



Affordability for All Work Group

(working title)

Children & Youth Community Plan
June 25, 2026





Agenda

Welcome, Introductions & Purpose	15 min
Results-Based Accountability & Turn the Curve Thinking	7–10 min
Spectrum of Financial Stability	8–10 min
What do the data tell us?	50 min
Emerging opportunity, next steps & closing	10 min



WELCOME

& Introductions



Introductions

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

You unexpectedly receive \$10,000 tomorrow with no strings attached. What is the first thing you would do with it?



Meeting Purpose

To build a shared language around financial stability and develop a shared understanding of the current conditions we are trying to change.



Where We Are in the Work Group Arc

**Launch &
Orientation**

Meeting #1

**Understand
the Situation**

Meeting #2

**Explore Solutions
& Existing Efforts**

Meetings #3–5

**Build the
Action Plan**

Meetings #6–8

**Finalize &
Commit**

Meeting #9

**Outcome for
today:**

Shared understanding of the issue and the factors shaping economic mobility and financial stability for Alexandria youth and families.



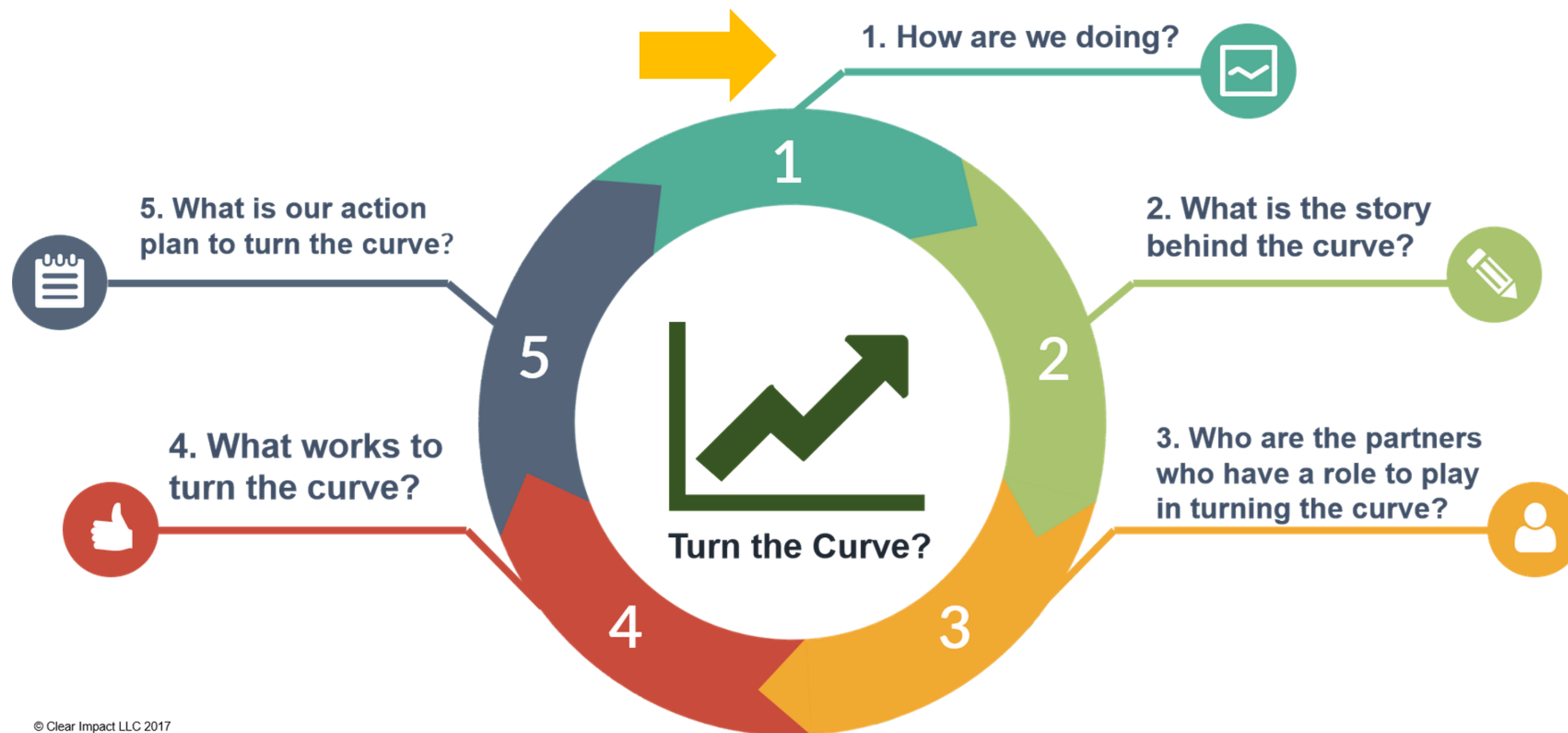
Results-Based Accountability & Turn the Curve Thinking





Results-Based Accountability: Turn the Curve Thinking

A structure for moving from shared concern to measurable action.



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Start with the Result

The condition of wellbeing we want for children, youth, and families.



Result

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

Guiding question for this work group

How can we better align and strengthen community efforts that help families build financial stability, reduce economic stress, and access pathways to economic mobility?



Spectrum of Financial Stability





Shared Vocabulary: Spectrum of Financial Stability

A common language for discussing conditions, experiences, and outcomes.

Crisis	Instability	Survival	Mobility	Stability
Inability to afford basic needs, with some needs in critical state: eviction notice, lack of housing, lack of food and/or utilities shut off.	Inconsistent ability to afford basic needs. Extreme precarity, feeling “stuck,” and little belief circumstances can improve.	Approaching ability to afford basic needs. Living paycheck to paycheck, juggling bills, prioritizing household needs.	Ability to afford basic needs plus a contingency fund to cover unexpected expenses. Some financial breathing room.	Ability to afford needs, characterized by a sense of stability and freedom over time.

Basic needs include: housing, utilities, food, transportation, healthcare, childcare, smartphone plan, and taxes.



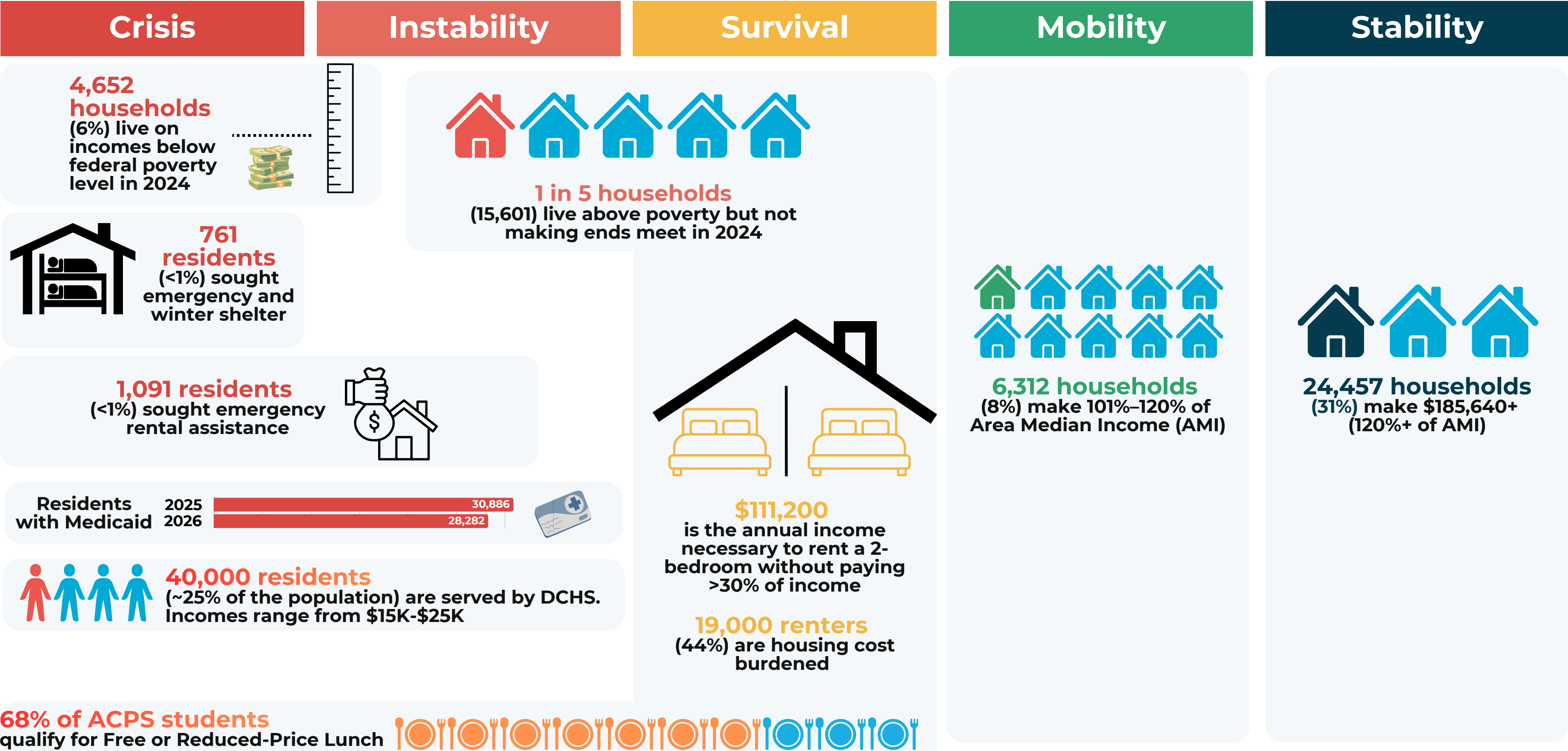
**What the data say about
how we are doing**



How Do Residents Fall Along the Spectrum?

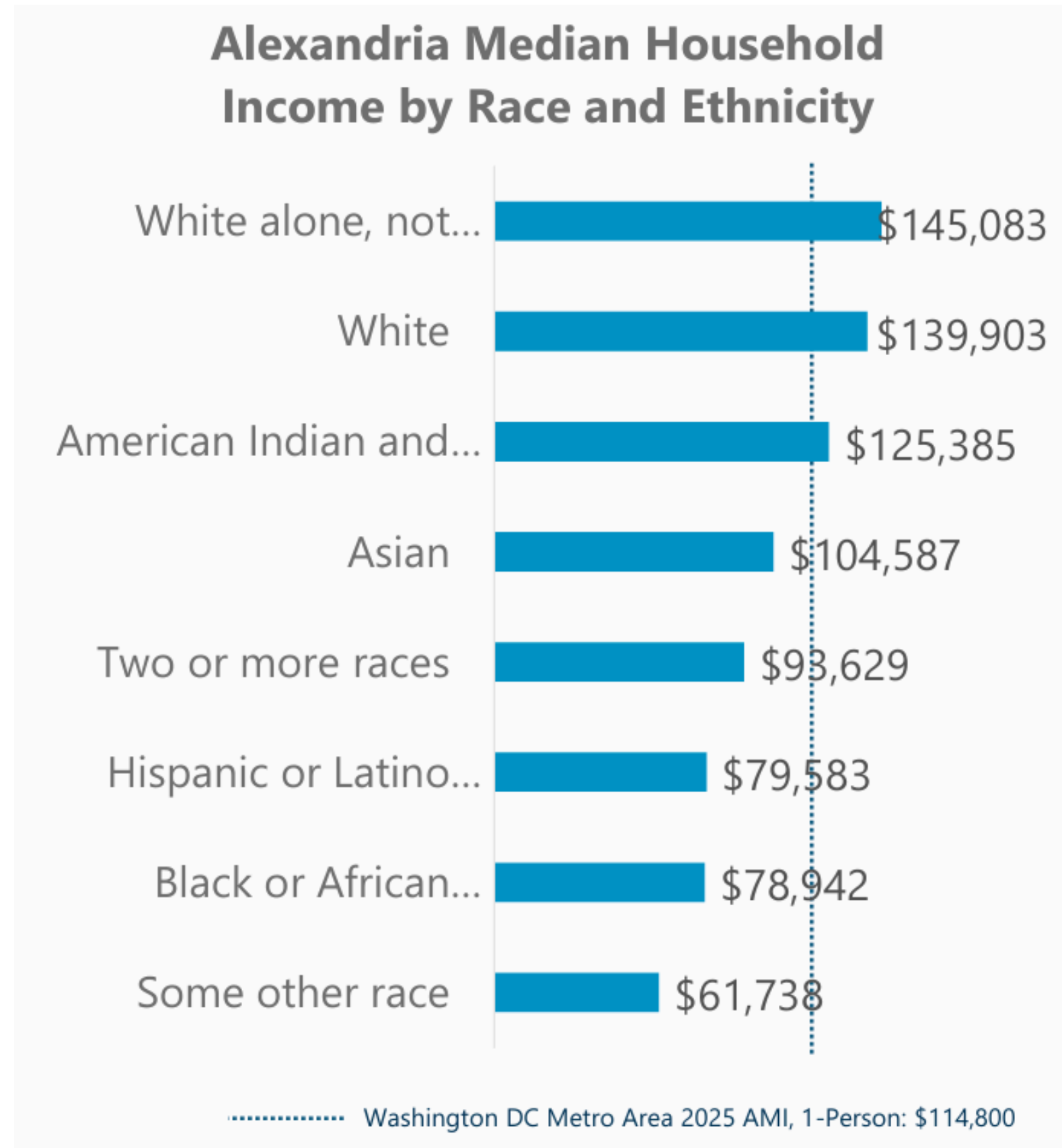
A snapshot using available local indicators.

Sources include United for ALICE, ACS, Housing 2040 Quantitative Analysis, DCHS data, SNAP/Medicaid enrollment, and ACPs FRPL eligibility.





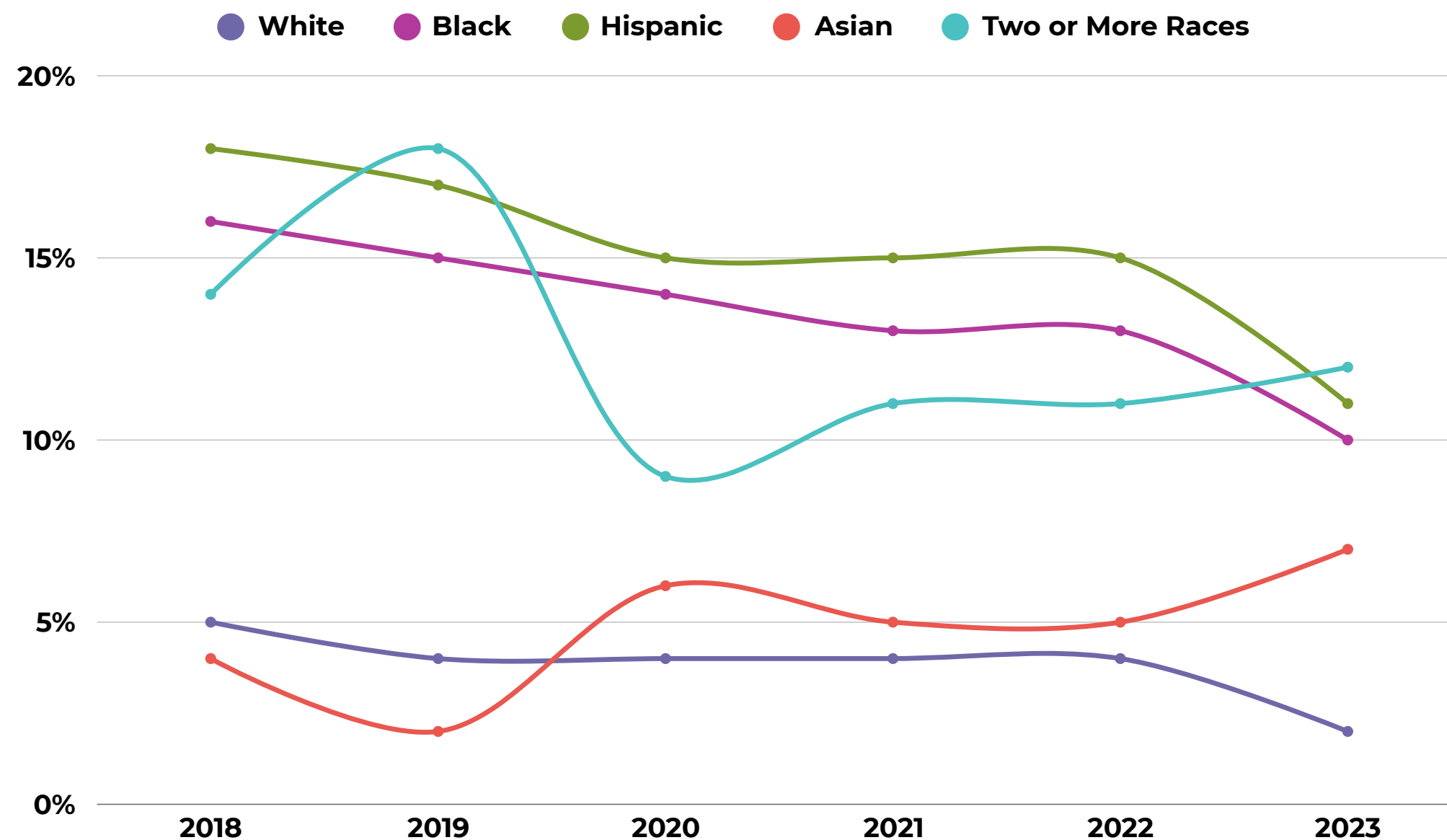
Median Income Disaggregated by Race





Childhood Poverty: Trends and Disparities

Overall child poverty is declining, but disparities persist.



Key takeaways

- Black, Hispanic, and Multiracial children are disproportionately affected.
- In 2023, children of color were 6× more likely to live in poverty than White children.
- White children's poverty rates remained below 5% across all years.

Discussion: What does this trend help us understand?



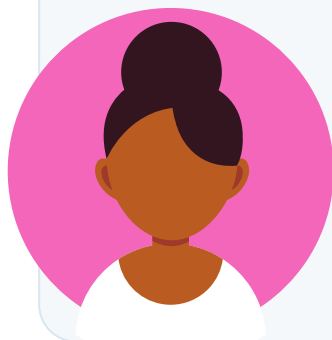
Spectrum of Financial Stability

ARISE participants share their experience with financial instability and what \$500 a month did for their sense of stability.

Crisis

"Life is hard. You wake up some days, and you're like, I don't know if I can even brush my teeth today. I just must get up to make sure my babies are good, and they're clothed, and they're not feeling the heaviness of all of this . . .

They're allowed to be children, and I have to honor that for them, even if it wasn't for me."



"It helped me so much. At the time...my daughter got critically ill - she was hospitalized for almost a month. The doctors didn't think she'd survive. I couldn't work for a year - she needed round-the-clock care...I was drowning with unpaid rent and court notices. Then I won the \$500. It kept us afloat."



Instability

"With two girls...they eat like . . . Every week . . . I'm back at the store.

Groceries. . . They're always asking for this and that. Sometimes I can't say yes. Even though the \$500 didn't last the whole month, it gave me one week of breathing room."



Survival

"Running up short and not being able to have that little cushion to...not have to work a second job so I can take a class that I need to...so I can get a certification that I need to get a better job. Because then it's just always like, you don't have the time because you must go to one job to the next, try to get any kind of sleep and then keep going. So, it's just a big merry around...just doing the same thing over and over again."



"With my job, I managed. But the program was a lifesaver during my pregnancy. Still, even with work, there's never enough. What I earn as a woman? It's never enough. There's always something missing at home."

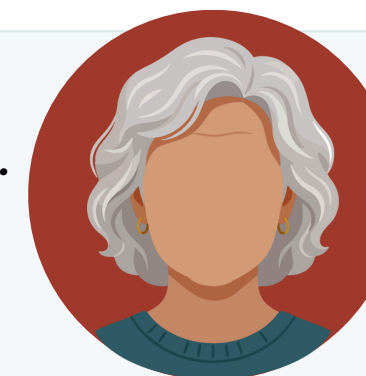


Mobility

"When this happened, my brother, he passed away, but he had been diagnosed with bone cancer . . . He lived in Philadelphia...Having this extra money allowed me to go back and forth to see him along his final journey in life. Without this, I wouldn't been able to go back and forth to see him. . . . I was so happy that I had...this extra benefit..."



"Last year, thanks to this, I bought my grandson a jacket. He's a bit chubby, so nothing fit him. When I put it under the tree, he asked, 'Grandma, how'd you afford this?' I said, 'Baby Jesus brought it!' It was the first time I could give him something sweet like that."

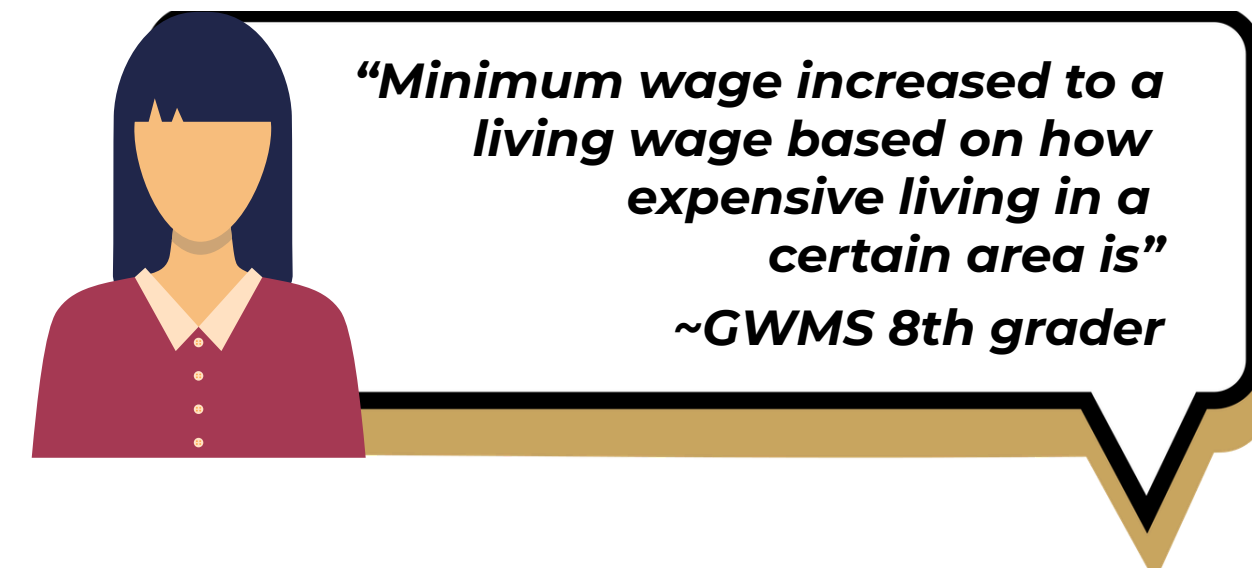
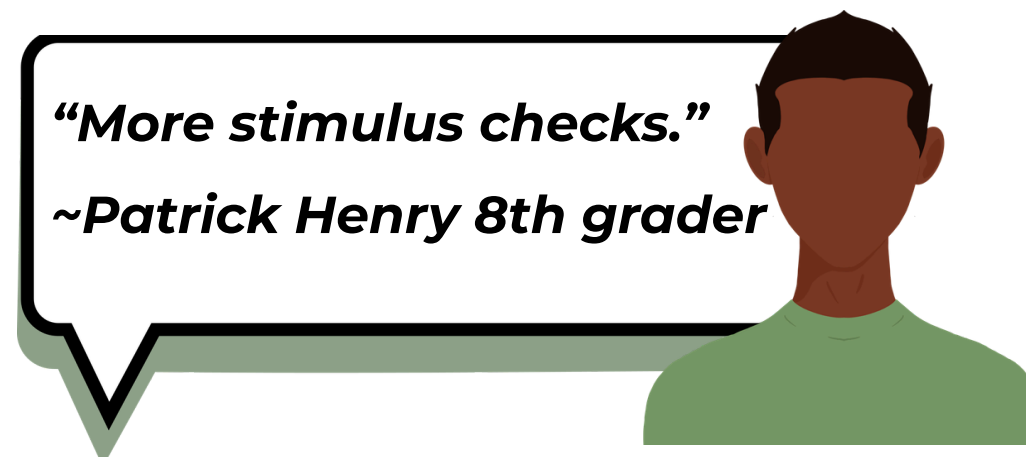
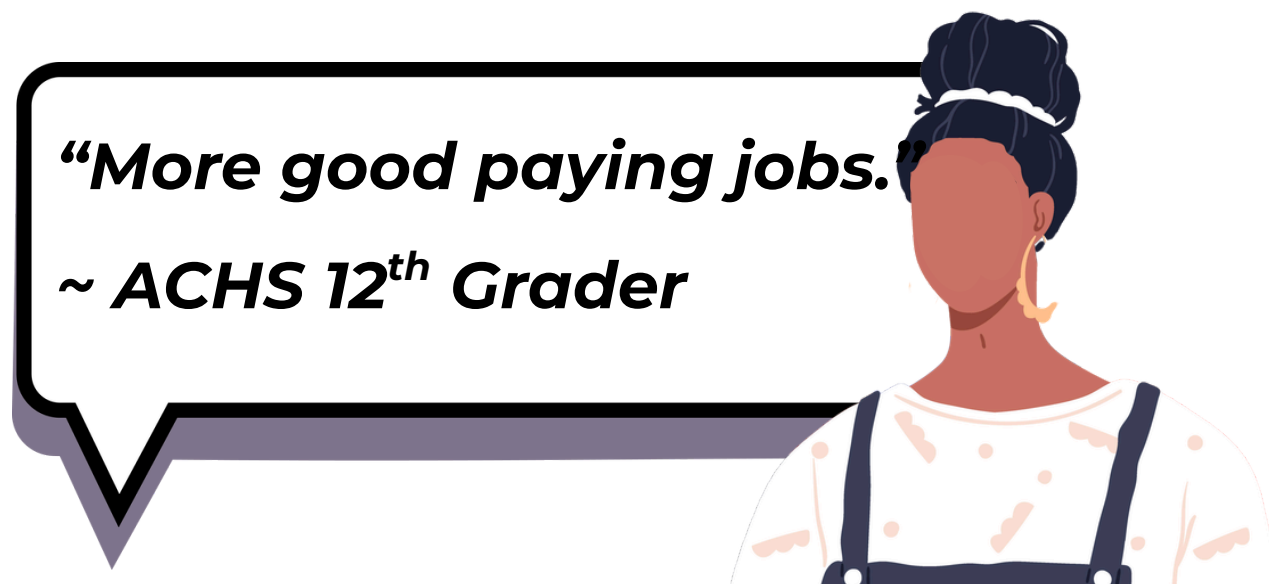
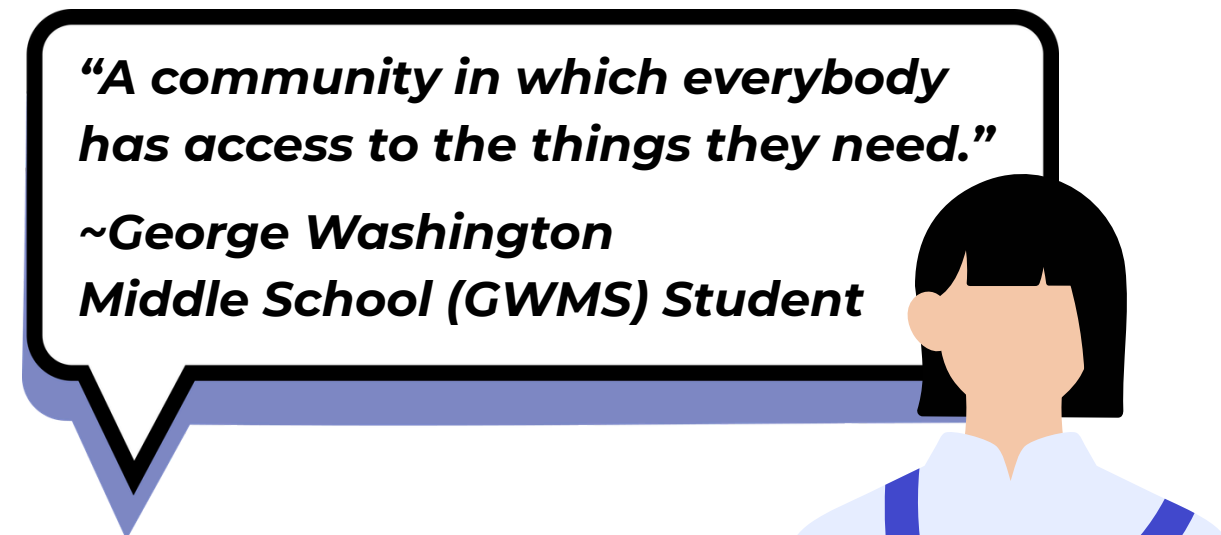




What we heard from youth: What's driving their experiences



What Youth Want (Ideal Future)

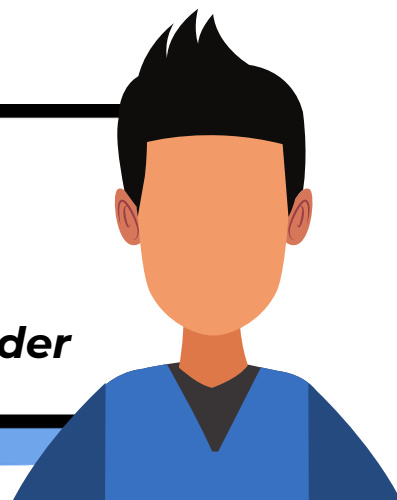




vs. What Youth Experience (Current Reality)

**"It is very expensive
just to live here."**

~Patrick Henry 8th grader



**"A lot of people don't get
paid much and can't afford
a lot of things."**

~ GWMS Student



**"Many students are
struggling financially and
are not getting support."**

~ACHS Student



**"Jobs that take up too
much time for parents."**

~ GWMS Student



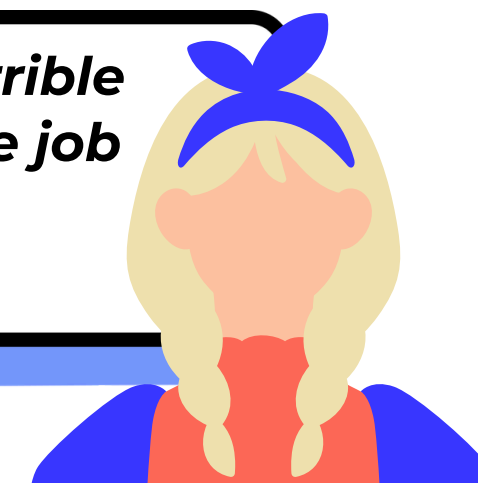
**"Some people don't get
everything they need."**

- Alexandria 12th Grader



**"Alexandria has...horrible
housing with horrible job
opportunities."**

~ Hammond Student





4,652 households
(6%) live on incomes below federal poverty level in 2024



1 in 5 households
(15,601) live above poverty but not making ends meet in 2024



\$111,200
is the annual income necessary to rent a 2-bedroom without paying >30% of income

Residents with Medicaid

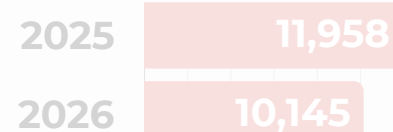


1,091 residents
(<1%) sought emergency rental assistance



489 residents
(<1%) sought emergency shelter

Residents enrolled in SNAP

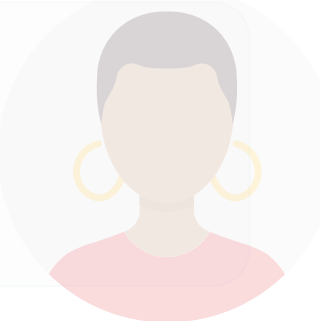


Discussion:

- What stands out to you from these data and stories?
- What data point or quote feels especially important for this work group to keep in mind?

"Many students tend to come to school tired due to worrying about their families."

"With my job, I managed. But the program was a lifesaver during my pregnancy. Still, even with work, there's never enough. What I earn as a woman? It's not enough. It feels like something is missing at the end of the day."



40,000 residents
(~25% of the population) are served by DCHS. Incomes range from \$15K-\$25K

"...it has become a nightmare to balance eating food and healthcare, ultimately leaving you to choose between the two. With the rising costs of childcare and health care, it has grown increasingly harder for people to get the essential necessities for their kids."

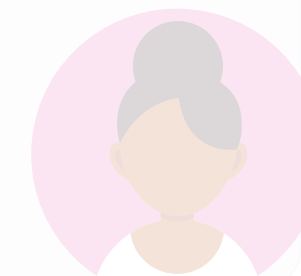
~Alexandria 8th grader



68% of ACPS students qualify for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

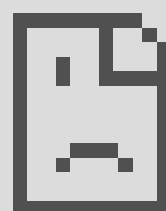


"It's so hard. You wake up some days, and you're like, I don't know if I can even brush my teeth today. I just must get up to make sure my babies are good, and they're clothed, and they're not feeling the heaviness of all of this...They're allowed to be children, and I have to honor that for them, even if it wasn't for me."





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Emerging Opportunity, Next Steps, & Closing





Looking Ahead: An Emerging Opportunity



The City is beginning to build an Office of Financial Empowerment!

- Builds on lessons from ARISE and other economic stability efforts
- May create new opportunities to strengthen financial stability and reduce economic stress
- Could be an opportunity for this Work Group to explore and help shape over time!



Next Steps & Closing



- Next time we meet, we will identify root causes and begin mapping existing efforts, resources, and partners
- Confirm next meeting: **August 6, 3:30-5:00 p.m.** (with "CYCP Office Hours" from 3-3:30)
- Thank you!