



BY ALEXANDRIA CITY HIGH SCHOOL



By Jonathan Gonzales

TOPIC

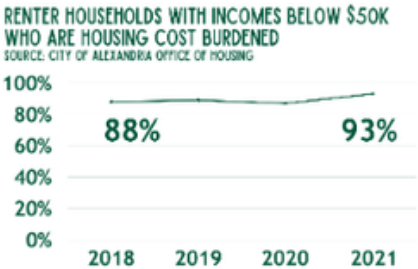
Cost of Living

TOPIC DESCRIPTION

The cost of rent and utilities has skyrocketed over the past couple of years, with the price of necessities such as gas and groceries also increasing, taking a toll on low-income families and minority groups. Low-income families and minorities are the only ones being most affected by this issue.

RESULT

The intended result is to lower the cost of rent and necessities and lower the rate of those individuals burdened by housing cost so that the quality of living for low-income families improves.



SIGNIFICANCE

This project matters as Lowering the general cost of living for low-income families will help them further exceed, thus providing them with more opportunities and resources for the youth.

Lowering the general cost of living would reduce homelessness rates, cause better educational outcomes, lower crime rates, increase economic growth, and cause overall healthier communities.

CYCP GOAL AND STRATEGIC AREA

All Children, Youth, and Families will have Positive Experiences

HOW ARE WE DOING?

As of now, according to the data, the cost of living in the City of Alexandria is approximately 30% higher compared to both state and national averages.

Looking at data trends, there has been a year over year increase in rent, with this rate being 3.2% over the past year, adding approximately \$66 to the average monthly rent.

This data tells us that the general cost of living in the City of Alexandria is higher than the averages at multiple levels, making it harder for low income families to thrive

Cost of Living in Alexandria, VA	Compared to State Average	Compared to National Average
Housing (Buy and Rent)	71% higher	68% higher
Utilities (Monthly)	8% lower	6% lower
Food	10% higher	10% higher
Healthcare	15% higher	13% higher
Transportation	9% higher	4% higher
Goods & Services	-	8% higher

IMPLEMENTATION

Various policies and changes can be implemented to reach our goal. Some of these policies and changes include; increasing funding for public and affordable housing construction, raising the minimum wage, subsidizing childcare, expanding healthcare access, and providing free college courses or vocational training for community members.

PARTNERSHIPS

Housing Alexandria, Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ARHA)



PERFORMANCE EFFORT

We are currently not getting the correct results that we want as there has been a year over year increase in rent, with this rate being 3.2% over the past year, adding approximately \$66 to the average monthly rent, and the rate of those burdened by rent cost is still in the high 80-90%

PERFORMANCE EFFECT

- Black children are, on average, 8.25 times more likely to live in poverty than White children
- 93% of renter households in Alexandria with incomes below \$50,000 are housing burdened, facing significant struggles to afford housing
- White youth are 1.16 times more likely than Hispanic youth to have access to a medical home, highlighting healthcare inequities

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Expand affordable housing access
 - Incentive developers to include affordable units in new projects
 - Increase city owned or subsidized housing units
- Reform property tax and rent stabilization
 - Implement property tax relief
 - Consider rent stabilization policies to limit excessive rent increases
- Improve wages and worker protections
 - Incentivize large employers to increase wages and offer affordable healthcare

ONLINE

- Housing Alexandria
 - Nonprofit that focuses on creating and preserving affordable housing within the city
- Wesley Housing
 - Works on projects to expand affordable housing options

CITATIONS

- Christopher Brown, Esq. “The Benefits of Alexandria’s Living Wage Program.” The Brown Firm PLLC, 7 Nov. 2018, brownfirmpllc.com/living-wage-laws-benefits-alexandria/.
- “Cost of Living in Alexandria, VA 2025 | Rentcafe.” RentCafe, www.rentcafe.com/cost-of-living-calculator/us/va/alexandria/. Accessed 13 May 2025.
- South, Jeff. “‘The Bedrock of Wealth Inequality’: Data Shows Big Racial Disparities in Mortgage Loans and Homeownership
- “Zoning for Housing/Housing for All.” City of Alexandria, VA, www.alexandriava.gov/planning-and-zoning/zoning-for-housinghousing-for-all. Accessed 12 May 2025.

IN PERSON

- Catholic Charities - Alexandria Food Pantry
 - Offers perishable and non-perishable food items to families in need
- Hunger Free Alexandria
 - Coordinates various food assistance programs