

NORTHERN VIRGINIA AFFORDABLE HOUSING ALLIANCE

ADVOCACY ACTION ALERT

Arlington Housing Activities May 2021

FY2022 Budget Addresses Housing Needs The Arlington County Board adopted a FY2022 budget that maintains the real estate tax rate of \$1.013 per \$100 but provides increased resources for housing, including \$16.9 million for the Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF). The budget includes \$14.2 million for Housing Grants, a local rental subsidy program earmarked for specific households. The County expanded eligibility/allowable rents for this program, and reduced clients' required contribution from 40% to 30% of their annual income to account for continued rising rents. The budget also adds \$592,000 for permanent supportive housing, and continues rental assistance for tenants who are not eligible for the federal COVID relief programs. \$50,000 was also allocated to study funding models to provide broadband access to committed affordable units in the county.

Eviction Prevention [On Wednesday, May 12 at 7 PM, Arlington's Tenant-Landlord Commission](#) will host **Senta Gorrie** from the **Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD)** and **Chris Thompson** from **Virginia Housing** to discuss the state [Rent Relief Program \(RRP\)](#). RRP 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. Plan to attend this meeting to learn about RRP and the progress that's been made to date. Below is a summary chart from VDHCD 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%			

As of April 7, 1,312 households in Arlington received assistance through the RRP program: 1302 renters, 10 mortgage holders (RRP no longer provides mortgage assistance which is now administered through another federal program). A total of \$7,607,396.57 has been disbursed: \$7,489,384.24 in rent assistance, \$118,012.33 in mortgage assistance. These numbers are inclusive of both landlord and tenant applicants. However, challenges remain in getting the fundings to those in need. Virginia will receive \$524 million in Emergency Rental Assistance funding, but thousands of tenants are still unaware of the program, and many small mom and pop landlords don't have the staff capacity to work with tenants and secure the required documentation. Language and literacy remain barriers, and tenants with informal leases have trouble providing documentation. Additionally, some landlords balk at providing the required W-9 form. VDHCD is providing grant funding to organizations with the capacity to do outreach to underserved communities to address some of these issues. Locally, NVAHA has teamed with **Legal Services of Northern Virginia** and the **Northern Virginia Apartment Association** to provide the latest information on eviction prevention assistance through a series of webinars. For more information on these sessions, [contact Nora Daly](#), our Director of Programs and Community Engagement.

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!](#)