

# Department of Community and Human Services: ARISE Focus Groups Snapshot

DCCHS and ACT for Alexandria partnered with 10 community organizations to interview potential applicants for ARISE, Alexandria's Recurring Income for Success and Equity, a guaranteed income pilot. Applicants were asked about their households, financial situations, how they might use a cash payment, and interest in the pilot. Data was summarized by doctoral candidates from Howard University's School of Social Work, overseen by Dr. Sandra Edmonds Crewe, Ph.D., MSW.



## Household Statistics

- **There were 83 people in the sample:** of 22 households; 41 were children aged 17 and under
- **All except two households** had at least one child
- **They represented a diverse ethnic and racial sample**
- **The smallest group was White/Caucasian at 4.55%**
- **22.73%** identified as Hispanic or Latinx
- **36.6%** identified as Black or African American



## Current Finances

- **63% of respondents** "often" or "always" live paycheck to paycheck
- **76% of respondents** struggle at times to make ends meet
- **90% of respondents** participate in social safety net programs like childcare, food, rental assistance and health and medical support
- **67% of respondents** "never" or "rarely" save money
- **50% of respondents** reported annual income between \$10k – \$24k, 9% reported lower income, and nobody reported more than \$75k



## Impact of Pandemic

- **Pre-pandemic:** 24% of respondents "always" struggled to make ends meet
- **Currently:** 33% "always" struggle to make ends meet
- Respondents reported **having a better quality of life pre-pandemic than now**
- Most respondents indicated that **they had experienced a loss of income due to the pandemic**



## Impact of Cash Payment

- **Individuals indicated that a \$500 monthly would be used for:**
  - » Food/ healthier food
  - » Rent and utilities
  - » Cleaning supplies
  - » Car payment, gas, car insurance
  - » Tuition
  - » Build savings
- Respondents indicated that **they were interested and excited about the pilot**

### Other Feedback:

Overall, respondents believe ARISE would be beneficial and allow them an increased quality of life. In evaluating payment methods and intervals, participants selected direct deposit at the beginning of each month. When addressing concerns about participating in ARISE, respondents' statements fell in these categories: bureaucratic concerns, impact on other benefits, immigration issues, trust/privacy and stigma.