



# CHILDREN & YOUTH COMMUNITY PLAN (CYCP) REPORT CARD



ALEXANDRIA'S PROGRESS TOWARDS ENSURING EVERY CHILD SUCCEEDS TODAY AND TOMORROW

## VOLUME 3, ISSUE #

This issue reports the progress made on expanding and strengthening college and career pathways between April 2021 - Month 2025

## CYCP GOAL

All Children and Youth are Academically Successful and Career Ready

## ALEXANDRIA SPOTLIGHT

This issue shines the spotlight on Marsha Banks Harold, Owner of PIES Fitness Yoga Studio. As part of the City of Alexandria's Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), Marsha Banks Harold, owner of PIES Fitness Yoga Studio and creator of "My Body Don't Bend That Way" yoga, offered local youth more than just job experience. She opened her doors, her business, and her heart.



"The value that I see in offering these work experiences to the youth of Alexandria is that it's a win-win for everyone," she shared. "The youth gain invaluable experience, and as a business, I'm able to hold space for them and build connection with my clients."

Through SYEP, the young people at PIES not only learned how to show up on time, complete timecards, and write in cursive, they improved their academic performance and professional confidence. Marsha noted a noticeable change in their engagement, saying, "Their grades improved, their time and attendance improved as well."

Programs like SYEP help create lasting impact—on youth, on businesses, and on the community. "It's really an honor to be able to foster this sense of community," said Marsha.

Watch the **full video** and learn more about how to get involved at: [alexandriava.gov/SYEP](http://alexandriava.gov/SYEP)

“THE VALUE THAT I SEE IN OFFERING THESE WORK EXPERIENCES TO THE YOUTH OF ALEXANDRIA IS THAT IT'S A WIN-WIN FOR EVERYONE. THE YOUTH GAIN INVALUABLE EXPERIENCE, AND AS A BUSINESS, I'M ABLE TO HOLD SPACE FOR THEM AND BUILD CONNECTION WITH MY CLIENTS.

- MARSHA BANKS HAROLD, OWNER OF PIES FITNESS YOGA STUDIO

## RESULT

All young people have access to postsecondary options that prepare them for thriving futures

## WHY THIS MATTERS

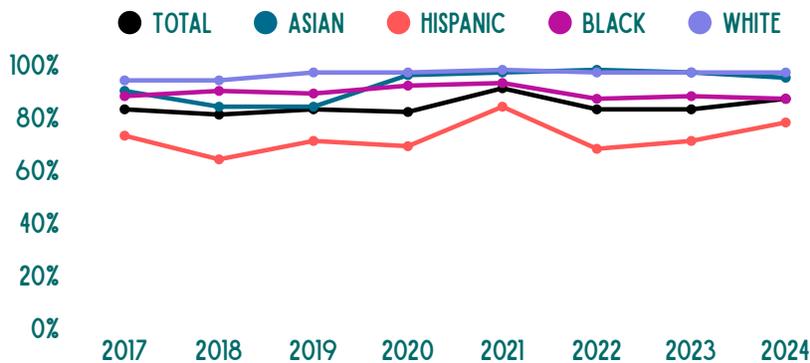
Graduating high school ready for college and career is essential for young people's long-term success. Yet systemic inequities, like underfunded schools, implicit bias, and socioeconomic barriers, mean that many students of color and those from low-income communities face greater challenges accessing the support and opportunities they need to thrive. When we address these disparities and ensure all students are prepared for life after high school, entire communities benefit.



## HOW ARE WE DOING?

### GRADUATION RATES BY RACE/ETHNICITY

SOURCE: VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, 2024



### Trends in Graduation

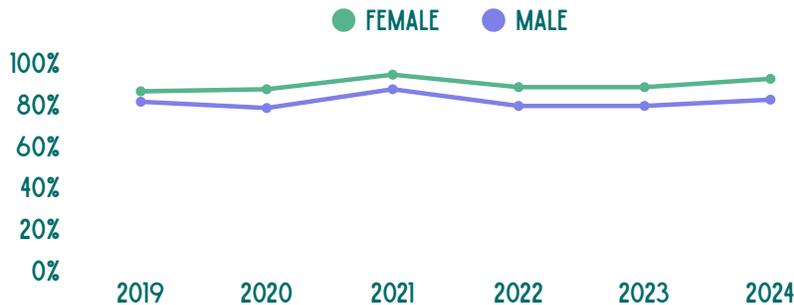
**Overall Trend:** Alexandria's on-time graduation rate has shown steady improvement over the past six years, increasing from 81% in 2018 to 87% in 2024.

### Trends by Race/Ethnicity:

- White and Asian students consistently graduate at the highest rates (above 95%).
- Hispanic students have seen improvement (from 64% in 2018 to 78% in 2024) but continue to have the lowest rates compared to other groups, suggesting persistent equity gaps.
- Black students maintained a fairly stable graduation rate (around 87-93%).

### GRADUATION RATES BY GENDER

SOURCE: VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, 2024

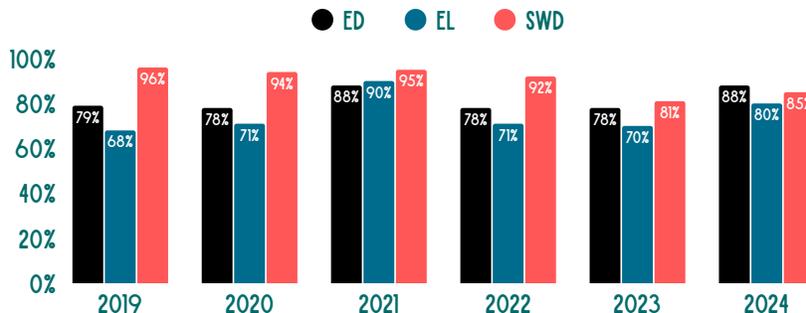


### Trends by Gender:

- Female students have consistently higher rates of on-time graduation than male students, with the gap remaining steady over time.
- Male graduation rates have hovered in the high 70s to low 80s, showing little long-term improvement.

### GRADUATION RATES BY SUBGROUP

SOURCE: VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, 2024

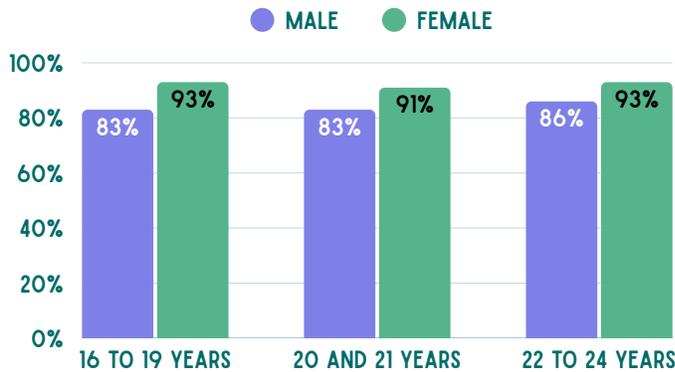


### Trends by Subgroup:

- Students with Disabilities (SWD) have graduation rates consistently above 90%.
- Economically Disadvantaged (ED) students have maintained an average graduation rate around the low 80s, with modest improvement in 2024.
- English Learners (EL) show the greatest fluctuation, with a peak of 91% in 2021 followed by a drop to 71% in 2024, highlighting volatility and potential barriers to consistent support.

## EMPLOYMENT RATE AMONG LABOR FORCE PARTICIPANTS BY GENDER AND AGE (16-24)

SOURCE: AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY



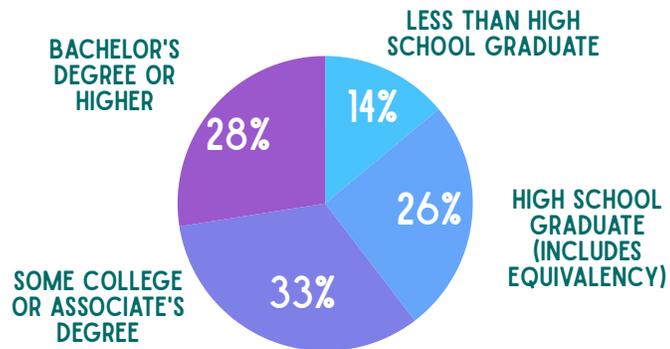
### Key Trends:

- Female youth consistently have higher employment rates than their male peers across all age groups, which may reflect greater employment barriers for younger males, such as fewer job skills, experience, or engagement with work opportunities.
- Employment rates increase slightly with age for both genders, though the gap between genders remains steady.

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF 18-24 YEAR OLDS

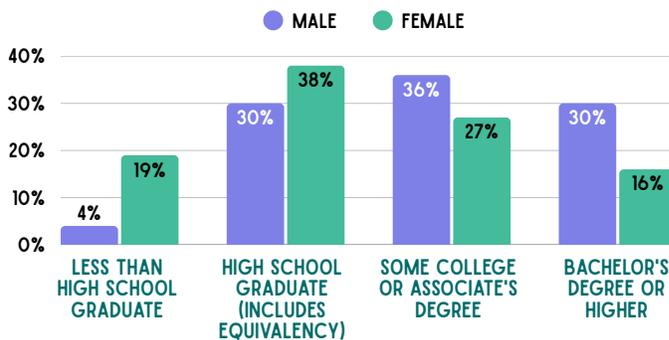
Source: American Community Survey

**9,366**  
TOTAL POPULATION  
OF 18-24 YEAR OLDS



## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF 18-24 YEAR OLDS BY GENDER

SOURCE: AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY



### Key Trends:

- Women are consistently more likely than men to attain a bachelor's degree or higher, with a gap of 9-14 percentage points.
- Educational attainment at the bachelor's level declined slightly for both genders in 2023, especially among females (from 33% in 2021 to 30% in 2023).

## STRATEGIES

- **Strategy #28** : Increase youth access to the resources they need for educational and career success
- **Strategy #30** : Advocate for programs that enhance youth leadership skills, workforce skills, and Virginia's 5 c's

## IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Progress with creating environments that support college and career readiness:



**2**  
Strategies  
**5**  
Action Steps  
**100%**  
are in progress

## CHAMPIONS & THEIR PARTNERS

- Alexandria Libraries
- Alexandria Seaport Foundation
- Department of Community & Human Services
  - Workforce Development Center
- Project Discovery

### Plan Alignment:

- ACPS Strategic Plan 2025
- Community Health Improvement Plan 2025

## WHAT HAVE WE DONE SINCE 2021?



### STRENGTHENING COLLEGE PATHWAYS AND ACCESS

#### ACPS reporting, 2023-2024 school year

- **Expanded the Governor's Health Sciences (GHS) Program**, a partnership between ACPS and The George Washington University (GWU), enabling students to earn up to 18 college credits and providing guaranteed admission to GWU's School of Medicine and Health Sciences upon meeting program requirements.
- **Awarded substantial scholarships to support college affordability:**
  - Scholarship Fund of Alexandria awarded scholarships to 216 students totaling \$644,800 for their first year of college, with renewals bringing the total potential value to \$2.33 million (2024).
  - Graduating seniors in the Class of 2024 were awarded at least \$2 million in scholarships from colleges, universities, non-profit organizations, and corporations.

#### Project Discovery reporting, 2021-25

- **Enrolled 284 students**, consistently exceeding its 55-student annual grant cap to meet the high demand for its college access program supporting first-generation students through workshops and campus visits.
- **Delivered Weekly College-Readiness Sessions** where topics like team building, stress management, and planning for life after high school were covered.
- **Facilitated college tours** every year across multiple states, helping students explore post-secondary options.
- **Integrated reflective activities** such as affirmation boards and "The Web" celebration to reinforce personal and peer growth.

#### Alexandria Libraries reporting:

- **Runs the Alexandria Scholarship Fund** to help youth in grades 6-12 reach their college goals.

#### CHIP 2025 reporting, Winter 2024-25

- **Working to identify the core needs of Northern Virginia Community College students** to see what other non-profit connections may be helpful.



The 2025 Project Discovery of Alexandria Club



Project Discovery participants build "The Web"

## WHAT HAVE WE DONE SINCE 2021?



### STRENGTHENING CAREER PATHWAYS AND WORKFORCE READINESS

#### **ACPS reporting, 2023-2024 school year**

- Maintained dozens of higher education intern partnerships across ACPS to provide students with hands-on experience and exposure to post-secondary education and careers.

#### **Seaport Foundation reporting, 2024**

- Offered a paid Apprenticeship Program through which youth learn to identify their own interests and needs and make choices accordingly.

#### **CHIP reporting, Winter 2024-25**

- **Launched a Youth Employment and Career and Technical Education (CTE) Working Group** to ensure Alexandria's youth have access to exceptional CTE, work-based learning opportunities and meaningful employment. Organized by ACT for Alexandria.

#### **City of Alexandria's Workforce Development Center reporting, 2025**

- Served youth in Alexandria, ages 14-21, with career readiness workshops, financial education workshops and paid work experiences through the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP).



*SYEP's Closing Ceremony, 2023*

## HOW MUCH HAVE WE DONE SINCE 2021?



### STRENGTHENING COLLEGE PATHWAYS AND ACCESS

**~55 HIGHER EDUCATION INTERN PARTNERSHIPS**  
active through ACPS.

**216 GRADUATES**  
received scholarships from The Scholarship Fund of Alexandria, totaling **\$644,800** for their first year of college.

*ACPS reporting, SY2023-24*

**284 STUDENTS**  
enrolled in Project Discovery.

**18 WEEKS**  
of programming delivered/year.

**27 COLLEGE CAMPUSES**  
visited through tours.

*Project Discovery reporting, 2021-2025*



*The Project Discovery Club tours Richard Bland College*

## HOW MUCH HAVE WE DONE SINCE 2021?

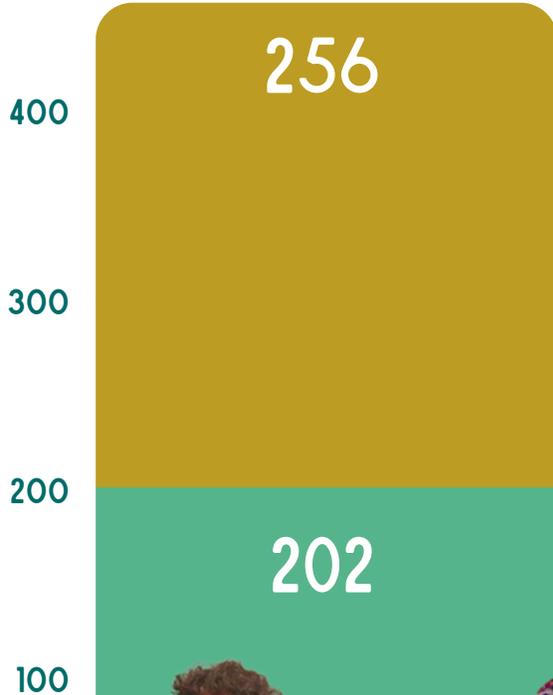
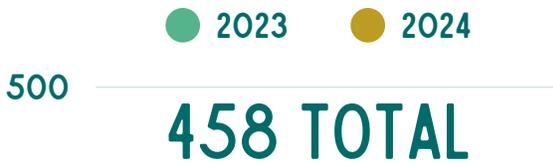


### STRENGTHENING CAREER PATHWAYS & WORKFORCE READINESS

**8+ YOUNG ADULTS**  
participated in the Seaport  
Foundation's Apprentices Program  
*Seaport Foundation reporting, 2024*

### # OF YOUTH PARTICIPANTS IN THE SUMMER YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM, 2023 & 2024

*Workforce Development Center reporting, 2023 & 2024*



2023 SYEP  
Participants

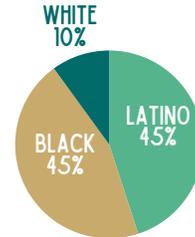


## HOW WELL HAVE WE DONE IT?



### STRENGTHENING CAREER PATHWAYS & WORKFORCE READINESS

### SEAPORT FOUNDATION APPRENTICE DEMOGRAPHICS



- >50% are court-involved
- Most do not have high school diplomas

*Seaport Foundation reporting, 2024*



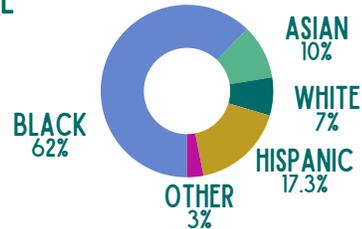
**\$12/HR**  
HOURLY WAGE  
OF SYEP  
PARTICIPANTS

### HOURS WORKED BY SYEP PARTICIPANTS

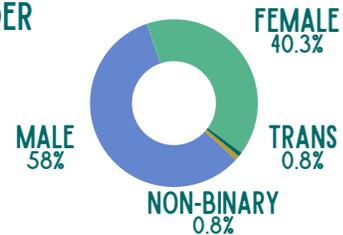


### SYEP 2023 DEMOGRAPHICS

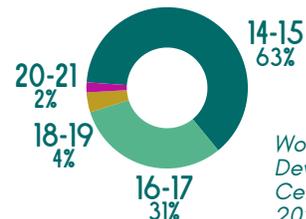
#### RACE



#### GENDER



#### AGE



*Workforce Development Center reporting, 2023 & 2024*

# IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?



## STRENGTHENING COLLEGE PATHWAYS AND ACCESS

**427 SENIORS**  
(45% of the Class of 2024)  
earned an Advanced Studies Diploma - the highest percentage to date at Alexandria City High School.

**21 SENIORS**  
planned gap years through programs like Year Up, AmeriCorps, employment, and internships.

**19 STUDENTS**  
committed to serve in the U.S. military.

**30 TITAN STUDENT-ATHLETES**  
signed letters of intent to compete in collegiate athletics across nine sports.

**19 STUDENTS**  
pursued alternative post-secondary education in fields such as real estate, skilled trades, cosmetology, and public safety.

**2,606 STUDENTS**  
Earned One or More Career & Technical Education Credential

Source: Virginia DOE, 2021-2024

ACPS reporting, SY2023-24

### 15 SENIORS COMPLETED PROJECT DISCOVERY IN 2025



**12**  
PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION



**2**  
ENTERING THE WORKFORCE



**1**  
UNDECIDED

### SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED THROUGH PROJECT DISCOVERY

**15 SENIORS & 6 ALUMNI**  
were awarded a total of **\$87,200** through Project Discovery.



Project Discovery reporting, 2021-2025

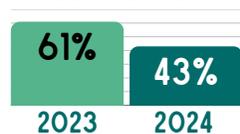
Project Discovery High School Graduate



## STRENGTHENING CAREER PATHWAYS AND WORKFORCE READINESS

### AMONG SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS:

NEVER WORKED FOR PAY BEFORE SYEP



VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS IMPROVED BECAUSE OF SYEP



**82%**  
felt their **writing skills improved** because of the program.

**93%**  
indicated they were more confident in their **interviewing skills** because of the program.

**81%**  
felt there was **good fit** between the summer job assigned to them and the occupation and career they hope to have one day.

Workforce Development Center reporting, 2023 & 2024

### AMONG THE SEAPORT FOUNDATION APPRENTICES:



**25%**  
entered the trades



**25%**  
enrolled in further education



**12.5%**  
entered consumer service positions



**12.5%**  
entered the armed forces

Seaport Foundation reporting, 2024

## RESOURCES

### COLLEGE & CAREER PREP

- **Alexandria City High School College & Career Center:** Helps students explore interests & career paths, research postsecondary options, and develop job application skills (resumes, interviews, federal employment).
- **American Red Cross – Alexandria:** Offers CPR, first aid, lifeguard, and instructor training.
- **Building Better Futures:** Provides tailored academic and career supports to help students succeed in school and beyond.
- **ACPS Career & Technical Education:** Offers industry-aligned courses and credentials; many include paid, credit-bearing work placements.
- **Early Childhood Learning Institute (Hopkins House):** Two-year early-childhood training: CDA credential, college credit, certificates, and job placement (\$25K-\$30K + benefits).
- **High School Internship Program (Urban Alliance):** Mentoring and paid internships for high school seniors to develop skills and career connections.
- **Nurse Assistant Training (American Red Cross):** 4-8-week CNA certification program with classroom and clinical training under nurse supervision.
- **Opportunities Plus (Liberty's Promise):** Professional internships for low-income, documented youth (ages 15-21) in various sectors.
- **Practical Nursing Honors Program (Alexandria Tech):** 18-month nursing certificate program for high school seniors leading to NCLEX-PN eligibility.
- **Project Discovery (City DCHS):** Supports first-generation college-bound students with workshops, campus visits, and mentorship.
- **Tech Prep in Virginia (Virginia Tech):** Career pathways that begin in high school and continue through an associate or baccalaureate degree, a journeyman's license, a postsecondary level industry certification, or a state licensure.

- **Training Futures (Northern VA Family Service):** 25-week business/medical office training with college credit, internship, and job search support.

### COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT

- **Alexandria Scholarship Fund Book Club:** Read about kids meeting their college goals while receiving practical advice from the Alexandria Scholarship Fund to help you reach your own. Grades 6-12.
- **Educational Opportunities for Alexandrians (EOA):** Undocumented ACHS grads receive scholarships for full tuition and expenses at NOVA for up to two years.
- **Project Discovery:** (See above – listed under prep and scholarships.)
- **Scholarship Fund of Alexandria:** Financial support for Alexandria City Public Schools students pursuing postsecondary education.

### YOUTH (14-21) EMPLOYMENT

- **Summer Youth Employment Program (DCHS):** Six-week summer jobs for ages 14-21 with advising and workshops; placements across local business, nonprofit, and government sectors.
- **Year-Round Youth & Young Adult Program (DCHS):** Ages 14-21 receive counseling, soft-skills workshops, and job-prep to compete for positions year-round. 703-746-5940. Email: Christina.Damhuis@alexandriava.gov
- **WIOA Youth Program (DCHS):** Serves low-income or at-risk youth (ages 14-24) with education and employment counseling, plus support services. 703-746-5940. Email: Christina.Damhuis@alexandriava.gov.

### CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- **Seaport Foundation Apprenticeship:** 6-9 month paid woodworking/boatbuilding apprenticeships for disconnected youth (ages 18-23) focused on trade and life skills.
- **NOVA Workforce Development:** Offers continuing education and professional development training for today's workforce. Learn new, in-demand skills, or prepare for industry credentials, and advance careers.
- **TeensWork! - Alexandria Department of Community & Human Services/JobLink:** Designed to help youth obtain and retain employment year round. Youth and young adults are paired with a Youth Employment Counselor who assists them in obtaining the skills necessary to succeed in the world of work.