

Working Together to Make a Measurable Difference

We would like to thank those who attended the *Working Together to Make a Measurable Difference Community Information Sessions* held at the Fairfax County Government Center, South County Government Center, McLean Community Center and the Reston Community Center. Your participation is greatly appreciated and we hope that you found the experience beneficial.

Patricia Harrison, Deputy County Executive for Human Services

The following organizations were represented:

AARP Virginia	Just Neighbors
AgingUp	League of Women Voters of Fairfax Area
Alliance for Human Services	Legal Services of Northern Virginia
Angel Fund	Lorton Community Action Center
Annandale Christian Community for Action (ACCA)	Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area
Bethlehem Baptist Church	Marian Homes, Inc.
Braddock District Council	McLean Community Connections
Braddock District Council Aging in Place Committee	McLean Community Center
Cardinal Bank	McLean Community Foundation
Central Senior Center	Mount Vernon At Home, Inc.
Christ The Servant Lutheran Church	Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations
City of Falls Church	New Hope Housing
Connections for Hope	Northern Virginia Community College
Consolidated Community Funding Advisory Committee (CCFAC)	Northern Virginia Vietnamese Senior Citizen Association (NOVASCA)
Evergreen Senior Care	Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness
FACETS	Reston Interfaith
Fairfax Area Disability Services Board	Rising Hope Mission Church
Fairfax County Commission for Women	Share Inc.
Fairfax County Human Services Council	Shepherd Gate Church
Fairfax County Public Schools	Society of St. Vincent de Paul/St. Timothy Catholic Church
Fairfax Long Term Care Community Coalition	South County Task Force for Human Service (SCTFHS)
Faith Communities In Action (FCIA)	St. James Catholic Church
Family PASS	Stop Child Abuse Now of Northern Virginia
Fellowship House	Temple Rodef Shalom
Food for Others	The Arc of Northern Virginia
Franklin Park Village	The Friends of Guest House
George Mason University	The Women's Center
Giving Circle of HOPE	Unified Prevention Coalition of Fairfax County
Good Shepherd Housing & Family Services	United Christian Ministries
GraceFul Care	Virginia State Senate
Habitat for Humanity of Northern Virginia	Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement (VOICE)
Health Care Advisory Board	Wesley Housing Development Corporation
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington	
Junior League of Northern Virginia	

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The following are reoccurring community themes and trends discussed at the *Working Together to Make a Measurable Difference Community Information Sessions*. Items listed below represent the views of the participants and organizations that attended the dialogue sessions. Participants discussed community trends in the six areas of affordable housing, connected individuals, economic self-sufficiency, healthy people, positive living for older adults and individuals with disabilities, and successful children and youth.

Affordable Housing

➤ **Earnings**

- ◇ Residents are exploring options to cover housing costs including multiple jobs and multiple wage earners per household (multigenerational or multi-family)

➤ **Housing Options**

- ◇ There is a growing need for housing options that are affordable and accessible to accommodate county residents and in particular, older individuals and persons with disabilities
- ◇ Individuals and families who are just above eligibility thresholds for housing assistance may be at risk for homelessness due to the high cost of living in the county

➤ **Living Conditions**

- ◇ There is a growing need for accessible and reliable transportation which is critical for housing permanence and job stability

Connected Individuals

➤ **Accessible Resources**

- ◇ There is a growing lack of accessible and reliable transportation necessary for older adults and individuals with disabilities to access medical appointments and engage in community events

➤ **Engagement**

- ◇ Retirees are seeking ways to volunteer and be involved in their communities

Economic Self-Sufficiency

➤ **Basic Needs**

- ◇ There are continuing financial strains on individuals and families to meet the costs of housing/rent, transportation, food, insurance, health care, behavioral health care, child care and older adult care
- ◇ There continues to be housing and employment barriers for ex-offenders

➤ **Earnings**

- ◇ There is continuing concern that minimum wage jobs or fixed social security incomes are not sufficient to live in Fairfax County due to high costs

➤ **Educational Attainment**

- ◇ There is a continuing need for adequate job and skills training outside of the college track
- ◇ Disparities continue in educational attainment by race/ethnicity
- ◇ The rising cost of postsecondary education continues to create financial burdens for families

➤ **Literacy**

- ◇ There has been an increase in multi-language families residing in the county
- ◇ There is a need for financial literacy and financial planning for individuals of all ages

➤ **Living and Working Conditions**

- ◇ There is a growing need for affordable, accessible and reliable transportation that is collocated with employment opportunities in order to promote job stability

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Healthy People

➤ **Health Care**

- ◇ There is a continuing shortage of affordable oral health care for adults; in general, adults in Virginia do not have access to publicly funded dental insurance (i.e., Medicaid)
- ◇ Residents are having difficulty finding physicians who accept Medicare

➤ **Health Literacy**

- ◇ There is concern about childhood obesity rates
- ◇ There is a need to understand the benefits as well as the cost of healthy, fresh food; there are areas in the county where fresh food is not readily accessible

➤ **Living and Working Conditions**

- ◇ As increasing numbers of older adults age in place, affordable, accessible and reliable transportation collocated with health care facilities is essential to health and well-being

Positive Living for Older Adults and Individuals with Disabilities

➤ **Support Networks**

- ◇ The “village model” concept for aging in place, where neighbors support each other by providing services such as transportation, home maintenance, and grocery shopping, is expanding in the county
- ◇ Some older adults may not have access to and/or be adept at using computers to obtain information and may have difficulty navigating resources

➤ **Financial Stability**

- ◇ There is a need for financial literacy training for older adults to include retirement planning; awareness of abuse/scams; and available resources for their changing needs

➤ **Health Care**

- ◇ There is a growing need for caregiver training and support, particularly as the population ages

➤ **Living and Working Conditions**

- ◇ There continues to be employment and housing barriers for youth with disabilities who age out of services

Successful Children and Youth

➤ **Basic Needs**

- ◇ There is concern regarding the number of homeless youth in the county
- ◇ There is concern about the number of students receiving free and reduced lunches; many students do not get adequate food outside of the school setting

➤ **Support Networks**

- ◇ There is a need for child care and after-school care, including households with multiple wage-earners

➤ **Health Care**

- ◇ There are continued incidence of youth experiencing depression and suicide ideation
- ◇ There are continued incidences of substance abuse which pose health concerns

➤ **Educational Development and Attainment**

- ◇ There is a growing recognition for the need for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education and training opportunities

Participant evaluations were very positive with 99 percent feeling that the sessions informed their collective efforts to improve the well-being of residents and 97 percent feeling that their time was well-spent. In general, the comments were positive and participants valued the opportunity to be among other organizations for discussions.

