

NORTHERN VIRGINIA AFFORDABLE HOUSING ALLIANCE

ADVOCACY ACTION ALERT

Alexandria Housing Activities October 2020

Planning Process for Arlandria - Chirilagua - Del Ray The community engagement process to update the area plans for Arlandria continues at two identical virtual meetings on **Tuesday, Oct 13, 6-7 PM** (meeting held in Spanish with English translation), or **Wednesday, Oct 14, 6-7 PM** (meeting held in English with Spanish translation). Housing affordability is the number one concern for the majority Latinx population there. Last month, City Council provided [\\$500,000 to AHDC for predevelopment funding of a project in Arlandria](#). Check out the City's website on Arlandria - Chirilagua Plan Update [here](#). Kudos to City staff for including a Spanish translation of the webpage.

COVID-19 Emergency Rent Relief Dashboard [This Dashboard](#) provides a snapshot of COVID-impacted residents who are receiving rental assistance through a combination of federal CARES Act and CDBG-CV funding. Currently, residents are protected from eviction under the [CDC Eviction Moratorium](#) (Federal Action) which expires on December 31, 2020. **Legal Services of Northern Virginia** is tracking weekly eviction cases at the courthouse and reaching out to defendants to provide [tenants' rights information in English](#) and [Spanish](#). Human service organizations like [ALIVE!](#) and [Lazarus Ministry](#) at Christ Church have been working on resident outreach with staff from the **Office of Housing** and the **Department of Community and Human Services** to ensure that the proper forms are completed to avoid an eviction notice. Efforts are also underway to inform landlords about [City and state rental assistance programs](#) to keep rental income flowing. Small 'Mom and Pop' property owners provide a significant portion of the City's market-affordable housing. They operate on slim margins; usually without substantial reserves to maintain operations. Absent additional federal assistance, the affordable housing industry could suffer serious setbacks that create additional stress on housing supply and low income households in the City. More information on the [stakeholders in the regional coalition](#) to prevent evictions, and Northern Virginia's response can be found in the [Northern Virginia Eviction Prevention and Housing Stability Toolkit](#).

Measuring Inclusion in Alexandria We are fortunate that Dr. Christina Plerhoples Stacy, Senior Research Associate at the Urban Institute, is a city resident and affordable housing advocate. In a recent blog for Urban, [Which Cities Became More \(and Less\) Racially and Economically Inclusive Over the Past Few Years?](#), Tina and her team revisited cities selected in 2016 to rank their progress (or regression) on their inclusion index. Alexandria was one of the cities on the list and, unfortunately, did not score well on advancing inclusion.

Tina was kind enough to provide a bit more explanation:

"Yes, it was discouraging to see Alexandria on the bottom of this list. Here's [Alexandria's city specific page](#), where you can see each measure over time for the city. Rent burden actually decreased during this time period, but not as much as the rest of the country. And rent burden here is also a factor of income, so rents could still be rising dramatically, but if higher income people are moving in and lower income people are being displaced, these measures might not show that. Digging deeper into rents and incomes over time would be a better indicator of that for this region specifically."

The things that drove our decline in inclusion in Alexandria were:

- an increase in the percent of the population who are "working poor" meaning that they had someone in the house who worked full time in the past year but they were still in poverty an increase in the high school dropout rate
- an increase in the racial homeownership gap (the gap between the homeownership rate for people of color versus white, non-Hispanic residents)
- an increase in the racial poverty gap (the gap between the poverty rate for people of color versus white, non-Hispanic residents)

As the blog noted, " Journalists, advocates, city leaders, and practitioners then used our [data feature](#) and report to reflect upon their policies and programs and to hold leaders accountable to inclusion goals." Addressing equity and inclusion will require investments in housing, education, healthcare and transportation so that all residents in the city can 'contribute to and benefit from economic prosperity.' Thank you, Tina, for helping us better understand the work we need to do.