



NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2022

ECONOMIC FACTORS

Countywide Data Analytics
Department of Management and Budget

June 2022

Needs Assessment 2022 – Table of Contents

- Introduction 2
- Employment and Labor Force 3
 - Impact on Virginia 3
 - Impact on Fairfax County 5
 - Disparities in Fairfax County Workers 6
 - Northern Virginia Industries 10
- Household Spending 12
 - Inflation Affecting Residents 13
 - Cost of College Education 15
 - Lower Income Households Are Spending More 16
- Child Care 18
- Food Insecurity 20
- Housing 22
 - Homeownership Disparities and Challenges 24
 - Eviction Prevention 26
- English Proficiency 28
- Additional Resources 31

Introduction

Economic factors affecting the lives of Fairfax County residents are discussed in this report. The complete Needs Assessment product includes the additional topics of Health and Transportation; however, given the rapidly changing economic conditions, Fairfax County reached the decision to publish the economic section first as its contents could inform an earlier strategic response to emerging community needs.

This Fairfax County information highlights comparisons with the Commonwealth of Virginia or the nation, where possible. A special focus is placed on summarizing disparities by race, ethnicity, sex or location.

All race categories, as reported by the various data sources, were incorporated in the analysis. Due to the small number of Fairfax County residents who self-identify as *American Indian or Alaska Native* and *Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander*, these two groups are not included in most graphs. The small sample size and relative percentages could lead to inaccurate conclusions.

Data from various timeframes are referenced throughout the narrative. Additional details for some topics covered in this report are available in the [Annex](#) (PDF format).

For streamlining and visual purposes, all sources of data are excluded in the story map but are linked in this PDF version.



Strategy: Example

Information included under this graphic describes an **existing** strategy, **proposed** strategy or **lack of** strategy to address the barriers identified.

Employment and Labor Force

Key findings are highlighted below:

- a) At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, employment in the U.S. was greatly impacted for workers in food preparation, personal services and some health care occupations.¹

- b) Across the U.S., female workers with a high school diploma or lower educational level, left the labor force from 2019 to 2021 in disproportionately greater rates than male workers with the same education. A less severe disparity was seen in female and male workers with a high school diploma – refer to table.²

Change in U.S. Labor Force From 2019 to 2021		
Sex of Worker	Less Than High School	High School Diploma
Male	-4.9%	-1.8%
Female	-12.8%	-6.0%

- c) Workers with levels of education higher than high school did not have major differences in rates of change in employment between women and men.³

- d) Across the nation, a record number of workers left their employment during 2021.⁴ Reasons for leaving included:

- better paying opportunities,
- personal business start-ups,⁵
- early retirement or
- health insecurity or needs related to child care.⁶

In December 2021, 4.4 million U.S. workers quit their jobs. (JOLTS)

Between 2019 and 2020, new business formations increased by 9.8% in Fairfax County and 21.4% in Virginia. (U.S. Census Bureau, [Business Formation Statistics](#))

Impact on Virginia

In Virginia, total employment separations (i.e., voluntary quits, layoffs and discharges) increased 6.9% in 2020 compared to the prior year. By comparison, separations at the national level in the same period were more pronounced with a 19.1% increase.

A high volume of separations continued through the end of 2021 but not at the record levels seen in 2020.⁷ Averaging the number of separations in both years (2020 and 2021), there were 20.0% more separations in 2020-2021 than in the period between 2011 and 2019.

Approximately 1.92 million Virginians stopped working in 2020 compared to an average of 1.55 million in years prior (2011-2019).

In 2021, there were 1.8 million separations in Virginia. (JOLTS)

¹ Pew Research Center. (2022, January 14). [Some gender disparities widened in the U.S. workforce during the pandemic.](#)

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ The Washington Post. (2022, January 4). [A record 4.5 million workers quit or changed jobs in November.](#)

⁵ Inc.com. (2022, May 20). [New Data Finally Shows Why People Are Quitting Their Jobs. It's Definitely Not Because They're Lazy.](#)

⁶ CNN Business. (2022, January 7). [How millions of jobless Americans can afford to ditch work.](#)

⁷ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS). www.bls.gov/jlt/data.htm.

The chart below displays three years of separations from the workforce experienced by Virginia workers. Around the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, a combined 630,000 Virginians stopped working in the months of March and April 2020, representing the highest number of separations during the year.⁸

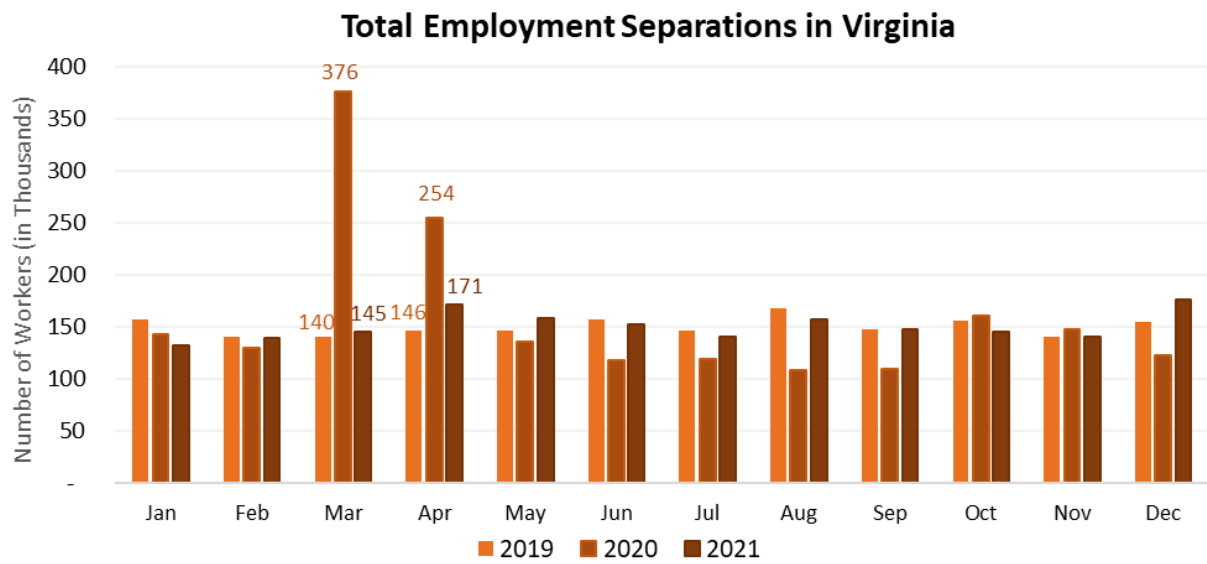
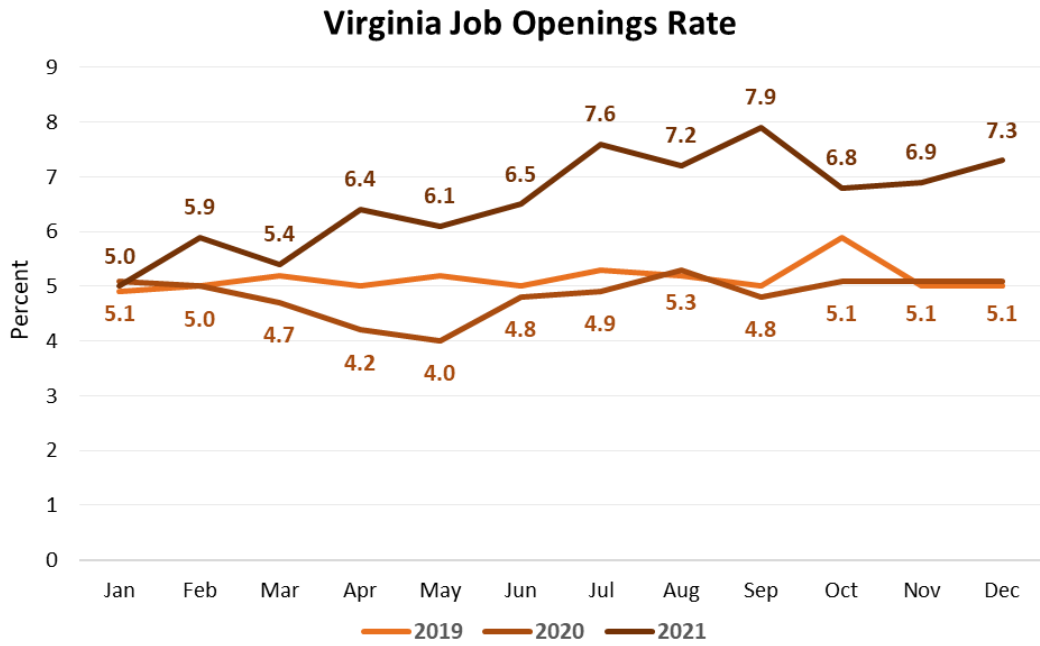


Chart above is interactive. See [story map](#) or click on [this link](#).

News headlines of worker shortages are supported by the chart below showing the rate of unfilled jobs (i.e., Job Openings Rate) in Virginia.⁹ A much higher rate of unfilled jobs was seen in 2021 than in earlier years.



⁸ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS). www.bls.gov/jlt/data.htm.

⁹ Ibid.

Impact on Fairfax County

From 2019 to 2020, more than 30,500 (4.9%) workers lost their jobs in Fairfax County. Surrounding jurisdictions in the Washington Metro area saw similar proportions of decreased employment¹⁰ (refer to the *Regional Employment Comparison* section in the [Annex](#)). In April 2022, the Small Business Pulse Survey revealed that 42% of all small businesses in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria region indicated the need to *identify and hire new employees over the next six months*. This percentage has remained stable since May 2021.¹¹



Strategy: Job Seeker Resources

Multiple resources are being established in Fairfax County to facilitate opportunities for career advancement and new employment. Resources include:

- New [Virginia Career Works](#) Referral Portal to connect job seekers to career, education and support resources
- Expansion of virtual tools for [job seekers](#), especially persons who are laid off or very low-income
- New Talent Attraction Program to market Northern Virginia as a premier destination for top talent: www.workinnorthernvirginia.com

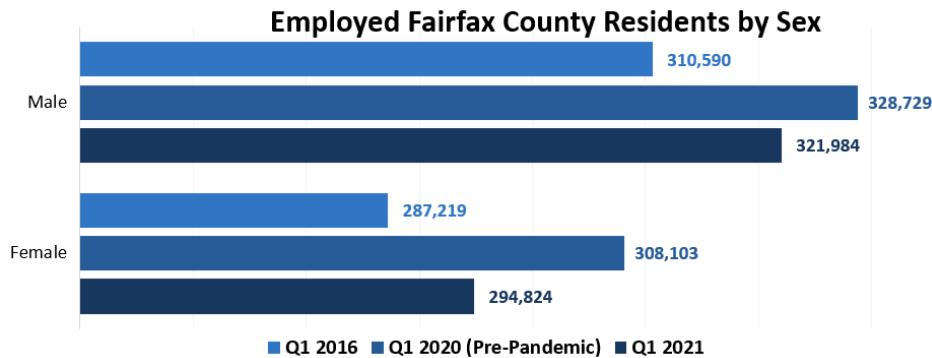
¹⁰ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages. [QCEW Data Views](#).

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau. Small Business Pulse Survey. <https://portal.census.gov/pulse/data>. Retrieved on 2022, April 28.

Disparities in Fairfax County Workers

Employment figures and average monthly wages for Fairfax County residents highlight disparities between male and female workers as well as among races.¹² While these disparities have existed historically, the section that follows focuses on the changes from pre-pandemic conditions to a later period.

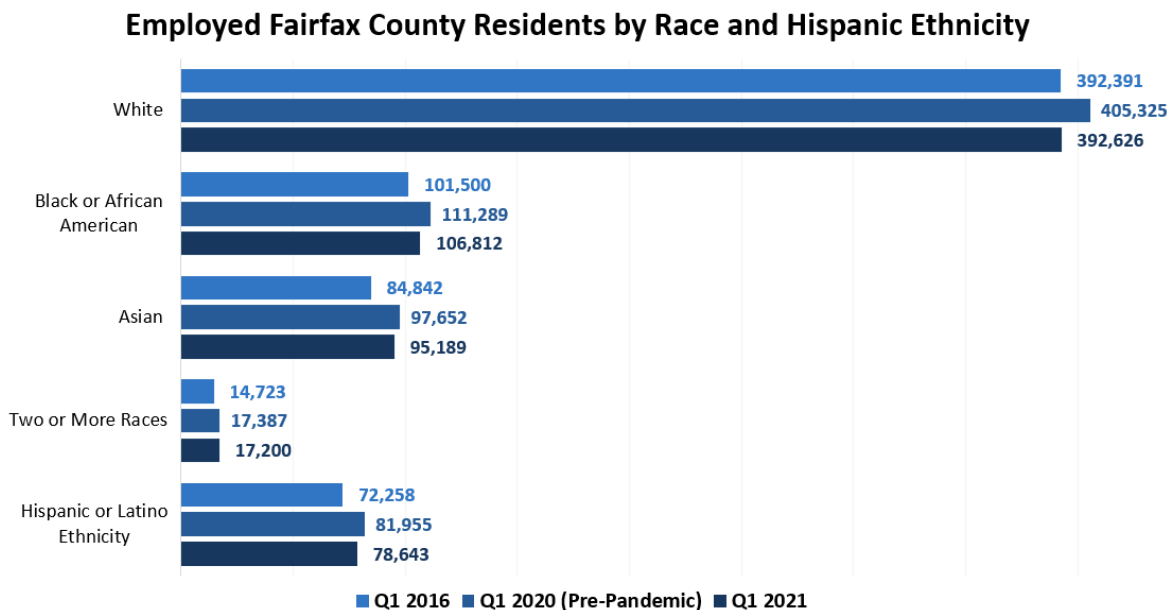
The two charts below show the number of employed residents in three time periods: five years ago (Quarter 1 in 2016), the quarter when the COVID-19 pandemic began (Quarter 1 in 2020) and one year later (Quarter 1 in 2021).



Male and Female Workers

In a **5-year period**, the number of male workers in Fairfax County increased by 3.7% compared to a 2.6% increase in female workers. These increases were larger than the rate by which the male and female county population increased (2.1% and 1.6%, respectively) in the same period.

Overall for both males and females, there were 3.1% or 20,024 fewer workers in Fairfax County **one year after** the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this same period, there were 4.3% fewer female workers and 2.1% fewer male workers.



¹² U.S. Census Bureau. [QWI Explorer](#).

Race and Ethnicity of Workers

In a **5-year period**, the number of **Asian** workers in Fairfax County increased the most, 10,347 persons. This equates to a 12.2% increase, which is greater than the 9.9% increase in the number of Asian residents in the county in the same period.

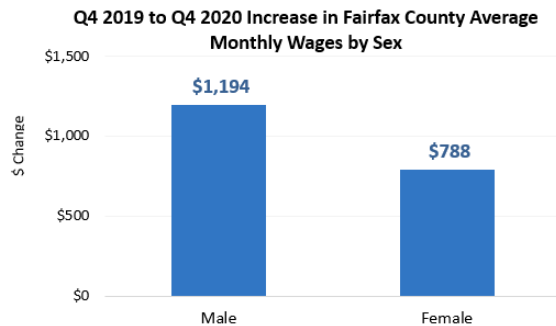
In one year, following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of **White** workers decreased the most, 12,699 persons or 3.1%. In terms of percentage, the largest decrease was in **Black and Hispanic/ Latino** workers at 4.0% representing 4,477 Black and 3,312 Hispanic workers.

For comparison, the table below shows the five-year percent change in Fairfax County resident demographics:

Male	2.1%
Female	1.6%
White	-4.5%
Black or African American	6.0%
Asian	9.9%
Two or More Races	34.5%
Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity	2.6%

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 and 2020 ACS [DP05](#))

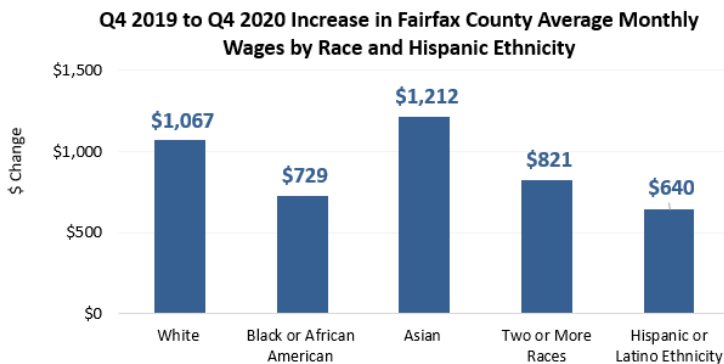
Changes in average monthly wages¹³ from the pre-pandemic quarter (Q4 2019) to one year later varied by demographics as shown in the following two charts.



Male and Female Workers

Comparing pre-pandemic monthly wages to **one year later**, the **increase in average wages** of male workers was nearly 52% greater than the increase for female workers (\$1,194 vs. \$788, respectively).

In this same period, the increase in average monthly wages was 13.3% for male and female workers combined.



Race and Ethnicity of Workers

In one year, following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, average monthly wages of **Asian** workers increased the most in terms of both percentage (16.5%) and dollars (\$1,212).

In the same period, wage increases hovered around 13% for workers of other races, both male and female workers, as well as for workers of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.

Numerous factors contribute to the wage differences between male and female workers. These factors include but are not limited to level of education, presence of children, numbers of hours worked and age.¹⁴ This report does not detail the underlying root causes of inequities. Information about Fairfax County's efforts to address

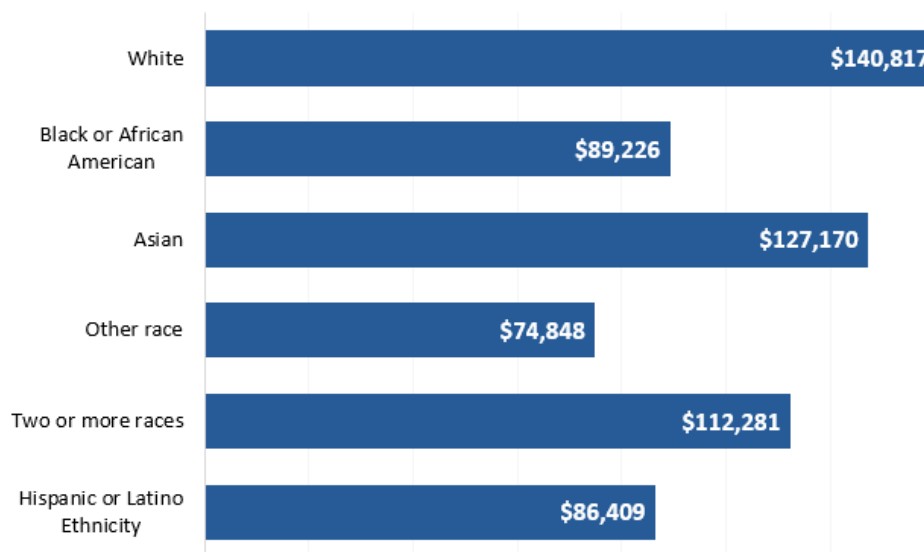
¹³ U.S. Census Bureau. [QWI Explorer](#).

¹⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. (2022, March 1). [What Is The Gender Wage Gap in Your State?](#)

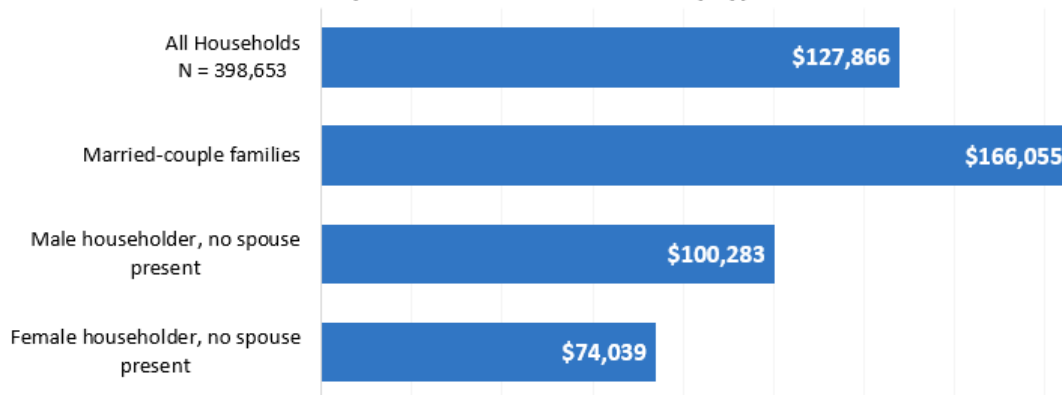
these issues can be found through [One Fairfax](#) and recommendations from the [Chairman's Task Force on Equity and Opportunity](#).

Based on 2020 estimates,¹⁵ White households in Fairfax County had the highest annual median income. Income estimates for householders of other races, of Hispanic/ Latino ethnicity as well as male and female heads of household are included in the two charts below.

Fairfax County Median Household Income by Race and Hispanic Ethnicity



Fairfax County Median Household Income by Type of Household



¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. (2016-2020). American Community Survey. Table S1903. [Census - Table Results](#).

For additional comparison, there were seven census tracts with median household income¹⁶ below \$55,500¹⁷ in 2020. Click on the links to view the location and other information about each census tract.

Fairfax County Census Tracts with Household Income Below \$55,500	
4619.02 – \$54,625	4154.01 – \$49,333
4516.01 – \$51,578	4523.01 – \$43,357
4215 – \$51,528	4514 – \$42,907
4216 – \$50,787	

Strategy: Employment Equity

Initiatives to remove digital barriers to employment include providing Chromebooks and low to no cost internet options to eligible job seekers and expanded broadband access at select county facilities.

Refer to a June 2022 [Digital Access Update](#) for supplementary information and recommendations.

A resource in Fairfax County to facilitate opportunities for career advancement and new employment is a Community Outreach Professionals Committee launched to coordinate and streamline countywide outreach and engagement efforts, with an emphasis on equity.

Strategy: Workforce Competencies

The [Countywide Strategic Plan](#) refers to a roadmap to enable Fairfax County’s most economically disadvantaged residents to build fundamental workforce competencies and link participants to workforce opportunities.

Read about the [Workforce Innovation Skills Hub](#) (WISH).

This link also provides information about “The One” – the Richmond Highway (Rt. 1) bus rapid transit system. Removing barriers such as lack of transportation options, affordable housing and child care that limit participation in the workforce and employment-related programs is an area of focus in the Countywide Strategic Plan.

¹⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. (2016-2020). American Community Survey. Table S1903. [Census - Table Results](#).

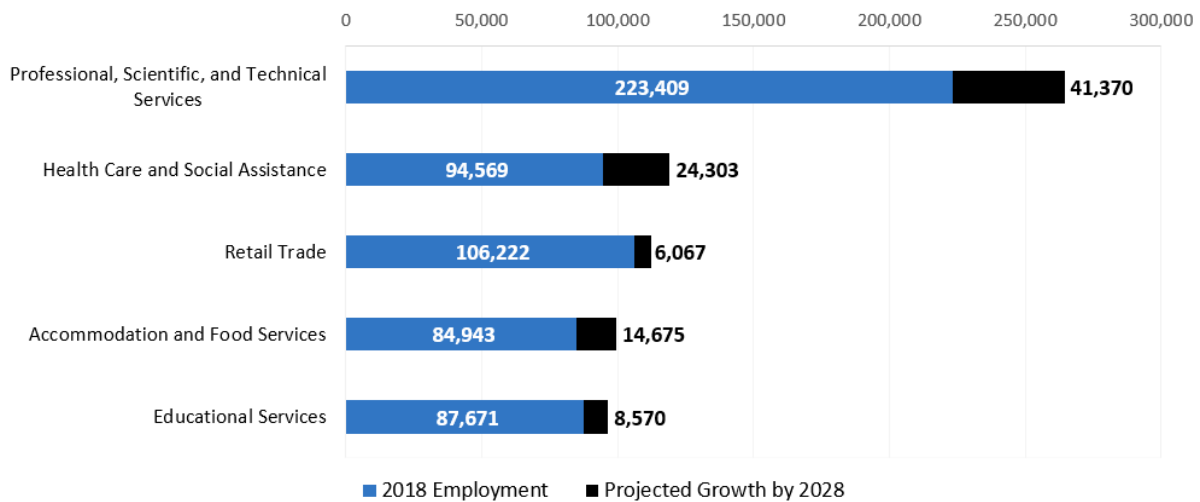
¹⁷ \$55,500 is the maximum annual income for 200% of the Federal Poverty Level for a family of four.

Northern Virginia Industries

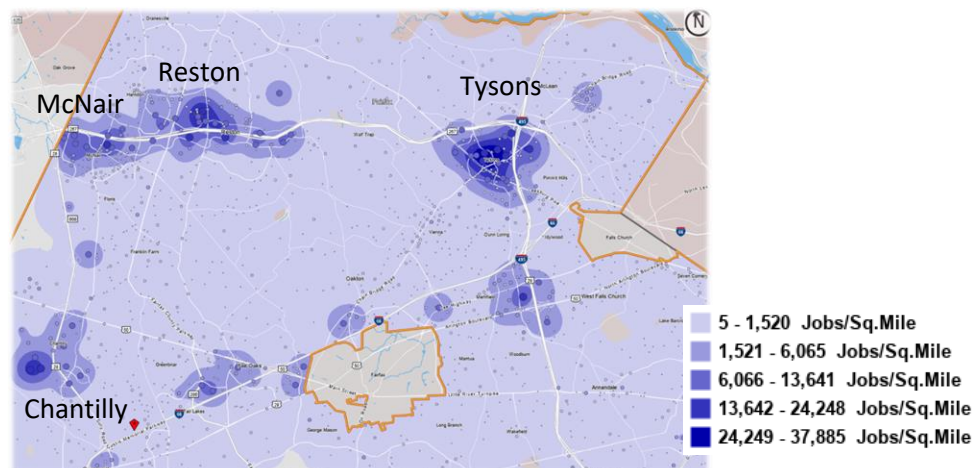
The following chart displays the top five industries with the greatest projected increase in number of jobs (i.e., number of people employed) for Northern Virginia by 2028.¹⁸ These five industries account for a projected growth of nearly 95,000 jobs (or 16%) from 2018. Refer to the *Occupation Projections* section in the [Annex](#) for the top five occupations with the greatest projected growth.

This information is helpful for personal or community planning to identify training resources and infrastructure that aligns with trends. Residents may seek college education or training/ credentialing programs that will contribute toward employment opportunities in growing sectors in Fairfax County and surrounding areas.

Northern Virginia Industries with Top Five Highest Projected Employment in 2028



Based on 2019 figures, the OnTheMap¹⁹ tool reveals that most Fairfax County jobs in Professional, Scientific and Technical Services are in Tysons, Reston, McNair and Chantilly.



¹⁸ Virginia Employment Commission. *Long-term Workforce Area Industry 2018-2028 Projections*. Northern Virginia Workforce Area (LWIA XI). [Industry Projections \(virginiaworks.com\)](https://www.virginiaworks.com/industry-projections).

¹⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. [OnTheMap](#). Read about this tool in the *Additional Resources* section.



Strategy: Fairfax Thrive

The county program *Fairfax Thrive* will provide one-on-one technical assistance to negatively impacted small businesses (50 employees or less per location).

The objectives of the technical assistance are the following:

- Build capacity and meet individual business goals
- Address economic and consumer shifts
 - Support business planning

Additional program details and timeline are available in this [Fairfax Thrive Presentation](#).

Household Spending

Fairfax County residents with moderate to low income may have little to no money remaining after covering essential expenses, such as food and housing. This limits a household's ability to build savings and restricts economic competitiveness.²⁰

The table points to the potential number of Fairfax County families who could qualify for assistance in the form of food or housing. A maximum annual income of \$55,500, or 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for a family of four,²¹ is a common eligibility requirement for benefit programs. In 2020, slightly more than one in ten families (or 30,425) in Fairfax County had income below \$55,500.²²

Families in Poverty	100% FPL	150% FPL	200% FPL	300% FPL
Fairfax County (#)	11,553	20,047	30,425	50,585
Fairfax County (%)	4.1%	7.1%	10.8%	18.0%
Virginia	6.8%	12.0%	18.4%	31.6%
U.S.	9.1%	16.0%	23.5%	38.6%
2022 Income Guidelines (Family of 4 persons)	\$ 27,750	\$ 41,625	\$ 55,500	\$ 83,250

Examples of assistance provided in Fairfax County are the following:

- 14,584 households (3.7% of all county households) received SNAP²³ (food stamps) benefits in 2020
- 7,946 households (2% of all households) received federal housing assistance²⁴ in 2020

Consistent with prior years, 2020 estimates show children (under age 18) in 2020 had a higher poverty rate compared to the county's general population, 7.7% (20,666 children) and 5.9% (67,085 persons), respectively.²⁵

For additional reference, the [Annex](#) provides poverty data for children under 5 years of age, which are not currently reported in standard ACS tables. The Annex also links to poverty data for other populations.

²⁰ Fairfax County, Virginia. [Fairfax County Economic Recovery Framework](#).

²¹ Fairfax County, Virginia. [Income Guidelines - Human Services Resource Guide](#).

²² U.S. Census Bureau. (2016-2020). American Community Survey. Table S1702. [Census - Table Results](#).

²³ U.S. Census Bureau. (2016-2020). American Community Survey. Table S2201. [Census - Table Results](#).

²⁴ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. *A Picture of Subsidized Households*. Retrieved from [PolicyMap](#).

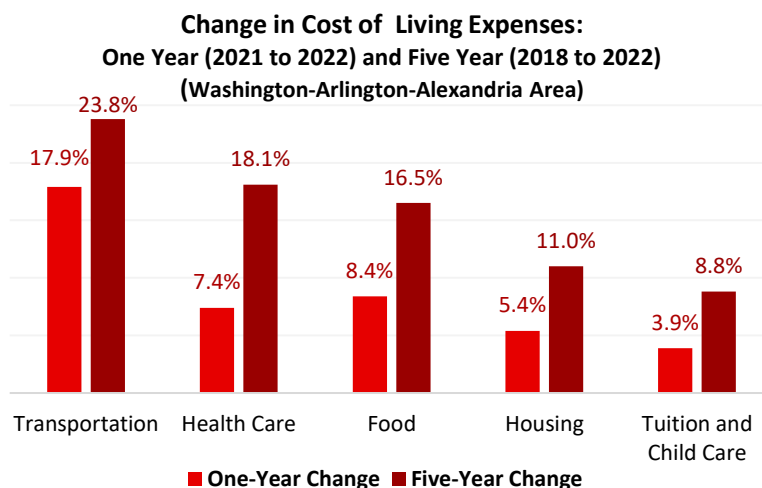
²⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. (2016-2020). American Community Survey. Table S1701. [Census - Table Results](#).

Inflation Affecting Residents

In the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria area,²⁶ inflation added to the economic burden of residents.

From May 2021 to May 2022, inflation raised consumer prices in the area by 7.5%. This increase represents the largest over-the-year increase in 40 years. The chart shows the 1-year and 5-year change in cost of basic need items.²⁷

Transportation costs had both the largest one-year (15.9%) and five-year increases (23.8%).²⁸ This category includes gasoline.



Longer-term, health care costs have increased the most over ten years, which may present challenges for residents who do not have health insurance coverage. This and other increases to the cost of basic needs are occurring at a time when many pandemic-era waivers that offered support to families, are ending. Among these supports are the following:²⁹

- Medicaid: Federal policy changes end the waiver which protected residents from benefit termination.
- SNAP: Ending waivers that allowed residents to receive higher benefits will reduce the amount of money low-income households receive for food.
- Child Care Assistance and Referral (CCAR): Ending waivers that paused co-payment fees, which families will have to resume paying.

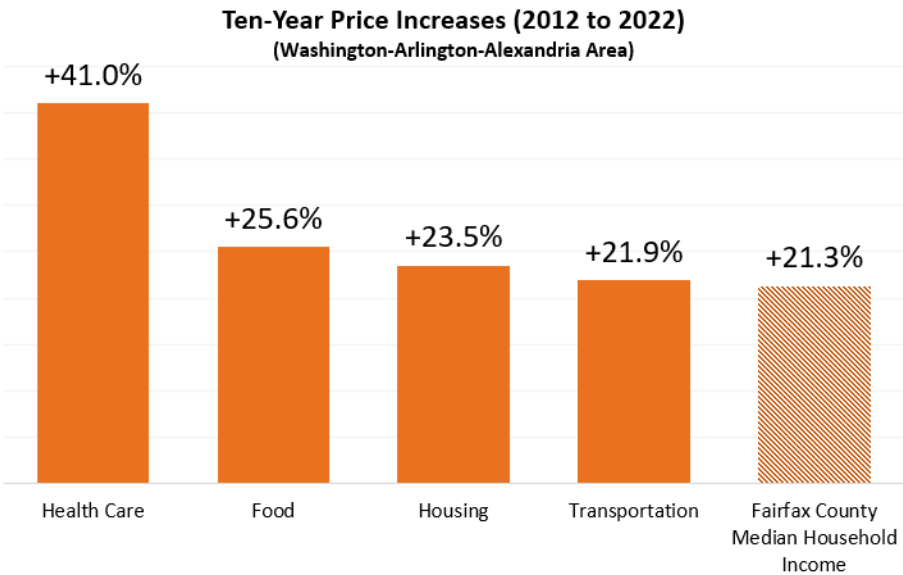
²⁶ The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' *Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MA-WV, Core Based Statistical Area* includes the District of Columbia; the counties of Calvert, Charles, Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George's in Maryland; the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, and Manassas Park and the counties of Arlington, Clarke, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, Rappahannock, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Warren in Virginia; and Jefferson County, West Virginia.

²⁷ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers. Retrieved in 2022, June. [Consumer Price Index, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria area – May 2022](#).

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Fairfax County Department of Family Services.

The chart below depicts the 10-year inflation for basic categories of household expenditures based on the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) as of May 2022.³⁰ For comparison, the chart includes the increase in median income in Fairfax County from 2010 to 2020,³¹ which fell behind the increase in the four household expenditures.



³⁰ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers. Retrieved in 2022, June. [Consumer Price Index, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria area – May 2022](#).

³¹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2016-2020). American Community Survey. Table S1903. [Census - Table Results](#).

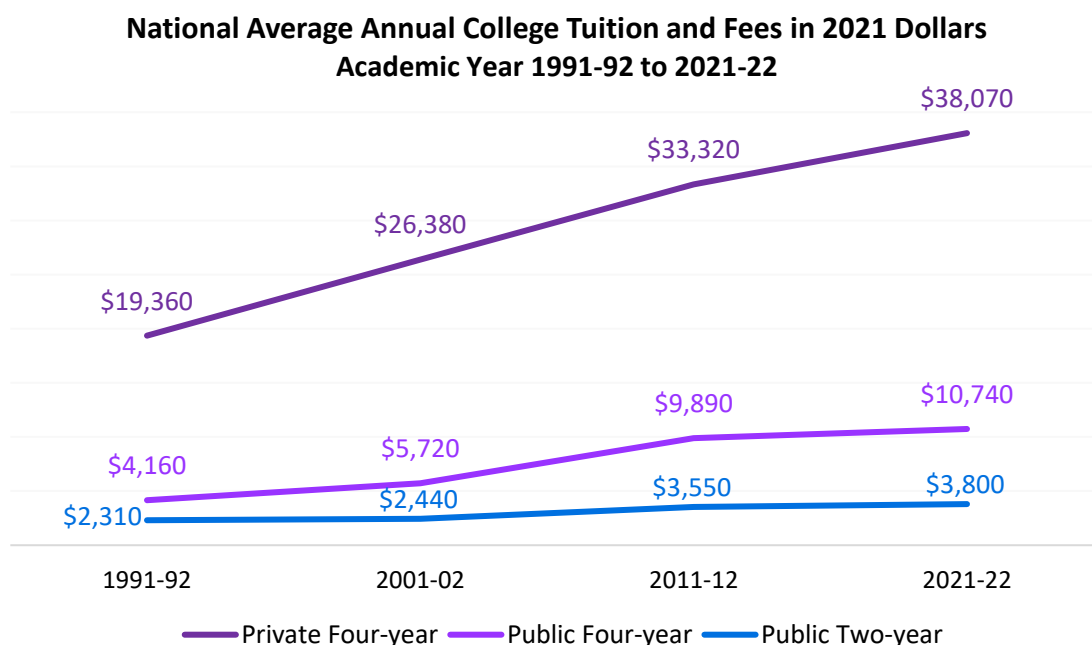
Cost of College Education

The Washington-Arlington-Alexandria area saw overall inflation of 7.5% from May 2021 to May 2022. Expenditures in tuition, related school fees and child care increased 3.9% in the same period.³²

Education costing \$100 in 1977 costs \$1,505 in 2022.

Based on May 2022 Washington-Arlington-Alexandria area CPI-U for tuition, other school fees and child care.

Across the U.S., the annual cost of a four-year in-state public college in 2021-22 was more than two and a half times higher (158.2%) than in 1991-92, after adjusting for inflation. Tuition and fees for a four-year private college almost doubled (96.6%) and a two-year degree increased 64.5% over the same period. In comparison, U.S. median family incomes only increased by 23% over the same 30-year period.³³



For many Virginia residents, including some in Fairfax County, a college degree is increasingly unattainable. Attending college in Virginia costs more compared to the national averages above, however.

- In 2021 dollars, a two-year in-state college costs \$5,216 annually for tuition and fees for the 2021-2022 school year.³⁴
- The figure for the same school year is \$14,121 for a public four-year in-state institution.³⁵
- Refer to the [Annex](#) for costs to attend Virginia institutions.

³² The *Education and Communication* category includes tuition, other school fees, and child care. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Retrieved in 2022, June. [Consumer Price Index, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria area – May 2022](#).

³³ College Board. (2021, October). [Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid 2021](#).

³⁴ College Board. [Trends College Pricing](#). *Trends in College Pricing 2021: Data In Excel*. Retrieved in 2022, March.

³⁵ Ibid.

Lower Income Households Are Spending More

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers³⁶ indicates that U.S. households at various incomes spend differently on basic needs. The chart below shows the change in annual expenditures³⁷ from 2016 to 2020, by income quintile³⁸ and for all U.S. urban consumers.

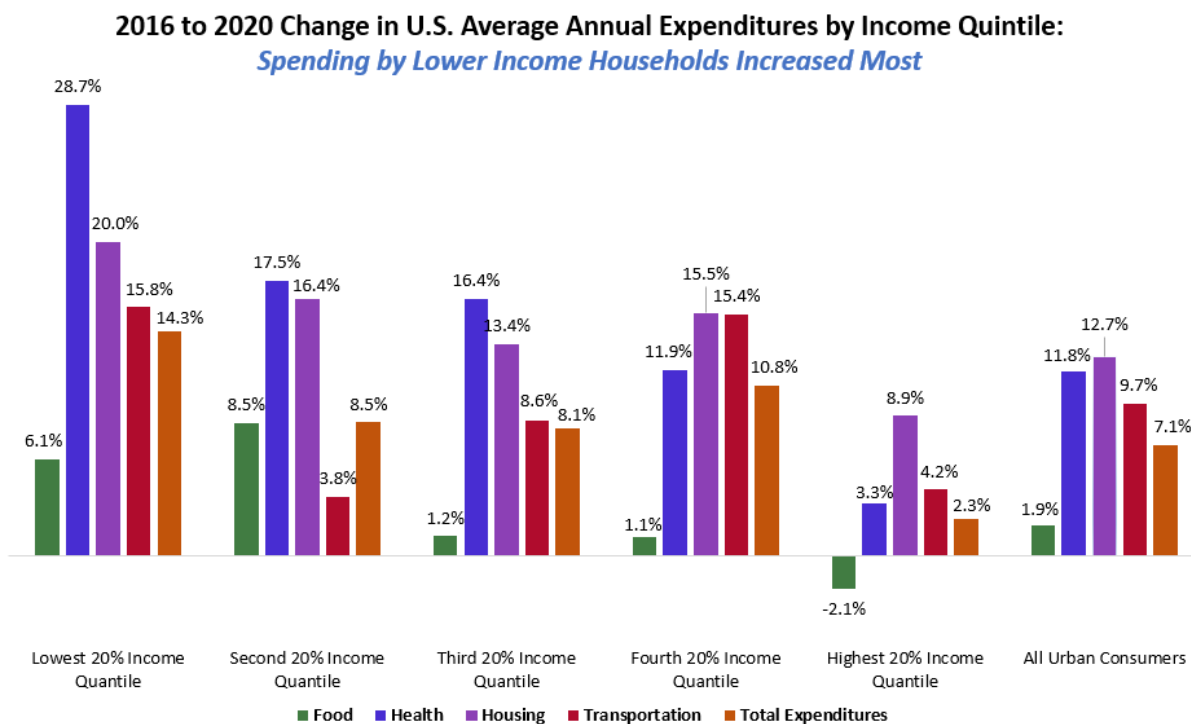


Chart above is interactive. See [story map](#) or click on [this link](#).

- For U.S. households with the lowest income, spending in health had the greatest increase (28.7%). In comparison, health spending increased by 11.8% in this same 5-year period for all urban consumers.
- For households in the lowest income quintile, expenditures in housing increased 20.0% from five years earlier.
- Change in total expenditures was highest in the lowest income quintile with an increase of 14.3% vs. 7.1% for all urban consumers.
- Among all income quintiles, the increase in food spending was greatest (8.5%) in the second lowest income quintile.
- These statistics suggest increased difficulties in lower income households to meet basic expenses nationally.

Nationally, the advance Child Tax Credit (CTC) payments issued monthly from July through December 2021,³⁹ helped households alleviate some level of financial hardship. One example, observed in a summer 2021 Household Pulse Survey data, was a drop in U.S. households experiencing food insufficiency⁴⁰ (i.e., sometimes or often not having enough to eat) or food insecurity (see *Food Insecurity* section). The survey also revealed

³⁶ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. [Consumer Price Index](#).

³⁷ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. CE LABSTAT Database. [Consumer Expenditures Surveys](#).

³⁸ Investopedia. [Quintiles Definition](#). University of Manitoba. (2022, January 20). [Concept: Income Quintiles - Child Health Income Quintiles](#).

³⁹ Internal Revenue Service. (2021, July 15). [IRS: Monthly Child Tax Credit payments begin](#).

⁴⁰ U.S. Census Bureau. (2021, August 11). [Economic Hardship Declined in Households With Children as Child Tax Credit Payments Arrived](#).

CTC payments were used by households to cover expenses of child care, housing and utilities, in addition to food. More recently, early 2022 Household Pulse Survey data indicated that 35% of U.S. households with children faced challenges covering expenses once the CTC payments ceased, compared to 30% during the months in 2021 when payments were distributed.⁴¹

The ending of CTC payments along with several public assistance programs ending pandemic-era benefits, will result in **increased out-of-pocket expenses** for food, child care and medical coverage for many low-income Fairfax families.
(Fairfax County Department of Family Services)



Proposed Strategy: Empowerment and support for residents facing vulnerability

Mitigating challenges experienced by vulnerable residents to access and use services is an area of focus in the [Countywide Strategic Plan](#). Multiple strategies include:

- Understanding root causes of vulnerabilities
- Co-location of county departments and community-based organizations
- Increasing integration and effectiveness of services by coordinating county efforts with state, regional, and community partners; for example, a guaranteed income project called the *Economic Mobility Pilot Program* launches in Fall 2022

⁴¹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2022, February 28). [Harder to Pay the Bills Now That Child Tax Credit Payments Have Ended](#).

Child Care

Child care often represents a significant expense for a family. Depending on the type of provider and the age of the child, annual costs of child care in Fairfax County for a preschool age child at a child care center can range from \$16,120 to \$22,100 per year (\$19,760 to \$25,220 per year for an infant).⁴²

Child care costs up to \$25,220.

About 7,900 Fairfax County families with children have annual income below \$25,000. (U.S. Census Bureau, ACS [B19131](#))

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the operations of child care providers. The table below shows the net loss of regulated providers in the county (including School Age Child Care Program), in addition to the location of provider closures:

Type of Provider	# of Providers in March 2020	# of Providers November 2021	Net Percent Change in # of Providers	Location of Provider Closures
Early Learning and Development Centers	558	548	-1.8%	Majority in McLean and Vienna areas
Family Child Care Homes	1,502	1,317	-12.3%	Majority in Alexandria area
Total in Fairfax County	2,060	1,865	-9.5%	

From March 2020 through November 2021, child care slots decreased by approximately 195 slots in Fairfax County.⁴³ The decrease in child care slots had an impact on working parents who relied on these resources to support their regular working patterns.

An article by the non-profit USAFacts estimated that women aged 25 to 44 with kids are “six times more likely than men to be out of work because of child care.”⁴⁴ Following are national statistics from the same article showing the disparities between fathers and mothers.

U.S. Parents with School-Age Children	April 2020	February 2021	Parent Not Working Due to Loss of Child Care
Working fathers	75.8%	84.5%	3.7 million
Working mothers	54.6%	64.6%	10 million

⁴² Rates reflect various cost ranges and care levels according to needs from infancy to school age. Fairfax County, Virginia. Retrieved in 2022, February. [Office for Children - Child Care Assistance and Referral](#).

⁴³ Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services. Office for Children.

⁴⁴ USAFacts. (2021, May 4). [How has COVID-19 affected mothers in the workforce? 15% of all young women with kids are not working because of childcare, compared to 2% of men.](#)

The costs of child care translate to disparities in the ability of households at various income levels to manage child care and employment. As of March 2021, 15% of mothers with annual income between \$25,000 and less than \$100,000 were not able to work due to child care responsibilities. This proportion is 18% for households making less than \$25,000 and 8% for households making more than \$100,000.⁴⁵



Strategy Needed: Child Care

The Fairfax [Countywide Strategic Plan](#) includes goals to provide quality child care as a key employment support. Targeted efforts will have to be explored beyond the recent expanded eligibility in the [Child Care Assistance and Referral](#) program from 275% of the Federal Poverty Level to 350%.

⁴⁵ USAFacts. (2021, May 4). [How has COVID-19 affected mothers in the workforce? 15% of all young women with kids are not working because of childcare, compared to 2% of men.](#)

Food Insecurity

The *Household Spending* section of this report indicates that food costs increased 8.4% regionally, based on the inflation index change from May 2021 to May 2022, and increased 25.6% over ten years. Such increases further squeeze household budgets and may create or worsen food insecurity. To measure food insecurity in a community, an existing metric is the Food Insecurity Index. The 2021 index is available at [Live Healthy Fairfax: 2021 Food Insecurity Index](#) and provides data at the county, ZIP Code and census tract levels.

The index value is calculated using social and economic factors ranging from household expenditures to perceived health status that may impact a household's ability to access and purchase food. Based on these factors, an index value (from 0 - 100) is generated for each ZIP Code, census tract and county in the nation. Communities with the highest values are estimated to have the highest food insecurity, which is correlated with household and community measures of financial stress, such as Medicaid enrollment, SNAP enrollment and mental health burden.

There are 18 (or 7%) census tracts with a Food Insecurity Index value above 50.⁴⁶ The census tracts with the top five highest index values are [4516.01](#), [4216](#), [4525.02](#), [4619.02](#) and [4215](#) (click on each link to view location and other information). These census tracts and the remaining 13 with the index value above 50 receive a rank of 5 for mapping purposes and their location is identified by the darkest shade of green (refer to map legend below).

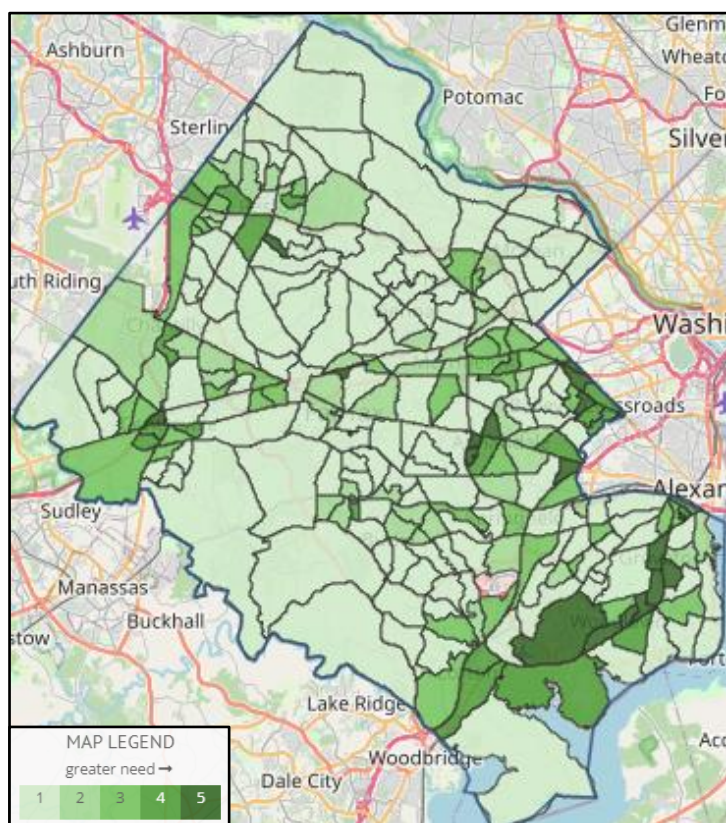


Table below lists the proportion of Fairfax County census tracts corresponding to each ranking per the map legend (5 = greatest need).

Rank	# of Census Tracts	% of Census Tracts
5	18	7%
4	21	8%
3	41	16%
2	45	17%
1	138	52%

For information about census tracts or ZIP Codes, readers may access the [Census Reporter](#) tool (type census tract or ZIP Code of interest in search box next to Profile header).

⁴⁶ Live Healthy Fairfax. Community Health Dashboard. [2021 Food Insecurity Index](#) (Note: default page opens to ZIP Code; change **Index Data** selection to Census Tract and in **County/City**, select Fairfax County).

Nationally, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated disparities in food insecurity.⁴⁷ While related local data by demographics and other types of disaggregation are not currently available, an ongoing collaboration exists with the University of Virginia to research and establish alternate methods of measuring food insecurity at a more detailed level.



Strategy: Food Insecurity

The Emergency Food Assistance Plan was developed by the Fairfax County Emergency Food Strategy Team, Fairfax County Food Council and community stakeholders. The aim of the plan is to provide a sustainable structure for providing emergency food assistance beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

The overarching goals are:

- Facilitate equitable food access
- Reduce barriers to food access
- Connect resources to persons who are or who could become food insecure

⁴⁷ Urban Institute. (2020, November 10). [*Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Food Insufficiency Persist during the Pandemic.*](#)

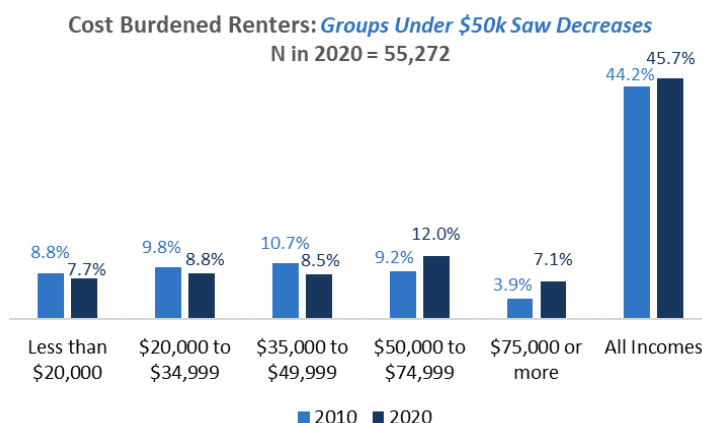
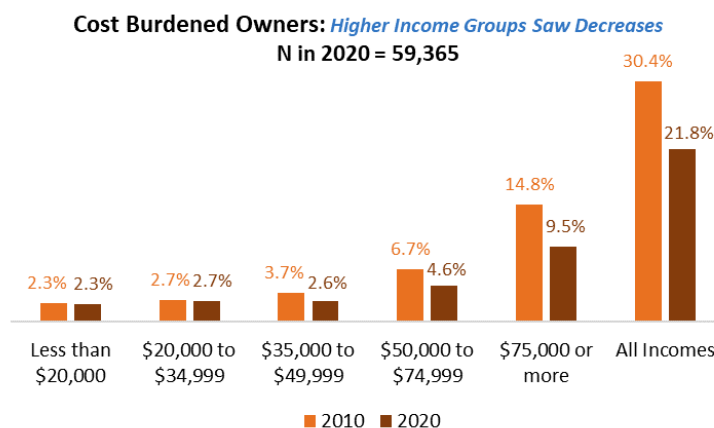
Housing

As mentioned in the *Household Spending* section of this report, the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria area saw inflation in housing-related costs of 5.4% from May 2021 to May 2022, and a rise of 23.5% over ten years. While the proportion of Fairfax County homeowners who are cost burdened has steadily decreased over time, the proportion of cost burdened renters continues to rise. Cost burden occurs when 30% or more of household income is spent on housing costs. Additionally, when 50% of household income is spent on housing, this household is considered severely housing cost burdened.

In 2020, there were 273,428 owner-occupied housing units and 125,225 renter-occupied housing units in Fairfax County. Between 2010 and 2020, the number of owner-occupied units decreased less than one percent (1,020 units) while the number of renter-occupied units increased by 16.7% (over 17,900 units).⁴⁸

In the two charts, the proportion of cost burdened homeowners and renters are displayed by income brackets. Since 2010, cost burdened homeowners remained stable in the two lowest income brackets but decreased in the higher income brackets, with a decrease of 8.6 percentage points overall.

In Fairfax County, the proportion of cost burdened renters decreased slightly in the three lowest income brackets since 2010. Renters earning between \$50,000 and \$74,999 saw an increase of 2.8 percentage points and renters earning \$75,000 or more saw an increase of 3.2 percentage points.⁴⁹



Charts above are interactive. See [story map](#) or click on [this link](#).

⁴⁸ U.S. Census Bureau. (2016-2020). American Community Survey. Table DP04. [Census - Table Results](#).

⁴⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2016-2020). American Community Survey. Table B25106. [Census - Table Results](#).

In 2010, the percentage of homeowners that were severely cost burdened was lower than the percentage of severely burdened renters. Over the past decade, while the percentage of severely burdened owners decreased by 2.7 percentage points, the percentage of severely burdened renters increased by 3.1 percentage points.⁵⁰

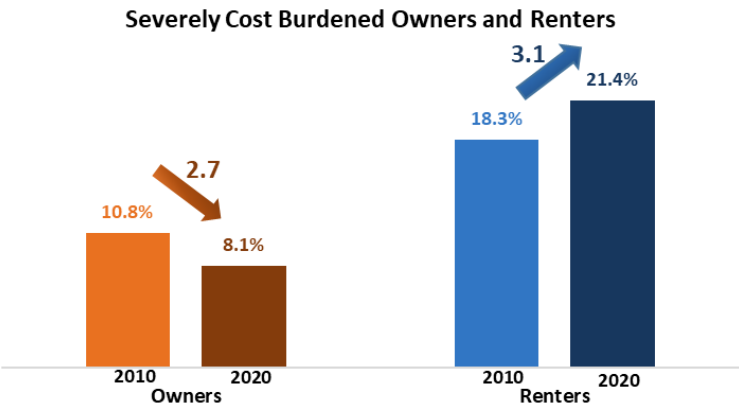
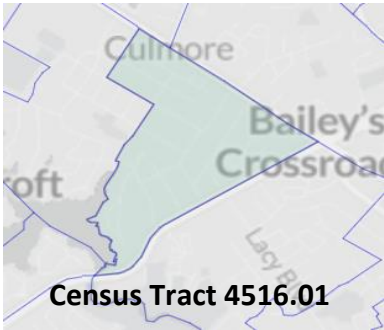


Chart above is interactive. See [story map](#) or click on [this link](#).

Research on national housing rates shows that wages are not increasing at the same rate as housing costs. Furthermore, many low-income families who are severely housing cost burdened live in substandard conditions.⁵¹

The table below depicts the top four census tracts with severely cost burdened owners⁵² and renters,⁵³ in addition to the household median income⁵⁴ for each census tract. For renter households, the listing reflects those with income below \$55,500 (i.e., 200% FPL income limit). Census tract 4516.01, located in the Bailey’s Crossroads area, appears both below and in the *Food Insecurity* section. For additional data about these census tracts, click on each link.⁵⁵

Severely Cost Burdened Owners and Renters	
Owners	Renters
4516.01 – \$51,578	4516.01 – \$51,578
4514 – \$42,907	4154.01 – \$49,333
4523.01 – \$43,357	4523.01 – \$43,357
4216 – \$50,787	4216 – \$50,787



⁵⁰ U.S. Census Bureau. (2016-2020). American Community Survey. Table B25070. [Census - Table Results](#). Table B25091 [Census - Table Results](#).

⁵¹ HUD User Online. Office of Policy Development and Research of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2014, September 22). [Rental burdens: Rethinking Affordability Measures](#).

⁵² U.S. Census Bureau. (2016-2020). American Community Survey. Table B25091. [Census Table - Results](#).

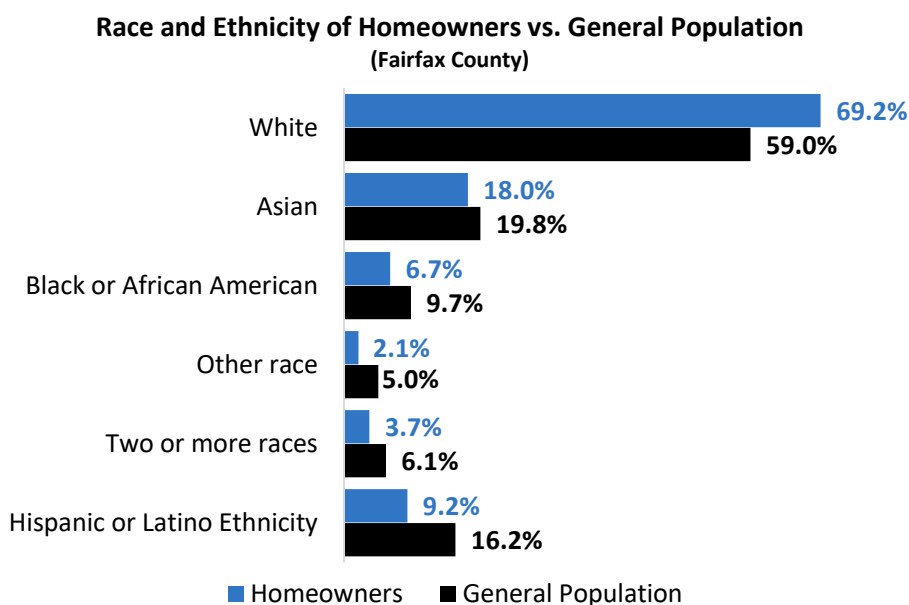
⁵³ Fairfax County, Virginia. [Vulnerability Index \(2016-2020\)](#).

⁵⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. (2016-2020). American Community Survey. Table S1903. [Census - Table Results](#).

⁵⁵ [Census Reporter: Making Census Data Easy to Use](#).

Homeownership Disparities and Challenges

When race and ethnicity characteristics of Fairfax County homeowners⁵⁶ are compared to the county's general population,⁵⁷ disparities in homeownership are revealed (refer to chart). White residents own homes at a rate greater than their share of the population, while residents of all other races and Hispanic residents own homes at rates less than their share of the population. Since homeownership is one stepping stone on the path to wealth accumulation,⁵⁸ this disparity may create challenges for the economic mobility of some households.



Nationally, homebuyers are challenged with the real estate market and the respective housing shortage. Many potential buyers are often forced into competitive bidding for available properties thus driving housing prices up. Zillow's 2021 *Consumer Housing Trends Report*⁵⁹ provides highlights about buyers:

- Largest group of buyers (37%) are Millennials, ages 27 to 41,
- Two in five have children under age 18,
- Predominantly White (more than 7 in 10),
- Nearly half (45%) are four-year college graduates and
- Have a household median income of about \$86,000.

Close to half (47%) of U.S. first-time homebuyers were **denied a mortgage** – compared to 26% for repeat buyers.

[Meet the Typical Homebuyer: Age, Salary, Location, Budget \(businessinsider.com\)](#)

The number of U.S. homebuyers acquiring their first property declined from 46% in 2018 to 37% in 2021.⁶⁰ The report also indicates that Latino (56%) and Black (54%) mortgage buyers experienced mortgage denial, at least once before approval, in greater proportion than White mortgage buyers (31%).

⁵⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. (2016-2020). American Community Survey. Table S2502. [Census - Table Results](#).

⁵⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. (2016-2020). American Community Survey. Table DP05. [Census - Table Results](#).

⁵⁸ Goodman, L. and Mayer, C. [Homeownership is still financially better than renting](#). Urban Institute. 2018.

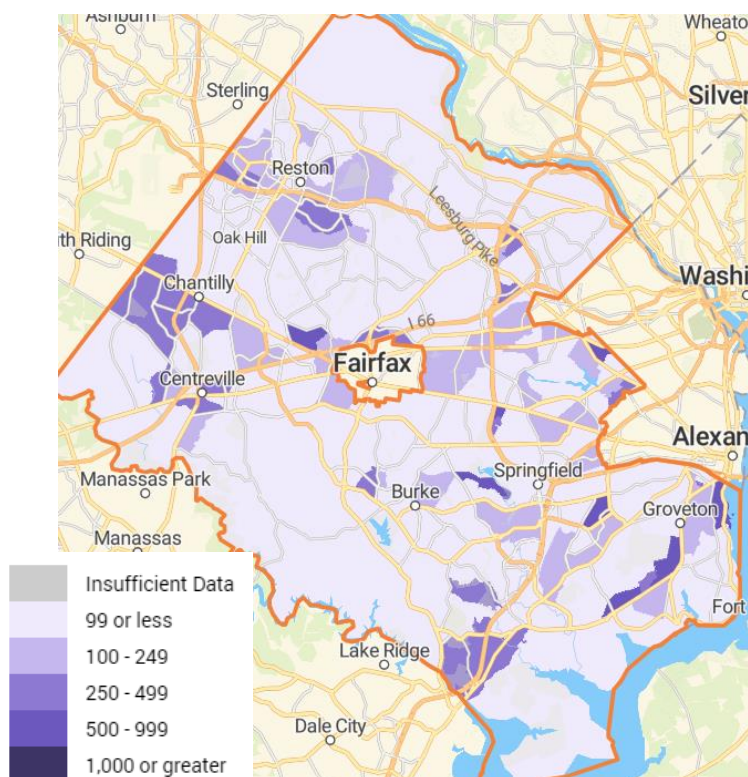
⁵⁹ Business Insider. (2021, September 12). [Meet the Typical Homebuyer: Age, Salary, Location, Budget](#).

⁶⁰ Zillow Research. (2021, September 1). [Buyers: Results from the Zillow Consumer Housing Trends Report 2021](#).

Based on a simple comparison of U.S., Virginia and Fairfax County housing values, a purchaser in Fairfax County would require significantly more resources to buy a property in the county, whether they are a first-time or repeat buyer. The table highlights that **nine in ten (90.0%) owner-occupied housing units in Fairfax County have a value \$300,000 or greater.**⁶¹

Home Value	Fairfax County, VA	Virginia	U.S.
Median	\$576,700	\$282,800	\$229,800
\$300,000 to \$499,999	29.1%	25.4%	20.5%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	51.6%	18.0%	12.3%
\$1,000,000 or more	9.3%	3.0%	3.7%

The map below displays the location by census tract of owner-occupied housing units valued below \$300,000.⁶²



Strategy: Affordable Housing

Expanding affordable housing opportunities is an area of focus in the [Countywide Strategic Plan](#), with multiple strategies. In March 2022, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors [voted to double the goal](#) for developing affordable housing units from 5,000 to 10,000 by 2034.

Also in March, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced an expansion of existing funding for homeless housing and service programs across the nation. Fairfax County [received \\$10 million](#) to fully fund 19 existing projects, which provide rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

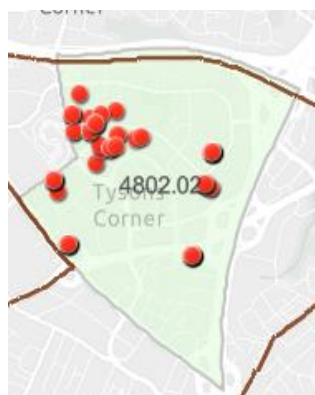
⁶¹ N = 273,428 owner-occupied housing units in Fairfax County. U.S. Census Bureau. (2016-2020). American Community Survey. Table DP04. [Census - Table Results](#).

⁶² U.S. Census Bureau. (2015-2019). American Community Survey. Retrieved from [PolicyMap](#).

Eviction Prevention

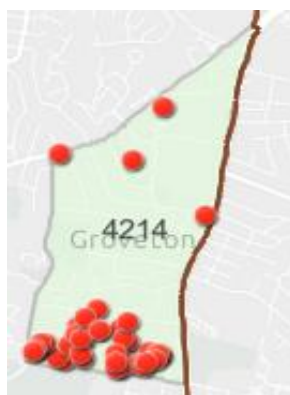
The economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic put many Fairfax County families and individuals at risk of eviction. To provide assistance and develop resources for those residents who were most deeply affected, many strategies were implemented by Fairfax County Health and Human Services system, stakeholders, community providers and local businesses.

The [Eviction Data Dashboard](#), populated with data provided by the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office, identifies areas of Fairfax County where residents are most at risk of eviction. Although various measures, federal, state and local, including several moratoria worked to keep evictions down since June 30, 2020, the three census tracts⁶³ shown below have consistently ranked highest in the number of residents at risk of eviction.⁶⁴ As of May 2022, these three census tracts accounted for 14% of all 1,463 writs of eviction issued.⁶⁵



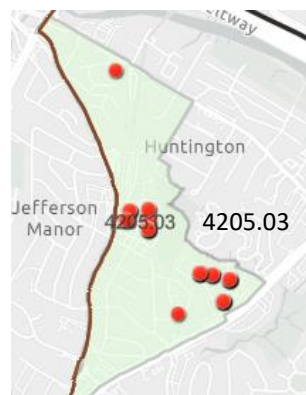
Census Tract 4802.02

McLean & Vienna (located in ZIP Codes 22102 and 22182)
See footnote – [4802.04](#) and [4802.05](#).



Census Tract 4214

Alexandria (Groveton)
(located in ZIP Code 22306)



Census Tract 4205.03

Alexandria (Huntington)
(located in ZIP Code 22303)

Using the county's existing homelessness prevention processes, rental and housing assistance coordination was expanded to meet the unprecedented needs. Coordinated Services Planning (CSP) partnered with over 20 community providers to disburse more than \$90 million dollars in federal and local funding (refer to [Annex](#) for table displaying funding sources and amounts). The locations of eligible residents receiving emergency housing funding⁶⁶ are illustrated in the map below.⁶⁷ The four ZIP Codes where the greatest amount of funding was disbursed correlate with highly vulnerable ZIP Codes. Eligibility criteria of eviction prevention assistance included households at or below 80% of Area Median Income and must not exceed of 150% of the Fair Market Rent value.⁶⁸

⁶³ Note that in the ACS 2020 dataset, Census Tract 4802.02 was split to form two new Census Tracts, [4802.04](#) and [4802.05](#).

⁶⁴ If landlord and tenant can come to a mutually agreeable understanding, eviction can be avoided at any point in the eviction process. Fairfax County Sheriff's Office. [Eviction Process](#).

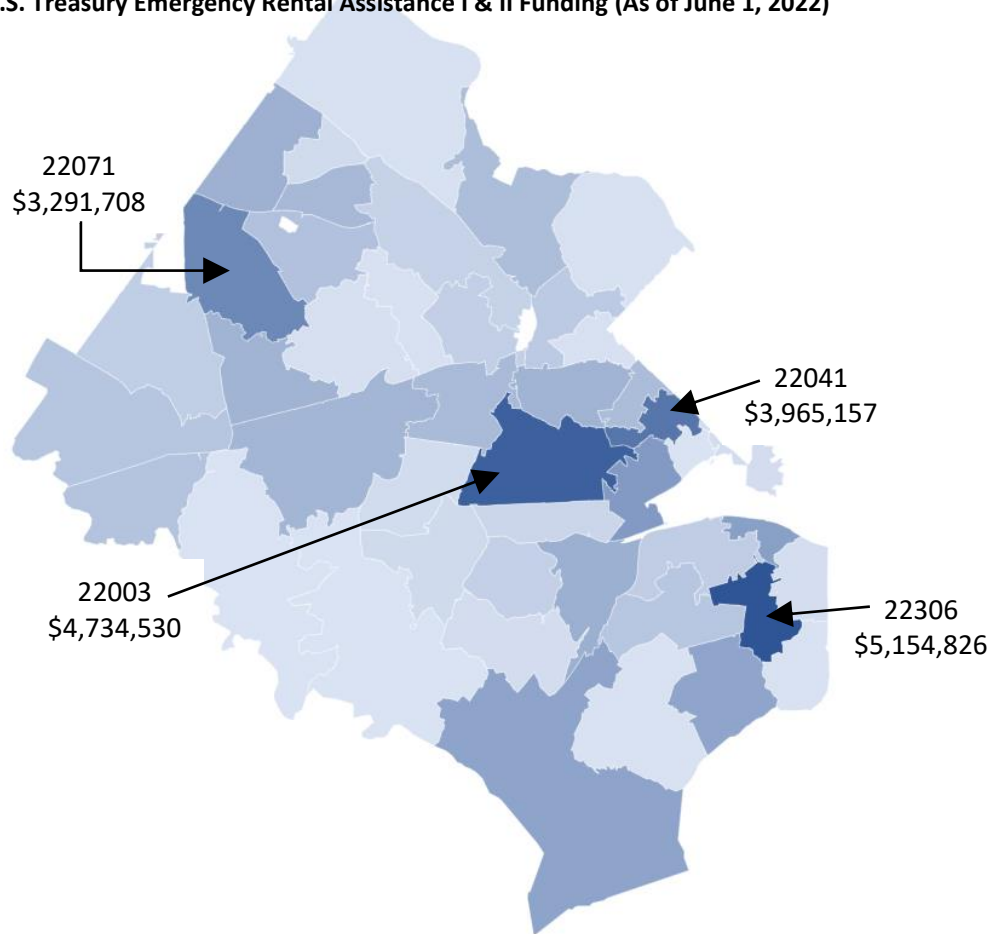
⁶⁵ Fairfax County, Virginia. [Eviction Data Dashboard](#). Retrieved in 2022, June.

⁶⁶ Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services. Coordinated Services Planning.

⁶⁷ Complete map with all ZIP Codes labeled with funding amounts is [located here](#).

⁶⁸ U.S. Department of the Treasury. (2021, June 24). [ERA FAQs 6-24-21.pdf. Treasury Releases Guidance to Speed the Provision of Emergency Rental Assistance Relief and Support Housing Stability for Renters at Risk of Eviction.](#)

**ZIP Codes Receiving Greatest Amount of Financial Assistance from
U.S. Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance I & II Funding (As of June 1, 2022)**



Strategy: Eviction Prevention

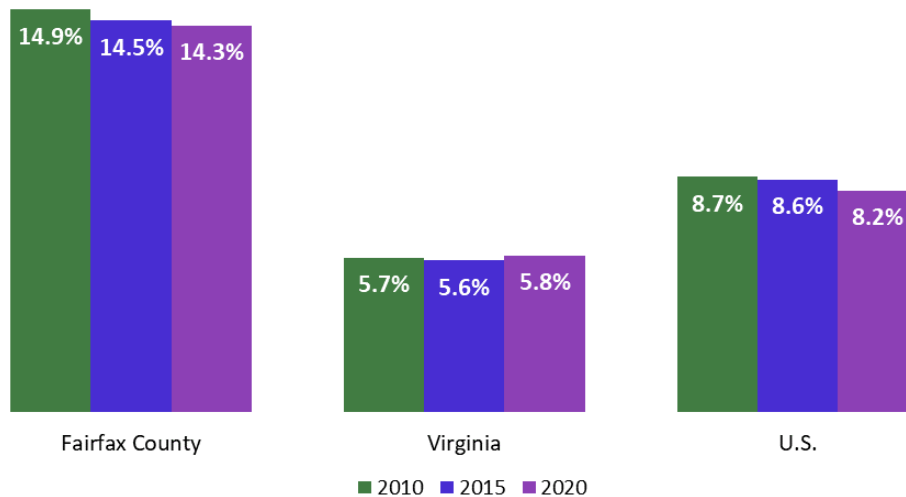
In addition to the existing CSP basic needs access process, several additional strategies were developed. These include:

- A landlord portal was developed to allow landlords to apply for assistance on behalf of their tenants; the portal may be accessed on the Health and Human Services [Eviction Prevention](#) web page.
- Communication tools, offered in a variety of languages, provide guidance about resources for on-going assistance.
- A cross-county task force consisting of county agencies and nonprofit partners was established.
- Organizational changes were made to facilitate working directly with Fairfax County Courts to engage residents facing eviction.

English Proficiency

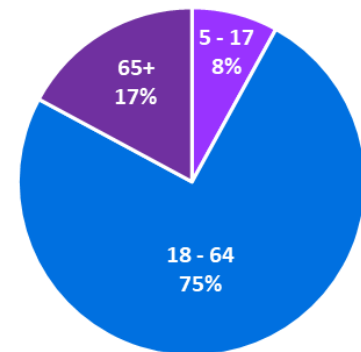
Fairfax County is a community with much diversity in its population and many languages spoken. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that there were 153,485 (or 14.3%) Fairfax County residents (five years of age and over) who spoke English less than very well in 2020. While this represents a stable trend over ten years in the proportion of residents with low English proficiency, it is also a consistently higher proportion when compared to both Virginia and the nation.⁶⁹

Proportion of Persons Who Speak English Less Than Very Well



Among Fairfax County residents with limited English proficiency, 75% (114,885) are persons 18 to 64 years of age (see pie chart).⁷⁰ This group may experience disadvantages related to opportunities in higher wage employment, thus the inability to speak English well stands as a barrier for economic mobility. The data in the table below point to a higher rate of persons living in poverty when a language other than English is spoken at home.⁷¹

Age Distribution of Persons Who Speak English Less than Very Well



Poverty By Language Spoken at Home		
Federal Poverty Level (FPL)	English Only	Other Than English
Below 100% FPL	3.9% (25,279 persons)	8.5% (35,579 persons)

⁶⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2016-2020). American Community Survey. Table S1601. [Census - Table Results](#).

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2016-2020). American Community Survey. Table S1603. [Census - Table Results](#).

The four languages in the table are spoken by nearly 7 out of 10 Fairfax County residents with limited English proficiency (i.e., speak English less than very well).⁷² Within these groups, slightly more than half of Korean (52.4% of all Korean speakers) and Vietnamese (50.6% of all Vietnamese speakers) speakers are not proficient in English. The proportion for Chinese and Spanish language speakers is 44.0% and 43.2%, respectively.⁷³

Language Spoken At Home	Total Number of Language Speakers	Speak English Less than Very Well	
		Number	Percent
Korean	35,501	18,591	52.4%
Vietnamese	25,914	13,119	50.6%
Chinese	27,114	11,934	44.0%
Spanish	145,333	62,798	43.2%

The Fairfax County [Human Services Resource Guide](#) shows 91 organizations providing English language instruction, including FCPS adult education courses, community and recreation centers, nonprofits and houses of worship. Unfortunately, no participant enrollment data are available; this gap reveals an opportunity to explore data collection.

Programs offered through the [Consolidated Community Funding Pool](#) (CCFP) by local nonprofits, provided English language instruction to 825 persons in FY 2022. This is a similar enrollment figure to FY 2020 when 867 persons received English language instruction via CCFP-funded programs.⁷⁴

This dataset highlights a continuing need in our community. In 2020, in Fairfax County there were 114,885 adults⁷⁵ not proficient in English and 35,579 persons⁷⁶ living below 100% FPL who speak a language other than English at home. Further analysis is required to determine the number of persons who need and could be eligible for language instruction services.⁷⁷

⁷² U.S. Census Bureau. (2016-2020). American Community Survey. Table C16001. [Census - Table Results](#).

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Fairfax County Department of Procurement and Material Management. (FY 2022 figure updated in December 2022 to reflect full fiscal year results)

⁷⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. (2016-2020). American Community Survey. Table S1601. [Census - Table Results](#).

⁷⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. (2016-2020). American Community Survey. Table S1603. [Census - Table Results](#).

⁷⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. (2016-2020). American Community Survey. Table S1601. [Census - Table Results](#).



Strategy: Language Access Assistance Toolkit

The Fairfax County Language Access Policy serves as a guide for county agencies to ensure that all residents have equitable access to information, services, resources, activities and benefits.

The purpose of this toolkit is to improve communication and engagement with Limited English Proficient, Non-English Proficient individuals and persons with disabilities who may require information in other languages and formats.



Strategy Needed: Language Service Delivery

Develop additional efforts to link populations who need English language services to available resources. Evaluate access barriers and language and cultural variations.

Determine approaches to collect data about community-based English instruction, in addition to programs funded by CCFP.

Additional Resources

- Fairfax County recognizes the challenges encountered by its residents described in this Economic Factors report. The County and partners look to address the numerous factors of economic insecurity through coordinated efforts, all linking to priorities identified in the Countywide Strategic Plan.
 - A September 2020 presentation summarized the factors: [Addressing Economic Insecurity – Laying the Foundation for Future Success](#). Progress updates will be shared as efforts have the longevity to measure such progress in a reliable manner.
- Referenced in the *Employment and Labor Force* section, the U.S. Census Bureau's [OnTheMap](#) tool provides access to additional labor force and industry-specific information for Fairfax County including the number of workers in each industry as well as workforce data by race, ethnicity, educational attainment, age group, sex and location (see [short tutorial](#)).
- In addition to the [Vulnerability Index](#), readers may refer to the [Annex](#) to learn about the Community Resilience Estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. These estimates are census tract level assessments of risk of neighborhoods to impacts from disasters including the COVID-19 pandemic.⁷⁸ A crosswalk between the Vulnerability Index and the [Community Resilience Estimates](#) highlight vulnerable census tracts common to both tools.
- The *Household Spending* section includes various categories of expenditures. For additional insight about them, review the Pew Research Center article hereby referenced.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ U.S. Census Bureau. [About Community Resilience Estimates](#).

⁷⁹ Pew Research Center. (2022, January). [What's inside the Consumer Price Index?](#)