighborhood and Community Services. Economic, Demographic and Statistical Research. (2013). 50+ in Fairfax County. Retrieved from [http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/demogrph/datavis/datavis\\_pdf/fifty\\_plus\\_datavis.pdf](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/demogrph/datavis/datavis_pdf/fifty_plus_datavis.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Census Bureau/American FactFinder. 2005-2014 American Community Survey. Retrieved from <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>.

<sup>5</sup>PolicyLink and USC Program for Environmental & Regional Equity (PERE). (2015). Equitable Growth Profile of Fairfax County. Retrieved from <http://nationalequityatlas.org/sites/default/files/Fairfax-Profile-6June2015-final.pdf>

<sup>6</sup>Fairfax County, Virginia, Department of Neighborhood and Community Services. Economic, Demographic and Statistical Research. (2014). Rental Housing Complex Analysis 2014. Retrieved from [http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/demogrph/rental\\_housing/rent2014.pdf](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/demogrph/rental_housing/rent2014.pdf).

<sup>7</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census/American FactFinder. 2014 American Community Survey. Retrieved from <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml> and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Mid-Atlantic Information Office. Consumer Price Indexes for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), U.S. City Average and Selected Metropolitan Areas, Annual Average and Percent Change, 2004-2014.

<sup>8</sup>Texas A&M Transportation Institute and Inrix. (2015). 2015 Urban Mobility Scorecard: United States of America Scorecard. Retrieved from <http://d2dtl5nnlpfr0r.cloudfront.net/tti.tamu.edu/documents/mobility-scorecard-2015.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup>Fairfax County, Virginia, Department of Neighborhood and Community Services. Economic, Demographic and Statistical Research. (2014). Rental Housing Complex Analysis 2014, Table 8. Retrieved from [http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/demogrph/rental\\_housing/rent2014.pdf](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/demogrph/rental_housing/rent2014.pdf).

<sup>10</sup>Glasmeier, Amy K., and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "Living Wage Calculator." Retrieved from <http://livingwage.mit.edu>.

# NOTES

<sup>11</sup>Fairfax County, Virginia, Department of Neighborhood and Community Services. Economic, Demographic and Statistical Research. (2014). Rental Housing Complex Analysis 2014. Retrieved from [http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/demogrph/rental\\_housing/rent2014.pdf](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/demogrph/rental_housing/rent2014.pdf).

<sup>12</sup>U.S. Census Bureau/American FactFinder. 2008-2014 American Community Survey. Retrieved from <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>.

<sup>13</sup>U.S. Census Bureau/American FactFinder. 2005-2014 American Community Survey. Retrieved from <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>.

<sup>14</sup>The low-income limit (80% MSA) used for Section 8 and public housing programs is adjusted so as to not exceed the national median income of \$65,800 for a four-person household in Fiscal Year 2015. Retrieved from <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il.html>.

<sup>15</sup>Virginia Department of Social Services. (2015). Local Department of Social Services Profile Report, SFY 2015. Virginia Department of Social Services. Retrieved from <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/>

<sup>16</sup>Fairfax County, Virginia, Department of Family Services. Weekly Child Care Rates, FY 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofc/avcostcare.htm>.

<sup>17</sup>U.S. Census Bureau/American FactFinder. 2014 American Community Survey. Retrieved from <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>.

<sup>18</sup>Fairfax County, Virginia, Domestic Violence Prevention, Policy, and Coordinating Council. (2014). 2014 Annual Report to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. Retrieved from <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/domesticviolence/documents/dvppcc-annual-report-2014.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup>Fairfax County, Virginia, Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission. (2015). Final Report. Retrieved from <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/chairman/pdf/adhoc-final-10.8.15.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup>U.S. Census Bureau/American FactFinder. 2013 American Community Survey and Public Use Micro Sample (PUMS). Generated by Fairfax County, Virginia, Department of Neighborhood and Community Services. Economic, Demographic and Statistical Research, March 2015.



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