



Fairfax County
ECONOMIC
MOBILITY PILOT

The Fairfax County Economic Mobility Pilot Update

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October 15, 2024



Agenda



Background & Overview of the Pilot



Participants At A Glance



Overview of the Research & Evaluation



Next Steps



Discussions/Questions

The Guaranteed Income Approach

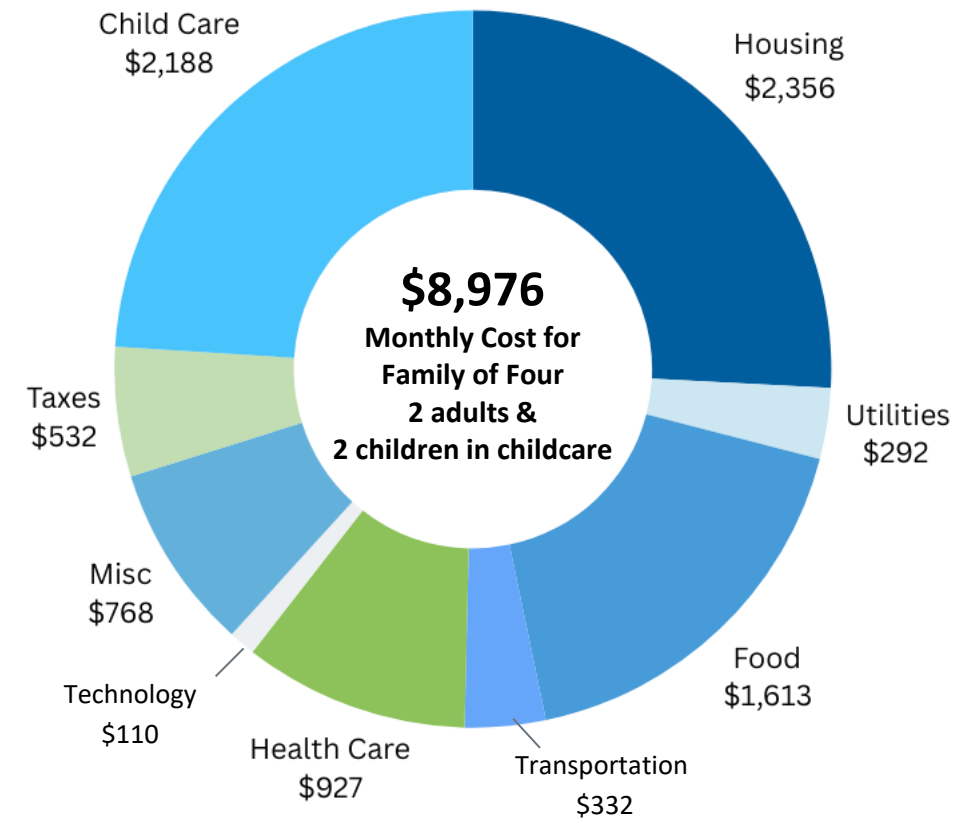
- Launched in October 2023, The Fairfax County Economic Mobility Pilot is led by Office of the County Executive – One Fairfax Central Team, Department of Family Services, and Neighborhood and Community Services.
- The pilot is jointly funded through the County’s American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) allocation and the Human Services Innovation Fund, which is overseen by the Human Services Council (HSC).
- The use of ARPA funds is tied to the County’s COVID response in meeting the social and economic vulnerabilities of residents.
- **Guaranteed income demonstration projects have shown that providing direct monthly unrestricted cash payments and wrap-around supports to targeted households¹:**
 - Prevents and reduces poverty by providing a stabilizing financial effect for participants
 - Reduces financial precarity and instability, which negatively impact one’s health and well-being, investment in their children’s future, and limits the ability to fully participate in the economy and benefit from the county’s success.
 - Creates a pathway for intergenerational mobility by enabling participants to achieve short-term and long-term goals
 - Reduces inequality and supplements the existing social safety net
 - **Challenges the status quo** of the traditional human services system and economic strategies by showing the need for better targeted strategies that **provide stability but also create a pathway to upward mobility and prosperity**
- Aligned with One Fairfax and the Countywide Strategic Plan, guaranteed income connects to the County’s broader vision and approach to **encourage and support economic opportunity and upward mobility** for all residents for the County to **achieve inclusive prosperity**.

[1. Economic Security Project. Guaranteed Income Primer.](#)

Focus Population: ALICE Lives Here

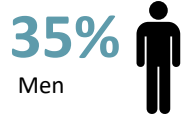
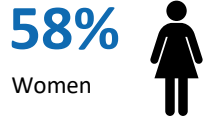
- According to the United Way, 23% of Fairfax County households are walking a financial tightrope.²
 - Earn more than the federal poverty level but not enough to cover the rising cost of living plus save for emergencies and a future for themselves and their families.
- Many residents are one unexpected bill or emergency from falling into financial hardship and poverty.
- These households are what the United Way defines as **ALICE**:
 - **Asset Limited:** no safety net in times of crisis.
 - **Income Constrained:** income falls short of cost of essentials.
 - **Employed:** working yet not earning enough.
- ALICE households are vital to the County's economy.

What it cost to afford JUST the basics in Fairfax County ²

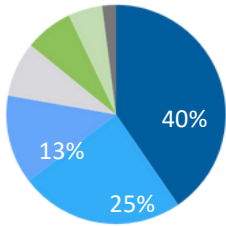


² [United for ALICE 2022 Virginia Report](https://www.unitedforalice.org/state-overview/virginia). Retrieved from <https://www.unitedforalice.org/state-overview/virginia>

Gender

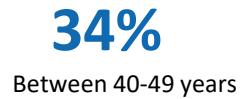


Race/Ethnicity



- Hispanic or Latino/a/e (40%)
- Black, Not Hispanic (25%)
- Asian/PI, Not Hispanic (13%)
- Middle Eastern/North African (5%)
- Unknown (8%)
- White, Not Hispanic (7%)
- Two or More Races (2%)

Age

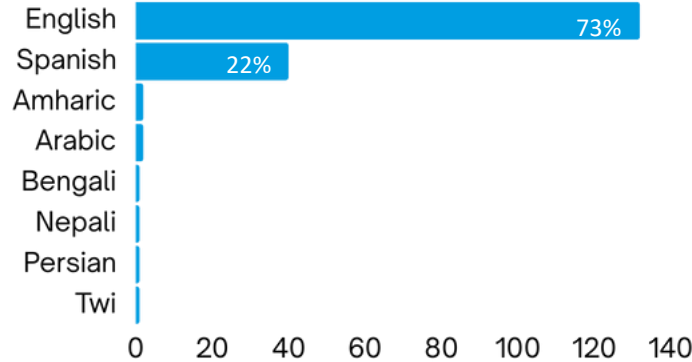


Disability Status

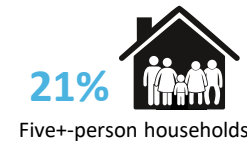
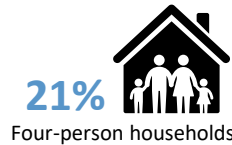


Living with a disability (vision, hearing, mobility, mental illness, COVID-19 related, social or behavioral, etc.)

Preferred Language



Household Size

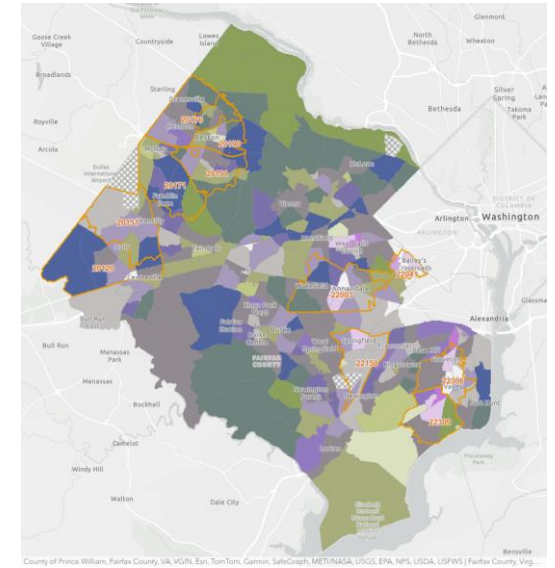


Education Attainment



Residence Within Fairfax County Existing or Future Opportunity Neighborhoods

Fairfax County Communities of Opportunity Map



Percent of Participants by Current & Future Opportunity Neighborhoods

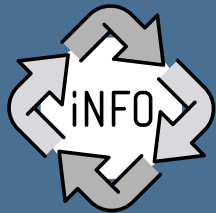
- Mount Vernon----- 33%
- Bailey's Crossroads----- 17%
- Annandale----- 12%
- Sully----- 11%
- Springfield----- 11%
- Herndon----- 9%
- Reston----- 7%

The Fairfax County Economic Mobility Pilot

- **Focused on ALICE households, the pilot is an evidence-based guaranteed income intervention** that prevents residents from falling into poverty by offering a pathway to climb out of economic hardship to stability and towards prosperity.
- **Community-led design** and **multi-partner** implementation between county agencies, community-based organizations, research and philanthropic/anchor institutions.
- Aligned with the principles of power and autonomy, the pilot provides 180 **randomly selected** participants with a monthly cash payment (\$750/month for 18 months) for use as they deem necessary as well as **access to wrap-around supports and resources**.
- Pilot eligibility included: Fairfax County residents; reside in a zip code of a current or future Opportunity Neighborhood; **at least one child under the age of 16 living in the household; Employed**; and earn between 150% and 250% of the Federal Poverty Level.
- NCS and community-based nonprofit partners led extensive applicant outreach and recruitment including direct mailings, several community and application assistance events with translation and interpretation support in 12 different languages.
- Over 2400 applications were received during the application period (September 23 to October 3, 2023).
- DFS oversaw the random selection process and led the verification review of all selected participants.
- Applicants not selected for the pilot were provided information on available community and county-led resources to support their immediate needs and economic mobility.



Research & Evaluation Overview



Informs county-led upward mobility and community wealth building strategies as well as program implementation

- Led by researchers from George Mason University (GMU) Center for Social Science Research
- Guided by a Community Research Advisory Council
- Strengths-based and mixed methods approach:
 - Surveys of pilot participants
 - Interviews and community conversations with the pilot households
 - Focus groups with county and non-profit partner staff
 - Ongoing observations of pilot implementation team meetings
 - Integrate spatial and demographic data from the County's Vulnerability Index and Community of Opportunities Index



Assess the impact on:

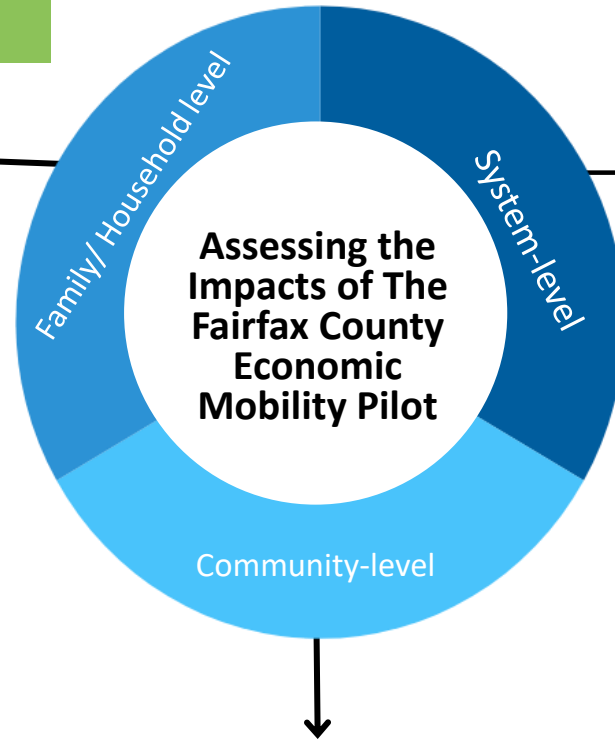
- Family Mobility Trajectory
- Growth in Social Capital/Role of Community
- Changes in Policy Approaches

RESEARCH QUESTIONS & KEY INDICATORS

Core Research Question #1.
 What **impact** does a direct monthly cash payment during the pilot have on a **family's mobility trajectory**?

Family Mobility Trajectory

- Economic security
- Day-to-day vulnerability
- Future planning
- Credentialing investment
- Entrepreneurial investment
- Employment investment
- Intergenerational support
- Financial gains / outcomes



Core Research Question #3.

- How does an **economic mobility program fit in the spectrum of other county-based program supports**?
- What barriers and constraints can be identified and what conditions enable implementation?
- What **system-level changes** in policy approaches emerge from a strengths-based program pilot to improve social and economic mobility that embraces a trust and invest philosophy?

Core Research Question #2
 What **impact** does the program have on participating households' levels of social capital, generalized social trust, resource and knowledge sharing, and involvement in community?

Growth in Social Capital/Role of Community

- Community involvement
- Social networks
- Community trust
- Knowledge sharing

Next Steps

- Spring 2025 update to the Health & Human Services Committee:
 - Preliminary research & evaluation findings
 - Key considerations for possibly sustaining this effort beyond the pilot phase
 - Public-private partnership strategy with local philanthropic and business community
- Fall 2025/Spring 2026 final report on the research & evaluation findings, which will help inform programmatic and policy approaches and contribute to the body of evidence on the impact of guaranteed income



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Thank You & Questions

Stories of Impact

These testimonials from participants highlight the economic challenges facing participants and the impact of the pilot.

“

I am the head of a household of six, that includes me, my sister, and four children aged 15 and under. Unexpected expenses have strained my budget significantly. In the past several years, I have not been able to find a higher-paying job that utilizes my bachelor's and master's degrees. I and my family are struggling with debt and difficulty paying bills. Being selected to participate in the Economic Mobility Pilot has helped. With encouragement from the financial empowerment coach through the pilot, I am working with a workforce development specialist on my resume. I am eager to get promoted or find a better-paying job.

“

Thanks to the program, I am gradually overcoming the payment of my debts, and it has also helped me make my family more comfortable. I have also been able to attend training on the financial system and workforce development coaching. Both training courses have been very important in learning more about my opportunities to get ahead and provide greater well-being for my family. I take this opportunity to thank the entire FCEMP team for the support they have given me since the participation process began.