

Connected Individuals



Connected Individuals are those of all ages and abilities who contribute to and are engaged in their communities as well as have access to local services. Factors which help connect individuals in their communities include access to resources that promote financial and residential stability; opportunities to donate time and resources to others; opportunities to participate and contribute to activities of their choice; and natural and community support systems that enhance well-being.



GOALS:

- ◆ Increase engagement in community life, civic activities, and recreational interests
 - ◆ Improve access to resources that promote stability

Why Does This Matter?

Fairfax County recognizes that a strong social connection with others and to communities promotes financial and residential stability among residents. From volunteering to participation in activities of one’s choice, likely results are improved health and overall well-being for the community.

The ability of an individual to reach a place of employment, medical service or grocery shopping is essential to promote residential stability. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that in 2015, over 16,700 households in Fairfax County did not have a vehicle available. A [2013 survey](#) of older adults and individuals with disabilities in Fairfax County found that approximately 1 in 4 survey respondents was unable to reach a destination due to a lack of accessible and affordable transportation in the county. [Positive Living for Older Adults and Individuals with Disabilities](#) includes information about transportation resources as well as opportunities for socialization and participation in meaningful activities.

What is happening in our county? — Representative Indicators of Fairfax County

In looking at civic engagement as an indicator of Connected Individuals, the number of registered voters in Fairfax County who voted in presidential elections remained stable between 2008 and 2012. The 2014 midterm elections showed lower voter turnout than presidential elections.

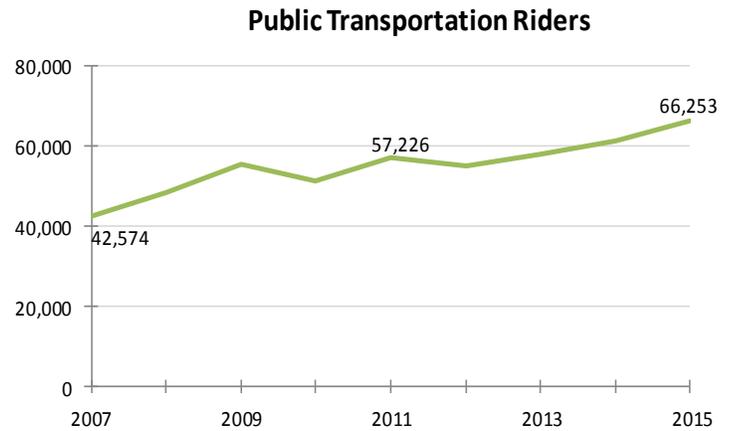
The Youth Survey, administered annually in Fairfax County public schools, is utilized to monitor assets or strengths that build resiliency and reduce risk behaviors in youth. Supportive relationships with an adult in the community or a parent are measured to assess progress toward the achievement of this goal. In the three-year period in the table below, the proportion of youth who had an adult in the community with whom to talk about something important and the proportion of youth who had a parent available to help have been stable.

Population Indicator	Baseline	Most Recent
% of registered voters who voted ¹	79% (2008) 524,034 / 665,674	46% (2014) 308,397 / 675,268
% of youth who report they have an adult with whom they can talk ²	40% (2012) 12,191 / 30,603	41% (2015) 13,360 / 32,813
% of residents who lived in the same house one year ago ³	86% (2012) 954,370 / 1,105,089	85% (2015) 956,430 / 1,128,680
% of working residents who ride public transportation to work ³	9% (2012) 54,977 / 606,954	11% (2015) 66,253 / 611,053

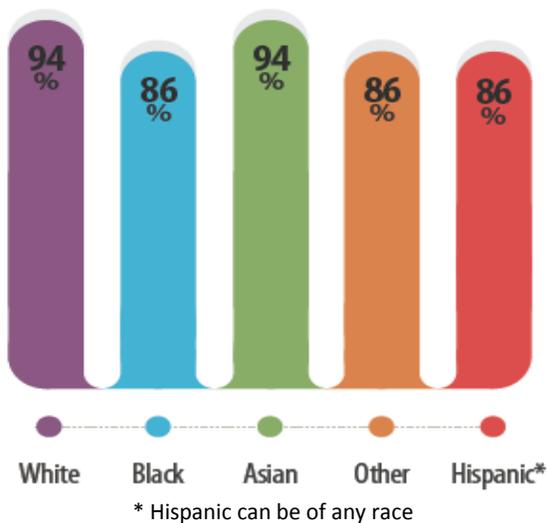
Source: ¹ [Fairfax County Office of Elections](#) (2014 is mid-term elections data) ² Fairfax County Youth Survey ³ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

What is happening in our county?

The number of **public transportation riders** in the county **increased** since 2007 **by an estimated 56%** while the county population grew by approximately 8% through 2015. *(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey; and Fairfax County Economic, Demographic and Statistical Research)*



HOUSEHOLD INTERNET ACCESSIBILITY BY RACE/ETHNICITY



In 2013, **93% of households had internet access**; however, the lowest proportion of internet access was correlated to areas within Fairfax County where the median income were lowest. Race/ethnicity disparity was present in internet access — an estimated 94% of households with White or Asian residents and 86% of households with Black or Hispanic residents had internet access in 2013. *(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey)*

Over **420,600 individuals age five and older spoke a language other than English** at home in 2015 in Fairfax County. This represents an increase of 56% from the year 2000. An estimated 159,900 individuals spoke English less than “very well” in 2015. These individuals may be socially isolated due to language barriers. *(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey)*

Most (90%) of 8th, 10th and 12th grade students in Fairfax County engaged in community service activities according to the 2015 [Fairfax County Youth Survey](#). Forty-four percent of respondents participated in some type of community service activities once a month or more.



Community Engagement

Goal: Increase engagement in community life, civic activities, and recreational interests



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How are we doing?

The health and human services system serves all residents as community engagement is a desirable goal for the entire Fairfax community. Two system indicators reflect the extent of community engagement experienced by individuals and families who participate in Fairfax County programs and services.

System Indicator	Baseline	2014	Most Recent
% of volunteers who report feeling a stronger connection to their community through their services*	88% (FY 2013) 469 / 535	87% (FY 2014) 981 / 1,129	85% (FY 2015) 942 / 1,106

Source: *Fairfax County Health and Human Services System Data

The first composite indicator demonstrates whether volunteers gain a stronger connection to their communities through their volunteer time and service. In FY 2014, human services programs contributing to this indicator engaged nearly 23,700 volunteers who provided approximately 245,800 volunteer hours valued at \$5.8 million. Surveys conducted with a sample of 1,106 volunteers in FY 2015 indicated that 85% felt a stronger connection to the community.

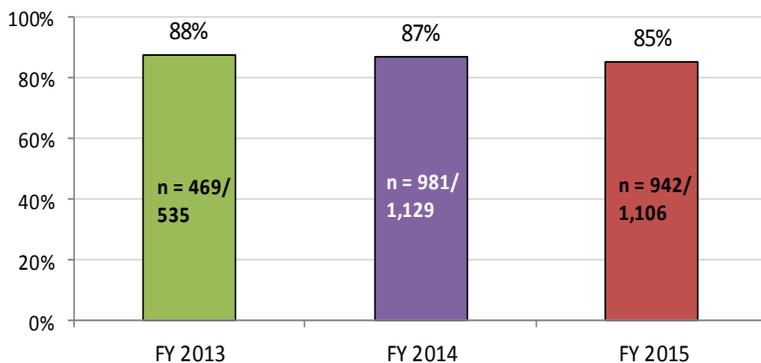
Contributing to this performance is the leveraging of partnerships with businesses, local organizations, and county agencies to generate volunteer opportunities.

A wide variety of volunteer opportunities across the system helps to ensure that volunteers are appropriately matched to meaningful activities. Diverse opportunities for engagement include short-term or one-time volunteer activities. While orientation and training is provided to volunteers to promote their involvement, a factor which may restrict performance and discourage potential volunteers is the time commitment for extensive training.

Other challenges include transportation barriers for some to reach volunteer opportunities; lack of access to social media by some human services agencies to promote volunteering; a resource intensive process to recruit, train, and manage volunteers; and limited volunteer opportunities for court-referred youth and adults.

Fairfax County has implemented a Volunteer Management System (VMS) to help recruit and manage volunteers. The VMS system is a source of volunteer data for all county agencies and is able to disaggregate data by race/ethnicity, gender, and age for this indicator.

Percent of volunteers who feel a stronger connection to their community



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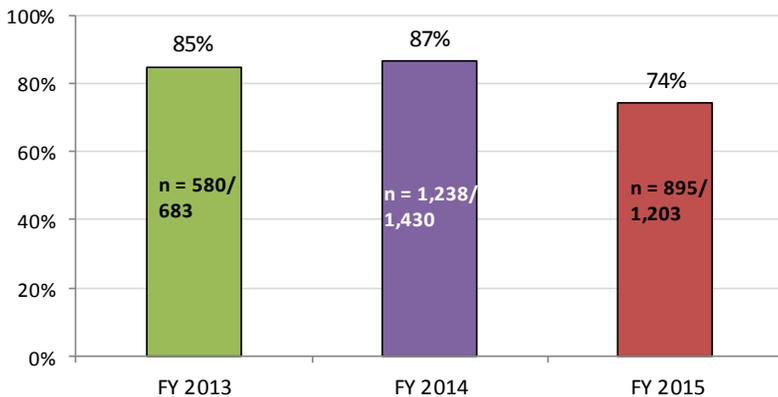
How are we doing? (continued)

System Indicator	Baseline	2014	Most Recent
% of persons who report feeling better connected to the community as a result of participating in programs and services*	85% (FY 2013) 580 / 683	87% (FY 2014) 1,238 / 1,430	74% (FY 2015) 895 / 1,203

Source: *Fairfax County Health and Human Services System Data

A variety of programs and services are designed to foster community life and recreational interests for individuals of all ages throughout Fairfax County. County agencies collecting data for this indicator include Family Services, Housing and Community Development, Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court, Neighborhood and Community Services, and the Office for Women & Domestic and Sexual Violence Services.

Percent of Persons Who Feel Better Connected as a Result of Participating



FY 2013 and FY 2014 results cannot be compared to FY 2015 results due to a change in survey methodology which affected over half of the customers represented in this indicator. In FY 2015, Community, Senior, and Teen Centers operated by Neighborhood and Community Services changed the survey question about community connectedness from a scaled response to a Yes/No response. Additionally, earlier versions of the survey described the concept of community connectedness but the description was not included in FY 2015.

Several factors have a positive impact on system performance for this indicator. The trend toward co-located facilities with multiple public and private partners has leveraged resources to expand opportunities for community engagement. Similarly, the availability of county space for community use contributes positively to this result.

The health and human services system has developed some capacity for interpretation services for limited English-speaking participants, including bilingual and multi-cultural staff when available. However, an increasing proportion of non-English speaking clients and limited number of multi-lingual staff and volunteers offsets this capacity.

Transportation barriers for accessing civic and recreational activities may increase social isolation. Increasing fuel and transportation costs present challenges to many, including clients who rely on human services transportation. An additional restricting factor is limited access to family care which may limit engagement in community activities.



Accessible Resources

Goal: Improve access to resources that promote stability



Connected Individuals



How are we doing?

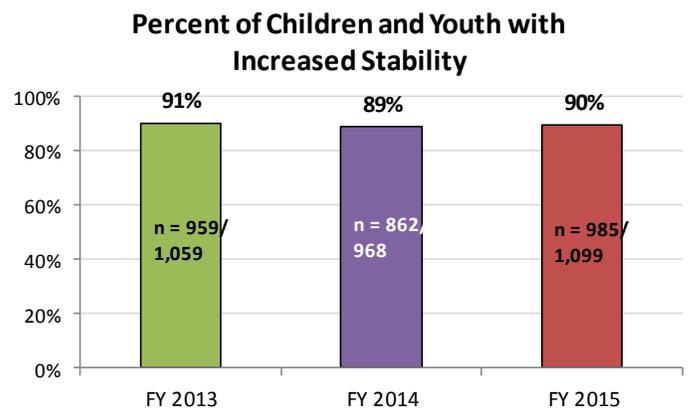
Access to resources (e.g., community services, housing, transportation) can promote feelings of stability and social connectedness. Stable residents live in the same residence for a period of time with access to community resources and the opportunity to develop ties with community members and organizations. Their children attend community schools and maintain relationships with peers and friends. [Older adults](#) need access to resources if they wish to continue to live in the same residence and age in place.

Instability negatively impacts all individuals and may be especially harmful to children and youth. Stability is critical for abused, neglected, or dependent children and youth who have been separated temporarily from their parents, families whose children are at risk of abuse and neglect, and youth with complex needs and risk behaviors receiving comprehensive services. Limited movement from home to home gives children and youth the ability to refer to a place as home.

System Indicator	Baseline	2014	Most Recent
% of children and youth with increased stability*	91% (FY 2013) 959 / 1,059	89% (FY 2014) 862 / 968	90% (FY 2015) 985 / 1,099

Source: *Fairfax County Health and Human Services System Data

This composite indicator illustrates the performance of programs and services related to stability of children and youth. The system performed well on this indicator during FY 2013 through FY 2015. Factors contributing to system performance include adherence to the policy of placing youth in the least restrictive environment, training of staff on emerging issues and practices (e.g., trauma-informed care), and implementation of evidence-informed practices (e.g., parent-child visitation policy). Additionally, increased focus on data management has facilitated data-informed decisions regarding the stability of children and youth.



Other factors that have contributed to the system's success include the [Bridging Affordability](#) program partnerships that help locate housing for clients, the foster care system's continuation of services (including placement) for youth through age 21, and support from Foster Care to subsidize rental fees. Young adults exiting foster care programs are expected to understand and apply independent living skills such as in areas of financial literacy and employment. Young adults who are not in the foster care system have been able to access the Bridging Affordability program, which includes rental assistance and partnerships that help locate housing for clients and provide case management services.

How are we doing? (continued)

Cross-system staff utilize Family Partnership Meetings to develop plans for ensuring the safety, well-being and permanence of children. The concept of permanency refers to a child having a legal, safe, nurturing family who will care for him/her into adulthood. Finding permanent families for older youth in foster care continues to be a challenge. Youth who age out of foster care often face lifetime challenges including homelessness, incarceration, and low educational attainment.

The system has also been challenged by its limited capacity to serve an increasing number of non-English speaking families who require language assistance services. Similarly, while staff are being trained in trauma-informed practices, the system currently lacks enough capacity to meet the demand for trauma-informed care.

Another major factor limiting the system's ability to increase stability is a lack of [affordable housing](#). There are few housing options affordable to youth and young adults with minimal income who age out of the health and human services system. There is a scarcity of vouchers for housing subsidy and the system has had limited success in securing additional funding to support homeless youth. Additionally, there are a limited number of landlords willing to rent to youth and beliefs by some home owners may make them more reluctant to rent to youth with criminal records. Finally, some youth lack parental support and the needed skills to live independently including positive connections with peers to enable them to procure housing with appropriate roommates.

Connected Individuals



Programs and Services Contributing To *Community Engagement* Goal

Volunteering Indicator: Office of Emergency Preparedness and Medical Reserve Corps · Regional Services and Center Operations · Virginia Cooperative Extension · Volunteer Services · Volunteer Solutions

Connectedness Indicator: Community, Senior, and Teen Centers · Community Service Program · Counseling Services · Congregate Meals · Human Services Transportation · Senior Housing

Other Programs, Services and Activities Supporting *Community Engagement* Goal

Volunteering Indicator: School Age Child Care · [Fairfax Area Commission on Aging](#) · [Alden Theatre](#) Ushers at the McLean Community Center · [A Village for All Ages](#) in the McLean Community · [Reston Community Center](#) · Volunteers, Interns & Volunteer Interpreter Program · [Volunteer and Partner Services](#) · [Chronic Disease Self-Management Program](#) leaders

Connectedness Indicator: [ElderLink](#) · [Father Engagement](#) · [Family Partnership Meetings](#) · [Mujeres Transformando Vidas](#) · [Neighborhood Networks](#) · [Parenting Education Program](#) · [Virginia Cooperative Extension](#)

Programs and Services Contributing To *Accessible Resources* Goal

Foster Care and Adoption · [Children's Services Act System of Care](#) · Healthy Families Fairfax · Protection and Preservation Services · [Transitional Living Program](#) · [Alternative House](#) · ([Assisting Young Mothers](#), [Homeless Youth Initiative](#)) · [Residential Youth Services](#)

Other Programs, Services and Activities Supporting *Accessible Resources* Goal

[Lethality Assessment Program](#) · [A Village for All Ages](#) in the McLean Community · [Parenting Education Program](#) · Supervised Release Services · [Center Without Walls](#) · [Human Services Transportation](#)

Connected Individuals



Our strategies to help volunteers feel better connected

- ◆ **Support seamless volunteer administration to enhance volunteer experience and connection to community**
 - ⇒ Has been selected for initial implementation
 - ⇒ Seeks to enhance a culture of engagement and sense of community by...
 - a. Placing greater emphasis on obtaining and using volunteer feedback to continuously improve their experience
 - b. Improving volunteer manager training and communication with volunteers
 - c. Leveraging the message of agencies to introduce and educate the community about the work of agencies and assuring volunteers are clear about the agency's mission and how their services help the community
 - ⇒ Leverages over 26,000 volunteers in VMS to potentially increase capacity for service delivery
- ◆ Build and foster relationships with schools and universities to increase engagement and volunteer opportunities

Our strategies to help people feel better connected through their participation in programs and services

- ◆ Make engagement an intentional program objective
- ◆ Enhance outreach and accessibility to programs and services to increase program participation by addressing challenges with interpretation, transportation, and family care

Our strategy to improve access to resources that promote stability

- ◆ Support initiatives in targeted areas ([place-based](#)) to improve accessibility for children and youth to focused resources by promoting community awareness and education about programs and services offered in targeted areas where needs exist

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Terms and Methodology

Baseline: Term refers to data for “year zero” and will be used as a comparison point for future performance.

Composite: Term refers to a single data point which represents various programs and services contributing to outcomes. Percentages on report card are composites and these are calculated by a) summing all individuals who are better off as a result of participating in contributing programs or receiving services – this sum is the numerator; b) summing the total number of individuals who participate in all contributing programs or receive services – this sum is the denominator; and c) dividing numerator by denominator; i.e., composite (%) = numerator ÷ denominator.

Rounding: Figures presented as percentages are in most cases rounded to the nearest whole number percentage. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%.

The system indicators included reflect a representative sampling of persons served by health and human services within county administered programs. Based on existing system indicator outcomes, health and human services appraises the overall system performance in attaining the desired goal utilizing the classifications below:

LEGEND:



An opportunity to celebrate the significant progress made in moving toward achievement of the desired result.



An opportunity to continue to improve upon the progress made toward achievement; this reflects less progress than the opportunity to celebrate; however, positive movement has been made.



An opportunity to improve, reflecting the need for the community and Fairfax County Health and Human Services System to address the desired result more effectively.