

Youth Recommendations for Strengthening Household Financial Stability

Increase Wages and Access to Good Jobs

Raise wages so families can better afford basic needs. Students recommended raising the minimum wage and advocating for fair wages.

Sources: *Jonathan Gonzales, Cost of Living, 2025; and Elyas, Cost of Living, 2025*



"...raise the minimum wage..."

~ Jonathan Gonzales, 2025

Strengthen worker protections and encourage large employers to offer affordable healthcare. One student recommended improving protections for workers and giving large employers incentives to increase wages and provide healthcare their employees can afford (*Gonzales, 2025).*

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

~ Gonzales, 2025

Create more jobs that pay a livable wage. One student recommended working with local employers and businesses to create more job opportunities that pay enough for families to live on (*Elyas, 2025*).

"...work with local employers to create more liveable wage jobs."

~ Elyas, 2025



Expand Education and Career Pathways

Offer free college courses and vocational training to community members. One student recommended making these learning opportunities available as part of a broader effort to help families manage Alexandria's high cost of living *(Gonzales, 2025).*

"...and provide free college courses or vocational training for community members."

~ Gonzales, 2025

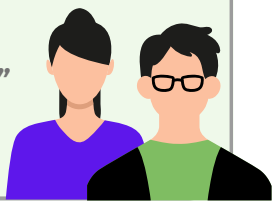
Provide Direct Financial Support to Families

Provide more funding for programs that give families direct financial support. Students pointed to ARISE, which provided monthly payments to participating residents, as an example of a program helping families manage high living costs. They recommended investing more money in efforts like this so the community can continue moving toward greater affordability.

Source: *Alora Denby and Ethan Sinor, Cost of Living's Effect on People of Color (2025)*

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

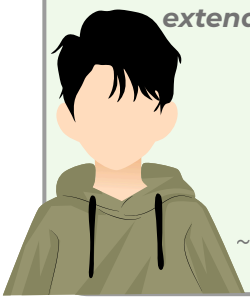
~ Alora Denby & Ethan Sinor, 2025



Build Financial Knowledge and Skills

Provide practical financial and housing education beginning at a young age and continuing through adulthood. Students recommended education on budgeting, tenant rights, leases, grocery shopping, utilities, emergency savings, and other everyday financial skills through schools, workshops, and multilingual community programs to help youth and families navigate Alexandria's high cost of living.

Source: *Clark, Cost of Living and Education, 2026*



"Establishing a financial literacy course starting in elementary school & extending to adulthood... [can embed] practical skills, like budgeting for local rent and understanding tenant rights."

~ Micheal Clark, 2026