



## Voices of the Community: Alexandria and Arlington

### Services Generally Earn High Marks, Especially for Single Adults

Of the six areas involved in this study, the Northern Virginia cities of Arlington, Alexandria, and Falls Church garner the highest ratings in several key features. Seventy-nine percent of these Northern Virginia residents say the availability of good jobs is “good” or “excellent,” 69% say the area is “very safe,” and 53% say access to transportation options is “excellent” – all of which represent the highest percentage of any area.

In addition to performing exceptionally well in these categories, Alexandria and Arlington are also a destination for arts and entertainment. Residents of these cities are more than ten percentage points more likely than any other area to rate the availability of restaurants and nightlife (86%), as well as arts and cultural opportunities (76%), as “good” or “excellent.” These may contribute to the 50% of residents who say the area where they live is a “very good” place for single adults, more than twice the average of the Greater Washington region.

### Most Residents Financially Stable; Area Not Ideal for Those Who Are Not

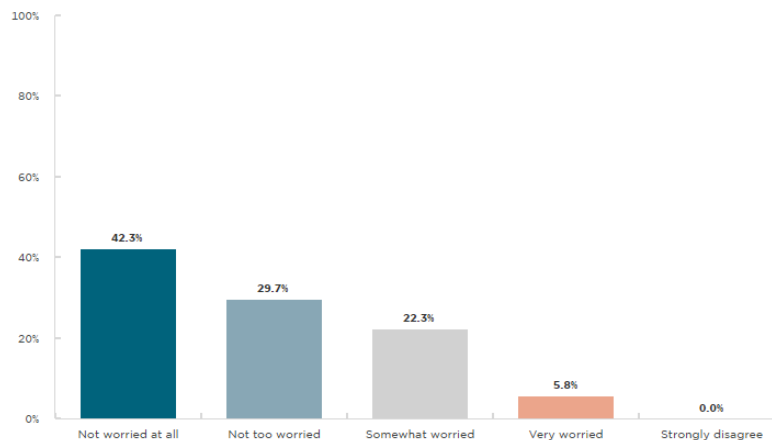
Alexandria and Arlington are the most financially healthy areas by a number of measures: 84% of residents are “living comfortably” or “doing alright,” and 42% are not at all worried about their ability to pay their rent or mortgage – both the highest percentages of any area. Moreover, 78% of residents say they do not need any assistance from nonprofit services.

#### Level of worry about paying rent/mortgage

Arlington/Alexandria, VA

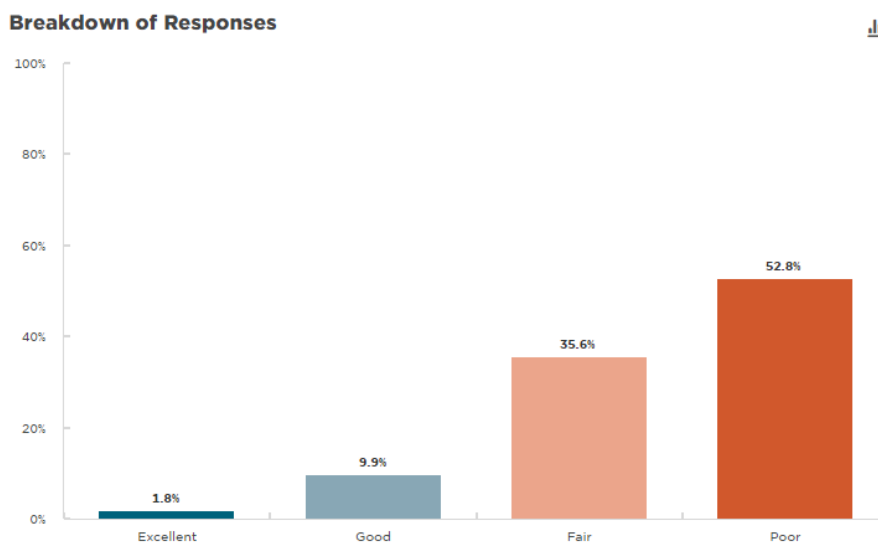
**71.9%**  
Not worried

Breakdown of Responses



However, Alexandria and Arlington residents are least likely to say that these areas are appealing for low- and middle-income residents. Just 15% say it is a “good” or “very good” place for low-income people, and 48% would say the same for middle-income people. This may be related to the 53% of residents who say the availability of affordable housing in the area is “poor” – second only to Washington, DC (59%).

**The availability of affordable housing**  
Arlington/Alexandria, VA  
**11.6%**  
Satisfaction



### Nearly Half of Residents Say Area is Changing “A Lot”; Fewer Believe those Changes Benefit All

As large companies such as Amazon and Capital One continue to expand their footprint in Northern Virginia – which may influence the area’s aforementioned “good jobs” triumph – it may not come as a surprise that 47% of residents say the place they are living is changing “a lot.” What *may* be surprising (or concerning) is that 28% of those in Alexandria and Arlington believe those changes are not benefiting them, the highest percentage of any area.

This number may be less troubling if the 29% who said the changes were benefiting everyone was not also the lowest of any area, and more than 15 points lower than the Greater Washington region’s average. These data points – combined with findings around whether the area is a good place for low- and middle-income residents – suggest there is a perception that the changes in the area are making it even less inviting to those who cannot afford the increasing cost of living.

### Despite Higher Means, Civic Engagement and Donations Lower Than Average

While Northern Virginians' financial stability may make them attractive candidates as potential volunteers and donors to community service organizations, they are less likely to have participated in these activities than their neighbors in the past year. They are least likely to report having worked to make change in their local community (22%) and are second-least likely to have participated in any volunteer work (38%). They are also in the bottom half of areas when ranked by the percentage of residents who have donated to a local nonprofit or charity (63%).

This seems to extend beyond volunteerism and charity. In the last cycle, Alexandria and Arlington residents were least likely to have voted in their local elections (58%) and are also the least likely to have donated to a candidate or issue in the past 12 months (11%). While in some cases these civic engagement numbers are not egregiously lower than other areas, this population may represent a prospective pool of untapped support for community organizations.