

Youth Recommendations for Expanding Affordable Housing

Build More Affordable Homes

Build and preserve more affordable housing. Students recommended increasing public funding for affordable-housing construction, developing more city-owned, subsidized, and otherwise affordable units, preserving existing affordable homes, and requiring newly created units to remain affordable over the long term.

Sources: *Hawkins and Mobley, Housing Affordability in Alexandria, 2026; Michael G., Abdul S., and Mustafa K., Affordable Housing 2025; sortocruzsheilyn, Affordable Housing, 2025; Gonzales, Cost of Living, 2025; and Elyas, Cost of Living, 2025*

Include affordable homes in new developments. Students recommended using inclusionary zoning, promoting mixed-income housing, partnering with developers to reserve homes for low-income families, and offering developers incentives to include affordable units in new projects. They also called for more affordable housing to be included as Alexandria continues to develop.

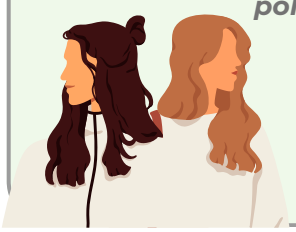
Sources: *Hawkins and Mobley, Housing Affordability in Alexandria, 2026; Michael G., Abdul S., and Mustafa K., Affordable Housing, 2025; sortocruzsheilyn, Affordable Housing 2025; Gonzales, Cost of Living, 2025; and Elyas, Cost of Living, 2025*

Make it easier to build affordable housing. Students recommended speeding up zoning and approval processes so affordable homes can be created more quickly. They also supported local policies that make it possible to develop more affordable housing in Alexandria.

Sources: *diazgerman, Affordable Housing, 2025; and sortocruzsheilyn, Affordable Housing, 2025*

"Virginia can provide more funding for affordable housing programs [and] support developers who build low-income housing... The City of Alexandria can expand on policies like inclusionary zoning ...preserving existing affordable housing while also creating more."

~ Kylie Hawkins and Taelor Mobley, 2026



Help Families Afford and Keep their Homes

Help families stay in their homes and avoid sudden housing cost increases. Students recommended rent control or rent stabilization to limit large rent increases, rental and utility assistance for low-income families, and property-tax relief. One student specifically recommended waiving condominium fees for people earning less than 30% of the area median income so unexpected increases do not make housing unaffordable or force people to move. Students also recommended expanding eviction-prevention efforts, rental assistance, utility assistance, and tenant protections so families receive help before losing their housing.

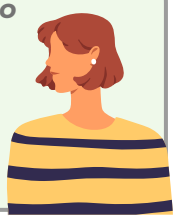
Sources: *Hawkins and Mobley, Housing Affordability in Alexandria, 2026; Morales & Furnari, Low-Income Rent Solutions, 2026; Fite, Silman & Romero, Cost of Living, 2026; Patrick, Equitable Rent, 2025; sortocruzsheilyn, Affordable Housing, 2025; Gonzales, Cost of Living, 2025; and Elyas, Cost of Living, 2025*

Expand housing support for families who are struggling to afford or keep their homes. Students recommended increasing funding for housing assistance and supportive housing programs, expanding rental support, and providing utility assistance to low-income families. They also identified legal-aid organizations as important resources for renters facing eviction or unfair housing practices

Sources: *Hawkins and Mobley, Housing Affordability in Alexandria, 2026; Michael G., Abdul S., and Mustafa K., Affordable Housing, 2025; sortocruzsheilyn, Affordable Housing by 2025; and Cost of Living, Elyas 2025*

"My other recommendation is to have rent controlled properties...so that rent increases and higher property fees won't force people to leave their homes because they don't have the money to pay it."

~ Sally Patrick, 2025





Youth Recommendations for Expanding Affordable Housing

Invest in Long-Term Housing Solutions

Follow through on the Housing 2040 Master Plan. One student recommended better supporting and enforcing strategies that are already part of the plan while adding new policies where needed. The Report emphasized looking at what has and has not worked, since rents and housing burdens have continued to rise and the plan has not yet achieved its intended results.

***Source**: Patrick, Equitable Rent, 2025*



> ***"Some [strategies] have already been implemented in the 2040 Housing Master Plan and just need to be supported and enforced more..."***
>
> *~ Sally Patrick, 2025*

Create reliable funding for affordable housing. One student recommended using housing trust funds supported by developer contributions and loan repayments. This would provide more money for affordable housing and help people who cannot afford rent on their own (*Patrick, 2025*).

> ***"...trust funds to help financially support affordable housing through developer contributions and loan repayments."***
>
> *~ Sally Patrick, 2025*

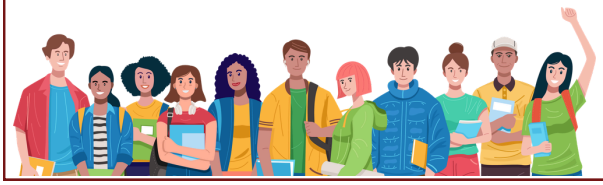
Increase public awareness of housing affordability and encourage community advocacy

Increase public awareness of housing affordability and encourage community advocacy. Students recommended helping residents better understand housing insecurity, displacement, and the need for affordable housing in Alexandria, while creating opportunities for community members to support affordable-housing solutions through civic engagement and advocacy.

***Sources:** Micheal Clark, Cost of Living and Education, 2026; sortocruzsheilyn, Affordable Housing, 2025.*



> ***"By teaching citizens how to hold property owners accountable through the city's Code Administration, the initiative protects lower-income earners from exploitation."***
>
> *~ Micheal Clark, 2026*



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

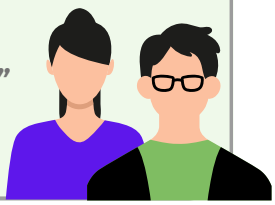
Provide Direct Financial Support to Families

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."

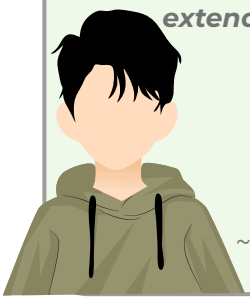
~ Alora Denby & Ethan Sinor, 2025



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