

About Northern Virginia

Total Population: 1,354,833 as of July, 2007 (1,010,241 in Fairfax County, 204,568 in Arlington County, and 140,024 in the City of Alexandria).

Cost of living—higher than average: The 2008 Cost of Living Index is around 120 for Northern Virginia (compared to the national average of 100).

Median household income (as of 2005) is: \$94,610 for Fairfax County, \$80,433 for Arlington County, and \$66,116 for the City of Alexandria.

The median rent (as of 2005) is: \$1,164 in Fairfax County, \$1,199 in Arlington County, and \$1,063 in the City of Alexandria.

Median monthly housing costs (as of 2005) for homes with mortgages are: \$1,700 in Fairfax County, \$1,431 in Arlington County, and \$1,263 in the City of Alexandria.

25.1% of residents were born in a different country.

30% of residents speak a language other than English at home.

Source: www.city-data.com

Finding Temporary Work

Often jobs with high pay take weeks or months to get. In the meantime, a temporary staffing company or *temp agency* can place you in a short-term job that will last days, weeks, or sometimes months. The pay is usually lower, and temporary jobs do not always offer medical and other benefits. To find temp work more quickly, apply at several temp agencies at a time. Here are some of the largest temp agencies in the area:

Randstad United States, Alexandria – 703-549-1289 or 703-683-3865 or online at: www.randstad.com

Spherion, McLean – 703-790-1000 or online at: www.spherion.com

Kforce, Herndon – 703-342-3100 or 703-481-8334 or online at: www.kforce.com

Temporary Solutions, Vienna – 703-883-2291 or 703-448-5396 or online at: www.tsijobs.com

Prism, Reston – 703-264-1200 or 703-736-0218 or online at: www.prisminc.com

Immigration Status

USCIS is the government agency that regulates immigration. Contact USCIS at 1-800-375-5283 or visit online at www.uscis.gov. If you have problems with your immigration status you should not delay to get legal help. If you have a very low income, you might be able to get low-cost or even free immigration help from: *The Center for Immigration Law and Practice* – 202-362-0120 or online at: www.cilpdc.org

Transition to Work in the U.S.

This document is for adult women and men living in northern Virginia who were born in another country. For many immigrants, the United States is a very different place to work. It can take years to build a new career and can be challenging. This brochure will help you find work and plan your career. This brochure focuses on Fairfax County, including City of Fairfax and Falls Church, Arlington County, and the City of Alexandria. For more details, see the full document version of this brochure called

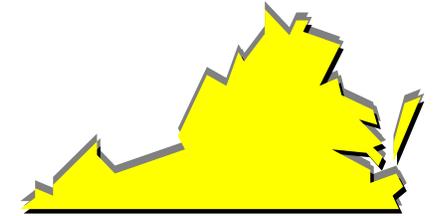
Employment Resources in Northern Virginia: Information for Immigrants to the U.S.

"First when I came here I used to babysit... After four or five years I changed my work plan and went to school... [Learning a new career] was hard, but now that have a lot of experience it's not that hard... My work makes me happy."

--An Ethiopian woman in the U.S. for 15 years

Finding Work in Northern Virginia

A guide for U.S. Immigrants



This brochure will help you:

- Learn about northern Virginia
- Learn how to search for a job
- Look into different career choices
- Choose the right career for you
- Find where to get help with your job search, applying for a job, résumé writing, job interviews, and more.
- Find where to get more training and education, such as English classes
- Find help for problems with your immigration status
- Find temporary jobs.

How do I search for a job?

There are many ways to find a job. It can feel easier to find a job through family or someone from your native country. If this is the *only* kind of job search you do, you will miss out on opportunities, which might mean that you will be paid less than if you searched in other ways, too. Some of the best jobs can only be found if you do search hard for them. You can read the "Classified Ads" or "Employment" sections of a newspaper or look for "Now Hiring" signs in store windows. However, many of the best jobs are listed only on the Internet. Searching "online" can be very easy once you know how to use a computer to access the internet. Read the section "**Where do I get help finding a job?**" for a list of agencies that will help you with your job search and with learning to use the Internet. These websites list job openings. You can sometimes post your résumé or apply for a job on online.

All jobs:

www.indeed.com

www.careerbuilder.com

www.monster.com

Government jobs:

www.usajobs.gov (federal),

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/living/employment (Fairfax),

www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/HumanResources/HumanResourcesMain.aspx (Arlington),

How do I decide on a career?

You should choose a job that will fit your interests (a job you will enjoy) and lifestyle (work schedule, pay, commute distance, etc.). There are many types of jobs in northern Virginia. Some of the biggest employers are private companies and federal and local government agencies. Most people work in the industries of science and technology, public administration, construction, educational services, health care, hospitality/accommodation and food services, finance and insurance, civic/religious/non-profit work, and administrative and support and waste management services. The following websites will help you learn about careers, find and apply for a job, write a résumé, and get other help:

Occupational Outlook Handbook – www.bls.gov/oco Learn about careers, including average pay, education required, etc.

Virginia Workforce Connection – www.vawc.virginia.gov Find what careers fit your skills, interests, and values. Find jobs. Use the virtual recruiter service. Find schools and financial aid for education. Get personal help on your job search, résumé, interviewing skills, etc. Get unemployment benefits if you lose your job.

America's Job Bank – www.ajb.dni.us Learn about different careers and watch short videos about each career. Find jobs. Get personal help.

Where do I get help finding a job?

These are some local one-stop centers where you can do a job search and get free personal career help from staff. These centers offer job fairs and workshops, quick tips, basic computer classes, résumé help, and job listings. If eligible you can also get trained and placed in a job.

Fairfax County:

SkillSource

6245 Leesburg Pike, Suite 315, Falls Church, VA 22044 (at Seven Corners) – 703-533-5400

11484 Washington Plaza West, Suite 110, Reston, VA 20190 – 703-787-4974

12011 Government Center Parkway, Suite 246E, Fairfax, VA 22035 – 703-324-7280

8250 Richmond Hwy., Suite 327, Alexandria, VA 22309 (in the Fort Belvoir area) – 703-704-6286

Virginia Employment Commission – 13135 Lee Jackson Hwy, Ste 340, Fairfax, VA 22033 – 703-803-0000

UCM Community Solutions, Inc. – 7842 Richmond Hwy., Alexandria, VA 22306 – 703-360-9088

Arlington County:

Arlington Employment Center – 3033 Wilson Blvd., Suite 400B, Arlington, VA 22201 – 703-228-1400

City of Alexandria:

JobLink – 1900 N. Beauregard St., Suite 300, Alexandria, VA 22311 – 703-838-4316

Virginia Employment Commission – 5520 Cherokee Ave., Alexandria, VA 22312 – 703-813-1399

What kind of job am I qualified for?

Many immigrants expect or are told that there are only certain kinds of jobs they can do. This can leave them stuck in the wrong job. Whether you are a man or a woman, no matter what age you are, you can decide what career you want based on your interests and abilities.

You might need to get a degree, license, or certification for certain high-paying jobs. This might involve going back to school or improving your English. Northern Virginia is expensive, and you might have family to provide for (inside or outside the country). You can work long hours at two or three low-paying jobs instead of getting the education or training you need for the job you really want. However, some people choose instead to work on their education a little at a time so they can earn higher pay and enjoy their work.

English as a Second Language class

Fairfax County:

Online at www.fcps.edu/DIS/OACE or call 703-658-2777. Cost: \$150 per course, including fees.

Arlington County:

Online at www.arlingtonadulthood.org or call 703-228-4200. Cost: \$175 per course for night classes and \$230 per course for day classes.

City of Alexandria:

Online at www.acps.k12.va.us/adulthood.php or call 703-461-4179. Day or night classes. Cost: \$55 per course. Tuberculosis test required to register. Test is \$7 at Health Department – 4480 King Street, Alexandria – 703-838-4377.

Adult and Community Education programs like those listed above also offer apprenticeships, GED (high school equivalency diploma), and certification courses.

"When I was in Zimbabwe I used to be in an office doing administrative duties, but when it comes to here in America it's hard [for me] to find office jobs... I need to be able to do whatever comes my way... The only challenge is it might be hard to find exactly what you're looking for."

--A Zimbabwean man in the U.S. for 3 years