



Affordability for All Work Group Meeting #4

(working title)

Children & Youth Community Plan
September, 2026





WELCOME

& Introductions



Introductions

Please share your name, role or organization, and answer:

What's a recommendation you followed that turned out to be either great or terrible?



Agenda

Welcome, Introductions, Purpose, & Where we Are in the Process

15 min

Revisit & Refine our Strategic Direction

10 min

Who are the partners who have a role to play?

Who should be involved in our efforts to promote financial stability? What existing assets can we build upon?

20-25 min

What Works to Turn the Curve?

Use research and youth recommendations to brainstorm what we could do together

35-40 min

Next steps, Announcements, & Close

5 min



Meeting Purpose

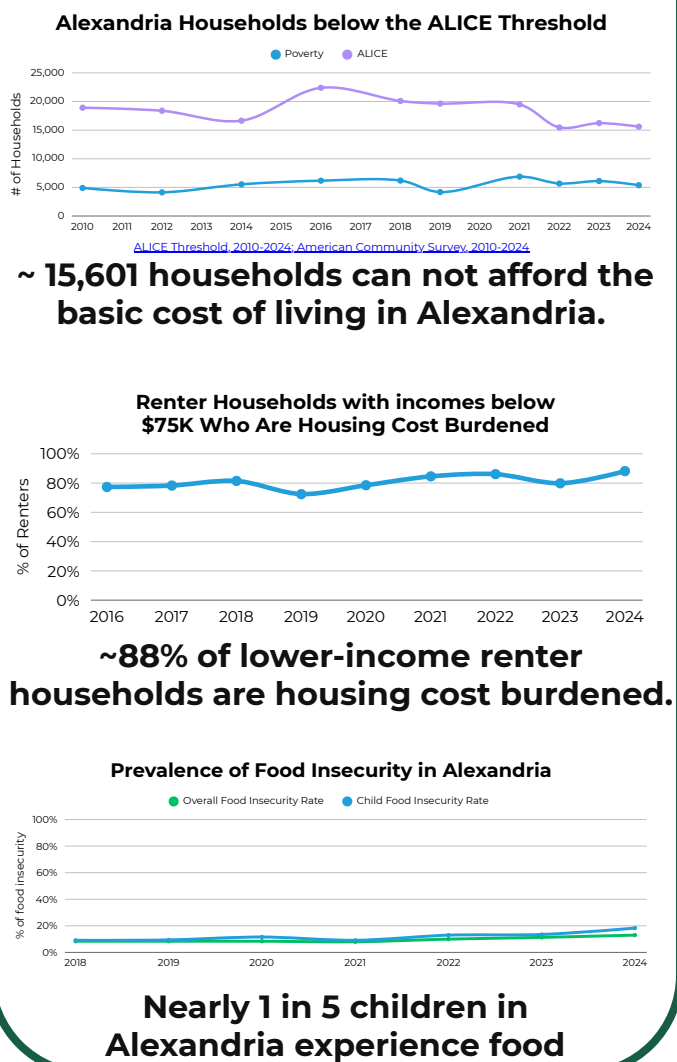
To refine our strategic direction, identify the partners and assets needed to advance it, and use research and youth ideas to brainstorm what we could do together.



Results-Based Accountability: Turn the Curve Thinking



1. How are we doing?



2. What's the story behind these conditions?

- Wages Have Not Kept Pace with the Cost of Living
- Fragmented systems make financial instability harder to navigate
- Structural racism & inequitable access to wealth-building
- Rising Costs of Essentials Force Impossible Tradeoffs
- Income & Employment Shocks, & Lack of an Emergency Buffer
- Eligibility Gaps - families needing help before a crisis
- Benefits access, cliffs, & administrative burden
- Limited access to college & career pathways & good jobs

3. Who are the partners who have a role to play?

TODAY

4. What works to improve these conditions?

5. What are we going to do?



Revisit & Refine our Strategic Direction



Priority Area

Strategic Direction

Approach



Affordability for All

Affordable Housing

Food Security

Financial Stability

Healthcare, Child Care, Family Supports

Resource Navigation

Align with & Strengthen Established Efforts: Housing Master Plan & CWS Strategic Plan

Align with & Strengthen Established Effort: Partnership to Prevent & End Homelessness Strategic Plan

Align with & Strengthen Established Effort: Food Security Action Plan & CWS Strategic Plan

Forming a Work Group

Align with & Strengthen Established Efforts: Kids' First Years Common Agenda

Align with & Strengthen Established Effort: CWS Strategic Plan & **Organizing Existing Group** (Youth Services Coordinating Council)

The development of this plan has been guided by a two-pronged approach.

In some cases, there are already established plans and initiatives in place. In those cases, our role is to identify opportunities for alignment and contribution.

In other areas, efforts are still emerging, and CYCP can play a more active role in helping shape, coordinate, or launch those efforts.

Where strong efforts already exist, we want to strengthen them. Where gaps exist, we want to help fill them.



Revisit & Refine our Strategic Direction



Result

Every family has what they need to live with stability and thrive in Alexandria.

Strategic Direction

Make living costs more manageable by helping families earn more, access direct financial support, and reduce everyday financial pressure.

Discussion Summary: *We decided that this strategic direction is too broad to clearly communicate what our work group could actually do. What would it mean for this group to “help families earn more” and “reduce everyday financial pressure”? We thought that our strategy may become clearer once we have considered existing resources, evidence about what works, and youth recommendations.*



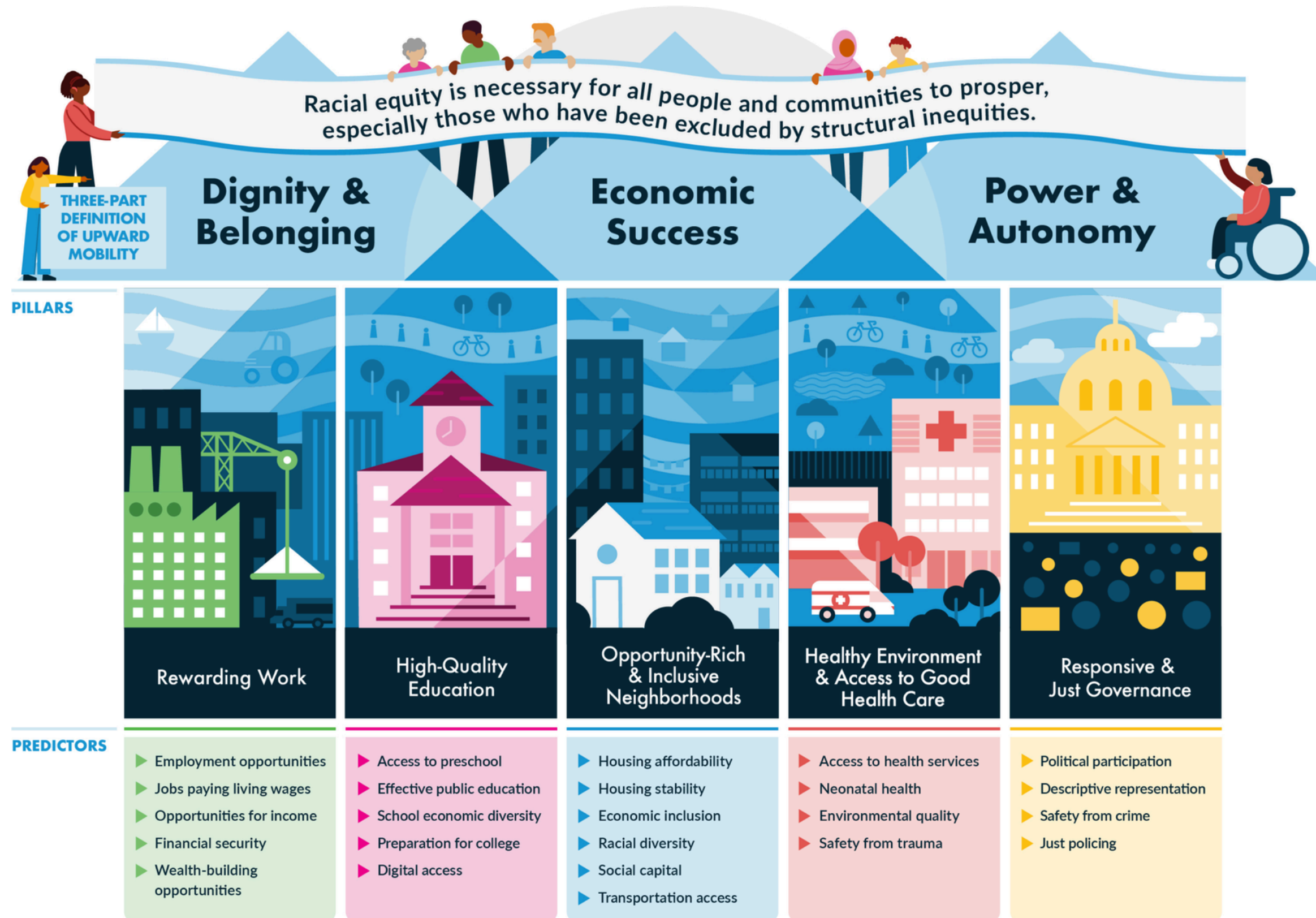
Partners

Who has a role in
advancing this strategy?





The Existing Ecosystem of Upward Mobility Supports in Alexandria

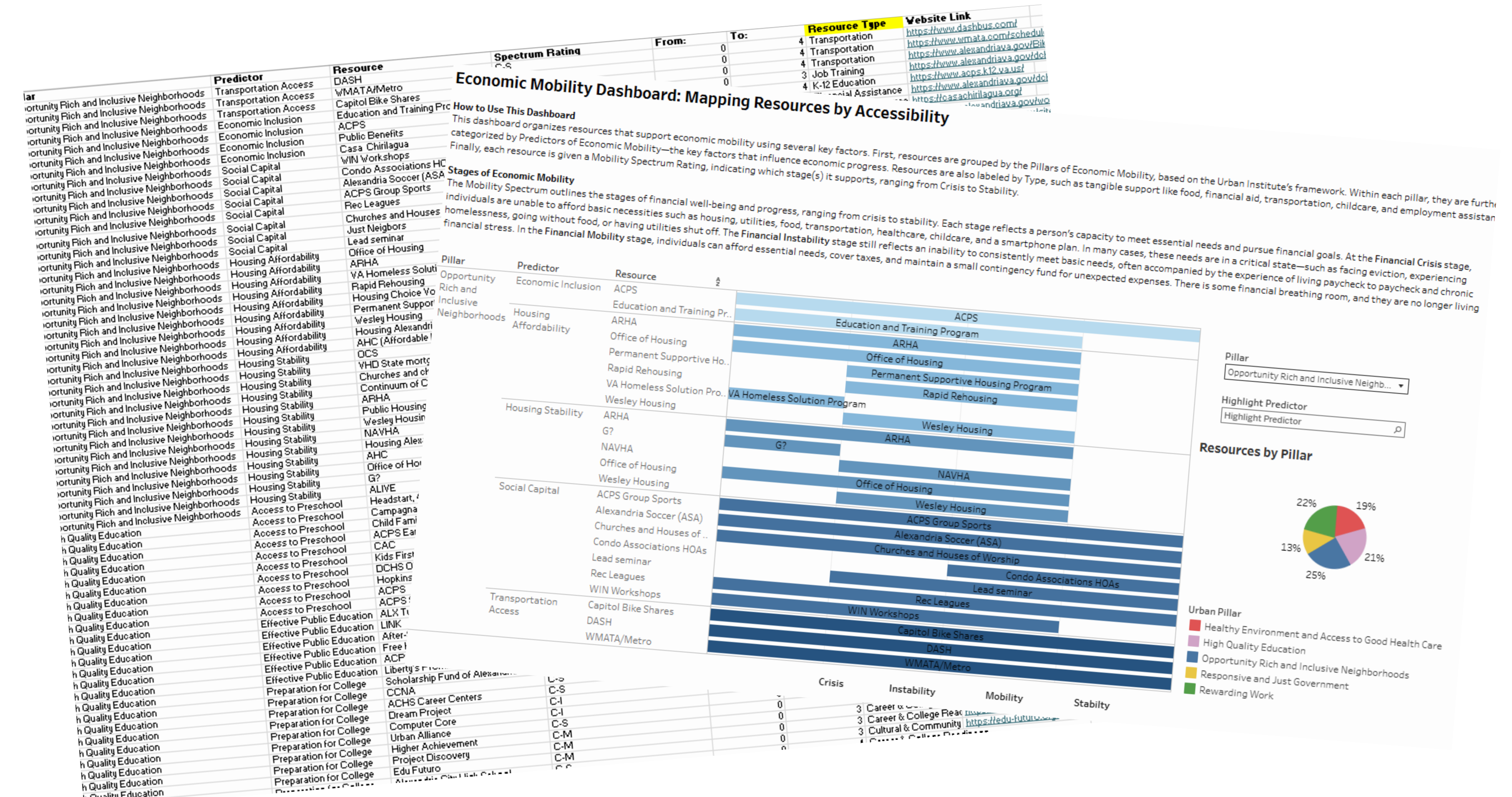


Julie shares the Urban Institute-based ecosystem map

The Urban Institute's Upward Mobility Framework

upward-mobility.urban.org/framework

Is there a path to economic stability in ALX?





Who needs to be connected?



SYSTEMS & INFLUENCE

Who has the influence, resources, authority, or power to change conditions?

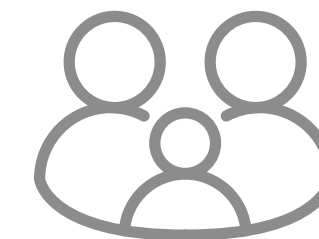
systems, institutions, government, decision-makers, employers, corporations, funders...

Are they connected?

TRUST & PROXIMITY

When families are struggling financially, who are they most likely to trust or turn to?

family, social networks, schools, community orgs, tribal communities, civic associations, faith communities, teams/clubs, frontline staff..



Young people and families should be at the center of identifying priorities and shaping solutions.



For each area: Who are the key partners who can influence the conditions? Who has trust and proximity to families?



Crisis Prevention & Financial Safety Net

For example, emergency savings, credit, cash assistance, etc.

Group named: DCHS Office of Community Services (OCS); faith-based community; ALIVE!; ACT for Alexandria; Salvation Army



Education & Career Pathways

For example, education, training, career pathways, etc.

Group named: ACHS Career & Technical Education/Academy; ACT for Alexandria/internship efforts; workforce-development partners; nonprofits & schools providing financial literacy/management courses (also named a gap - no financial literacy courses for adults)



Income Supports & Benefits

For example, benefits, tax credits, direct assistance, etc.

Group named: DCHS benefits/eligibility services; OCS; ALIVE!; faith-based organizations; Salvation Army (we also identified a gap here - there's next to nothing in place to prevent a family reaching a crisis. No financial supports.)



Wealth-Building Opportunities

For example, savings, assets, homeownership, etc.

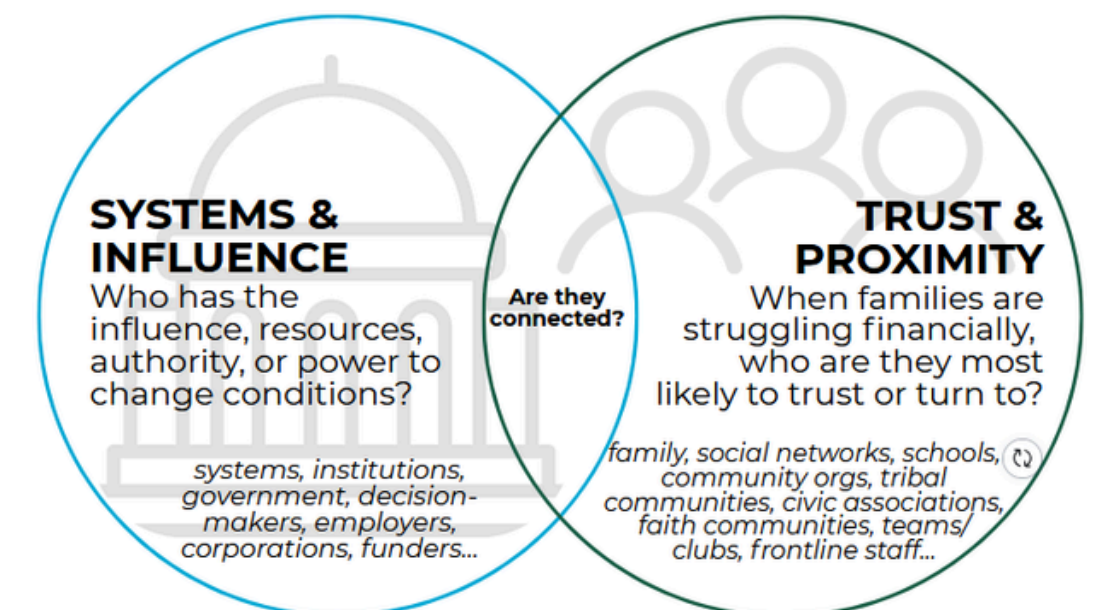
Group named: City homeownership programs; free/pro bono tax-preparation services



Increase Income & Job Quality

For example, wages, employment, job quality, etc.

Group named: Workforce Development Center; private employment services; Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP); Small Business Administration / small-business and entrepreneurship supports





What Works

What could help
improve conditions?





Racial equity is necessary for all people and communities to prosper, especially those who have been excluded by structural inequities.

THREE-PART
DEFINITION
OF UPWARD
MOBILITY

**Dignity &
Belonging**

**Economic
Success**

**Power &
Autonomy**



What works to help improve upward mobility?

The Urban Institute's Upward Mobility Framework

upward-mobility.urban.org/framework

PILLARS



Rewarding Work



High-Quality
Education



Opportunity-Rich
& Inclusive
Neighborhoods



Healthy Environment
& Access to Good
Health Care



Responsive &
Just Governance

PREDICTORS

- ▶ Employment opportunities
- ▶ Jobs paying living wages
- ▶ Opportunities for income
- ▶ Financial security
- ▶ Wealth-building opportunities

- ▶ Access to preschool
- ▶ Effective public education
- ▶ School economic diversity
- ▶ Preparation for college
- ▶ Digital access

- ▶ Housing affordability
- ▶ Housing stability
- ▶ Economic inclusion
- ▶ Racial diversity
- ▶ Social capital
- ▶ Transportation access

- ▶ Access to health services
- ▶ Neonatal health
- ▶ Environmental quality
- ▶ Safety from trauma

- ▶ Political participation
- ▶ Descriptive representation
- ▶ Safety from crime
- ▶ Just policing



CAMBER
COLLECTIVE

Pathways to economic mobility

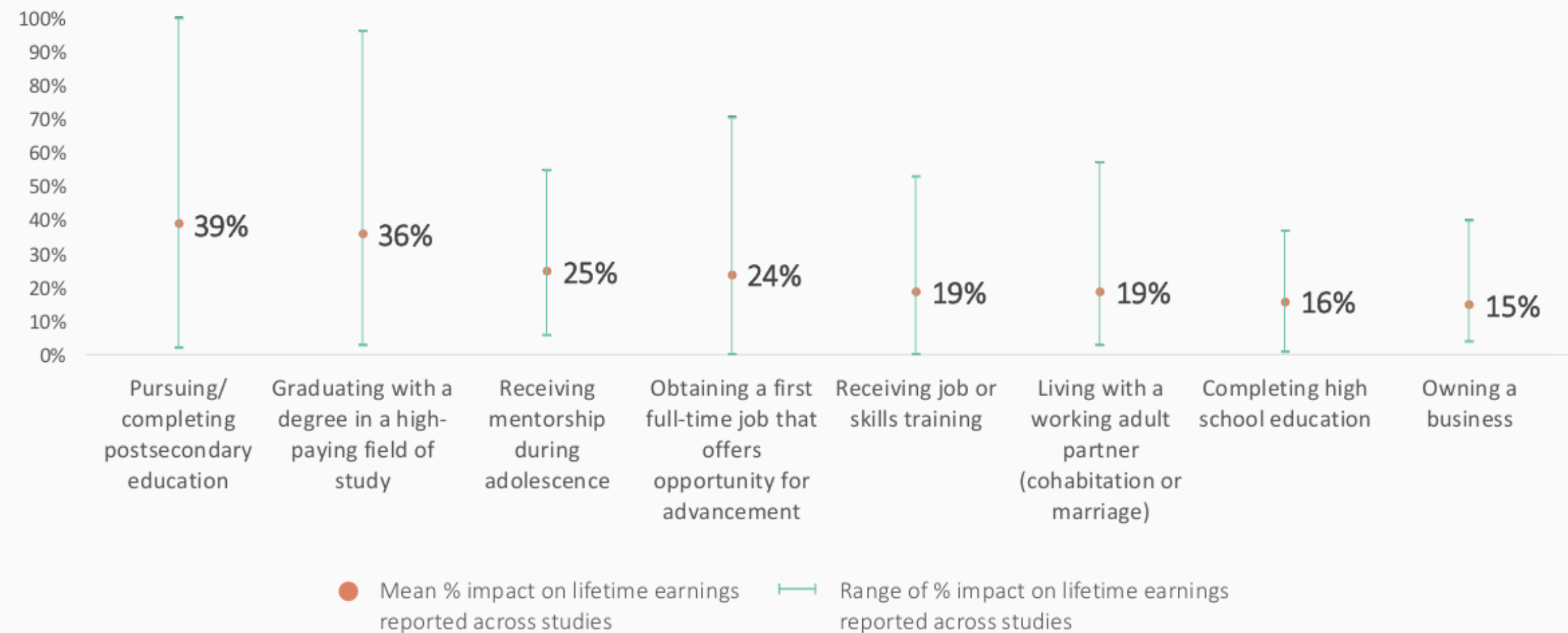
What enables economic mobility? We analyzed hundreds of research studies and surveyed thousands of Americans to identify 28 life experiences that drive lifetime income. We call them the **Mobility Experiences**.

[Read the Insights](#)

8 experiences boost lifetime
income by 15% or more
according to academic research



Estimated Impact of Top 8 Life Experiences on Lifetime Earnings

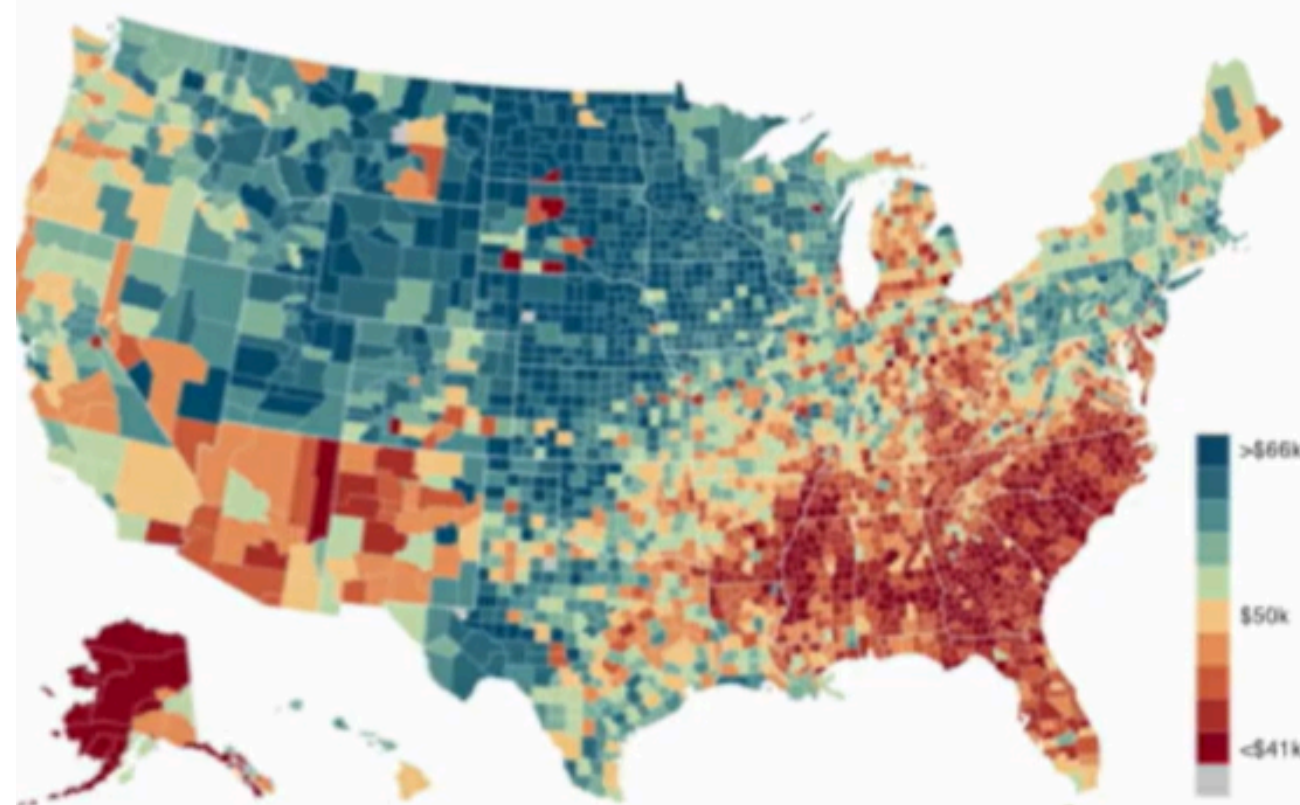


Social connectedness is single strongest predictor of people rising out of poverty



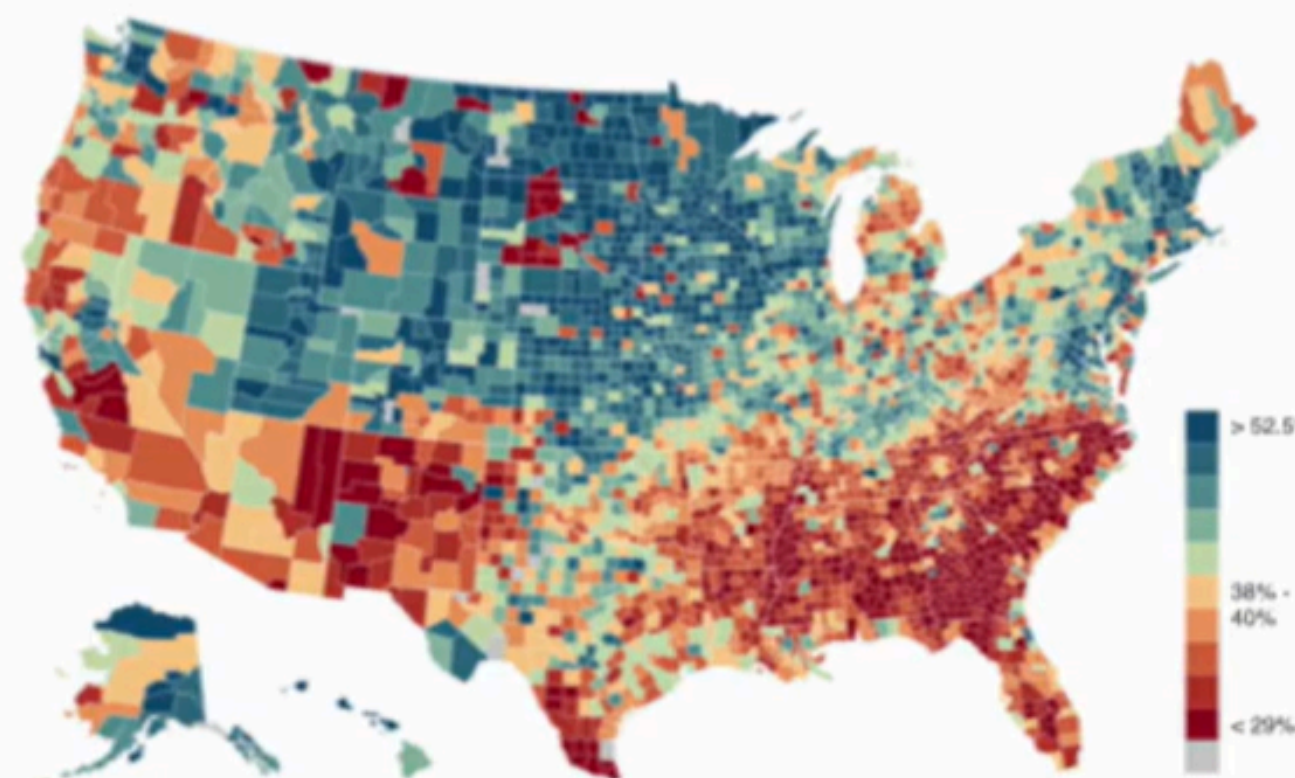
Economic Opportunity and Social Capital

Upward Mobility
Based on Tax Records



Average Household Income at Age 35
for Children whose Parents Earned \$41k

Economic Connectedness Based
on Facebook Data



Share of Above-Median-Income Friends
among Below-Median-Income People



What Works to Improve Conditions?

What research says works



Root Cause/Problem	What research says works to support upward mobility
Families needing help before a crisis	Rewarding Work (Financial Security) • Access to income and material supports; • Simpler, coordinated access to benefits (Herd & Moynihan); • Money & financial resources that help families meet needs and prevent hardship from escalating (Urban Institute) • Help families withstand financial shocks through emergency savings, and build a financial cushion (Urban Institute)
Fragmented systems, benefits access, cliffs & administrative burden	
Rising costs of essentials force impossible tradeoffs	
Income & employment shocks & lack of an emergency buffer	
Wages have not kept pace with the cost of living	Rewarding Work (Employment, Wages, & Income) • Employment opportunities, jobs paying living wages, opportunities for income and work that provides economic security (Urban Institute)
Limited access to college, career pathways & good jobs	High-Quality Education (Preparation for College) • Expand accessible education, training, credentials, paid work-based learning and pathways to quality jobs (Community Health Rankings)
Inequitable access to wealth-building	Rewarding Work (Wealth-Building Opportunities) • Equitable opportunities to build assets and wealth, including through savings, capital and sustainable homeownership (Urban Institute 1, 2, 3)



What Works to Improve Conditions?

Youth Recommendations

alexandriava.gov/child-and-family-services/children-and-youth-community-plan-report-cards#CommunityReportCardsmadebyYouth



Make assistance easier to access before families reach crisis

Simplify applications for rent, utilities, and other assistance; reduce eligibility and administrative barriers; expand support for ALICE households; increase awareness; and help families before eviction or another financial crisis occurs.

Help families cover essential expenses

Expand rental, utility, emergency cash, and other financial assistance that helps families afford basic needs and remain stable.

Make schools and community spaces hubs for support

Create accessible places where families can connect to food, clothing, hygiene products, school supplies, health services, housing assistance, and other resources in one place.

Make resources easier to find and navigate

Regularly promote food assistance, SNAP, tenant rights, financial supports, and other resources through schools, social media, flyers, hotlines, trusted messengers, and community outreach.

Mobilize community partners around basic needs

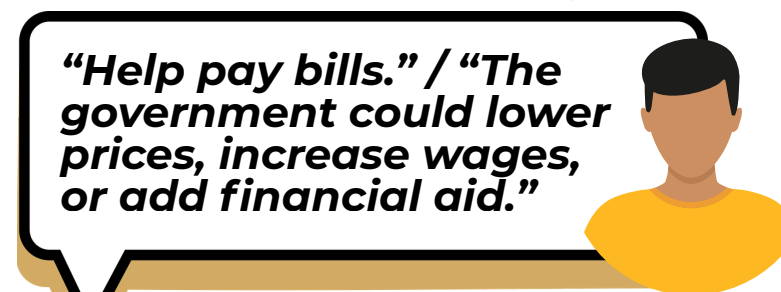
Coordinate schools, food providers, faith communities, businesses, farmers, volunteers, and community organizations to provide food and essential supplies through food drives, donation drives, distributions, and permanent resource centers.



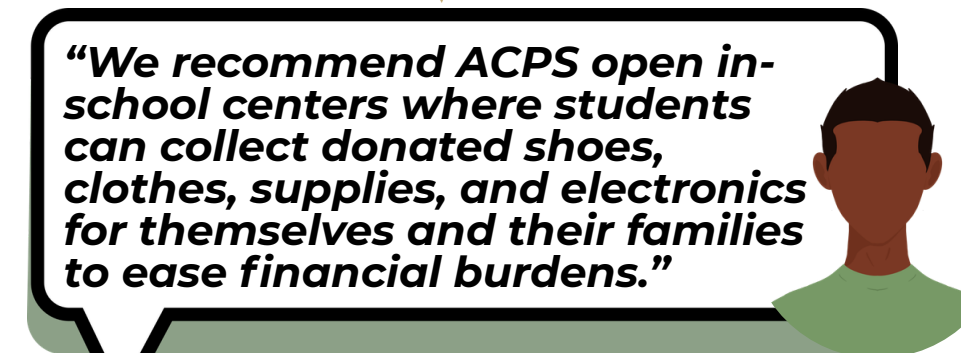
"Seeking help through local organizations before it escalates."



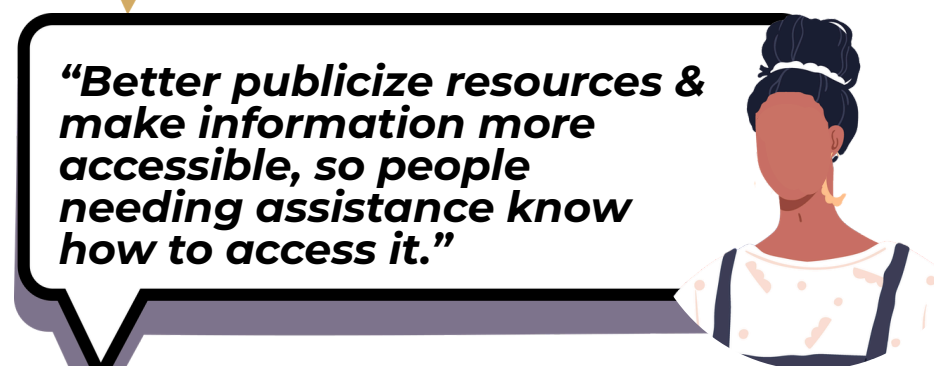
"Prevent families from receiving eviction notices."



"Help pay bills." / "The government could lower prices, increase wages, or add financial aid."



"We recommend ACPS open in-school centers where students can collect donated shoes, clothes, supplies, and electronics for themselves and their families to ease financial burdens."



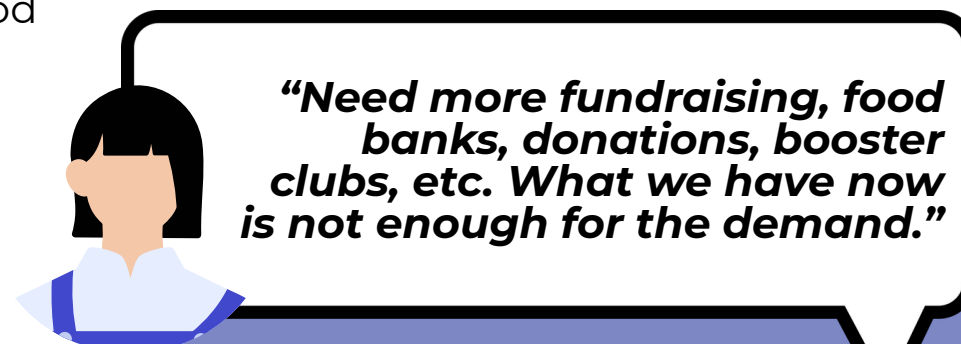
"Better publicize resources & make information more accessible, so people needing assistance know how to access it."



"Raise awareness of resources through parent square emails."



"Get the social worker to help."



"Need more fundraising, food banks, donations, booster clubs, etc. What we have now is not enough for the demand."



"Help for non-native English speakers find jobs"



What Works to Improve Conditions?

Youth Recommendations

alexandriava.gov/child-and-family-services/children-and-youth-community-plan-report-cards#CommunityReportCardsmadebyYouth



Provide direct financial support

Invest in cash assistance and guaranteed-income approaches like ARISE that give families flexibility to manage high living costs and financial emergencies.

Reduce the financial pressure on families

Work with City and state partners on tax, fee, and cost-reduction policies that leave families with more resources to meet everyday needs.

Increase wages and access to good jobs

Advocate for living wages, worker protections, affordable employer healthcare, and family-supporting jobs; partner with employers to expand quality job opportunities.

Expand education and career pathways

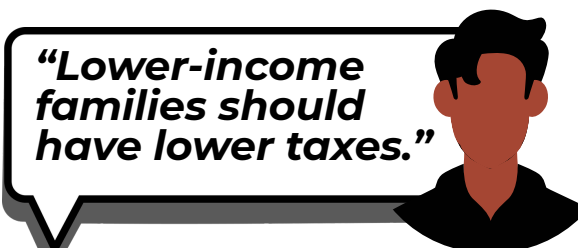
Increase access to free college courses, vocational training, paid internships, job training, and pathways to living-wage careers, particularly for youth, caregivers, immigrants, and residents with limited English proficiency.

Build practical financial knowledge

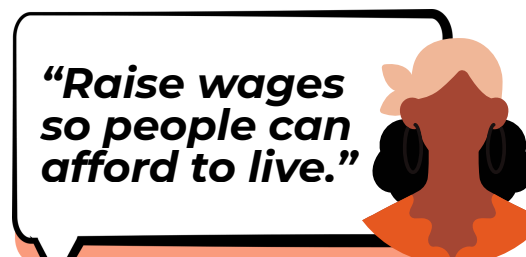
Provide age-appropriate, multilingual education on budgeting, leases and tenant rights, utilities, grocery costs, emergency savings, and other everyday financial decisions from school age through adulthood.



"Money to give to families."



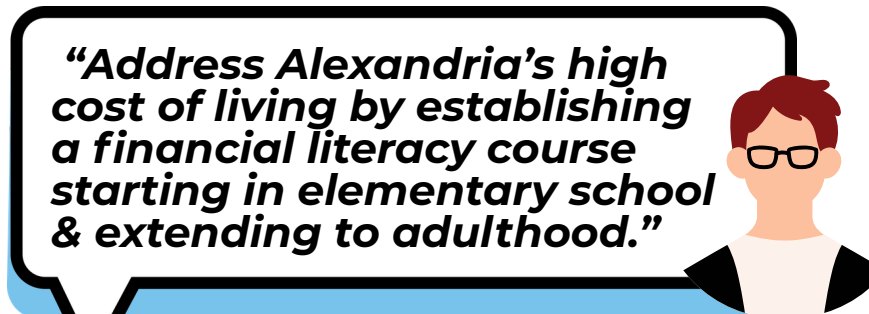
"Lower-income families should have lower taxes."



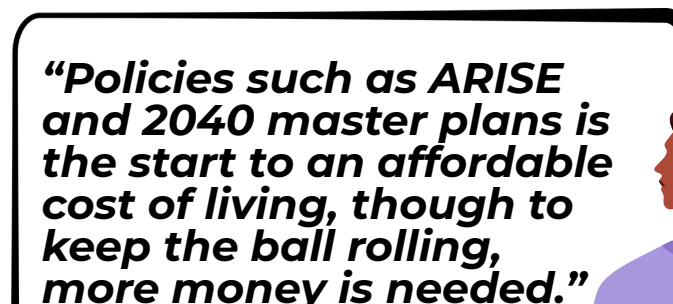
"Raise wages so people can afford to live."



"Education helps people get higher paying jobs."



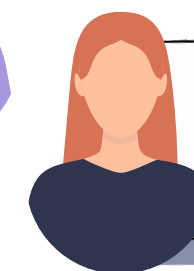
"Address Alexandria's high cost of living by establishing a financial literacy course starting in elementary school & extending to adulthood."



"Policies such as ARISE and 2040 master plans is the start to an affordable cost of living, though to keep the ball rolling, more money is needed."



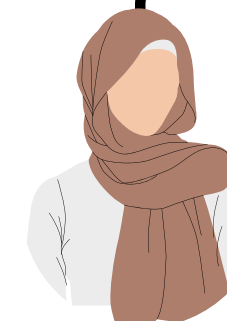
"The government could lower prices, increase wages, or add financial aid."



"No-interest loans."



"Discounts."



"Incentivize large employers to increase wages and offer affordable healthcare."



What do you think would work? What could we do together in the first year?



Directions:

1. **Brainstorm Ideas (5 minutes)** On your own: Write down as many possible Year-One actions as you can. Brainstorm actions we could do together over the next year to advance our strategy. One idea/sticky note.
2. **Share & Categorize Ideas (10 minutes)** Share your ideas with the group. Together we will group & combine similar ideas.

Link to Whiteboard: canva.link/qpewj5i3fumwy2b



Next Steps





Next Steps & Announcements



- **Next Meeting:** October 1
- Prioritize 1-2 ideas brainstormed today
- Build an action plan around those ideas

Announcements?

- Check out latest recommendations from youth ([Report Cards Made by Youth](#))!
- Anything you want to share/think we should know?