

NORTHERN VIRGINIA AFFORDABLE HOUSING ALLIANCE

ADVOCACY ACTION ALERT

Alexandria Housing Activities May 2021

FY2022 Budget Addresses Housing The Alexandria City Council adopted an [FY2022 budget](#) that reduces the real estate tax rate to \$1.11 per \$100 of assessed value, and provides \$8.8 million to the Housing Trust Fund. The budget also eliminates the DASH system bus fare, an important mode of transportation for low and moderate income households, beginning September 5.

Eviction Prevention [The Rent Relief Program](#) (RRP) is the state program sponsored by the **Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development** and **Virginia Housing** that provides an online portal for tenants and landlords to access the federal funds that provide rental assistance to eligible households impacted by COVID-19. Tenants can apply individually through the tenant portal, or landlords can submit a listing of eligible tenants for an entire building via the landlord portal. Tenants and landlords are required to collaborate to provide documentation to complete the application, and the funds are disbursed to the landlord on behalf of the tenant. Below is a summary chart from the **Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development** of the number of households served statewide, including demographic information that the state is tracking to ensure that funds are going to households hardest hit by the pandemic.

	Total unique Renter HHs	Total Amount rent paid	Avg Payment	Total children served < 8 years old	% below 50% AMI	Black HHs served	Hispanic HHs served
3/10	25,297	\$110,814,026.49	\$4,380.52	17,462	88.5%	51.6%	10.6%
3/24	28,375	\$135,112,956.98	\$4,761.69	19,642	90.6%	52.2%	10.8%
Net change	3,078	\$24,298,930.49	\$381.17	2,180			
% change	12.2%	21.9%	8.7%	12.5%			

Current information from the state agencies shows that 1,190 households have received \$6,970,533 in rental assistance and 10 households received \$80,164 in mortgage assistance. Note that RRP no longer provides assistance to homeowners impacted by COVID. That assistance can be obtained through another federal program.

Community Input on Priorities for American Rescue Plan Funds The City of Alexandria is seeking community input on the use of forthcoming federal funding as part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). A list of potential programs and projects has been developed to help guide the use of the funds for immediate recovery needs, as a long-term investment, and to inform other potential federal funding opportunities. Residents, businesses, and community organizations are being asked to [provide feedback](#) about their priorities for the use of these funds by ranking a list of potential programs and projects that are already under consideration, or by proposing new projects. Beginning May 4, the survey and supporting materials will also be available on the City's website in Spanish, Amharic and Arabic. The City will host virtual public meetings on [Saturday, May 8 at 10AM](#) and [Monday, May 10 at 7 PM](#) to review the funding guidelines, provide input on proposed projects and discuss specific project proposals. The deadline to provide feedback is May 13.

ARHA Redevelopment Work Group The next meeting of the ARHA Redevelopment Work Group is Thursday, May 20 at 5: 30 PM. Register [here](#) to attend.

2021 Housing Resource Guide The City of Alexandria's Office of Housing publishes an annual guide on city programs and services for renters, homeowners, landlords, and prospective homebuyers, as well as housing resources offered by local and state housing partners. The [2021 Housing Resource Guide](#) is now available in [Spanish](#), [Arabic](#) and [Amharic](#) on their [webpage](#). For questions regarding the Office of Housing's housing programs, including COVID-19 resources, please contact them at 703.746.4990 or visit their [webpage](#).

Making Room for More Housing: The Los Angeles Accessory Dwelling Boom will be featured in a webinar on June 23, 2021 from 5:00 to 6:15 PM. Accessory dwelling units (ADUs), new additional residential units situated within currently built single-family lots, are viewed as a way to increase housing supply in expensive and land-constrained markets. After new policies went into effect in 2017, ADUs in Los Angeles dramatically increased from 581 permits from 2014 to 2016 to 10,979 permits from 2017 to 2019. ADUs now account for about 20 percent of all Los Angeles housing permits. Join the **Center for Real Estate Entrepreneurship of George Mason University** for an in-depth case study discussion on the regulatory and procedural changes which facilitated this ADU boom, and the resulting impact on housing and neighborhoods. This is certainly a topic of interest for housing advocates in Alexandria. Click [here](#) to register. There is a \$10 fee to attend.

Broadband Subsidy Beginning May 12, 2021, eligible households will be able to enroll in the [Federal Communications Commission program](#) to receive a monthly discount off the cost of broadband service from an approved provider. Eligible households can enroll through an approved provider or by visiting [Broadband Subsidy](#) for income eligible families. We continue to advocate for broadband that is affordable and accessible for all.

Energy Efficiency [Community Housing Partners \(CHP\) Energy Solutions](#) is a fully licensed and insured non-profit weatherization and energy solutions provider serving all localities in Northern Virginia. They provide the federal Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) administered by Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) as well as several income-qualifying utility-sponsored energy efficiency programs with their partners

Dominion Energy Virginia, Washington Gas, Columbia Gas of Virginia, Rappahannock Electric Cooperative, and Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative. Using a combination of in-house energy auditors and technicians, as well as a network of qualified contractors and trade allies, their programs offer no cost energy efficiency and home improvement services to qualifying owners and renters of single-family homes, townhomes, manufactured homes, and multifamily properties to reduce their utility bills while improving their comfort, addressing health and safety concerns, and improving the resiliency of their homes. This is a valuable diagnostic resource for low income residents who experience high utility costs.

HousingX from Housing Forward Virginia [Housing Forward Virginia](#), a statewide housing policy and research organization, is bringing back its popular **HousingX** chats series. Their [May 26 event](#) "xChats: Affordable Housing Beyond Our Borders" will introduce affordable housing providers in Virginia to housing practitioners and policy analysts from other countries. This session will feature four short, engaging presentations followed by a moderated panel conversation with all the speakers and questions from the participants. This is a free event, so plan to attend!

From Our Partners at the Corporation for Supportive Housing. [CSH invites you to join them in urging Congress and President Biden to fund capacity-building investments that will improve Medicaid Home and Community Services.](#) [Read the letter and sign here!](#)