

City of Alexandria, Virginia

Community Profile

Community Profile

OVERVIEW

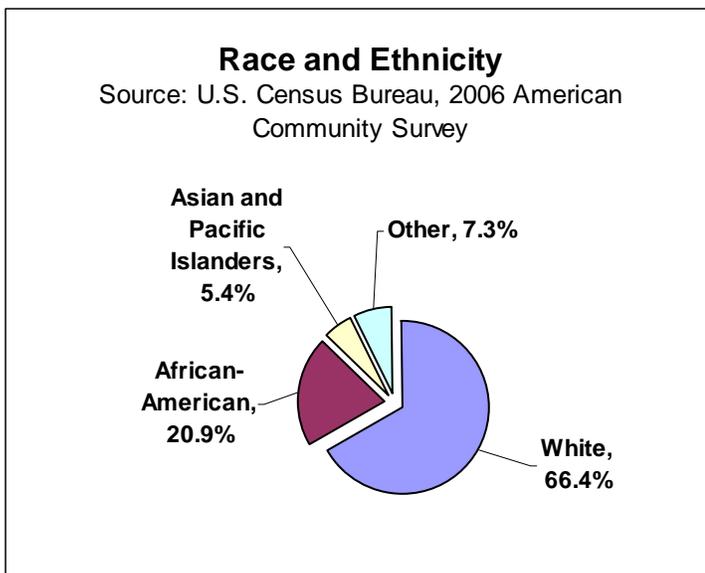
Alexandria is an independent City in Northern Virginia, just across the Potomac River from Washington, DC. Rich in history and diversity, Alexandria is nationally recognized as one of the best places to live and do business on the east coast.

Alexandria was established on May 11, 1749 by an Act of the Virginia General Assembly, and was later incorporated in 1779. The City was named after its landowners, the Alexanders. The charter, which currently governs the City, was adopted in 1922.

DEMOGRAPHICS

As illustrated in the chart below, Alexandria is home to a diverse population, which is expected to increase to 140,467 in FY 2008.

The per capita income is projected to be \$71,949 for FY 2008. There are a total of 69,007 households, with an average size of 2.04 persons per unit.



* 13.0% of Alexandrians are of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity (of any race)

GOVERNANCE

In 1921, the overwhelming majority of Alexandrians voted, by referendum, to implement the Council-Manager form of city government. As a result, legislative authority and responsibility are centralized in the elected City Council, while administrative authority resides with the City Manager.

The City Council is comprised of the Mayor and six at-large Council Members who are responsible for appointing the City Manager, City Clerk, and City Attorney. The City Manager serves as the Chief Executive Officer and is responsible for the daily operations of the City.

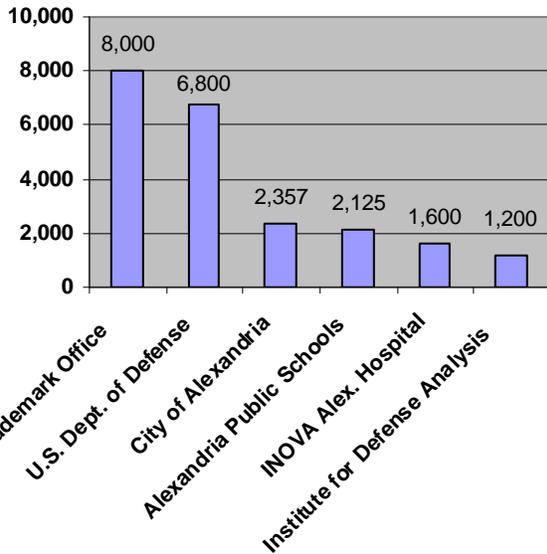
The City of Alexandria also has a strong commitment to citizen participation, which is evidenced by the 76 citizen boards and commissions established by City Council. These bodies compose a formal system through which citizens can advise City Council on major issues. Boards and commissions are responsible to City Council, and appointments are made by Council at their regular legislative meetings.

ECONOMY

Alexandria is home to over 8,000 thriving businesses and organizations, which includes a large concentration of technology companies, the fourth-largest concentration of professional associations in the country, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (PTO), and a tourism industry that hosts nearly two million visitors a year. Chart 2 illustrates the City's largest employers.

Community Profile

Largest Employers



As of October 2007, Alexandria's unemployment rate is 2.2 percent, while Virginia's rate is 3.0 percent and the national rate is 5.0 percent.

There is approximately 20 million square feet of office space and over 6 million square feet of retail space existing in the City today. As of September 2007, the office space vacancy rate was 6.4 percent, while Northern Virginia's rate was 12.6 percent and the Washington, D.C. Metro Area's rate was 10.9 percent. For 2007, total retail sales in the City equaled \$2.5 billion.

TOURISM

As the most visited destination in Northern Virginia, Alexandria enjoys about 2 million visitors annually. The City offers an array of historic and cultural attractions including many historic homes, churches, businesses and museums.

Six of the premier historic sites, including the Black History Museum, the Alexandria Archaeology Museum, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Park, Friendship Firehouse, Gadsby's Tavern, and the Lyceum, are owned and operated by the City of Alexandria.

The tourism industry supports 24 hotels with 4,500 rooms within the City of Alexandria. For the 12 months ending in June 2006, the average occupancy rate was 66.7 percent. The average daily rate for hotel rooms in the City is \$114.

HOUSING MARKET

In 2006 and 2007, the residential real estate market leveled off and slowed dramatically. In 2008, assessed value of residential real property in Alexandria is approximately \$498,670, which represents a 1.9 percent decrease from 2007. The average assessed value for single-family homes is \$656,984, a decrease of 0.86 percent from 2007. The average assessed value for condominiums is \$326,026, a decrease of 4.3 percent from 2006. While housing values declined slightly in 2007 and 2008, the decline was much smaller than the outer suburb jurisdictions of the Washington, D.C. region. For 2009, housing values are likely to stabilize.

Community Profile

The City of Alexandria has several affordable housing programs in order to assist low to moderate income individuals with home purchases. Initiatives include the Moderate Income Homeownership Program and the Housing Counseling Program. In addition, the City provides relocation counseling to those seeking suitable rentals in the City.

In addition, the City assists non-profit housing groups, as well as the City Housing Authority, by providing loans to preserve or expand multi-family rental housing. In the area of new development, the City often receives voluntary developer paid contributions of cash or units in order to provide new affordable rental or ownership units.

The number of housing units in Alexandria is 72,129, which includes 21,906 single-family units, 17,956 condominium units, and 31,697 rental apartments. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2005), approximately 43 percent of housing units are owned and 57 percent are rented.

RECREATION AND PARKS

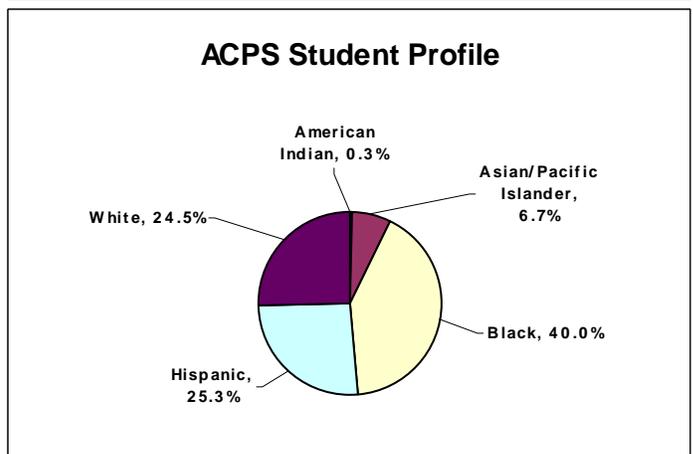
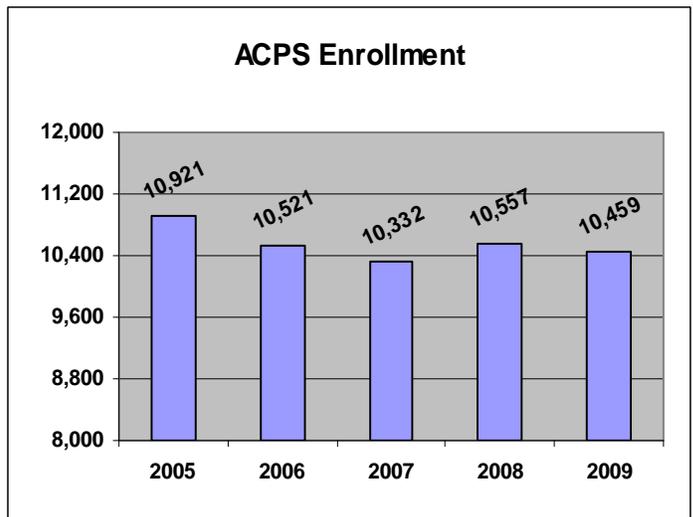
The City of Alexandria contains 964.6 acres of public parks and open space, resulting in a per capita total of about 7 acres per 1,000 residents.

There are 46 playground areas, 7 swimming pools, 16 gymnasiums, 25 outdoor basketball courts, 39 tennis courts, and 56 athletic fields.

In recent years the City has adopted an Open Space Plan and has been actively acquiring property for new or expanded parks, as well as regaining open space as an element of new development projects.

EDUCATION

The Alexandria City Public School System provides elementary and secondary education for the City's youth. It currently has one high school, one ninth grade school, one Alternative high school, two middle schools, and 13 elementary schools. The number of students expected for the 2008-2009 school year is 10,459, which represents a gradual decline in public school membership since 2005.



There are a number of institutions of higher education in Alexandria. These include: Northern Virginia Community College, Strayer University, Virginia Tech, George Washington University and the Episcopal Theological Seminary.

TRANSPORTATION

The City has an extensive transportation system in place. Passenger rail service is provided by Amtrak and the Virginia Railway Express (VRE). There is also an extensive public transportation system, which includes Alexandria's local bus system (DASH), one regional Metro bus system, the Fairfax County REX service and Metrorail subway service (4 stations and 2 lines).



Domestic and international air service is provided by Ronald Reagan National Airport, just 5 minutes away from downtown Alexandria, Dulles International Airport, located 33 miles away from the City, and Baltimore / Washington International airport, located 38.5 miles away. All major domestic and international carriers service these airports.

City residents have easy access to anywhere in the Washington, D.C. Metro area via the Capital Beltway (I-495), Interstates 66, 95, & 395, U.S. Route 1, and State Routes 7, 236, 241, and 401.

PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK