

ARLINGTON COUNTY AFFORDABLE HOUSING STUDY: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH RESULTS

JUNE-AUGUST 2014

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Commissioned by
Arlington County



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I.A. Spanish Language Immigrant Focus Group

Background

Eleven (11) group participants representing these Central and South American countries of origin:

- El Salvador;
- Guatemala;
- Ecuador; and
- Peru.

All are current Arlington residents living in apartments in Rosslyn, Ballston Park, and Columbia Pike. While the group was mixed by age, most were older -- aged 55+. Discussion was conducted in Spanish by moderator Russell Schroeder.

Findings

- Housing cost is a major, if not the dominant factor in these residents' lives. Paying the rent drives the need to work...many work two jobs...or take in boarders, or even go without food.
- This hardworking but low-income group lives on the economic margin because of housing costs. As such, any increase... especially of the magnitude of \$50 to \$100 per month...is severely felt and accompanied by some sacrifice in lifestyle or sustenance.
- Despite relative high and still rising costs, these residents choose to live in Arlington to be close to work ("This is where the jobs are") or to enjoy the convenience of schools, shopping, easy public transportation, or a safe, clean community.
- Rent increases have been significant -- over \$100 per month -- for those still out in the unregulated housing market. Most report such a financial hit means sacrificing food. Other sacrifices include: no car; no shopping; no weekends off.
- Of course, for parents, this pressure to pay (increasing) rent means less time with children.
- Much like the English language immigrants, these residents ask for relief in the form of more government/county assistance or rent/price control.

- Other issues/topics raised:
 - Problems with building management;
 - Prejudiced treatment toward the Spanish speakers;
 - Concern about drug use in buildings (safety);
 - Connectivity of Spanish immigrant communities through church and non-profits;
 - Anxiety caused by renovation projects;
 - Need for English/Spanish assistance in understanding leases, legal documents, rules and rights;
 - Changing income rules for subsidized units; and
 - Immigration and deportation concerns.

I.B. English Language Immigrant Focus Groups

Background

Ten (10) participants representing these countries of origin:

- Iraq;
- Bangladesh;
- Ethiopia; and
- Iran.

All are current Arlington residents living mostly in the Columbia Pike area -- one in Courthouse area -- in shared apartments, or in the case of one man, with family in a rental house. While the group had some mix by age, most were older...aged 55+.

Findings

- Arlington is valued primarily because it is safe -- especially compared to many of these people's home countries -- and convenient, since services are available by walking or accessible transit.
- Expensive housing is a major problem and concern.
- While all report receiving some form of government assistance, these residents have little to no income. They live marginally. Any increase in rent -- no matter how small -- forces either relocation or a clear sacrifice of some other need; specifically food or medicine.
- All have experienced rent increases because the market is strong. Nearly all expect a rent increase within the next year.
- The impact of high housing costs on this economically marginalized existence is -- no cars; no travel; no restaurants; working two jobs/working constantly; poor diet; stressful/unhealthy lifestyle.
- Given their economic circumstances, poor credit is inevitable. This means not being able to lease an apartment in their own name; essentially being beholden to others to provide a housing opportunity.
- Multiple persons living in one or two-bedroom units are common. Some report up to five persons sharing small space, just to avoid being homeless.
- Suggested "solutions" include rent control, more government owned housing (like Arlington Mill).

- Despite the difficulties, all express gratitude for the generous government assistance they receive and for the opportunity to live in America and work here “doing the jobs Americans need done but don’t want to do.” As one said, “we are proud of where we live.”

II. Low-Income Seniors Focus Group

Background

A discussion session was held in early July with five seniors at the Arlington Mill Center. All five have contact with or participation in senior programs at the Center. Living situations -- four live in multi-family high-rise condos and one in a single family-owned home. All live in the Columbia Pike corridor.

All five report living on modest subsistence incomes; mostly from Social Security with only minimal, if any, savings or pension payments supplementing the Social Security income.

Findings

Condo fees from rising Homeowners Association assessments are the major financial challenge and threat to continued home ownership these condo dwellers face. This monthly cost keeps rising and threatens to push these condo owners out of their aging buildings that seem to need more and more costly repair as time goes on.

The dilemmas to selling are numerous including: getting a high enough/reasonable price; being able to then find a replacement, affordable rental property; and then having too high assets to qualify for affordable (or subsidized) housing. Three of the four report still paying mortgage in addition to rising condo fees.

Most report not wanting to move because they enjoy their unit, its location or have established lives in their building.

The one detached single family homeowner (widow) finds her property tax bill (\$6,000) to be her biggest burden and threat to continued home ownership. She is unaware of senior tax break programs provided by the County but when informed became greatly relieved but still skeptical this property tax burden could be lifted.

Essentially, all of these low-income seniors feel threatened, not secure, in their housing. The “extra” costs of home ownership -- rising condo fees and property taxes -- are pushing them to the breakpoint where their home will no longer be affordable given their modest incomes.

These housing costs result in sacrifices -- doing without air conditioning in summer or lowering the heat in winter. This coupled with “high food prices” means finding ways to survive by doing without.

Living in Arlington is valued for good public transportation, accessible and

abundant County services (classes, programs), close walkable retail service, high quality hospital and doctors nearby, and, for some, being close to family.

Change is seen as coming and inevitable to Columbia Pike. They see affordable housing projects going up all around prompting the question, "How will this impact my condo's value?" They see demographics shifting with new and younger people moving in. And, the single-family homeowner reports regular offers from developers to purchase her house as a tear-down.

In fact, the change, growth and even streetcar talk for Columbia Pike -- especially the expansion of affordable units -- prompts some to ask, "Why us?...Why isn't any of this affordable housing going in Clarendon or North Arlington?"

Among these participants, there is no interest in moving to a seniors-only building. Instead, they enjoy their independence and living in multi-generational buildings and neighborhoods.

The number one request/need is for the County, in its Affordable Housing policy, to assist in paying low-income seniors' condo fees as they do single-family homeowners' property tax bills.

III. Employer Focus Groups

Background

Discussion participants represented

- Consumer Electronics Association;
- Virginia Hospital Center;
- Dittmar/Holiday Inn;
- GMU -- Arlington campus HR; and
- GMU -- student housing/facilities.

Findings

Generally, these employers believe their employees adapt and accommodate their commuting behavior to be able to work where their job is located.

Complaints, from employees, are more about commuting hassles than housing location.

In fact, a detailed employee survey by Arlington Hospital Center found that while only about one-in-four live in Arlington and most of the rest did not want to move to Arlington...some because they work long shifts and do not want to be in proximity/ available to the hospital when off duty; others because of the established family lives elsewhere.

None of the five employers expressed any difficulty finding employees to fill Arlington jobs even though some lower wage workers report long distance commutes.

Even Holiday Inn, with frequent turnover of custodial staff has a pipeline of ready replacements.

Consumer Electronics Association provides a unique and valued “forgivable loan” subsidy to first-time homebuyers on staff toward purchase of a home within an 8-mile radius. This trade association finds this to be a valuable recruitment and retention tool. While many employees choose to live in DC, there is no sense those preferring Arlington (Crystal City HQ) are having difficulty finding suitable housing.

Bottom line: Housing is seen as a choice...affordability is obviously a factor of location and thus commute, but workers make these trade-offs consciously and willingly.

Other Mentions

- GMU sees a need for affordable student-friendly housing. This means larger -- 3/4 bedroom -- sharable units and leases times to the school calendar.
- The Silver Line may well draw corporate and residential development outward to Tysons because commutes will be easier for those outside the Beltway than into Arlington or DC while Metro access will facilitate travel.
- Younger (millennials) couples are perceived to be potentially changing (lowering) demand for detached single-family housing. A desire for a “no yard work” lifestyle and comfort with multi-family high-rise living seem to be driving forces. This trend combines with downsizing baby boomers to create both a demand for multi-family units and (potentially) a larger supply of available single-family detached homes.
- Arlington Hospital is experiencing a surprising boom in births...that is mirrored in the student population growth in Arlington schools. This seems to reflect not only the larger percentage of 20-30 year olds in Arlington, but also a decision to stay in Arlington without a move to a detached single-family house in the further out suburbs in order to raise a family.

IV. CAF Residents

Background

One-on-one interviews via telephone were conducted with fifteen (15) Committed Affordable Unit (CAF) residents in mid-July 2014. These CAF residents, identified by County staff, skew older:

- n=5 over 65+;
- n=6 aged 55-64;
- n=3 aged 40-54; and
- n=1 aged 18-39.

Length of living in their current unit is:

- n=4 (27 percent) less than one year;
- n=6 (40 percent) between 1 and 5 years; and
- n=5 (33 percent) from 6 to 10 years.

Nearly all -- 14 of 15 (93 percent) -- report having their rent subsidized by a County grant or Section 8 voucher.

Findings

HOUSING SATISFACTION.

The large majority -- 12 of 15 (80 percent) are satisfied with their current housing; 8 of 15 (53 percent) are "very satisfied" and 14 of 15 (93 percent) are satisfied with the neighborhood and location of their apartment; 10 of 15 (67 percent) are "very satisfied."

SAVED MONEY.

A slight majority -- 9 of 15 (60 percent) say that living in a CAF unit has allowed them to save money or use money toward expenses other than rent.

SOCIAL INTERACTION.

These CAF residents report generally fine, but not exceptional social interactions with both immediate apartment neighbors -- 4 of 15 "great," 9 of 15 "just OK," 2 of 15 "not so great" -- and with the larger Arlington community -- 4 of 15 "great," 9 of 15 "just OK," 2 of 15 "not so good."

CAF PROCESS.

Most -- 11 of 15 (73 percent) -- describe the process of obtaining their residence to be “easy.” The rest -- 4 of 15 (27 percent) -- called it “moderately” difficult; no one chose the “very difficult” option.

Most also find the recertification process to be easy -- 10 of 15 (67 percent). The rest -- 5 of 15 (33 percent) -- say it is “moderately difficult” with no one selecting the “very difficult” option.

UNIT FIT NEEDS.

Opinion is mixed with more -- 10 of 15 (67 percent) -- saying their CAF unit meets their/their family’s needs and 5 of 10 (33 percent) saying it does not.

EXPECTED STAY.

More expect to stay in their CAF unit “for a long time” -- 10 of 15 (67 percent) -- than expect their tenure to be “a few years or less” -- 5 of 15 (33 percent).

These “transitional” residents expect their next unit/apartment/home to have these features.

*BALCONY, OR A YARD ENOUGH FOR MY FAMILY CAN COME VISIT
AND I HAVE MY DISABLED SON.*

HOUSE.

HOME WITH A BATH TUB.

BIGGER APARTMENT.

LARGER HOME.

PRIOR RESIDENCE.

Most -- 11 of 15 -- moved into their CAF unit from another home in Arlington. Of the 4 of 15 who did not live in Arlington previously, 3 of 4 came from outside the DC metro area.

ARLINGTON PREFERENCE.

The clear majority - 13 of 15 (87 percent) -- would prefer to stay in Arlington for at least the next 10 years.

CAF PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS.

Nearly all -- 14 of 15 (93 percent) -- say the CAF program in Arlington should be expanded. Here are their reasons why...

UNTIL THOSE WHO NEED IT, HAVE THIS AS A GOOD PLACE, UNTIL 10%-20% VACANCIES, BETTER-LISTS, LONGER 24 HOUR PERIOD, QUICKER THAN 2 YEARS WAITING LIST, FOR THE VOUCHER.

IT DEPENDS HOW THEY FIX THE UNITS, I DO NOT LIKE THEM TO TEAR DOWN OLD PLACES, NO.

THEY ARE REAL STRICT.

THEY NEED TO OFFER MORE UNITS RENTS ARE REALLY HIGH.

BECAUSE IT'S A LOT OF HOMELESS PEOPLE WHO NEED THE HELP AND A PLACE TO STAY.

SO MANY PEOPLE NEED IT, IT IS SO DIFFICULT TO FIND HOUSING AFFORDABLE, JUST BY THE GENERAL ECONOMY, FOR FAMILIES AS WELL.

SOME PEOPLE OUT THERE NEED A PLACE TO STAY AND I DON'T THINK THEY HAVE ENOUGH; NEED MORE UNITS IN THIS COMPLEX.

THE TREND IS TOWARD HIGH-END, EVERYTHING GETS TORN-DOWN OR UP-SCALE, APAH TRIES HARD TO KEEP THINGS GOOD, FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

IT'S AFFORDABLE NOW BUT IF I MORE IT'LL BE MORE EXPENSIVE.

BECAUSE WHEN I LOOK AROUND ONLINE AND WHAT OTHER COMMUNITY HAVE; I GET A DIFFERENT FEEL FOR THE QUALITY OF LIFE ARLINGTON HAVE.

BECAUSE INCOMES ARE REALLY LOW THESE DAYS.

Lastly, suggestions for improving the CAF residential selection process are...

MAKE SURE THEY CHECK ALL REFERENCES, PRIOR-RENTAL, HISTORY, ETC, NOT DRUNKS, PERSONAL HABITS, ETC.

ONE THING, THIS RENT, GOES BY THE COUNTY INCREASE, IT MAKES IT DIFFICULT, IT NEEDS TO BE MORE FAIR, MORE TIED TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

THEY ARE STRICT NO FAMILY ALLOWED.

EASIER DOCUMENTATIONS, IT JUST SOMETIMES, SUCH A WIDE RANGE OF PEOPLE TO DEAL WITH, AND FINDING THE

DOCUMENTATION.

WE GOT A DIVERSE AMOUNT OF PEOPLE.

*GET SOME PERSON TO RELATE TO GO-TO-PERSON FOR
PROFESSIONAL QUESTIONS, THE COUNTY HELPED WITH A FAX.*

SHOULD GO BY INCOME.

ON THE LEASE 1 BEDROOM FOR 1 PERSON.

*NO LONG AS THEY DON'T HAVE ANY MENTAL ILLNESS OR
CRIMINAL BACKGROUND.*

SECTION 8.

CAF Residents

Topline Questionnaire

1. How long have you lived in your current apartment?

Less than 1 year	4	27%
Between 1-5 years	6	40%
Between 6-10 years	5	33%
More than 10 years	0	0%
Born here/whole life	0	0%
DK/Refused	0	0%

2. How satisfied are you with your current housing - very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

Very satisfied	8	53%
Somewhat satisfied	4	27%
Somewhat dissatisfied	2	13%
Very dissatisfied	1	7%
DK/Refused	0	0%
Total Satisfied	12	80%
Total Dissatisfied	3	20%

3. How satisfied are you with the neighborhood and location of your apartment - very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

Very satisfied	10	67%
Somewhat satisfied	4	27%
Somewhat dissatisfied	0	0%
Very dissatisfied	0	0%
DK/Refused	1	7%
Total Satisfied	14	93%
Total Dissatisfied	0	0%

5. Has living in your current apartment allowed you to save money or use money towards expenses other than rent?

Yes	9	60%
No	6	40%
DK/Refused	0	0%

7. How is your social interaction with your immediate apartment community neighbors - great, just okay, or not so good?

Great	4	27%
Just okay	9	60%
Not so good	2	13%
DK/Refused	0	0%

9. How is your social interaction with your larger Arlington community neighbors - great, just okay, or not so good?

Great	4	27%
Just okay	9	60%
Not so good	2	13%
DK/Refused	0	0%

11. How would you describe the process for obtaining your current residence - was it easy, moderately difficult, or very difficult?

Easy	11	73%
Moderately difficult	4	27%
Very difficult	0	0%
DK/Refused	0	0%

12. How would you describe the process for annual recertification in order to stay in your current residence -- is it easy, moderately difficult, or very difficult?

Easy	10	67%
Moderately difficult	5	33%
Very difficult	0	0%
DK/Refused	0	0%

13. Is your rent subsidized in any way, such as by a county grant or Section 8 voucher from the government?

Yes	14	93%
No	1	7%
DK/Refused	0	0%

16. Did your choice of units fit your needs? Is it the type of apartment you and/or your family need?

Yes	10	67%
No	5	33%
DK/Refused	0	0%

19. Do you expect to live in your current home a short period of time - say, a few years or less - or for a long time?

Transitional/short period of time	5	33%
Long-term	10	67%
DK/Refused	0	0%

21. Did you live in Arlington before moving to your current apartment unit?

Yes	11	73%
No	4	27%
DK/Refused	0	0%

22. IF NO: Did you live in the DC area before moving to your current apartment unit?

Yes	1	25%
No	3	75%
DK/Refused	0	0%

23. Should the Arlington Committed Affordable Housing Program be expanded to offer more units?

Yes, expanded	14	93%
No	1	7%
DK/Refused	0	0%

25. And would you prefer to live in Arlington long-term, say for the next 10 years or more, or prefer to live somewhere else?

Yes, live in Arlington long term	13	87%
Prefer to live somewhere else	2	13%
DK/Refused	0	0%

26. Gender.

Male	4	27%
Female	11	73%

27. Age.

18-39	1	7%
40-54	3	20%
55-64	6	40%
65-Up	5	33%
Refused	0	0%

V. Multi-Family Developers Focus Groups

Background

Organizations represented: five private developers and two not-for-profit developers. The five private developers represent some of the largest, most active multi-family housing builders in Arlington. County staff recruited participants.

Findings

The major themes of discussion related to Affordable Housing include --

- *Trade-off between “on-site” CAF and monetary contribution.* Non-profits feel more units would be built if the “on-site” option were pushed harder by the County in negotiations. That is, the perception is the number of CAF’s is shortchanged by when cash payments are made in lieu of on-sites.
- *“More height/more density = more affordable units.”* Private developers feel the economics of multi-family buildings support more affordable units when the number of total units per footprint can be increased. Adding floors/height is considered “free dirt.” It is these “extra units” that are most cost effective and thus, most amenable to increasing the supply of CAF’s.
- *Neighborhood pushback is the principal limiter to more height/density and thus more affordable units.* It is generally perceived that a small but active, vocal and politically potent group of neighbors near any proposed multi-family project have outsized power to limit height/density. The suggestion is to link height to affordability as a tool in pushing back against these activist neighbors. A solid committed policy by the County to on-site affordable units is seen as going a long way to mollify neighbor concerns. Allied with this thinking is the experience many private developers have with post-project neighborhood acceptance of taller (tallest) buildings. In other words, experience suggests the fears of height/density are much stronger than any experienced reaction to the structures themselves.

Thus, more “back-bone” and tools to fight off activist neighbors’ fears is seen as a key component to more affordable units throughout the County.

- *Connection in negotiations of Affordable Housing with other “community benefits.”* Having all “developer contributions” negotiated together in a mixed pot is said to shortchange affordable housing. As one private developer noted, “We end up giving big money to an arts park or public landscaping instead of affordable housing.” The suggestion is to decouple the affordable housing negotiation from the other community

benefits negotiations.

- *Raise the “affordability bar” up from 60% AMI.* Building and providing units affordable to individuals/families at 60% AMI is much more difficult economically (especially without great height/density allowances) than it would to move up the ladder to 80% or even 100% AMI. The Fairfax County example of a higher allowance is cited as a comparative working model. Also linked to this is the belief such a move would place more “workforce” clients -- teachers, firefighters, police, nurses -- into Arlington CAF’s.

Other points discussed and suggestions made:

- Arlington County affordable housing negotiations blur the lines between CAF and market-rate in replacement units. Suggested to treat these separately.
- Arlington’s land use policy is more cumbersome, lengthy, and costly than neighboring jurisdictions. Warning -- Arlington is likely to lose out to Silver Line-oriented multi-family development since CAF unit standards are more encompassing and the approval/ negotiations process is quicker.
- Suggestions (including those above) to demonstrate Arlington County truly is committed to making affordable housing a priority:
 1. Let multi-family developers skip to the front of the land-use approval process line (or, skip steps) if they meet a certain standard for CAF’s/contributions.
 2. Have the County pick up costs for underground utilities or parking garages near/co-located with multi-family buildings as a way for the developer to dedicate more resources to affordable units.
 3. De-couple the affordable housing and community benefits contribution negotiations.
 4. Allow projects with more height / more density and with that, more “backbone” and help pushing back against neighborhood activists.

5. Raise the CAF eligibility standard up from 60% AMI to 80% or even 100% AMI.
6. Promote policies (such as those above) that make “on-site” / “integrated” CAF’s more economically viable so going forward, both “on-site” / “integrated” and CAF building-specific development occurs.

VI. In-Commuters

Background

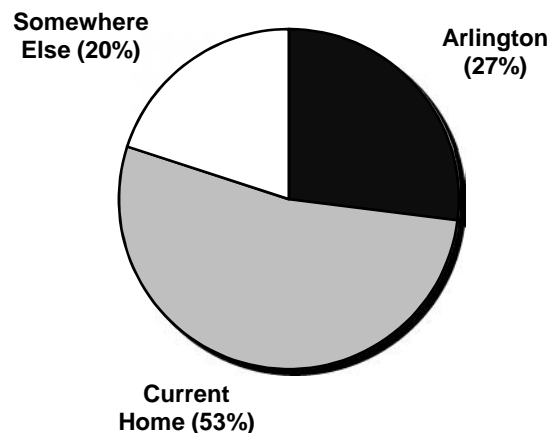
Intercept interviews were conducted with 323 in-commuters who work in Arlington but live elsewhere in the Metro region. Respondents were screened to meet both an age (21 to 39) and income (under 80 percent AMI) criteria of a “target” affordable housing demographic segment. Interviews were conducted by intercept interviews outside/near Ballston Metro, Rosslyn Metro, Shirlington Transit Station, and Pentagon Transit Center. Interview dates were June 24-28, 2014. Arlington-based interview company, NeoNiche Strategies, conducted the interviews.

Findings

ARLINGTON PREFERENCE.

Only 27 percent would prefer to live in Arlington; the majority (53 percent) would rather stay in their current home.

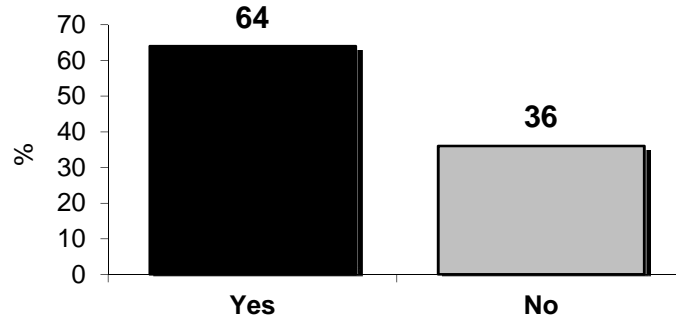
Q12: Where would you prefer to live?



CURRENT HOUSING AFFORDABLE.

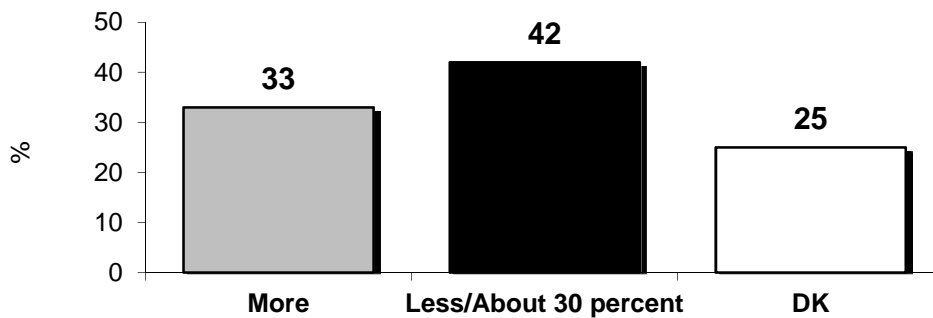
About one third (36 percent) consider their current housing as unaffordable; a 64 percent majority say their current home is affordable.

Q14: In general, considering all the costs it takes to live in your current home -- including monthly rent or mortgage payments, plus taxes and utilities -- do you consider it “affordable”?



Similarly, one third say they “spend more” than 30 percent of their gross household income on total housing costs. More (42 percent) say they spend less than 30 percent or right at 30 percent of their household gross income on housing -- that is, they meet the definitions of affordability. A quarter (25 percent) are not sure or won’t say the ratio of income to housing costs.

Q15: Most experts define “affordable” as 30 percent or less of your total gross spent on housing. If you had to guess, do you think your household spends more, less or right about 30 percent of the total gross household income on housing costs ... that is, the cost of rent or mortgage plus taxes and utilities?



ARLINGTON HOUSING BARRIERS.

Main barriers to living in Arlington [Open-End Question] are encompassed in the following topics.

- Cost/affordability;
- Family;
- Like neighborhood/location (roots);
- Commute convenient/close;
- Schools; and
- Always lived where now.

“Cost/affordability” is top response mentioned by just one quarter of respondents.

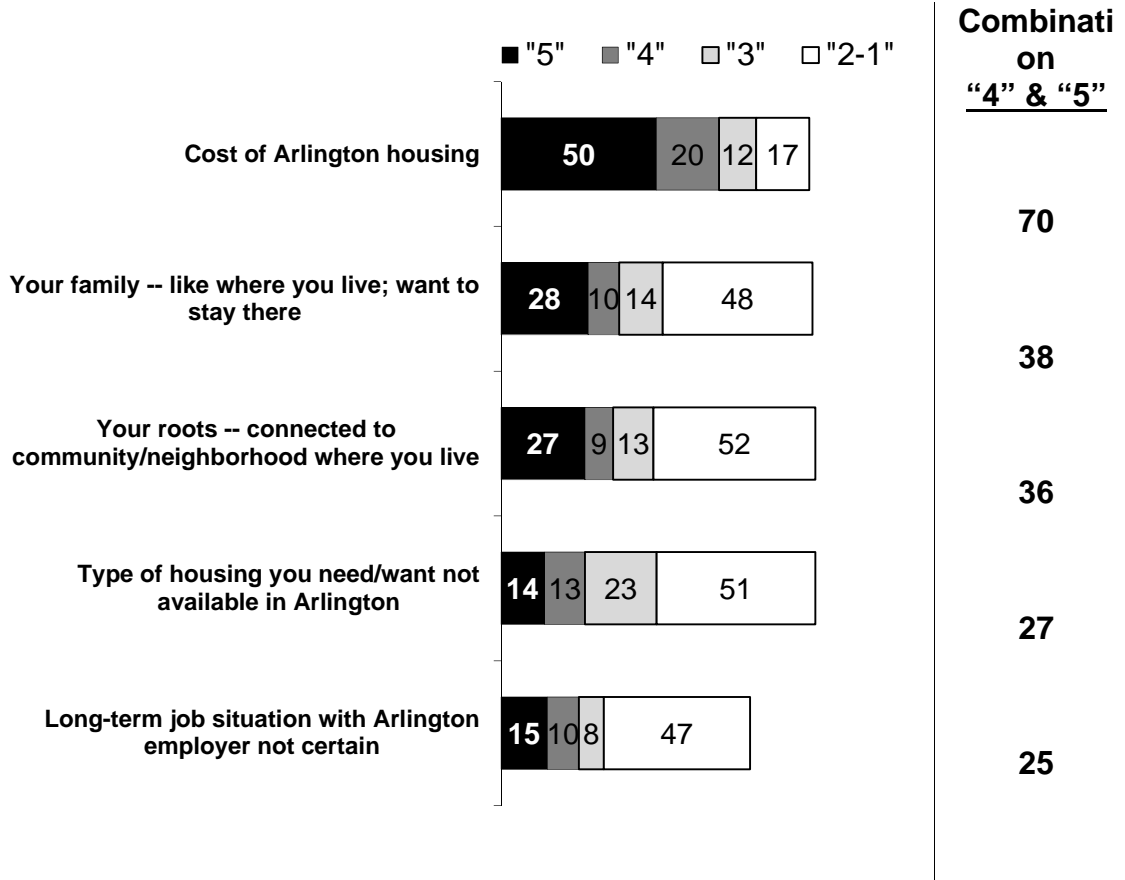
A full list of responses is attached in Appendix A.

RATINGS OF BARRIERS TO ARLINGTON HOUSING -- Affordability dominant reason.

When given five factors to rate as barriers to living in Arlington, “cost” scores tops by a large margin -- 50 percent rate as “5” (highest rating); 70 percent rate as “5” or “4.” After “cost,” next highest rated barriers are “family” (38 percent rate as “4” or “5”) and “community/neighborhood roots” (36 percent rate as “4” or “5”).

Just 27 percent rate “type of housing needed not available in Arlington” as a top barrier including one-in-seven (14 percent) rating it a “5” (highest).

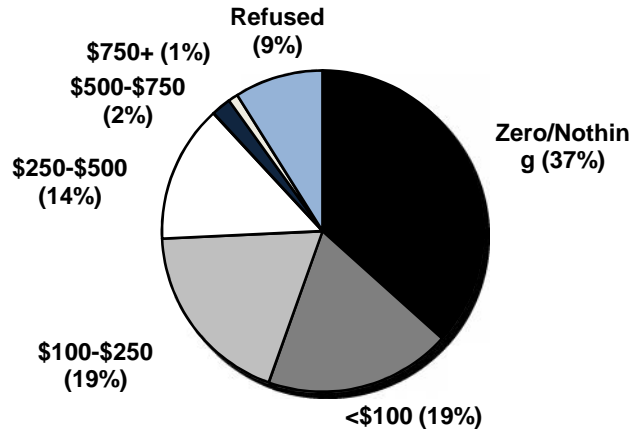
Using a 1 to 5 scale...with “1” being the LOWEST and “5” the HIGHEST, rate how big a barrier each of the following factors is to you living in Arlington today, that is, closer to where you work.



AMOUNT WILLING TO PAY TO LIVE IN ARLINGTON.

Value trade-off of moving to Arlington -- 17 percent would pay \$250+ more per month to live here; another 19 percent would pay \$100 to \$250+ more meaning 36 percent would pay \$100 more. Thirty-seven percent would not move to Arlington, and thus, their willing price is zero.

Q17: Given the time and cost of commuting, how much MORE PER MONTH would you be willing to spend on housing to live in Arlington closer to your work?



APPEAL OF VARIOUS HOUSING OPTIONS IN ARLINGTON.

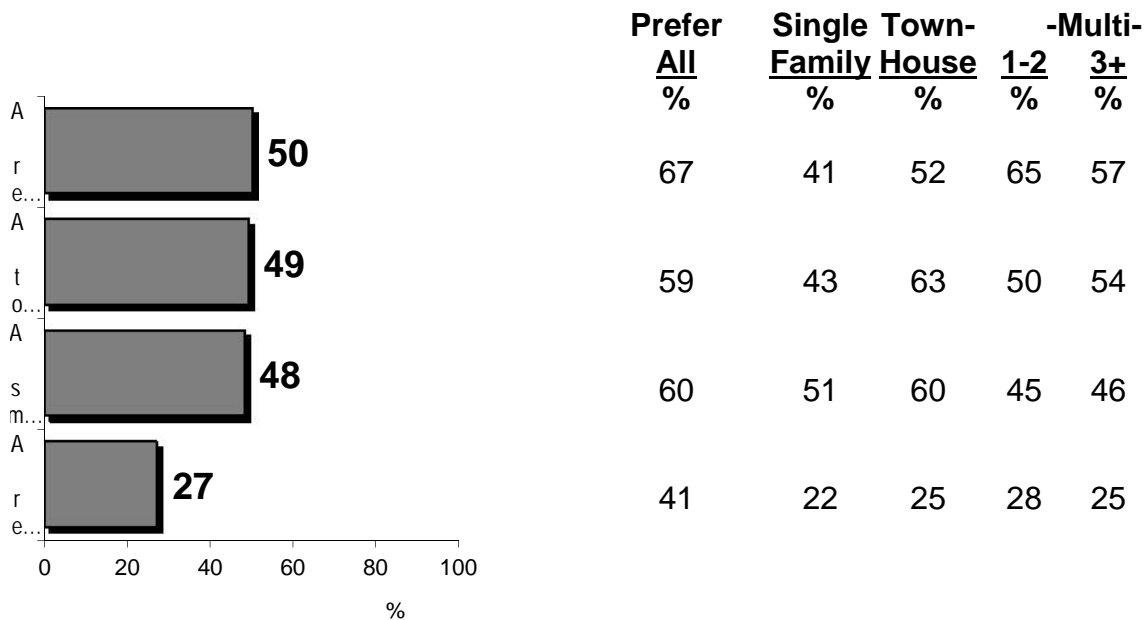
About half of respondents express interest in moving to Arlington IF affordable housing were available in the form of either a “high rise rental apartment (50 percent “Yes”), “townhouse” (49 percent), or “small single family house” (48 percent). Interest in housing type differs by current housing.

Current single family residents most prefer an Arlington single family home (51 percent) followed by a townhouse (43 percent). Current townhouse residents pick an Arlington townhouse most often (63 percent) followed closely by a single family house (60 percent) and the rental apartment in a high rise (52 percent). Those living in a low rise multi-family building are most interested in an Arlington rental apartment in a high rise (65 percent) as are current residents of a higher rise (3+ floors) multi-family building (57 percent). These respondents, however, are also nearly as interested in owning a townhouse (54 percent) in Arlington if it’s affordable.

Q16: Would you move to Arlington if the following types of housing were affordable to you, based on this “affordable definition,” that is, 30 percent or less of your gross income on housing...

(% Yes)

-Type of Home Now-



In-Commuters
Topline Questionnaire

1. How long have you worked in Arlington?

Less than 1 year	138	43%
1-2 years	73	23%
3-4 years	41	13%
5-9 years	44	14%
10 years or more	27	8%

2. How long have you lived in the greater Washington metro area?

Less than 1 year	26	8%
1-2 years	31	10%
3-4 years	44	14%
5-9 years	47	15%
10 years or more	175	54%

3. Gender.

Male	148	46%
Female	175	54%

4. How many people, counting yourself, live in your household?

1	46	14%
2	86	27%
3	71	22%
4	68	21%
5 or more	49	15%
Refused	3	1%

5. Are you married, single, divorced, widowed, or separated?

Married	88	27%
Single/never married	216	67%
Widowed	4	1%
Divorced/separated	11	3%
Refused	4	1%

6. Do you have any children aged 18 or under?

Yes	86	27%
No	237	73%

7. How long is your average one-way commute to work?

15 minutes or less	13	4%
Between 15-30 minutes	73	23%
Between 30 min-1 hour	149	46%
Over 1 hour	85	26%
Refused	3	1%

8. Do you usually commute by car, by bus, by Metro or some mix?

By car	52	16%
By bus	61	19%
By Metro	64	20%
Some mix	139	43%
Refused	7	2%

9. Where do you live?

DC	75	23%
Alexandria	45	14%
Falls Church	33	10%
Fairfax County	47	15%
Loudoun County	6	2%
Prince William County	33	10%
Prince Georges County	59	18%
Refused/Other	25	8%

10. Where would you prefer to live?

Arlington	86	27%
Your current home	171	53%
Somewhere else	66	20%

11. In general, considering all the costs it takes to live in your current home - including monthly rent or mortgage payments, plus taxes and utilities - do you consider it affordable?

Yes	207	64%
No	116	36%

12. Most experts define affordable as 30 percent or less of your total gross spent on housing. If you had to guess, do you think your household spends more, less or right about 30 percent of the total gross household income on housing costs, that is,

is,

the cost of rent or mortgage plus taxes and utilities?

More	105	33%
Less	70	22%
About 30%	66	20%
DK/Refused	82	25%

13A. Would you move to Arlington if the following types of housing were affordable to you, based on this affordable definition, that is, 30 percent or less of your gross income on housing?

A rental apartment unit in a new high-rise building.

Yes	161	50%
No	99	31%
Not sure/Depends	63	20%

13B. A rental apartment unit in an older building built before the 1970s.

Yes	88	27%
No	167	52%
Not sure/Depends	68	21%

13C. A townhouse you could own.

Yes	157	49%
No	101	31%
Not sure/Depends	65	20%

13D. A small single-family house with a very small yard that you could own.

Yes	156	48%
No	110	34%
Not sure/Depends	57	18%

14. Given the time and cost of commuting, how much MORE PER MONTH would you be willing to spend on housing to live in Arlington closer to your work?

Zero/nothing/will not move	119	37%
Less than \$100	61	19%
Between \$100 and \$250	61	19%
Between \$250 and \$500	44	14%
Between \$500 and \$750	7	2%
Over \$750	2	1%
Refused	29	9%

15. Using a 1 to 5 scale - with 1 being the LOWEST and 5 the HIGHEST, rate how big a barrier each of the following factors is to you living in Arlington today, that is, closer to where you work.

Cost of Arlington housing.

1 -- lowest	39	12%
2	17	5%
3	40	12%
4	65	20%
5 -- highest	162	50%

16. Type of housing you need or want is not available in Arlington.

1 -- lowest	103	32%
2	60	19%
3	73	23%
4	43	13%
5 -- highest	44	14%

17. Your family - spouse or children - like where you live; want to stay there.

1 -- lowest	108	33%
2	47	15%
3	45	14%
4	31	10%
5 -- highest	92	28%

18. Your roots - you are connected to the community or neighborhood where you live.

1 -- lowest	119	37%
2	47	15%
3	42	13%
4	29	9%
5 -- highest	86	27%

19. Long-term job situation with Arlington employer is not certain.

1 -- lowest	129	40%
2	56	17%
3	57	18%
4	31	10%
5 -- highest	50	15%

20. Which best describes your current home?

Detached single-family house	110	34%
Townhome/duplex	65	20%
Multi-unit with 1-2 stories	40	12%
Multi-unit with 3-5 stories	39	12%
Multi-unit with 6 stories or more	33	10%
Refused	36	11%

21. And, lastly, how many bedrooms does your current home have?

One, or an efficiency	47	15%
Two	92	28%
Three	80	25%
Four or more	90	28%
Refused	14	4%

Appendix A

About the same cost.

Affordability.

Affordable.

Already live in state, looking to change scenery.

Arlington cost too much. I would have to get a roommate; I prefer living alone.

Arlington hates us for no reason. Arlington does not like black people.

Arlington is a little more expensive than my current home.

Arlington is costly. Affordable.

Arlington is expensive, very touristy. I have lived here all my life. I like the area and my family is there.

Arlington is expensive.

Arlington is more expensive than Alexandria. It is not that far from where I work so I don't mind the trip.

Arlington is too congested. I get a lot more space for my money where I am.

Arlington is too expensive to live.

Arlington is too expensive.

Arlington is too expensive.

Arlington is too expensive.

Arlington is too expensive. I would prefer to have a lot of space that you don't get in Arlington.

Arlington too crowded, too commercial, busy/noisy.

Attend school in College Park, MD (proximity).

Back home.

Back in El Salvador.

Bad area.

Because DC is closer to everything and children want to go to Georgetown.

Because everything is near my house.

Because I like where I live.

Because I own my home; don't feel like selling.

Because it is far from school.

Because it is not close to the beach.

Because it's cheap and near by school.

Been living in current area for a long time now, Comfortable here.

Born and raised in Arlington. Been there, done that.

California.

Can't afford it.

Can't stand Virginia.

Cannot afford right now, maybe later.

Cheaper as someone who lives more and is making less than \$60,000 per year. Also just quieter and I pay less for parking.

Cheaper.

City kid and just enjoy the city life.

Close to work.

Closer to DC.

Closer to family.

Closer to place of work.

Comfortable here for now, maybe later.

Comfortable where they are.

Comfortable with surroundings.

Convenience.

Convenient.

Cost and family.

Cost of living is too high.

Cost of living is very cheap.

Cost of living.

Cost of living.

Cost too much for too little.

Cost.

DC because it's busier; it's closer to where I work.

DC has more to offer for me.

DC is centerpoint.

DC is far more convenient than Arlington.

DC is in same vicinity of Arlington -- next door.

DC is right next door to Arlington, not in such a big rush to move.

DC more to offer and is very Metro accessible.

Don't drive -- love convenience shopping.

Easier and cheaper to live on family owned property.

Easy to manage my expenses.

Environment is comfortable.

Everything is close to each other, easy access.

Everything is pretty accessible.

Everything that I know is DC.

Expensive. Affordable and grew up in area.

Family and cousin -- hard to find housing in Arlington.

Family and has less congestion.

Family and spacious.

Family is here.

Family, cost of living, slower pace.

Family.

Family.

Family.

Family.

Feel it's better for my family.

Good area.

Good community, close to everything.

Good paying rent.

Good schools for daughters where I currently live.

Grew up here, connected.

I am tired of DMV. Ready for a change. Virginia is too strict; commonwealth.

I can't afford to stay here alone.

I don't care about living close to work. When I leave I like to get away from work. My current place is secluded.

I don't care for Northern Virginia.

I don't know much about Arlington. I just started coming here 2 days ago.

I don't like Arlington because it isn't diverse and it cost a lot to live here.

I don't like Virginia.

I don't want to be close, hustle and bustle, too expensive in Arlington.

I just don't like Virginia. I like that DC I close to everything. I am 10 to 20 minutes from everything. I like walking to the Metro.

I just like living in the city.

I like all of the nightlife in DC.

I like Arlington but prefer to live in my current area.

I like Arlington, but it's too expensive. It's too expensive in this area.

I like DC so far, since I moved here from Florida.

I like DC. I don't care for Arlington.

I like houses mostly -- not apartments.

I like the city life.

I like the entertainment. So many attractions.

I like where I live. Arlington is expensive.

I lived in Arlington for a while, but Maryland feels more like home and it's more affordable.

I love living in DC.

I love Old Town Alexandria. It's historic.

I never looked at Arlington. I would like to move the SC because I have land.

I only want to work here.

I prefer my current home because I was born and raised in DC. I'm not a huge fan of Arlington. I would prefer a home in DC.

I prefer my current home because it's more convenient for me.

I prefer the accessibility and community in DC currently.

I prefer to live in Suitland, MD because this is too far to live. None of my family or friends live out here and I don't drive and it's only a select few that drive.

I really do like the area; however, I need the proper job first before thinking of living in Arlington.

I want somewhere a little more secluded.

I would prefer DC over Arlington anytime.

I'd prefer to live in the city because there are more things to do while it is still Metro accessible to Arlington.

I'm comfortable where I live. I was born and raised in DC.

I'm not a city girl. I need a little space.

I'm not a fan of VA.

I'm not familiar with Arlington. The neighborhoods are beautiful in Maryland. People have money, cars, and they know how to act.

I'm not sure about Arlington, but I'm open.

I'm planning to move to another state.

I'm ready to move to a new atmosphere.

It is too expensive.

It is too far.

It was one of the cheapest option at the moment. Arlington, however, was more expensive and had less options of housing for immediate needs.

It's a nice city, however based on speculation, it seems very expensive to live in Arlington.

It's all I know.

It's cheap.

It's more affordable.

It's preferable to me.

It's too expensive.

It's too transient, too much crime, costly, crowds.

Job.

Just like the area.

Just what I'm used to.

Knows surroundings and more affordable.

Less congested. More parks, open space. More affordable.

Less expensive.

Like DC better.

Like the city.

Like to be central in the district -- have no car so access to buses and Metro to get around.

Lived there a while, liked the home.

Living in Arlington is too much.

Long history in area.

Love the city life and enjoy being around my friends.

Love the city life.

Low crime rate.

Metro access.

Metro accessible.

Might move to Arlington in 2-4 years depending on nearby attractions.

More affordable and culturally diverse.

More comfortable.

More expensive.

More familiar with that area.

More likely because I'm used to it and because of my family. Majority of my family lives in that area.

More opportunities.

My current home is close to my livelihood.

My family lives there and I have lived there all my life.

My friends, social life.

My rent in Arlington was almost the same as my mortgage in Alexandria.

My roots are growing deeper at my current place of living.

My son goes to a good school in Fairfax County. I don't want to have to readjust to living in Arlington.

Near friends and family. Walk to Metro. Convenient.

Near friends. Prefer DC nightlife, activities, restaurants. Do not want to own a car.

Neighborhood.

Nice street/shopping where I live.

No family in Arlington. Too expensive.

No interest in the Commonwealth State. Closer to everything, affordable.

No Old Town nearby, i.e., less than 5 minutes.

No parking.

Not a fan of Virginia. Family and free housing.

Not a lot of things to do here in Arlington. More things to do in DC.

Not a lot to do. DC fits more of social lifestyle.

Not Arlington because too much money for rent.

Not as quiet as Ashburn.

Not interested in VA because of high living costs. Interested in DC/MD for tuition prices and better job opportunities.

Not preferable.

Not sure.

Peace, history, low cost of living.

People, community, job opportunity.

Prefer rural communities.

Prefers to live in DC, doesn't really want to live in VA.

Price of mortgage, square footage, and access to multiple commuting options (bus, VRE, Metro).

Price.

Quiet (not a city girl).

Rent is high, lack of transportation.

Rooted to community.

Roots and affordable.

Roots and connections back home.

Roots and economical.

Roots and too much cost for rent.

Roots.

Roots.

Social life.

Spiritual family ties.

Suburban area.

Taxes and the cost of living in Arlington. It's more reasonable than my current home.

That's what I'm used to, that's where I live.

The cost of living for apartments is too expensive in Arlington.

The location. It's close to my job, it's convenient to get around.

The suburbs and the quietness.

The Washington Metro area is expensive to live in, and would like to consider moving down to NC, GA, or FL.

To be closer to family.

Too busy and noise. Nice area, more spacious.

Too busy.

Too busy. Out of Washington metro area to a small town.

Too congested.

Too congested.

Too crowded.

Too expensive and congested.

Too expensive to live in Arlington.

Too expensive to live in Arlington.

Too expensive to live in Arlington.

Too expensive.

Too expensive.

Too expensive.

Too expensive.

Too expensive. Accessibility and affordability.

Too hot for me. Small housing.

Too loud.

Too much cost.

Traffic and expense.

Traffic, price.

Traffic.

Traffic. Less traffic elsewhere.

Transportation better in DC.

We just moved from VA to DC. It was difficult find a property we wanted in Arlington at a reasonable price.

We looked at houses in Arlington but the one what we liked is in Alexandria.

Weather.

Where we live is close for my wife. It's not necessarily about affordability, although I do believe Arlington is expensive.

VII. Homeless Persons

Background

One-on-one in-person interviews were conducted in mid-July 2014 with twelve (12) homeless individuals identified by Arlington County Department of Human Services. Homeless respondents included a mix of men and women as well as those in single and family living situations. Verbatim responses to each question asked are listed below each topic of this study.

Findings

EXPERIENCES FINDING PLACE TO LIVE.

Two of the 12 are having positive experiences with housing assistance from the County. For the others a combination of a tough job market (given their skills or criminal background), expensive housing, and bad credit make obtaining housing difficult.

What's your experience trying to find a place to live?

It's very expensive to live in Arlington and a tough job market. It's tough because when I apply for a job many people have the experience. I need to get a job to get this experience but no one wants to give me the job. How am I supposed to get experience if no one hires me? I do have one year of medical experience after my education was done but all the doctors want 2-4 years' experience and are very picky. The other barrier about the job market is that many doctors are now going bilingual and are making that a requirement for new staff to be bilingual. I know some Spanish but not enough to answer questions and I don't want to get anything translated wrong being in the medical field. At 18 I messed up my credit but charging to the max and not being able to pay them and now I have learned that good credit makes a difference especially when trying to find a place to live on your own. I had a job but got minimal pay and eventually I couldn't afford my apartment because once the lease was up I had to go month to month which increased rent to more than I could afford.

Lived in Arlington County all my life. Went to prison, then lived with the family and couldn't afford rent \$500 month. So ended up in Shelter.

It has been stressful finding for individual to find work. Age requirements is a major factor. Has military background.

Since released from jail (Feb. 2013), had a hard time finding employment. If you have no income, how can you find a place to live?! Arlington makes it hard for you to find a place because the market rate is too high.

Not so bad. She has 2 caseworkers at the Drewery Ctr. That assisted with permanent supportive housing based on/ after she received income through SSI, Disability, SSDI.

She's been to institutions/ jail because of attitude. Which bought her to this point. Trying to find a place Arlington here been good so far with the help of her case manager.

It's hard because of the cost and my background. Not so good credit, and a criminal background have been barriers.

Hard. Trying to find housing in Arlington if you don't have a housing grant you can't get affordable housing. Grants are not guaranteed. You have to be a working family elderly or disabled to get a housing grant singles don't qualify. If you don't have a degree housing is not attainable.

No money, no family. 5 years in streets. No papers, no English. Currently cleaning houses. Is about one hour to commute. Very hard work, mostly irritating for hands. (no gloves) Temporary.

Just started (week ago)... ASPAN helps a lot with essentials.

Been on the streets + w/ Family. Has been hard to find housing.

Has friends and family to live w/ the problem. Is doing it on his own. Housing is just really expensive which makes it hard.

HOUSING SUPPORT SYSTEM.

All 12 homeless respondents seem to have some network for support either from government or non-profit source with either job placement, housing, mental health counseling, food, health care, or other daily essentials.

Is there a support system -- both from government and others -- to help you in Arlington? What? How does it work?

My support system is my foster mom but she lives in Georgia now. The government system that's helped is Arlington Social Services. I am pretty much self-sufficient for the most part but I still can use help with financial planning.

Department of Human Services gives money and food stamps/ Medical assistance.

Arlington Employment Center they offer Job Placements

Drewery Ctr- Mental health. Social services- Section 8.

Drewery Ctr- Provides assistance. I would pay 30 percent of rent based on my income and they would pay the remainder. The Drewery Ctr. Is better to me than Housing Grant because through them, one would (dept. of Social Services) have to pay 40 percent. And obviously 30percent is better than 40percent

Client in Drewery Ctr. Psychiatrist/ dr. helps with her stability to look for a place

The Arlington housing grant and Doorways for women and families. The housing grant covers a percentage of your rent based on the age of your children. Doorways for Women requires women to pay 30percent of their income in rent. It gradually goes up to 35percent to 40percent on income

Crisis Assistance Bureau does not offer help enough. You can only get assistance once every 12 months

ASPAN, they provide clothes, showers and food. They also provide rooms on November 1 such as winter shelters. They also actively look for the homeless

ASPAN, Food, clothes, laundry, showers

Job- No support yet. He knows ASPAN has a job assistance but hasn't looked into it yet. Had food stamps but is in the process of recertifying for food stamps. ASPAN helped him to reapply and now it's the waiting for approval

He works never asked family + friends for money – they have their own families, etc. On the housing programs - ASPAN. Going to be looking into food stamps + such. Just hard to wait for a day.

WHERE SPEND NIGHTS.

“Living” conditions are mixed with 4 of the 12 in the Residential Program Center, 2 of 12 living on the streets, and the rest in apartments with housing assistance, with relatives, or at “Doorways for Women.”

Where do you “live” -- spend nights?

Before I “aged out” at 18, (meaning no more County assistance unless you followed the criteria (student, jobs etc.) I was a full-time student and had three jobs so I was able to get assistance till I was 21. I had lived with a friend in Arlington but it did not work out. Currently I am living with some family members in Maryland but it’s not the best situation.

Here @ R.P.C.

RPC – Only been here for 2 weeks. Prior, was on the streets. Deciding that RPC was better than surviving the dangerous world.

RPC – Residential program center. Been here since March 2014.

RPC – Been here since Feb. 2014. Prior was staying at her cousins but decided to come to RPC for support to live on her own – wanted independence.

Doorways for women safe house.

I live in Arlington. I live in an apartment.

Streets currently.

Streets, Southside Arlington.

Apartments of supportive housing. Permanent supportive housing.

Currently 2 weeks ago – now has housing assistance 1 bedroom apt.

EXPECTATIONS.

Seven of the 12 homeless respondents are optimistic about the future hoping and/or planning to be living in permanent housing six months from now.

Four of the 12 expect a longer struggle to find housing.

Do you expect to be in a different living situation or the same place six months from now? Why? How?

I am very much trying to get back to Virginia. I am doing what I can right now to work and save money and I hope to be back by the end of summer.

Having my own place!

Expect to be in own living quarters. By staying clean, keeping 2 ppts (mental health), Being proactive, looking for employment.

She has plans& goals to go forward in life. RPC helps get you to that goal. This facility is not geared for permanent living situation.

Plan on being in own house. Already been accepted but waiting to look for a place to stay permanent.

I just applied for apartments and waiting to hear back from Arlington Affordable Housing regarding an appeal for housing.

Currently meeting today about employment opportunity and continue to work with ASPN. Don't give up hope.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES IN ARLINGTON.

These 12 homeless respondents are clearly connected to local support systems.

Are there programs or services available to you to help you into a more permanent living situation in Arlington? What are those?

Peer center and Jury center in Arlington.

The Arlington Employment Center.

Drewery CTR/ Mental Health. ASPAN – Homeless program (non-profit).

Permanent support of Housing. Arlington Housing Grant.

Permanent support of Housing. ASPAN.

Doorways for Women, home start program.

Doorways for Women, home start program.

ASPAN.

ASPAN. Social services. Section 8 – has voucher till the day he dies. Housing grants.

CURRENT HOUSING CIRCUMSTANCES.

Below are the stories of how each of these homeless individuals came to be in their current housing situation, how they found out about it and among the 6 of 12 receiving housing assistance, what type.

How did you come to be in your current home?

In Arlington, it was a friend who said I could stay but the husband ultimately didn't want me there so my last option was to call my sister who came to get me in Virginia and took me to our cousin's house in Maryland. It is not the best or ideal living situation and there is no privacy.

Couldn't afford rent and didn't want to live on street!

Already knew of the (Edifice) walking in is how he found out about it.

From jail. Had nowhere to go! Called RPC to put name on list until bed/room became available.

Was living with an older gentleman but had to leave due to his consumption of alcohol. When left you ended up at the winter shelter which is a temporary shelter (during the winter season). As my stay at the winter shelter was coming to an end, I called the RPC for a screening to see if a bed/room was available. With the help of my caseworker at the Drewery Ctr & connection w/ RPC. I got approved to stay at the RPC quickly.

Went to detox then let the people in detox know my living situation/ lack of end then RPC interviewed me for residency after I was finished w/ detox.

I applied for the apartment after being told about the affordable housing program. I could not afford the condo I lived in.

No home.

Talked w/ ASPAN who got him there.

Put name on section 8 list 2-3 years ago and they finally called 2 weeks ago.

How did you find out about it?

Being in foster care I eventually learned that my grandparents have some land in southern Maryland and I only wanted to call on this part of the family if I had no other option.

Friend told me about it.

Walk-in!

Word-of-mouth.

Knew about the RPC because she was here in the past (2010).

Was already familiar w/ RPC by living in Arlington. She is from Arlington.

I lived next door to the apartments and inquired about them.

Talked w/ ASPAN who got him there.

There was a winter shelter- stayed for a month- one of the workers told him Section 8 was coming and to get his name on the list so he did.

Do you receive assistance/money to help with rent? From who?

Right now I do not get help with rent but when I was in Arlington there was the TLS program through social services that helped me out.

D.H.S. in Hyattsville.

SSI. Disability.

General relief, will receive disability soon.

I get a housing grant.

ASPAN covers some he thinks and he covers the other.

SUPPORT NEEDED.

Most say they need a job to help them stay in their home, clearly meaning any income they now have is not sufficient to cover rent. Others cite the need for additional financial assistance while one points out the special challenges single homeless face in qualifying for assistance and still working to move ahead with a quality life.

What might you need to stay in your home -- what type of support or help?

To stay in Arlington I would need a job with better pay and also how to better budget my money and some financial planning.

D.H.S. Really supports me.

Section 8 with the assistance of a job.

SSI & disability is good but it is not enough. I would need to pick up a part time job to have another source of income. I can also take courses/ classes to further my education to a good paying job.

Would need assistance w/ everything; income especially. She is starting her life over (second chance) therefore needs help in all areas.

I need help and support as a single person because I don't qualify. I can't have a car or anything "extra" to get benefits. I make "too much" but not enough to get by. Programs only help crazy people or families. There is no quality of life with help from social services. I can't have a car, cable, or anything extra and get help from social services.

Need a job. Continued government help to help w/ rent.

Section 8 – \$37,000 up is the cut off. He say if he had \$37,000 he wouldn't need section 8.

WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER LIVING SITUATIONS.

Three living scenarios were presented to these homeless respondents...

- a. Rented room in someone else's house: 3 Yes; 9 No.
- b. Rented room in apartment: 5 Yes; 5 No.
- c. Group home supervised: 4 Yes; 7 No.

For each, some are willing to take any room while others have a few conditions. On the negative side, past bad experiences rule out a repeat try at that type of living arrangement or others seek a more independent living situation.

Would you be willing to live...in a rented room of someone else's house?

Yes

This would NOT be my first choice but I would accept it if it was the only option. I was abused when I was younger, so I don't trust a lot of people and I would rather live alone.

Did it before, wouldn't mind doing it again.

Willing to, but not wanting to. Room will be better than streets.

No

God bless a child that got his home, tranquility.

Have had negative experiences with people/roommates.

Prefer own place. After having own place for so long, cannot just live w/ someone easily.

Did it before, not for me.

I have done it for the last 3 years because it has always been an issue. Affordable basement units do not qualify for grant.

I shouldn't have to but only as a last resort. I already have a place now.

Independent from help.

Wouldn't be comfortable in someone's house like that.

Has done, didn't like it. If he had to, last option.

Would you be willing to live...in a rented room in an apartment?

Yes

Again, This would NOT be my first choice but I would accept it if it was the only option. I was abused when I was younger, so I don't trust a lot of people and I would rather live alone.

God bless a child that got his home, tranquility.

A room is a room! Just grateful to have somewhere to stay. As long as I pay my half of the rent and don't get in the way of the other tenant, I'm okay with that.

Tried 500\$ per month for basement room. It don't matter where, a room is a room.

Roommate is fine.

No

Have had negative experiences with people/roommates.

No , definitely no. Too closed in.

I have done it for the last 3 years because it has always been an issue. Affordable basement units do not qualify for grant.

The same as before. Even to save money I'm not sacrificing the quality of my son's life to share a room.

Would you be willing to live...in a group home monitored by a case manager?

Yes

*Well-structured professionalism.
Feels Safer. They are well-structured.
A room is a room. As long as there is a case manager, I would feel safer.
I wouldn't have a problem with other people.*

No

*Again it has to do with being abused and I don't want to live with others. I'm scared of what could happen. I also don't want to live in someone else's world or have to deal with how they run things, it's uncomfortable living with someone else because it's not your own place and not the way you would run it.
Would rather stay at RPC until have plan of living own my own/ getting place falls into place.
Did that before, not interested again. Prefer my own space. Plus too much drama with others in the home.
At the age I'm in, I'm too old to live in a group house.
I just want my own space. Everyone has different schedules and it's frustrating.
I have done it but I have a place.
It feels like you're in a shelter and doesn't like being in a shelter.*

BOTTOM LINE: DOES ARLINGTON CARE?

Nine of 12 say Arlington does care about the homeless, 3 of 12 say NO.

Those positive cite the support network, programs and services available, and success stories.

**Overall, do you think Arlington really cares about helping homeless folks?
YES: Why? What gives you that sense?**

I have seen people go from the streets to getting a job and from drugs to rehab. I have seen miracles happen in this County! There are many programs to help us.

Because of different organizations that support and provide services.

They have reliable resources / consistency.

Arlington has more programs and services they provide opposed to DC for instance.

They have a lot of different housing programs.

The provided services are a blessing to me. A lot of places to receive benefits.

For the current services, yes.

Help w/ food. Help w/ housing. Knows about the jobs but hasn't inquired on that yet, want to work one day.

It kinda cares. Some of the programs have helped, only uses the programs he needs to get back on his feet to support himself.

Those negative about Arlington's commitment to helping the homeless had difficult experiences and/or feel more services are geared toward those with mental disabilities than those who are working poor.

**Overall, do you think Arlington really cares about helping homeless folks?
NO: Why? What gives you that sense?**

The lack of support. There is not enough organization in Arlington itself. The city is money hungry. Prefer to take money to build all these luxury apartments but only have few homeless facilities

You have to pretend to crazy to get help. APAH should give people second chances to find work to rebuild their lives. It's just so much you have to go through just to get help. I was previously turned down by Doorways. I got pregnant and was put on bed rest when I finally got help. DHS could not get me in the program

The county keeps approving people who are not crazy but playing crazy but playing crazy for benefits. This is taking up space for those that really need help. There is no quality of life for the working poor who want to make a better life for themselves. The assistance only helps families and mentally ill people. Affordable housing prices are not really affordable. You have to work 2 jobs to afford the "affordable housing" in Arlington. Section 8 prioritizes people with mental issues and the working poor don't qualify.

VIII. Disabled Persons

Background

One-on-one interviews were conducted with fifteen (15) disabled individuals via telephone in mid-July 2014. Self-identified disabilities are:

- Mental -- n=9
- Physical -- n=7
- Substance -- n=7
- Sensory -- n=2

Respondents were identified and recruited by Arlington County staff.

Findings

INDEPENDENT LIVING.

Most -- 13 out of 15 (87 percent) -- say they live independently. Below are their definitions of what "living independently" means...

LIVING WITHOUT ANY ASSISTANCE, PHYSICALLY.

BEING ABLE TO MANAGE YOUR OWN AFFAIRS HOUSE. KEEPING AT THINGS LIKE THAT.

WHEN YOU'RE TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF FULLY.

NOT DEPENDING ON ANYONE FOR MEALS, CLOTHES,

BEING ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AND DO WHAT YOU WANT TO DO.

ON YOUR OWN.

I TAKE MY KIDS AND I TAKE CARE AND BATH MY OWN AND CLEAN MY HOUSE.

MEANING DO EVERYTHING YOURSELF.

WHEN YOU CAN DO FOR YOURSELF.

ABLE TO WHATEVER, AND NOT NEEDING ASSISTANCE.

MAKE MY OWN MEALS, I CAN GET AROUND TO MY APPOINTMENTS, MY OWN HOUSE CLEAN AND WASH MY OWN CLOTHES.

LIVE ALONE, AFFORD RENT, TO BE ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

ON MY OWN.

ACCESSIBLE FEATURES.

About half -- 8 out of 15 -- say they have the accessible features in their home they need. Of the seven who say they do not, below are their responses to the question, "Which accessible features do you need most in your home?" [Three of 7 said "none" in this follow-up question.]

NEED A SHOWER CHAIR, RAILING.

NONE.

KITCHEN.

NONE.

HARD WOOD FLOORING, GRAB BARS, ELEVATED TOILET SEAT, REACHABLE LIGHTING , RAMP ENTRY WAY, WIDEN DOOR FRAMES, ROLL IN SHOWER.

NOTHING.

NEEDS.

Services or help that would assist these individuals live more independently are...

HOUSEKEEPER AND HELP ME SHOP I HAVE BACK PROBLEMS.

SOMEONE HELP ME PAY MY BILLS, LAUNDRY, AND PAPER WORK THINGS LIKE THAT.

SOCIAL SERVICES, FOOD STAMPS.

BARS FOR MY BATHROOM TO HELP BECAUSE I HAVE PROBLEMS WITH MY BACK AND I WOULD LIKE MY TOILET SEAT TO SIT HIGHER.

TRANSPORTATION.

APARTMENT LOOKING FORWARD TO GETTING OUT THE GROUP HOME.

FINANCIAL AID.

I NEED HELP GRAB BARS TO HELP ME MOBILE THAT'S FREE, HOUSEKEEPING AND THINGS.

NURSE, TRANSPORTATION FOR THE DOCTORS WHEN I NEED IT.

MORE ACTIVITIES.

TRUE AFFORDABLE TRULY MODERN, TRULY ADA COMPLETE COMPLIANCE AND POLICING CONSTRUCTION AND TO ENSURE THAT INFORMANT IS MANDATORY OF ADA MODERN RULES AN REGULATION AND MORE HANDY PARKING.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

*BETTER SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS BETTER FOOD AND
LABORATORY FACILITY.*

TENURE IN HOME.

A majority -- 9 out of 15 (60 percent) -- have lived in their current home less than 2 years. Most of the rest -- 5 of the remaining 6 -- have been living in their home 2 to 10 years. Below are the comments about how these individuals came to live in their current home.

DROVE AROUND AND SAW IT.

I KNEW OF IT FOR YEARS , WORD OF MOUTH.

THROUGH RESOURCES IN THE COMMUNITY. NO HOME.

LOOKING THROUGH THE SENIOR CARE.

LIST OF APARTMENTS FOR SENIORS.

*I WAS IN NOVA MENTAL HEALTH AND THEY WORKED IT OUT TO
GET ME HERE IN THE GROUP HOME, AND BEFORE I WAS IN THE
HOSPITAL.*

APPLICATION, AND I FIND OUT IT WAS BEING BUILD.

*INVESTIGATION ABOUT HOMES AND WITH A REALTOR. THROUGH
H.P.R.P.*

I DON'T KNOW.

ONLINE.

THERAPIST.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.

SAFETY.

All but a few feel safe -- 12 out of 15 (80 percent) -- in their home. Reason for this feeling of security...

ENCLOSED HALLWAY, KNOW MY NEIGHBORS.

24 HOURS SECURE, LOCKS ON THE DOOR.

I JUST DO.

*BECAUSE NO ONE CAN GET IN UNLESS YOU'RE APPROVED TO
GET IN.*

THERE'S STAFF ALWAYS HERE DURING THE DAY AND OTHER PEOPLE HERE THAT'S WELL GRANTED AND GET ALONG WITH EACH OTHER.

CONTROL ACCESS, CAMERAS.

I LIVE IN A CONDO AND SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE I LIVE ON THE NORTH SIDE OF ARLINGTON.

NEIGHBORS, NOT A HIGH CRIME NEIGHBOR HOOD.

BECAUSE HERE THEY HAVE SECURITY WALKING AND MOBILE.

QUIET NEIGHBORHOOD, SMALL BUILDING, WE ALL KNOW EACH OTHER AND LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER, AND NEED A CODE TO GET IN.

MONITORS AT THE FRONT DOOR, DOORS ARE ALWAYS SECURED.

The three who do not feel safe offer these reasons...

I'M IN A VAN NOW.

NO SECURITY.

I DON'T LIKE THE LOCKS ON THE DOOR.

AFFORDABILITY.

Opinion splits with 9 of 15 (60 percent) saying their housing is affordable and 6 of 15 (40 percent) saying it is not affordable.

Of those saying YES, affordable, reasons are...

IT'S IN MY PRICE BUDGET.

THEY GAVE ME REDUCTION.

I'M CURRENTLY ON SSI AND THEY TAKE SOME MONEY OUT OF THAT AND I HAVE MONEY LEFT OVER AND IT'S VERY AFFORDABLE.

I GET HOUSING GRANT.

HOUSING GRANT.

I DON'T KNOW.

BECAUSE MY LAST MONTH LIGHT WAS 40 DOLLARS AND MY RENT IS 240 DOLLARS, 2 PARKING SPOTS IN FRONT OF MY DOOR.

I'M ON A FIXED INCOME,

Of those saying NO, not affordable, reasons are...

*I GET \$750 A MONTH. RENT IS \$1126 A MONTH.
THEY KEEP RAISING THE RENT,.
PRICES ARE TOO EXPENSIVE.
I HAVE OTHER BILLS TO PAY AND I DON'T HAVE MUCH LEFT.
I HAVE TO PAY ALL MY BILLS.
NO RENT.*

ASSISTANCE.

About half -- 8 of 15 (53 percent) -- receive help or assistance in paying for their housing; the rest -- 7 of 15 (47 percent) do not receive any financial assistance.

Those receiving assistance detail this as...

*GRANT.
RENT ASSISTANCE.
SSI AND THE GROUP HOME IS A FINANCE HOME.
HOUSING GRANT.
FOOD STAMPS.
SECTION 8.
PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING.
HOUSING GRANT.*

MOBILITY.

Nearly all -- 14 of 15 (93 percent) say they have the ability to get to places they need to go. Main means of transportation are detailed as...

*I HAVE A CAR.
STAR PROGRAM.
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION.
BICYCLE.
I USE STAR.
TAXI.
METRO , TRAIN, OR WALK.
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION.
STAR.
BUS, LOGISTIC CARE.*

BUS , TRAINS.

I DRIVE.

PUBIC TRANSPORTATION , AND CAR.

METRO.

BUS.

All 15 (100 percent) say where they live is convenient to Metro or bus public transit.

ENOUGH DISABLED HOUSING OPTIONS.

Most -- 10 of 15 (67 percent) -- do not think there are enough housing options in Arlington for people with disabilities to live as independently as they can.

Just 3 of 15 (20 percent) think Arlington has sufficient housing options for the disabled.

Type of Disability -- Mental

Yes	9	60%
No	6	40%

Type of Disability -- Physical

Yes	7	47%
No	8	53%

Type of Disability -- Substance

Yes	1	7%
No	14	93%

Type of Disability -- Sensory

Yes	2	13%
No	13	87%

Type of Disability -- Intellectual or Developmental

Yes	0	0%
No	15	100%

1. Do you feel you live independently?

Yes	13	87%
No	2	13%
DK/Refused	0	0%

3. Do you have the accessible features in your home that you need?

Yes	8	53%
No	7	47%
DK/Refused	0	0%

7. How long have you lived in your current home?

Less than 2 years	9	60%
Between 2-10 years	5	33%
Between 11-20 years	1	7%
More than 20 years	0	0%
Born here/whole life	0	0%
DK/Refused	0	0%

8. Do you feel safe where you live?

Yes	12	80%
No	3	20%
DK/Refused	0	0%

11. Do you find your current home to be affordable for you?

Yes	9	60%
No	6	40%
DK/Refused	0	0%

14. Do you get any help or assistance from the government paying for your housing?

Yes	8	53%
No	7	47%
DK/Refused	0	0%

16. When it comes to transportation, do you feel you can get to places you need to go?

Yes, can get places	14	93%
No, it is difficult	1	7%
DK/Refused	0	0%

18. Is where you live convenient to transit -- such as Metro or busses?

Yes	15	100%
No	0	0%
DK/Refused	0	0%

19. And lastly, do you feel there are enough housing options in Arlington for people with disabilities to live as independently as they can?

Yes	3	20%
No	10	67%
DK/Refused	2	13%

20. Gender.

Male	7	47%
Female	8	53%

21. Age.

18-39	2	13%
40-54	7	47%
55-64	3	20%
65-Up	3	20%
Refused	0	0%
